



# The Biddeford Beat

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2017**  
**8am to Noon - Biddeford Public Works**

For Residents Of  
 Biddeford  
 Old Orchard Beach  
 Saco  
 Scarborough

**FREE HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE drop off**

**Proof of Residency Is Required**

Bring your household hazardous waste items such as button and rechargeable batteries, insect sprays, rust inhibitors, fluorescent light bulbs, non-latex paint, de-greasers, fuels, paint stripper, paint thinner, drain cleaners, gasoline, flea killer, mothballs, used oils, insecticides, pool chemicals, weed killer, fertilizer, toilet bowl cleaner, pesticides, metal polish, herbicides, rodent killers, no-pest strips, antifreeze, brake & transmission fluid, wood stain, sealants, spot remover, furniture polish, and more!

**Do Not Bring**  
 Latex Paint, Tires, Smoke Detectors, Propane Cylinders, Explosives, Pathological or Radioactive Waste, Computers, Commercial Waste, or Any Unknown Waste Materials

Please use original sealed containers where possible or transport in cardboard boxes.

Biddeford Department of Public Works 371 Hill Street (207) 282-1579  
 Solid Waste Management Commission biddefordrecycles.org



**Finding the Pieces** is a new program providing children with Autism the opportunity for a fun and inclusive camp experience. Students from the University of New England's health, wellness and occupational therapy will serve as camp counselors to provide one-on-one support for the campers. This camp experience is for Biddeford children in grades K-5 with a diagnosis of Autism. Campers receive 1:1 support during their summer camp experience. Finding the Pieces campers daily schedules will include sensory play, social skill groups and speech and language building activities along with arts, crafts, outdoor play, field trips and more!

Finding the Pieces Camp took place at John F. Kennedy School, 64 West Street, from August 7<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup>.

For more information regarding this program, please call Biddeford Recreation Department at 207-283-0841 or email [findingthepieces@biddefordmaine.org](mailto:findingthepieces@biddefordmaine.org).

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

**Tuesday, August 22:**  
 7:00 PM – School Committee Meeting (Live)

**Thursday, August 24:**  
 8:00 AM – Downtown Task Force (City Hall, Mayor's Office)

6 pm - 9 pm - Elm Street/Rt. 1 Corridor Public Meeting (City Council Chambers)

**Monday, August 28:**  
 6 pm - 7 pm  
 Zoning Board of Appeals Live

**Thursday, August 31:**  
 8:00 am - Downtown Taskforce (City Hall, Mayor's Office)

For Full Calendar, [click here](#)

In anticipation of the planned York County Courthouse to be built at 511-515 Elm Street, a public meeting has been scheduled for **Thursday, August 24, 2017 at 6 p.m.** to gather comment from property owners about the future zoning and land use of the Elm Street/Route 1 corridor. This meeting will take place in Council Chambers, on the second floor of City Hall. If you are unable to attend this meeting, there will be future opportunities to provide input. Written comment may be directed to: [Route1corridorcomments@biddefordmaine.org](mailto:Route1corridorcomments@biddefordmaine.org).

Thank you.

### **Biddeford's recycling rate**

I'm excited to report that Biddeford's recycling rate continues to improve, thanks to the dedicated efforts of our residents to properly sort recyclables from trash. At 35%, we have achieved one of the highest rates of recycling of any community in Maine. Plus, for every ton recycled, we save \$56, adding up to more than \$200,000 in savings for the city each year.

Our schools recycle as well. They are a big contributor to the success of the program and divert significant amounts of paper and other recyclables from the landfill.

Even so, the members of the Solid Waste Management Commission have been pushing to increase the recycling rate higher. We believe the next step is to tackle the problem of food waste, which constitutes a significant percentage of the waste stream. As an initial step, we have been selling Earth Machine backyard composters at a steeply discounted price. However, we continue to look at a variety of more comprehensive options for food waste composting, with the criteria that it is convenient to use and has no cost to the city.

I would like to thank all the members of the commission for their hard work and countless hours volunteering to make our city more sustainable and to reduce costs.

### **Free Downtown Wi-Fi Hot Spots:**

Last Friday a free downtown Wi-Fi hot spot was installed at city hall. The Downtown Development Commission has been working on this project for several months as a way to enhance the downtown experience in Biddeford. State Representative Martin Grohman has strongly championed this effort.

- Bangor Savings Bank sponsored the hotspot
- Axiom Technology of Machias installed the equipment
- The signal is available on Main Street approximately from the Biddeford Savings parking lot (Jefferson St) to Three D's (Washington Street)
- Look for 'Connect Downtown' in the Wi-Fi settings of your mobile device
- One hour of use is available before re-log on is needed
- Public Works will post signs on Main Street in the coming days

DDC is now seeking sponsors for additional hotspots so that a continuous signal is available from Elm Street down to Mechanic's Park. This is one example of how the DDC works continuously to improve the downtown experience.

### **Projected Tax Rate Decreased: Most Homeowners To See Decrease**

On Tuesday, August 15, 2017, the City Council amended the adopted FY18 budget in order to lower the projected tax rate. Prior to their action Tuesday, they had worked hard to reduce the proposed \$0.99 increase down to \$0.37. The increase was directly to cover the new bond payments of (\$668,842) caused by the \$9.9 million voter authorized borrowing. The increase would have resulted in a 1.86% increase in the tax rate.

The newly passed state budget increased the funding for local education. Stated publicly by our state representatives and senators, some of that funding was intended to reduce the property tax burden. The City Council honored that intent and used half of the funds to reduce the tax rate. Those funds (after netting out the change in the homestead exemption reimbursement) was \$364,917 or \$0.20 on the tax rate. The new tax rate is \$20.07 or a 1% increase over the \$19.87 from last year.

While the property tax rate went up, most homeowners will actually see their property taxes go down again this year because of the increase in the homestead exemption. The additional (increase) in the homestead exemption from \$15,000 of value to \$20,000 negated the slight increase for all homes valued at \$500,000 or less. For more specific information on the homestead, please see the accompanying article.

### **While Tax Rate Is Up Most Homeowners to See a Decrease in Actual Bill**

Several years ago, the Maine Legislature passed a 'homestead exemption' for Maine residents. The exemption allowed a certain portion of each Maine resident to not pay property taxes on a portion of their primary home. Until recently, the exemption was for the first \$10,000 of value. In your tax bill last year, the exemption increased by another \$5,000. For Biddeford home owners that receive the Homestead Exemption, it reduced your tax bill by another \$99.30 (\$19.87 x 5). This additional exemption negated the minimal increase in the property tax rate for most homeowners last year.

We are pleased to share that will be the case again this year. Like last year, the exemption will increase by another \$5,000 (for a total of \$20,000). Using the new tax rate of \$20.07 per thousand dollars of value, it will generate an additional savings of \$100.35. That amount will be offset by the increase in the property taxes (1%). If your home is valued at \$500,750 or less (and you qualify for the homestead exemption), your tax bill will be the same or go down.

The median home in the community is assessed locally at \$211,000. The median home is determined by putting all of homes in numerical order; starting with the lowest and ending with the highest. Exactly half of the homes are valued at more than \$211,000 and the other half less than \$211,000. For the average home, they will see a decrease in their tax bill of \$57.95 because of the homestead.

For the majority of homeowners in the community, this will be the second consecutive year that their property tax bill has gone down or stay the same.

For more information on the homestead exemption, please contact the Assessor's Office or refer to the State of Maine's [website](#).

For email subscriptions, [click here](#)

For questions and comments: t. 207.284.9313 | e. [newsletter@biddefordmaine.org](mailto:newsletter@biddefordmaine.org) | Thank you for reading