

Advisory Committee of Racial Equity, Inclusion, and Human Rights

Minutes for the Tuesday, March 24th, 2026 Meeting

6PM | Council Chambers

Members Present: Katie Brydon, Rheyln Burke, Suzette Furrow, Adam Baker, Shane Boyes and Sharon Webber

Non Voting Members: Emme Nguyen, Michael Beck, Courtney O'Donnell

Members not present: Mark Roth, Kathryn Robinson and Theresa Fallon (excused)

City of Bangor staff present: Assistant City Manager, Courtney O'Donnell, City Council Liaison, Michael Beck

Call to Order

- Call to order 6PM
- Roll Call
 - Excused absences: Mark Roth, Kathryn Robinson and Teresa Fallon

Public Comment

- No public comment

Approval of Minutes: February 24th, 2026

- Chair Brydon motions to approve, Member Baker so moved, Vice Chair Boyes second
 - Member Webber mentions in the previous meeting Furrow is marked as absent as well as present
 - Correction noted
 - Roll call vote: 6 yes, 0 no

Committee Business

- Language Access Plan
 - Assistant City Manager O'Donnell is awaiting additional responses however notes survey responses thus far demonstrate a need for language accessibility services
 - Guest speakers: Brian Loring and Greg Leavitt (AE New Mainers Resource Center)
 - Bangor Adult Education helps to assist those inquiring English language acquisition so that they may be successful in the workforce or within education
 - Bangor Adult Education in the past 3 years has experienced an increasing amount of English language acquisition inquiries. Since July 1 2025 Bangor Adult Education has serviced 150+ people with English language acquisition
 - Nate Berger a full time English language teacher was recently hired to address the increasing need
 - Chair Brydon mentions Nate Berger notes encountering the following languages most: Spanish, French, Arabic, Chinese, Vietnamese, Haitian Creole, Swahili and Kinyarwanda
 - Assistant City Manager O'Donnell mentions the survey sent to all city employees regarding language accessibility thus far has concluded the top languages encountered being Spanish, Mandarin, French and ASL
 - Chair Brydon asks Greg and Brian what tools they use to translate at Bangor Adult Education
 - Google translate and a language line
 - Brian Loring suggests that due to the large population needing language accessibility services, adjusting physical signage and documents to accommodate all languages may be an extensive use of resources. Recommends that as people are already using technology to navigate language translation, it may be the most efficient and equitable path forward

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- Chair Brydon asks Greg and Brian if they have identified other barriers those who are needing English language acquisition assistance may struggle with in addition
 - Brian Loring mentions financial literacy and technological knowledge as well as healthcare and education access
- Assistant City Manager O'Donnell suggests we begin by working with city groups who need language accessibility services most (emergency services, public health etc.)
- Chair Brydon asks how much language line would cost
 - Vice Chair Boyes confirms language line requires users pay by the minute
 - Chair Brydon asks if language line offers ASL services
 - Vice Chair Boyes confirms that ASL services are available
- Next steps: Assistant City Manager O'Donnell intends to gather additional information via the survey, will connect with emergency services regarding language accessibility needs and too will propose piloting a language line
- Committee Status Update
 - It was confirmed the council chair does not have sole authority to disband the committee
 - Chair Hawes has asked to meet with Chair Brydon to discuss how the ACREIHR and city council can best partner together to meet city needs going forward
- Committee Website Review & Enhancements
 - What can we share on the webpage that will be beneficial to the community?
 - Educational resources, training resources, community engagement resources, organizational and policy resources etc.
 - Assistant City O'Donnell mentions that any resources shared would need to be preapproved due to it being a government website
 - Member Burke asks how to identify what resources shared via the website would be acceptable
 - Assistant City Manager O'Donnell responds her and or council can confirm what is permitted
 - Member Baker recommends agenda/minutes
 - Member Boyes recommends inquiry box
 - Chair Brydon recommends committee members share written posts regarding areas of interest as they pertain to the committees mission and work
 - Member Burke suggests member photos and a calendar including upcoming events, holidays etc.
 - Member Nguyen suggests adding bios to the photos and meeting dates to the calendar

Updates from City Manager

- Update from Councilor Beck
 - 3/23 the council officially established a standing committee on homelessness
 - 9 member committee - 30% with lived experience

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- Councilor Beck informs that the first gov ops meeting in April will include discussion regarding a housing committee
- The ordinance regarding ICE went through first reading but has been delayed twice and will again be reviewed April 13th
 - The council has passed an order directing the City Manager to mandate all city staff comply with LD1971 immediately. Bangor now complies with LD1971
 - Chair Brydon asks what in the ordinance must be amended
 - Councilor Beck mentions the City Solicitor had concerns and suggested amendments - to be presented April 13th
- A \$50,000 subcontract with the Together Place Peer Recovery Center was granted, a part of the overdose response pilot grant
- Public health decided not to apply for a stand alone case management grant because the Maine CDC intends to apply however supplemental case management funding from the Maine General Medical Center is expected
- City Human Resources position to be created to aid in efficiency, cost savings and better customer service
- Council accepted over \$320,000 from the Maine Department of Transportation to fund an electric ADA accessibility van, bike racks and a new mobile fair technology for the community connector
- Parks and rec bond was voted down unanimously due to cost however conversation amongst the council will continue
- \$641,297 from the Opioid Settlement Fund was allocated to 16 organizations
- Chair Brydon requests the the ACREIHR continue to be informed regarding the happenings at the border portal office located at 99 Farm Road Bangor Maine so that we can help support the community as needed
 - Councilor Beck assures he will present any additional information

Meeting Adjourned

- Chair Brydon motions to adjourn, Member Baker so moved, Member Furrow 2nds
 - Vote 5 yes, 0 no – meeting adjourned