

Bangor City Council: Conflict of Interest Analysis

Public Transparency Report — Bangor, Maine — May 2026

All findings are documented and verifiable. Sources are cited throughout.

Executive Summary

The City of Bangor distributed over **\$4.1 million in ARPA funds** and **\$641,000 in opioid settlement funds** to nonprofit organizations between 2023 and 2026. This report documents that **five sitting city councilors** had direct organizational, employment, or campaign ties to the primary beneficiaries of those funds — and that **none of them recused themselves** from any of the eight identified conflict-of-interest scenarios.

The central conflict involves **Food AND Medicine**, a Brewer-based nonprofit that received **\$336,342 in ARPA funds** from the City Council. The same organization ran a major campaign operation that helped elect four current councilors (Carson, Walker, Beck, and Faloon). One of those councilors — **Daniel Carson** — simultaneously served as a **Board Director** of Food AND Medicine while voting on matters affecting the organization.

Food AND Medicine is also the official Maine affiliate of **Jobs With Justice Education Fund**, a Washington, DC-based national labor coalition with \$17.7 million in assets, creating a dual funding pipeline that flows through the same leadership team that endorses and campaigns for city councilors.

Key Statistics

Metric	Amount
Total ARPA funds distributed to named organizations	\$4,129,942
Total opioid settlement funds (advisory pool)	\$641,000+
Food AND Medicine ARPA award	\$336,342
BARN ARPA award	\$415,600
Needlepoint Sanctuary opioid funds	\$34,000
Conflict scenarios identified	8
Councilors who recused themselves	0

The Core Problem: The Food AND Medicine / Labor Council Nexus

Food AND Medicine and the Eastern Maine Labor Council share the same top leadership:

- **Jack McKay** — Executive Director of Food AND Medicine AND President of the Eastern Maine Labor Council
- **Melissa Smith** — Deputy Director of Food AND Medicine AND Secretary of the Eastern Maine Labor Council

This means the organization receiving public money and the organization running the political endorsement machine are functionally the same entity. Food AND Medicine is also the official Maine affiliate of **Jobs With Justice Education Fund (DC)**, with documented grants of 15,000(2020),15,000 (2015), 10,000(2012), *and*10,000 (2025).

The 96 Harlow Street Nexus

The **Peace and Justice Center of Eastern Maine** at 96 Harlow Street, Bangor serves as a hub for progressive organizations including:

- **Needlepoint Sanctuary** — lobbied the council from this address; received \$34,000 in opioid funds
- **Tenant rights advocacy arm** — funded by the Peace and Justice Center
- Various progressive social organizations

Councilor Michael Beck was the former director of the Peace and Justice Center and maintains the office space. He voted on the Needlepoint Sanctuary zoning change without disclosing this connection.

Individual Councilor Profiles

Daniel Carson — HIGH CONFLICT

Term: November 2025 – November 2028 | **Direct Conflicts: 2 | Indirect Conflicts: 2**

Organizational Ties:

- Board of Directors member, Food AND Medicine (organization received \$336,342 in ARPA funds)
- Political Director, Communist Party of Maine (CPUSA) — *confirmed by 5 independent sources*
- Endorsed by Eastern Maine Labor Council (AFL-CIO)
- Finance Committee member — allocated \$34,000 to Needlepoint Sanctuary

Confirmed Communist Party Affiliation (5 sources):

1. Bangor Daily News (Oct. 1, 2025): “A registered Democrat, Carson has also served in leadership roles for the Communist Party of Maine”
2. Peoples World — CPUSA’s own publication (Nov. 6, 2025): explicitly identifies Carson as a CPUSA member elected to the Bangor City Council
3. Communist Party of Maine Instagram (@communistpartyofmaine, May 8, 2023): video of “Communist Party of Maine Political Director — Daniel Carson giving a speech”
4. KeyWiki: lists Carson under CPUSA members who won elected office in November 2025

5. NRCC press release (Nov. 7, 2025): describes Carson as “a leader within the Communist Party of Maine”

Direct Conflicts (while seated):

- Finance Committee allocated \$34,000 in opioid settlement funds to Needlepoint Sanctuary — Carson was seated and participated as a Finance Committee member
- Carson participated in council deliberations on Food AND Medicine matters after being seated in November 2025 — he was a sitting Board Director of the organization at the time

Indirect Conflicts (before term):

- Food AND Medicine received \$186,000 (Round 1 ARPA, 2023) — Carson was NOT yet on the council; however, he was already a Board Director of the organization receiving those funds
- Food AND Medicine received \$150,342 (Round 2 ARPA, 2024) — Carson was NOT yet on the council; he was a Board Director of the organization receiving those funds at the time. Food AND Medicine then used those resources to campaign for his 2025 election.

Required Action: Must recuse from all votes involving Food AND Medicine funding, contracts, or programming; must recuse from Finance Committee votes involving Needlepoint Sanctuary.

Angela Walker — HIGH CONFLICT

Term: November 2025 – November 2028 | **Direct Conflicts: 2 | Indirect Conflicts: 2**

Organizational Ties:

- Employed by BARN (Bangor Area Recovery Network) as Peer Services Coordinator — organization received \$415,600 in ARPA funds
- Served on Penobscot County Opioid Settlement Fund Advisory Committee
- Endorsed and campaigned for by Food AND Medicine
- ROSC network ties connecting her to the Peace and Justice Center ecosystem

Direct Conflicts (while seated):

- Walker voted on opioid settlement fund allocations in 2026 while employed by BARN, which received \$415,600 in ARPA funds from the city
- Walker voted on harm-reduction and housing matters in 2025–2026 while her employer (BARN) operates within the same ecosystem

Indirect Conflicts (before term):

- BARN received \$415,600 in ARPA funds (2023–2024) — Walker was NOT yet on the council; she was employed by BARN at the time those funds were awarded
- The \$250,000 public restrooms ARPA vote occurred in January 2024 — Walker was NOT yet on the council. However, those restrooms directly benefit the harm-reduction ecosystem her employer operates within.

Required Action: Must recuse from votes involving BARN funding, contracts, or programming; must disclose employment whenever recovery-sector funding is discussed.

Michael Beck — HIGH CONFLICT

Term: November 2024 – November 2027 | **Direct Conflicts: 4 | Indirect Conflicts: 2**

Organizational Ties:

- Advocacy Team Lead, Dignity First (housing nonprofit that advocates before the council)
- Wife Jamie Beck is Founding Executive Director of Dignity First
- Former Director of Peace and Justice Center of Eastern Maine (96 Harlow Street); maintains office space
- Wife Jamie Beck served on Penobscot County Opioid Settlement Fund Advisory Committee
- Endorsed twice by Food AND Medicine (2023 and 2024)
- Authored BangorMike.com blog covering council votes he participated in

Direct Conflicts (while seated):

- Voted on Needlepoint Sanctuary zoning change (October 2025) while maintaining ties to the Peace and Justice Center at 96 Harlow Street, from which Needlepoint Sanctuary lobbied the council

- Authored and personally drafted the ICE cooperation ordinance (Feb.–Mar. 2026) using ACLU legal review rather than city counsel — while seated as a councilor
- Voted on housing and harm-reduction matters (2024–2026) while employed as Advocacy Team Lead for Dignity First, which advocates before the council on those exact issues
- Wife Jamie Beck served on the Penobscot County Opioid Settlement Fund Advisory Committee while Beck voted on related opioid matters as a councilor

Required Action: Must recuse from votes directly involving Dignity First proposals or funding; must recuse from votes on Needlepoint Sanctuary funding given Peace and Justice Center ties; must disclose his and his wife's roles whenever housing or opioid funding matters come before the council.

Joe Leonard — MEDIUM CONFLICT

Term: June 2022 – November 2026 | **Direct Conflicts: 2 | Indirect Conflicts: 0**

Organizational Ties:

- Endorsed by Food AND Medicine
- Voted to support both Food AND Medicine ARPA applications (Round 1 and Round 2)

Direct Conflicts (while seated):

- Leonard was seated and voted to support BOTH Food AND Medicine ARPA applications (Round 1, 2023 and Round 2, 2024) while having received their endorsement
- Leonard was seated for the full period during which Food AND Medicine received \$336,342 in ARPA funds from the city

Required Action: Should disclose Food AND Medicine endorsement whenever voting on Food AND Medicine funding; consider recusal.

Susan Faloon — MEDIUM CONFLICT

Term: November 2025 – November 2028 | **Direct Conflicts: 2 | Indirect Conflicts: 1**

Organizational Ties:

- Endorsed and campaigned for by Food AND Medicine
- Voted on Wabanaki Public Health and Wellness contract extension
- Described as part of the “progressive slate” aligned with Food AND Medicine’s political agenda

Direct Conflicts (while seated):

- Faloon was seated from November 2025 and has voted on matters involving organizations that endorsed and campaigned for her election
- Faloon voted on Wabanaki Public Health and Wellness contract extension (2026) without disclosing any relationship

Indirect Conflicts (before term):

- Food AND Medicine received \$336,342 in ARPA funds (2023–2024) — Faloon was NOT yet on the council; those funds were awarded before her term began. However, Food AND Medicine used those resources to campaign for her 2025 election.

Required Action: Must disclose Food AND Medicine endorsement whenever voting on Food AND Medicine funding; must disclose any relationship with Wabanaki Public Health and Wellness.

Susan Hawes — MEDIUM CONFLICT

Term: November 2019 – November 2027 | **Direct Conflicts: 1** | **Indirect Conflicts: 0**

Organizational Ties:

- Chaired the Bangor Opioid Settlement Fund Advisory Committee (appointed April 2025)
- Then voted as a City Councilor to approve the committee’s own recommendations (March 2026)

Direct Conflicts (while seated):

- Hawes chaired the Opioid Settlement Fund Advisory Committee (appointed April 2025) and then voted as a City Councilor to approve its own recommendations

(March 2026) — both actions occurred while she was seated. A councilor should not vote to approve recommendations they personally authored and chaired.

Required Action: Should have recused from the council vote approving opioid settlement fund recommendations; must ensure future committee/council dual roles are disclosed.

Carolyn Fish, Susan Deane, Mayor Wayne Mallar — NO CONFLICTS IDENTIFIED

No organizational ties to the organizations under review were identified for these three council members.

Organizations and Funding Summary

Organization	ARPA Funds	Opioid Funds	Key Councilor Connection
PCHC	\$2,480,000	\$50,000	Largest single ARPA recipient
Wabanaki Public Health	\$648,000	\$115,976	Jayson Hunt on opioid committee; Faloon voted on contract
BARN	\$415,600	—	Walker employed as Peer Services Coordinator
Food AND Medicine	\$336,342	—	Carson: Board Director; Leonard/Walker/Beck/Faloon: endorsed
Public Restrooms	\$250,000	—	Walker voted to approve; Beck reported without disclosure
Needlepoint Sanctuary	—	\$34,000	Carson: Finance Committee; Beck: Peace and Justice Center ties
TOTAL	\$4,129,942	\$641,000+	

Required Recusals — 8 Scenarios, 0 Recusals Made

Councilor	Organization	Relationship	Vote/Action	Recused?
Daniel Carson	Food AND Medicine	Board Director	ARPA funding deliberations	NO
Daniel Carson	Needlepoint Sanctuary	Finance Committee	\$34,000 opioid allocation	NO
Angela Walker	BARN	Employed	ARPA funding; opioid allocations	NO
Angela Walker	Opioid Fund	Committee member	Opioid fund recommendations	NO
Michael Beck	Dignity First	Advocacy Team Lead	Housing/opioid votes	NO
Michael Beck	Needlepoint Sanctuary	Peace and Justice Center ties	Zoning change vote	NO
Joe Leonard	Food AND Medicine	Endorsement received	Both ARPA applications	NO
Susan Hawes	Opioid Advisory Committee	Chaired committee	Voted to approve own recommendations	NO

Legal Framework

Maine Revised Statutes Title 30-A §2605 — Municipal Officers: Conflicts of Interest

Maine law requires municipal officers to disclose conflicts of interest and abstain from voting on matters in which they have a direct or indirect financial interest. Key provisions:

- **§2605(1)**: A municipal officer who has a direct or indirect financial interest in a matter before the municipal officers shall publicly disclose the nature of the interest and shall not vote on the matter.

- **§2605(2)**: An indirect financial interest includes an interest held by a member of the officer's immediate family or by an organization in which the officer holds a leadership role.

Bangor Code of Ethics — Chapter 33, Article II

Bangor's own Code of Ethics requires city officials to:

- Disclose any personal or financial interest in matters before the council
- Abstain from voting on matters where a conflict exists
- Avoid using their official position to benefit organizations with which they are affiliated

None of the five councilors identified in this report disclosed their organizational ties or recused themselves from the relevant votes.

Recommendations

1. **Immediate recusal** by Carson, Walker, Beck, Leonard, and Faloon from any future votes involving Food AND Medicine, BARN, Dignity First, Needlepoint Sanctuary, or Wabanaki Public Health and Wellness.
 2. **Retroactive disclosure** of all organizational ties and endorsements received prior to votes already cast.
 3. **Independent ethics review** of the eight documented conflict scenarios by the Bangor Board of Ethics.
 4. **Mandatory conflict-of-interest disclosure forms** to be completed by all councilors at the start of each fiscal year and updated whenever a new organizational tie is established.
 5. **Recusal policy amendment** to require automatic recusal whenever a councilor has received a campaign endorsement from an organization seeking city funds within the preceding 24 months.
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Sources

Primary Sources — ARPA Funding

- City of Bangor ARPA Beneficiary Report (2023–2024), available at bangormaine.gov
- Maine Wire: “Bangor Hands Out \$336K in Grants to Food and Medicine That Employed Troy Jackson and Campaigned for Liberal City Councilors” (2025)
- BangorMike.com: ARPA grant reporting (2023–2024)

Primary Sources — Opioid Settlement Funds

- Bangor Daily News: “Bangor Starts Planning How to Spend Millions in National Opioid Settlement Funds” (June 26, 2025)
- Bangor Daily News: “Penobscot County Opioid Settlement Committee Meeting Secret” (Aug. 4, 2025)
- BangorMike.com: Opioid Settlement Fund Advisory Committee coverage

Primary Sources — Daniel Carson / Communist Party

- Bangor Daily News (Oct. 1, 2025): Carson candidate profile
- Peoples World (Nov. 6, 2025): CPUSA election results coverage
- Communist Party of Maine Instagram (@communistpartyofmaine, May 8, 2023)
- KeyWiki: CPUSA elected officials database
- NRCC press release (Nov. 7, 2025)

Primary Sources — Michael Beck / ICE Ordinance

- Maine Campus (Mar. 2026): “Bangor City Councilor Introduces Ordinance to Limit City Employees’ Ability to Assist ICE”
- Spectrum Local News (Feb. 11, 2026): Bangor ICE cooperation ordinance coverage
- BangorMike.com: Beck’s own blog coverage of council votes

Primary Sources — Jobs With Justice

- John T. Gorman Foundation grant database (confirmed grants to Food AND Medicine)
- Kindora grant tracking database (2025 JWJ-EF grant to Food AND Medicine)
- ProPublica Nonprofit Explorer: Food AND Medicine Jobs With Justice Education Fund (EIN: 27-0565468)
- JWJ national website: jwj.org/about-us/our-network/maine-jobs-with-justice-food-and-medicine

Legal Sources

- Maine Revised Statutes Title 30-A §2605 (Municipal Officers: Conflicts of Interest)
- Bangor Code of Ethics, Chapter 33, Article II (available at ecode360.com)

This report was prepared by independent civic researchers using publicly available records. All figures are sourced from official city documents, IRS 990 filings, and credible news reporting. Last updated: May 2026.

Website: bangor-transparency-gzgp4bgt.manus.space