



Town of Bridgewater

Town Council

September 10, 2024

7:00 PM

MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being duly present, Town Council President Kevin Perry called the meeting of the Bridgewater Town Council to order at 7:00pm on Tuesday, September 10, 2024 in the Council Chambers.

Present: Fred Chase, Paul Murphy, Mary McGrath, Susan Robinson, Kevin Perry, Brad McKinnon, Mark Linde, Adelene Ellenberg and Sonya Striggles.

Also in attendance was Acting Town Manager Blythe Robinson and Town Attorney Jason Rawlins.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

a) August 7, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Councilor Chase made a motion to approve the August 7, 2024 meeting minutes, which was duly seconded by Councilor McKinnon.

A voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon –Yea; Robinson – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passed 9-0.

b) August 13, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Councilor McKinnon made a motion to approve the August 13, 2024 meeting minutes, which was duly seconded by Councilor Striggles.

A voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon –Yea; Robinson – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passed 9-0.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Moment of silence held for David Wolohojian who passed away on 9/6/24. Mr. Wolohojian was very involved in the community and Councilor Perry extended his condolences to his family. Councilor Perry also noted that it was the eve of September 11th and held a moment of silence.

PROCLAMATIONS – None

CITIZEN OPEN FORUM

- Ray Ajemian, 221 Aldrich Road: spoke about the change to the code and thinks the density bonus change to 22 is a good idea.
- Jonathan Algarin, 19 Heather Lane, Chairman of Veterans council: would like the POW/MIA flag to be raised for 9/20, wants to show the 1,700 veterans that the Town cares.
- Janet Hanson, Pleasant Street: noted that there should be more than 5 people on the ad hoc committee, liked the Rules amendments that were added. Does not agree with density bonuses, what is allowed is allowed.
- Kitty Doherty: spoke about the Old State Farm trail and the process. Hope all vote in favor of the easement for DOC.

APPOINTMENTS – None

HEARINGS – None

LICENSE TRANSACTIONS – None

PRESENTATIONS – None

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

a) Fire Station update

Acting Town Manager Blythe Robinson updated the council with the following: site work has begun, going well. Contractors doing what they need to do. Team meets every Wednesday. Bond sale for the financing meeting held last week. Total budget is just under \$26M. Sold bonds of \$23M. Received 8 bids, interest rate of 3.7%. Borrowing a little under \$22M, maintained credit rating. Remaining coming from ARPA funds. Ground breaking sometime between 10/15 and 10/22.

Council Linde asked how involved the Fire Station Building Committee was and Acting Town Manager Robinson noted that the project is now being managed by CED Director Bob Rulli, the contractor and finance director. Councilor Perry added that the Fire Station is working differently than the school did and that Mr. Rushton still involved.

b) Strategy on Working with Boards, Commissions and Committees

Acting Town Manager Blythe Robinson updated the council with the following: strategy is to support the boards, impressed that Bridgewater took the task to have a dedicated person for committees. Through myself and with others will help with questions that may come up, get the resources that are needed. I cannot make it to every board or committee meeting but will attend as many as I can.

Councilor McKinnon would like an update on the tire dump on Water Street added to the next agenda.

Councilor Ellenberg asked about the Town insurance and if it would cover volunteers and asked Acting Town Manager Robinson how do she felt about jurisdiction issue from council appointments to Town Manager appointments. Acting Town Manager Robinson noted that she would look at each issue that comes up with the committee to be functional in the short term and do her best to help get it filled. She

noted she would have to get the information on the insurance update.

DISCUSSIONS – None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilor Chase noted that the Rules & Procedures Committee met on September 9th and voted two items with amendments.

LEGISLATION FOR ACTION

- a) Order O-FY25-009: Town Manager Search Preliminary Screening Ad Hoc Committee Selection

Councilor Perry noted that Rules and Procedures met on September 9th and voted 3-0 to recommend with amendments.

Councilor Chase read the amendments into the record.

Councilor Ellenberg asked for a point of order and noted that there was a Zoom issue with the Rules and Procedures meeting on September 9th.

Councilor Chase noted that there was a Rules and Procedures meeting scheduled for September 5th but the Zoom link for residents was not correct so the meeting did not take place because the public could not attend.

Councilor Perry noted that based on the fact the meeting was posted and link worked for public and committee do not see any issue on hand.

Councilor Ellenberg made a motion to postpone Order O-FY25-009, which was duly seconded by Councilor Linde.

Councilor Linde noted that he was only able to get on as a citizen because Councilor McKinnon sent him a link.

Councilor McKinnon noted that three citizens were on the Rules and Procedures meeting last night.

Councilor Murphy made a motion to move the question, which was duly seconded by Councilor Striggles.

A roll-call vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon – Yea; Robinson – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passed 9-0.

A voice vote was taken on Councilor Ellenberg's motion to postpone with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon – No; Robinson – No; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – No; Perry – No; Linde – No; Chase – No; Striggles – No; McGrath – No; Motion Failed 1-8-0.

Councilor McKinnon made a motion to approve the Rules and Procedures Amendments, which was duly

seconded by Councilor Striggles.

Councilor McGrath made a motion to change the School Committee member to be an administrator of the school who lives in town, this was duly seconded by Council Ellenberg.

Councilor McGrath noted that she spoke with the High School Principal who lives in town and he said yes to be on the committee.

Councilor Murphy noted that a member of the school committee is an elected official, administrator is a hired position. Not in agreement.

Councilor Linde noted that he does not believe that anyone from the Town Council would be asked to be on any superintendent search committee so not in favor.

Councilor Ellenberg noted that she supports Councilor Murphy making this committee temporary.

A Voice vote was taken on Councilor McGraths motion to amend with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon –No; Robinson – No; Ellenberg – No; Murphy – No; Perry – No; Linde – No; Chase – No; Striggles – No; McGrath – Yea; Motion Failed 1-8-0.

A voice vote was taken on Councilor McKinnons motion to amend with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon –Yea; Robinson – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – No; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passed 8-1-0.

Councilor Perry made a motion to add “no more than” between “and” and “one” in the sentence (4) members of the Town Council. This motion was duly seconded by Councilor Chase.

A voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon –Yea; Robinson – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – No; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passed 8-1-0.

Councilor Chase made a motion to approve Order O-FY25-009 as amendment, which was duly seconded by Councilor McKinnon.

A voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon –Yea; Robinson – Yea; Ellenberg – No; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – No; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passed 7-2-0.

- b) Proposed Ordinance D-FY25-005: An Ordinance Establishing the Process for Hiring a Town Manager
Councilor Chase noted that Rules and Procedures met on September 9th and voted 3-0 to recommend with amendments. Those amendments included changing the last sentence to read “The Preliminary Screening Ad-hoc Committee will ensure that the proper background checks have been completed for all finalists.”

Councilor Murphy added that Rules also approved the amendment of removing “at least three” from the first sentence

Councilor Linde asked for a point of information asking who will do the background checks. Council Murphy noted that it would be a hired search firm or a member of the Town working with the Ad Hoc Committee.

Councilor Linde made a motion to add “by the search firm” after “completed” and before “for” on Ordinance D-FY25-005. This motion was duly seconded by Councilor Ellenberg.

Councilor Murphy noted that getting specific would mean having to use a search term even when naming an Acting Town Manager.

A Voice vote was taken on Councilor Linde’s motion to amend with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon –No; Robinson – No; Ellenberg – Yes; Murphy – No; Perry – No; Linde – Yes; Chase – No; Striggles – No; McGrath – No; Motion Failed 2-7-0.

Councilor Chase made a motion to approve the amendments proposed for Ordinance D-FY25-005, which was seconded by Councilor McKinnon.

A Voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon –No; Robinson – No; Ellenberg – Yes; Murphy – No; Perry – No; Linde – Yes; Chase – No; Striggles – No; McGrath – No; Motion Passed 7-2-0.

Councilor Robinson made a motion to refer Ordinance D-FY25-005 to advertising, which was duly seconded by Councilor McKinnon.

A Voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon –No; Robinson – No; Ellenberg – Yes; Murphy – No; Perry – No; Linde – Yes; Chase – No; Striggles – No; McGrath – No; Motion Passed 7-2-0.

OLD BUSINESS – None

NEW BUSINESS

- a) Order O-FY25-010: Granting of an Easement - Massachusetts Electric Company
Acting Town Manager Robinson noted that this would allow for a permanent easement for right of way for utilities to the new fire station.

Councilor Linde made a motion to keep Order O-FY25-010 at council, which was duly seconded by Councilor Striggles.

A Voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon –Yea; Robinson – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion Passed 9-0-0.

- b) Order O-FY25-011: Granting of an Easement - Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Councilor Chase noted that earlier Kitty Doherty made remarks, provide members this evening for Old Farm Trails that has been going on for 14 years. Actual work will begin. Urge the council to approve this

grant of easement from the Commonwealth.

Councilor Striggles made a motion to keep Order O-FY25-011 at council, which was duly seconded by Councilor McKinnon.

A Voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon –Yea; Robinson – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion Passed 9-0-0.

- c) Order O-FY25-012: Contract - Acting Town Manager
Councilor Perry noted that the contract was approved at executive session and this is the first reading of the contract.

Councilor Linde made a motion to keep Order O-FY25-012 at council, which was duly seconded by Councilor Striggles.

A Voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon –Yea; Robinson – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion Passed 9-0-0.

- d) Order O-FY25-013: Transfer Order - Salary to Expense
Acting Town Manager Robinson noted that this was to fund the contract for animal control services and acting town manager.

Councilor Linde made a motion to refer Order O-FY25-013 to Budget & Finance and Finance Committee, which was duly seconded by Councilor McKinnon.

A Voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon –Yea; Robinson – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion Passed 9-0-0.

- e) Order O-FY25-014: Contractual Payments
Councilor Linde made a motion to refer Order O-FY25-014 to Budget & Finance and Finance Committee, which was duly seconded by Councilor Robinson.

A Voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon –Yea; Robinson – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion Passed 9-0-0.

- f) Order O-FY25-015: Transfer Order - Public Education Government (PEG) for Town Council Chambers
Acting Town Manager Robinson noted that this is to fund an upgrade to the council chambers for meetings.

Councilor Linde made a motion to refer Order O-FY25-015 to Budget & Finance and Finance Committee, which was duly seconded by Striggles.

A Voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon –Yea; Robinson – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion Passed 9-0-0.

- g) Order O-FY25-016: Acceptance of Gift - Bridgewater State University
Acting Town Manager Robinson noted that this is a gift from BSU and is split between police, fire and highway services.

Councilor Linde made a motion to refer Order O-FY25-016 to Budget & Finance and Finance Committee, which was duly seconded by Councilor Striggles.

A Voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon –Yea; Robinson – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion Passed 9-0-0.

Councilor Ellenberg asked if the Town got payments from BSU in lieu of taxes and can the money be increased. Acting Town Manager Robinson noted that she would have to do more research on that.

Councilor Perry noted that it is a common gift BSU gives each year and Councilor Robinson noted that it is a discretionary gift from BSU and cannot ask for more.

- h) Zoning Ordinance D-FY25-003: Proposed Amendment to Central Business District (CBD-S), Density Bonuses 9.6.7
Councilor McGrath gave a brief explanation of what she is looking to do, wants to have a density of 22 instead of 26.

Councilor Robinson made a motion to refer Ordinance D-FY25-003 to Planning Board and Community and Economic Development. This was duly seconded by Councilor McKinnon

A Voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon –Yea; Robinson – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion Passed 9-0-0.

- i) Zoning Ordinance D-FY25-004: Proposed Amendment to Mixed Use Buildings as Proposed in the Central Business District (CBD) per Section 3.2 Table of Use Regulations
Councilor McGrath asked that Zoning Ordinance D-FY25-004 be put on hold for the moment.
- j) Proposed Ordinance D-FY25-006: Bridgewater Town Charter Amendment for Gender Neutral Language
Councilor Striggles made a motion to refer Ordinance D-FY25-006 to Rules & Procedures which was duly seconded by Councilor Robinson.

A Voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon –Yea; Robinson – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion Passed 9-0-0.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

- Josh Randall, 1 Clara Drive: prior chair of veterans council, was disappointed that this past Flag Day the POW flag was not flown and also noted that the Town Clerk was disrespectful to the workers at the polls.
- Janet Hanson, Pleasant Street: density bonus still do not understand it, charter changes will go to the state and then go to the voters. Against 5 member ad hoc.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Councilor McKinnon: asked everyone to think about 9/11 and what happened on that day.
- Councilor Robinson: thanked those that showed up to the meeting; I believe there is a consistent spirit here and we want community input. Ad hoc meeting will not exclude community input.
- Councilor Ellenberg: echo Councilor McKinnon, we are Americans first before party. Ask that all councilors listen to constituents and respond and keep them in mind. Complimented Councilor McGrath for her zoning ordinance.
- Councilor Murphy: no comments
- Councilor Linde: tomorrow being 9/11, ceremonies in East Bridgewater and Brockton. We do not have a ceremony, my goal is to have a ceremony. Tomorrow night over at Crispis walk to end Alzheimer fundraiser.
- Councilor Chase: thanked Councilor Linde for his comments about 9/11.
- Councilor Striggles – congratulated Councilor Ellenberg and her daughter with her wedding. Commended Councilor McGrath for her efforts on her Ordinances, proud to sit next to her.
- Councilor McGrath: was invited to Ousamequin Club (Women's Group) for high tea, great event.
- Councilor Perry: would like to see the town do something for 9/11 25th year anniversary. My thoughts and prayers go out to everyone. Thank the committee as a whole for the discussion tonight. Positive steps forward for the council. Will work with the public, will be transparent as possible. 5 member will allow that to happen.

EXECUTIVE SESSION - None

R. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor McKinnon made a motion to adjourn, which was duly seconded by Councilor Robinson.

A Voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon – Yea; Robinson – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea;

Meeting adjourned at 8:44pm.

In accordance with the applicable provisions of the Town of Bridgewater Home Rule Charter and Town Council Rules and Procedures, the Town Council assembled voted, at their meeting on Tuesday, October 1, 2024, to approve the aforementioned minutes, as submitted.