



# The Biddeford Beat

CITY OF BIDDEFORD WEEKLY NEWSLETTER | MONDAY, JAN 23, 2017

Volume 17.3

A1

## Welcome 8 New Hires to Biddeford Fire Department

On Thursday, January 12, the City held a ceremony for eight new hires of the Biddeford Fire Department where each firefighter was sworn in at Biddeford Fire Station. With so many new fire employees at one time, this ceremony was one of kind.



From left to right: Eric Marcotte, Darrell Farnham, Breeanna Zoidis, Ryan Cunningham, Steven Szostek, Andy Morgan, Derek Hayes, Steven Quinn

“It was an honor for me to witness this ceremony and the “swearing-in” of the new firefighters. They are fortunate to be part of a superb fire department, said Mayor Casavant. *(continued on A2)*

## New Councilor W6 Appointed



Norman Belanger was sworn in Councilor W6 on Tuesday, January 17<sup>th</sup>

replacing former Councilor Rick Laverriere who resigned for family reasons.

Belanger, a Harvard educated Attorney was born and raised in Biddeford and graduated from BHS in 1975. He served on City’s first environmental board. He’s married with three children.

## Captain Jason Wheeler Retires after 31 Years

Jason Wheeler joined the Biddeford Fire Department in October of 1985 after gaining experience as a volunteer at Kennebunk Fire Department.



Growing up in Kennebunk, you would find Jason working hard mowing lawns, raking, shoveling snow to earn extra money

*(continued on A2)*

## REMINDER: Winter Wonderland Art Due this Friday

Deadline to provide art is due this Friday, January 27<sup>th</sup>. We will accept 2D work only, no sculptures. All ages are welcome to participate. Details can be found [here](#). The exhibition is a joint effort of the City of Biddeford and Engine, an arts organization in downtown Biddeford. For questions please contact City Manager’s Executive Assistant Andrea Fagan at (207) 284-9313 or Engine at (207) 370-9130.

### UPCOMING MEETINGS

#### Tue Jan 24

6:00pm - Strategic Planning Committee (City Hall 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room)

7:30pm - School Committee (BHS Little Theater)

#### Wed Jan 25

5:30pm - Council Workshop (Officials Only) (Biscuits & Co)

#### Thu Jan 26

7:00pm - Conservation Commission (City Hall 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room)

## WinterFest 2017 Details

Biddeford WinterFest, Feb. 3-5, 2017.

A great cabin-fever-busting weekend in Biddeford!

Sledding in City Square, dog sled rides, skating, and much more!

[WinterFest Facebook](#)  
[Heart of Biddeford](#)



*(continued from A1 Captain Wheeler)*

working a gas station attendant during his teen years. While attending Kennebunk High School, he found an interests in audio visual tech classes, enjoyed playing sports on the baseball and basketball teams and received the award of 'most improved player' in basketball during his freshman year. Outside of school, he also enjoyed outdoor activities such as hunting, fishing and competitive shooting. He graduated from high school in 1977. Jason went to college at Southern Maine Community College and majored in the Fire Science Program. He became a volunteer in the Kennebunk Fire Department where he credits being influenced by one of his two older brothers, who was also a volunteer in the same department.

Before joining BFD, Jason did various other jobs. He worked as a mason, installed insulation, did counter work and deliveries for a local car parts store and even worked as a meat cutter, truck driver and delivery person for a local meat and produce business. While working full time at Biddeford Fire, Jason attended the National Fire Academy for Leadership programs and Emergency Scene Management. Over the years, training's that he really enjoyed and excelled in were High Angle, Ice & Cold Water, Ocean and Below Grade Rescues. Throughout his tenure in the department, Jason moved up the ranks, to Lt. in 2003 and his final move to Captain of "D" Shift in 2005. He really enjoys working with his shift personnel and his motivation has always been to strive to make a difference to someone in need.

Jason credits his daughter Jessica with being his greatest influence in shaping him into who he is today. Jessica was born with Cystic Fibrosis and passed away at the young age of 12. He states "she was so strong willed, kind and wise beyond her age, she cared more about others than she did herself, no matter how weak she was." One of the greatest memories was being present when Jessica was born. His hardest was being with her when she died.

*(continued from A1 BFD New Hires)*

**Ryan Cunningham:** Comes to from Barrington, NH. Currently a live in student at Scarborough F.D. while finishing his schooling at SMCC in the Fire Science/Paramedic program. He will be starting with us this summer.

**Darrell Farnham:** BHS Graduate. Just returned from serving four years active duty in the U.S. Navy. His grandfather, Raymond Charette retired from BFD as a full time firefighter.

**Derek Hayes (Badge #87):** Comes to us from Waterboro, ME. He has belonged to various local departments. He will be working on "B" shift.

**Eric Marcotte:** Has been a junior firefighter with BFD since 2012. Graduated from BHS in 2016, is currently a live-in student at Gorham F.D. and attending school at SMCC for Fire Science.

**Andy Morgan (Badge #88):** Comes to us from Goffstown, NH where he was a firefighter in their local department. He will be working on "C" shift.

**Steven Quinn (Badge #86):** Started with us in June 2016 as a Call Force Firefighter. Will now be working on "A" shift.

**Breeanna Zoidis:** Comes from Casco, ME. Currently a live-in student at Kennebunk F.D. while finishing her schooling at SMCC in the Fire Science/Paramedic program. She will be starting with the City later this summer.

**Steven Szostek (Badge #89):** Comes to from Hollis, ME where he is a Lt. in the Hollis F.D. He will be working on "D" Shift.

Jason met his wife Karen through the Fire and EMS Service. She is the Executive Administrative Assistant and a Firefighter for the Kennebunk Fire Department. Jason has a stepdaughter (Rachel), two step granddaughters (Destiny and Aidanne) and a step grandson (Drake). His 16 year old cat, Mr. Symms is his loving pet.

When he has spare time, Jason enjoys the Patriots and Red Sox, outdoor hobbies; swimming, kayaking, hunting, fishing, snowshoeing or walking trails. He continues to volunteer in the National Fire Academy Alumni Association.

Jason also enjoys a wide variety of books, authors, movies and music. He says he doesn't have any special talent, but does consider himself a "Jack of all trades, master of none." It's clear that all he has accomplished surely contradicts the statement.

Jason will be retiring from the Fire Department on Saturday, January 28th after 31 years of service. Jason has been proud of his profession and has instilled in many firefighters the importance of training and education in the fire service. He has also stressed the importance of looking out for the firefighters not only junior, but senior as well.



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For questions and comments:

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Thank you for reading.