

The Biddeford Beat

CITY OF BIDDEFORD WEEKLY NEWSLETTER | MONDAY, APR 3, 2017

Volume 17.11

A1

Biddeford Airport and American Red Cross Blood Drive a Success

On Friday, March 24th, Biddeford Airport held its first blood drive in conjunction with The American Red Cross. Twenty-two people donated blood that day, collecting 24 units of blood for the American Red Cross. The American Red Cross staff was very pleased with the turnout despite *(continued on A3)*



Hangar A: American Red Cross Staff & Biddeford Residents

'Draft' FY18 Budget Long-term or Short-term View

By: Jim Bennett, City Manager

On March 21, 2017, I presented the 'draft' FY18 budget to the City Council. Normally, I would not include the word 'draft'. In this article my goal is to explain why I consider the budget presentation a draft and this will be the first of many budget discussions.

For the frequent viewers who watch or attend the City Council meetings, you may have recently heard the words, "unfunded long-term liabilities," "unstainable," or "unfunded employee costs." These may seem like casual terms to observers. But, to Council members, it represents challenging decisions as they try *(continued on A2)*

Biddeford Athletic Fields Survey

As part of the ongoing parks and fields study, residents and interested persons are asked for their input on the fields, how you utilize them and how they can be made better. Click [here](#) to complete a survey that will help us to understand how you feel about these valuable resources. Please allow ten to fifteen minutes to answer all the questions. This survey is accessible until April 10, 2017.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Mon Apr 3

5:15pm - Downtown Development Commission
(City Hall 2nd Floor Conference Room)

Tue Apr 4

5:00pm - Finance Committee
(City Hall Council Chambers)

6:00pm - City Council Meeting
(City Hall Council Chambers)

Wed Apr 5

8:30am - Economic Improvement Commission
(City Hall 2nd Floor Conference Room)

6:00pm - Planning Board Meeting
(City Hall Council Chambers)

For Full Calendar, [click here](#)

City Awarded Grant for Project Canopy

The City of Biddeford was awarded a 2017 Planning and Education grant of \$10,000 under the Project Canopy Assistance Program administered by the Maine Dept of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Maine Forest Service.

This award is 100% of the requested amount and helps position the City for a follow up on Tree Planning Project in 2018. Project Canopy grants are made available through the U.S.D.A. Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program CFDA 10:675. Stay tuned for more information on this exciting new project

Reel Lessons from Spider-Woman

In February 2017, Toni Sipka (Marvel Comics Spider-Woman) held a Studio Production Program in collaboration with Public Access. That class was such a success that Biddeford resident and local television host, Toni will be offering the studio program this Spring starting Saturday, April 8th at 9:30am – 12:30pm. *(continued on A2)*

Questions/Comments:

t. 207.284.9313

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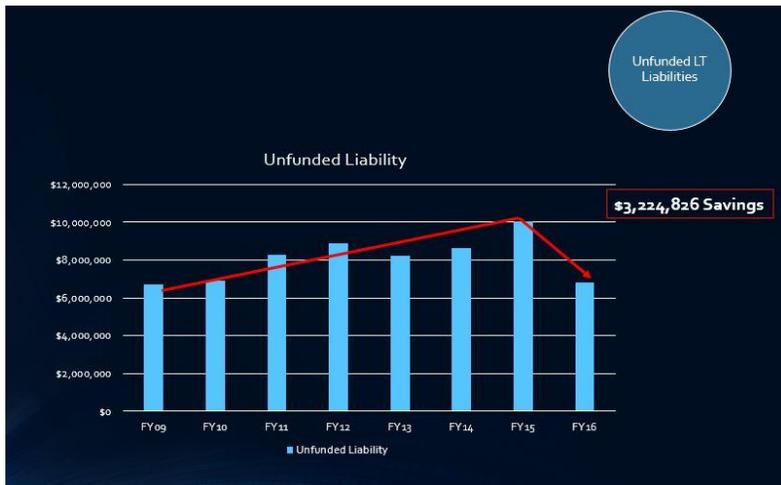
w. biddefordmaine.org

(continued from *AI Draft Budget*)

to balance today's needs with the impacts on tomorrow. The municipal budget this year will be a series of choices between the short-term and the long-term view. To their credit, the Council has made decisions in the past year that will be very beneficial to the taxpayer in the long-term. However, this means some additional costs in the short-term. Allow me to provide some concrete examples of those decisions.

Two years ago, nearly every full-time employee could become eligible for paid healthcare after they retired from the City. This benefit had long gone away both in the private and the public sector. In Maine, such benefit is a rarity. In fact, I am not aware of any Maine communities that offer such benefit. On June 30, 2016 the projected long term cost to the taxpayers had increased 49% since 2010 to \$10,054,660. The annual budget for that line item had also increased 27.55 in two years at \$178,313. As you can see these costs were climbing at an alarming rate.

During the last round of labor negotiations, the City Council made it a priority to eliminate this benefit. Through the process, both sides found a compromise. The longer term employees kept the benefit but newer employees would no longer be eligible. Those employees would instead receive \$15 per week towards a retirement health savings account to assist with medical costs after they leave the employment with the City. Today, 150 of the City's 230 employees are no longer eligible for the benefit. The immediate adjustment to the long term future costs of the City was reduced by \$3,224,826 as seen in the chart below. It should be noted that the adjustment as shown does not include the savings from the changes to the fire labor contract that also included a similar provision.



The savings are substantial and they will show up down the road. However, there is an immediate cost to fund the \$15 per week payment. In the current budget, that cost is \$117,000. This is an excellent example of the short-term vs. long-term. In the short-term the budget needs to increase to pay the \$117,000. In the long-term, the budget for the retiree health insurance costs will go down significantly.

The City used lease-purchases to buy nearly all vehicles. Since 2009, The City has paid \$1,831,549 in interest on these purchases. This is a large number. Yet, the interest rate was lowest it has been in many years prior. And, with interest rates increasing, the costs are

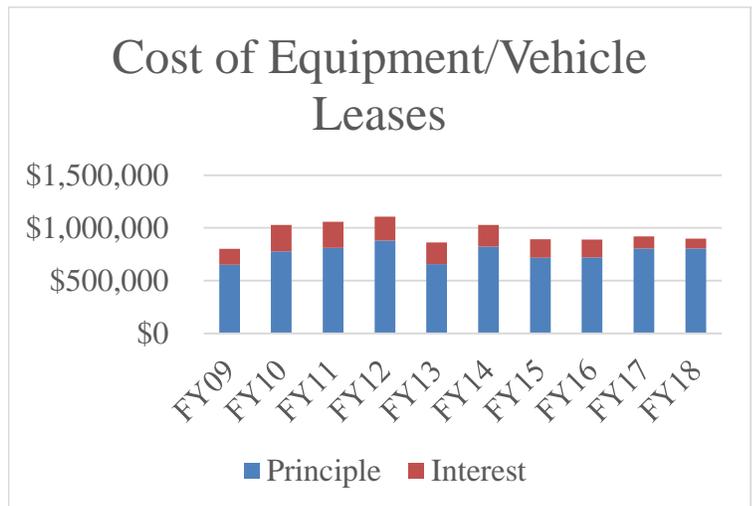
certain to climb. Below is a copy of the principle and interest costs the City has paid on these leases and purchases.

In the long-term, paying cash for the majority of the vehicles will save money. However, shifting back to that system will cause a spike in the budget. Traditionally, the City will pay about \$85,000 toward down payments and finance the rest. In the draft budget, I have proposed that we pay \$439,450 in cash towards vehicle and finance \$401,050 (instead of \$840,500).

It will take a few years to pay off the old leases before those would be done. At the same time the budget would increase to allow City to pay for vehicles in cash. This approach will cost money in short-term and be beneficial in the long term.

The draft budget is in the hands of the City Council to make a tough decision between short and long term. there is no right or wrong answer. Over the next month, the Council will have discussions. As they do, I will be writing more in the 'Beat' to provide you more in depth information about the budget, the choices and the impacts.

Please feel free to contact me directly if you have any questions or concerns by phone 207-284-9313 or email at james.bennett@biddefordmaine.org.



(continued from A1 Blood Drive)

inclement weather and a helicopter which made an emergency landing at Biddeford Airport. A few moments before the American Red Cross staff arrived, members of the National Guard from New Hampshire landed their helicopter at the airport due to stormy weather. The helicopter remained at the airport



Friday, March 24, 2017
New Hampshire National Guard: Emergency landing due to storm at Biddeford Airport

throughout the drive giving donors an opportunity to see the aircraft, which many do not typically get to see in person.

Members of the Friends of Biddeford Airport (FOBA) provided the volunteer staffing that was required for the drive to occur. The City and Biddeford Airport appreciate those who helped put the drive together and would like to thank everyone who donated blood in support of the American Red Cross.

This was the first time Biddeford Airport hosted a blood drive with the American Red Cross. It was such a success that the City plans to coordinate another blood drive at the airport on Veteran’s Day, November 10, 2017. Stay tuned for more details.

(continued from A1 Reel Lessons)

Toni is a successful model, talent agent and well known for her time spent traveling the country making appearances as Marvel Comics Spider-Woman. Toni’s expertise is not from a book, but from real life experiences. Her goal is to provide information and tools about studio and television production.

In this class you will learn the ins and outs of television. Some of the focuses are set design, hosting, personal growth, communicating ideas with directors and inspiring confidence for true potential. With completion of the program, you will be provided a video to take which includes before and after accomplishments.

Students from the February program shared their experiences stating:

- “Toni provided us an awesome experience, valuable tips on TV productions and it was a great learning opportunity.” - *Robert Cyr.*
- “I really liked it, I learned stuff that will help in everyday life.” - *Andrew Gelinias (13 years old)*
- “Great Training! Learned a lot about broadcasting.” - *Bruce Martin*

As in the February classes, the spring program is for all ages.

- Saturday, April 8th: 9:30am to 12:30pm
- Saturday, April 15th: 9:30am to 12:30pm
- Saturday, April 22nd: 9:30am to 12:30pm

Classes will be held at:

Public Access building
15 Columbus Way
Biddeford (Next to Westbrook ice rink)

To register for this free program, please email Toni direct at annakatoni@aol.com.

Refreshments will be served. If you have dietary restrictions, please inform Toni in advance.



#365BiddefordMEpositives
@BiddMECity
@BiddMECityMgr

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Thank you for reading.