

# WOOD WORKS



## Biddeford Public Works Department

Oversees range of operations to maintain and enhance city life

Jeff Demers,  
Director of  
Public Works





# Skilled team, innovative machines

## Biddeford Public Works Department proactively approaches infrastructure maintenance to enhance city life



**Jeff Demers,**  
Director of  
Public Works



**Jeremy Court,**  
Collection  
Supervisor

**A** short drive south of Portland, Maine, is the city of Biddeford, which stands out not just for its rich history but for the monumental efforts of its Public Works Department to maintain and enhance city life. The department is a critical cog in the city's daily function, overseeing a range of operations from wastewater management to maintaining public parks and infrastructure.

"We take care of everything from the trash handling and recycling to all the sewer infrastructure, including 50 miles of sewer lines, 23 pump stations and two wastewater treatment plants," elaborated Collection Supervisor Jeremy Court.

Director of Public Works Jeff Demers added, "Our scope also extends to managing the city's cemetery and airport, ensuring that our community's infrastructure meets the needs of today and plans for tomorrow."

The department is responsible for 212 lane miles of road and 72 lane miles of sidewalks, performing plowing, routine maintenance and proactive measures to help preserve the environment. These efforts have even helped improve the health and appearance of the nearby Saco River.

"Every year, we inspect half of the city's catch basins on a rotating basis," explained Court. "This rigorous inspection and maintenance

schedule helps us prevent issues before they arise, ensuring compliance with our environmental permits."

The department must overcome many challenges, from the 150-year-old original clay sewer system to the demands of modern environmental standards.

"Biddeford's infrastructure challenges are exacerbated by its age," noted Demers. "We're constantly balancing the maintenance of old systems with the implementation of modern, proactive solutions to meet environmental standards and community needs."

Thanks to a dedicated and experienced staff, the department is able to complete its tasks.

"The equipment is important, but it's really about the people who operate it," said Demers. "We ensure our team is skilled and values the tools they use, which makes all the difference in providing excellent service to our community."

Operator Julian Kinsella commented, "Navigating through traffic, clearing catch basins, and inspecting sewer lines — each day presents new challenges. It's rewarding to see the direct impact of our work on improving Biddeford's environment and quality of life."

### High-quality equipment

The Biddeford Public Works Department is continuously engaged in infrastructure projects that rely on state-of-the-art equipment that not only ensures efficient operation but also supports the city's commitment to safety and environmental stewardship.

One of those key tools is the versatile Vactor 2100i combination sewer cleaner, a machine equipped with a powerful hydro hose, jet rod and hydro gun.

"The Vactor is crucial for preventing environmental damage by cleaning out catch basins before debris reaches the Saco River," said Demers. "It's about keeping our waterways clean and our streets free from overflow, essentially safeguarding the community's health."

Kinsella added, "With enhanced suction and water pressure capabilities, the new Vactor significantly outperforms older models of equipment we've operated. This means faster,

The Elgin Pelican broom sweeper is an essential part of maintaining local roads.







The Biddeford Public Works Department cleans out a catch basin with a Vactor 2100i combination sewer cleaner.

more effective cleaning and less downtime, which is essential for keeping our projects on schedule and reducing the impact on local residents as we maintain the sewer systems."

The department also utilizes an Elgin Pelican broom sweeper, which is essential for maintaining the cleanliness and safety of Biddeford's streets. The sweeper plays a pivotal role in the preventative maintenance strategy, especially in managing street debris before it can impact the water systems.

Demers highlighted the synergistic use of the Elgin Pelican broom sweeper in conjunction with the Vactor 2100i.

"The Elgin sweeper precedes the Vactor in our cleaning sequence, effectively gathering larger debris from our streets," noted Demers. "It reduces airborne dust and prevents pollutants from entering our water systems. This preparatory step is crucial as it allows the Vactor to focus on finer particles and sediment, ensuring a thorough clean that supports our MS4 permitting efforts and keeps our river ecosystems healthy."

The department also relies on a BOMAG BMP 8500 multipurpose compactor, which is a vital piece of machinery for the department's ongoing sewer separation projects.

"The BOMAG has transformed how we handle below-ground compaction," emphasized Court. "With this machine, we can ensure compact soil with no settling risks, enhancing safety by allowing our team to operate remotely without entering potentially dangerous trenches."

The department's approach to equipment is not just about having the right tools but also ensuring they are available when most needed.

"Our equipment is on call 24/7," stated Demers. "This readiness allows us to respond promptly to emergencies, maintaining the integrity of our infrastructure and the safety of our residents."

Innovations such as the versatile Vactor combination sewer cleaner, the efficient Elgin Pelican broom sweeper, and the remote-controlled BOMAG multipurpose compactor illustrate the Biddeford Public Works Department's commitment to combining advanced technology with practical, community-focused solutions. These tools are integral in ensuring the department not only meets but exceeds the operational demands of today's public works challenges, enhancing both efficiency and environmental stewardship.

### Partnership with C.N. Wood

The Biddeford Public Works Department values its partnership with its equipment distributor,



**Julian Kinsella,**  
Vactor Operator



**Gabriel Angis,**  
Laborer



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*Continued...*



# 'We love working with them'

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▶ VIDEO

Gabriel Angis jet rods debris from a catch basin while Julian Kinsella operates the vacuum on a Vactor 2100i combination sewer cleaner.



The BOMAG BMP 8500 multipurpose compactor helps the Biddeford Public Works Department improve safety and compaction when backfilling material into a hole.

C.N. Wood. The relationship has significantly contributed to the department's efficiency and effectiveness by ensuring reliable equipment performance and timely support.

"C.N. Wood has been instrumental for us over the years," praised Demers. "Starting from our first replacement of the old sewer cleaning truck with a Vactor to the current models we operate, their consistent support is why we continue to partner with them. Their responsiveness and the ability to provide crucial parts swiftly means we avoid costly downtime and maintain our operations smoothly."

Court added, "We work hand in hand with C.N. Wood, and their service is top notch. They take care of us and are always there to answer our questions. We love working with them."

The importance of this partnership is further highlighted when equipment needs arise unexpectedly.

"We work very closely with C.N. Wood to maintain the machines," said Kinsella. "Every time we call, they are there for us."

Demers added, "Their prompt service allows us to maintain our equipment in-house, which is significantly more cost-effective and efficient than outsourcing."

C.N. Wood's support extends beyond just maintenance. C.N. Wood ensures that all equipment is functioning optimally, which is crucial for the Biddeford Public Works Department's ability to meet regulatory standards and community expectations. By providing dependable equipment and exceptional service, C.N. Wood enables the department to perform at its best, underscoring the importance of strong distributor relationships in public works operations. ■

C.N. Wood sales representative Fred Griego (second from left) provides support to the Biddeford Public Works Department, which includes (L-R) Gabriel Angis, Lance Laboie, Julian Kinsella, Steven Demers, Jeremy Court and Jeff Demers.

