



Town of Bridgewater

Town Council

September 17, 2024

7:00 PM

66 Central Square

Academy Building

Council Chambers/2nd Floor

MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being duly present, Town Council President Kevin Perry called the Special meeting of the Bridgewater Town Council to order at 7:00pm on Tuesday, September 17, 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.

Councilor Perry held a moment of silence for Douglas Mello, a US Army Vietnam Era veteran who passed away on August 31, 2024.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

a) August 27, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Councilor Linde made a motion to approve the August 27, 2024 meeting minutes, which was duly seconded by Councilor McKinnon.

Councilor Ellenberg made a motion to amend page 5 of the meeting minutes by adding "versus" before "the will of the voters. This motion was duly seconded by Councilor Striggles.

A voice vote was taken on the amendment 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 the motion to approve the meeting minutes 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) September 3, 2024 Special Town Council Meeting Minutes

Councilor Chase made a motion to approve the September 3, 2024 meeting minutes, which was duly

seconded by Councilor Ellenberg.

A voice vote was taken on the amendment 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

Councilor Perry read a notice from the Town Clerk about student ballots being mailed and needing correct address and noted that in-person voting will be from October 19th to November 1st at Town Hall.

PROCLAMATIONS

- a) Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States 125th Anniversary
Council President Perry read the proclamation into the record and thanked the veterans for their service.
- b) Bridgewater 12 Year Old American All Stars
The players and their families from the 12 Year Old American All Stars baseball team were on hand to accept a Proclamation from the Town Council.
- c) City of Peace
Councilor Perry read the proclamation into the record and presented the proclamation to Christina Ajemian.

CITIZEN OPEN FORUM

- Christina Ajemian, 221 Aldrich Road and BCCR: spoke about the need for peace in the community and around the world. Also noted the events taking place during Peace week 9/21 to 9/28.
- Francis Jeffries, 35 Shaw Road: spoke about the Peace week events.
- Eileen Hiney, 316 South Street and Chair of open space: spoke about the open space that has been in the works off of Plymouth Street, Invites will be sent out about a 10/5/24 trail opening taking place.
- Ray Ajemian, 221 Aldrich Road: Stiles and Hart is in great shape right now. Perfect example how two agencies can work together.
- Ed Ivaldi, Boxwood Lane: spoke about the ad hoc committee members.
- Janet Hanson, Pleasant Street: commented on the ad hoc committee appointments. Wanted more than 5 members. Also spoke about the Resolution.
- Carlton Hunt, Austin Street: spoke about CPC 5 year plan. Two focus group meetings coming up. Survey developed for the Town to take.
- Ed Ivaldi, Boxwood Lane: asked questions regarding the ad hoc committee and what the revenue from retail marijuana is.
- Pearl Cohen and Russell Greenberg, 35 Willow Ridge Drive: would like sign in front of the Academy Building noting that it is the Town Hall/Town Offices.

APPOINTMENTS

- a) Appointments to the Town Manager Preliminary Screening Ad Hoc Committee:
 - 1) Council President Kevin Perry

Councilor Linde noted that he appreciates the citizens who spoke, is disappointed that the same five names came up, has more experience than the other 5, was not asked and does not support this.

Councilor Chase made a motion to ratify the appointment of Council President Perry to the Town Manager Preliminary Screening Ad Hoc Committee. This motion was duly seconded by Councilor Striggles.

Councilor Ellenberg noted that we do not want a situation that is an inside deal and need to listen to the citizens.

Councilor Robinson noted that it is accurate that some citizens want much larger group but also heard that some want just the 5 and trust the council to do their job. 29,000 residents in Bridgewater and we have heard from many. Also noted that she has extensive experience in search committees, she reached out to Councilor Perry and Mr. Dutton and that no one came to me with a secret deal. Also added that if someone has issues with individuals to contact her.

Councilor Linde noted that he does not believe anyone else has public search process and that he reached out to Mr. Dutton not Dr. Perry.

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 – No; Motion passed 6-3-0.

2) Council Vice President Paul Murphy

Councilor Striggles made a motion to ratify the appointment of Council Vice President Murphy to the Town Manager Preliminary Screening Ad Hoc Committee. This motion was duly seconded by Councilor Chase.

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.

3) Councilor Fred Chase

Councilor Striggles made a motion to ratify the appointment of Council Vice President Murphy to the Town Manager Preliminary Screening Ad Hoc Committee. This motion was duly seconded by Councilor Murphy.

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.

4) Councilor Susan Robinson

Councilor Striggles made a motion to ratify the appointment of Council Vice President Murphy to the Town Manager Preliminary Screening Ad Hoc Committee. This motion was duly seconded by Councilor Chase.

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.

5) School Committee Chair Timothy Fitzgibbons

Councilor McKinnon made a motion to ratify the appointment of School Committee Chair Timothy Fitzgibbons to the Town Manager Preliminary Screening Ad Hoc Committee. This motion was duly seconded by Councilor Murphy.

Councilor Linde noted that the School Committee is charged with picking new superintendent of schools and a councilor would not be asked to be on search committee, does not thing appropriate.

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 – No; Motion passed 6-3-0.

HEARINGS – None

LICENSE TRANSACTIONS – None

PRESENTATIONS

a) Sewer Resource Presentation - Environmental Partners

Helen Gordon from Environmental Partners gave a presentation of Sewer Enterprise Operations. Some topics included Regular maintenance – daily, weekly, monthly and annual inspections, skilled workforce – investing in trained employees, energy costs – man aging energy consumption, chemical and supplies and emergency response.

Kathryn Roose from Environment Partners gave an update on Capital Projects from 2013 to 2024 which included infrastructure invements, new infrastructure, technology, identified sewer needs areas based on environment concerns.

Councilor Murphy asked who is Environment Partners and Ms. Roosa noted that they are part of an Apex company and serve as owners project manager for the Town of Bridgewater for the water project. Role is to oversee the design process, bidding and design process. Waste Water Treatment plant.

Councilor Robinson thanked Environment Partners for the presentation and asked if the town's aging infrastructure was green, yellow or red for capacity for today and noted that one or the big concerns is around future development. Ms. Roosa noted that MA DEP requires that the treatment plant must operate 80% below it's discharge capacity. Priority areas have already been identified. CED Director Bob Rulli noted that similar to water we are looking at alternatives, spoke with department of corrections last year and they have room for additional capacity. Mr. Rulli also added that long term planning would be to bring neighborhoods from prison to BSU on line, major infrastructure projects that require federal, state and local money.

Councilor Robinson added that it would be helpful to have a set of communications to customers if there are sewer rate hikes, knows we need to increase rates but having visibility would be helpful for the next few years. 2026 to 2030 will be \$68M for Water and Sewer \$57M and is sure all towns are facing similar

but it is dumping huge concerns. I know there are plans for grants, etc. but staying in touch and what the impact on taxpayers will be important to understand.

- b) Vision of Reality Update - Bob Rulli, CED Director
CED Director Bob Rulli gave an update on Vision to Reality, noting several development projects coming up.

Councilor McGrath noted that the center of town mixed use is 25% of units for MBTA requirements. Mr. Rulli noted the under MBTA 1,401 required on paper and whether the platform is moved or not, the 40R is just west of Waterford Village and we are in compliance with MBTA legislation.

Councilor Linde asked that the next Vision to Reality be in early December or January.

Councilor Ellenberg asked about 96 Main Street. Town Attorney Rawlins noted that this is private property and private property is not something that the Town Council can discuss.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- a) Water Street Tire Dump Issue Update
Acting Town Manager Blythe Robinson noted that the State owns the property now and the Town reached out to them about cleaning the property.

Councilor Robinson would like an update on recreational marijuana sales and the impact on the town at a future Town Council meeting.

Councilor McKinnon would like an update on the 4 to 6 National Grid poles for Winter Street.

DISCUSSIONS – None

COMMITTEE REPORTS – None

LEGISLATION FOR ACTION

- a) Order O-FY25-012: Contract - Acting Town Manager
Councilor McKinnon made a motion to suspend the 14 day rule, which was duly seconded by Councilor Robinson.

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

Councilor Striggles made a motion to approve Order O-FY25-012, 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.

b) Resolution: R-FY25-001: National POW/MIA Recognition Day

Councilor Linde noted that he heard that the POW MIA day is this Friday and wanted to put forth this resolution to the council to display the flag. Councilor Linde also noted that there will be a brief ceremony Friday morning and that he will work on the flag being permanent.

Councilor Linde made a motion to approve Resolution R-FY25-001, 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.

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

a) Proposed General Ordinance D-FY25-007: Acceptance of MGL c.33, Section 59 Military Service on Salary, Seniority and Leave Allowances for Public Employees

Acting Town Manager Robinson noted that this Ordinance would bring the town in compliance with coverage for military members.

Councilor Striggles made a motion to refer Proposed General Ordinance D-FY25-007 to Rules and Procedures, 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.

b) Order O-FY25-017: Acceptance of Tangible Property - Bridgewater State University Foundation
CED Director Bob Rulli noted that this is coming from the Foundation of BSU, they would like to donate plants, planting, clean up before homecoming.

Councilor Robinson asked if there was any concerns of safety on property and Mr. Rulli noted that DPW has been doing some trimming and will coordinate with highway dept, waivers will be signed.

Councilor Chase made a motion to suspend the 14 day rule, 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.

Councilor Linde made a motion to approve Order O-FY25-017, which 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 – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passed 9-0-0.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

- Carlton Hunt, Austin Street: noted that the Ad Hoc Committee should not elect the president of the council for the committee chair.
- Janet Hanson, Pleasant Street: noted president of the council should not be on the committee because of their responsibilities. Glad to hear we shouldn't be forced to tie into sewer.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Councilor McGrath: thanked Councilors Linde and Striggles for sponsoring the POW MIA Flag resolution and noted that she will have having a table at Autumnfest on 9/28 in the hopes of getting people to sign up for committees.
- Councilor Striggles: – heard from constituents about the importance of the POW MIA Flag. Also thanked the citizens that came to the meeting, not all going to agree, you did not elect us to be yes people. We are all volunteers and doing our best for the people of Bridgewater.
- Councilor Chase: that the ad hoc committee be comprised of the maximum number of town councilors (4) and those 4 members would be instrumental in providing to the full council the best information. Also noted that the process is going to be very transparent for what the citizens want to see and learn and will devote his attention to that result. #1 priority for every member of the committee.
- Councilor Linde – noted that the video that was done on Central Square is accurate, as he walks it everyday, it is difficult and unsafe. Also added that the Friend's of the Library book sale will be on 9/28 maybe at Autumnfest or at the library. PM – no comments
- Councilor Ellenberg: noted that citizens reached out to her to note that basketball nets have disappeared and just hoops. Also noted that the duty of all us Americans to participate in a little bit of citizenship and that there are subcommittees that are hollow. Asked the Town Manager to provide a list of all the hollow committees and what is open and their slots. Encourage citizens to step forward for appointments for these subcommittees.
- Councilor Robinson: no comments
- Councilor McKinnon: noted that it was great to have the Little League Team at the meeting.
- Councilor Perry: honored to have the State Champs here tonight, they represented the town well. Ad hoc in place, it will be a public process.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – None

ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Linde made a motion to adjourn, which 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 – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passed 9-0-0.

Meeting adjourned at 9:44p.m.

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.