



Town of Bridgewater

Town Council

November 26, 2024

7:00 PM

66 Central Square

Academy Building/2nd Floor

MEETING MINUTES

A. 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, November 26, 2024 in the Council Chambers.

Present: Fred Chase, Paul Murphy, Mary McGrath, 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 all veterans and their families.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- a) November 12, 2024 Meeting Minutes
Councilor McKinnon made a motion to approve the November 12, 2024 meeting minutes, which was duly seconded by Councilor Chase.

A voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passed 8-0.

B. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT - None

C. PROCLAMATIONS – None

D. CITIZEN OPEN FORUM

Councilor Linde made a motion to suspend the rules and allow Janesse Campbell Means, Chair of the BCCR to speak. This was duly seconded by Councilor Chase.

A voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passed 8-0.

- Janesse Campbell Means, Chair of the BCCR: Noted that BCCR is just asking to continue to fly the pride and Juneteenth flags. Individuals lied on Facebook, BCCR did not say what is being said.
- Ray Ajamian, 221 Aldrich Road: Noted that he hopes the council reappoints Mr. Robinson and agrees with Councilor Chase on the proposal for the flag.
- Joseph Gillis, 30 Caroline Circle: spoke about POW/MIA flag and how it came about, should adopt a resolution to have POW/MIA flag flown with United States Flag at all times.
- Janet Hanson, Pleasant Street: POW/MIA should be flown at all times under the American Flag, not sure why this needs to be a big discussion. Pride and Juneteenth flags, no problem with those, maybe have their own pole. Do not agree with Admin code Section 14 Citizens comments, clarification question should be able to be responded to.
- Karen Segal: POW/MIA flag should remain in front of the building. Can we find a solution for the alternate flags, another flagpole.
- Keith Buohl, 10 Field Crest Drive: fully support the POW/MIA and US Flag as it is flown, also supports the flying of the Juneteenth and Pride flag. Bridgewater always comes together. recommendation would be to erect a second flag pole, slightly lower than the current flagpole.
- John Donna, 261 South Street: Pride flag should not fly on Town property, do not need another flag pole.
- Sandra Wright, 150 East Street: spoke about what the POW/MIA flag is about. United States flag represents all of us, other flags are not representing all of the people.
- Carlton Hunt, 80 Austin Street: appalled by some of the language hearing tonight. Create a committee with citizens involved to erect more flag poles in front of Town Hall. Had this conversation with the Town's Veterans agent.
- Sam Baumgarten, 60 Short Street: totally in support of what Mr. Buohl said. We need to fly the pride and Juneteenth flag. Small token of equality and exclusion. Not against flying the POW/MIA flag, would like another flag pole. Spoke about the conversation meeting and the Nip project. Asking the council to pay close attention to that issue and weigh in on the issue.
- Sarah Cashman, 1245 High Street: flag issue a hot topic. There are arguments to be made on both sides. Money can be raised for a second flag pole. There is a place to show that there is unity in Bridgewater. Pledge my commitment to make that happen.
- Paula 45 Moura Drive: lend my support to the Veterans and allow the POW/MIA flag to fly in front of the Town Hall. There are other communities that have other flag poles for those that want to raise other flags.
- MJ Spagone: flag pole issue, we have options before us. There are 3 flag poles in this room, why can't we put more flag poles in front of Town Hall. One pole in the center with the United States and POW/MIA, one with the BW flag and one with the Commonwealth flag. Then the Pride and Juneteenth flag under the Town flag.
- Jean Battiste, 260 Lakeside Drive: extremely important to pay attention to the environment, fires in MA because of the drought. Climate change whether you believe in it or not. At the conservation commission meeting residents asked for issues to be looked at but the project was closed without those issues being looked at.
- Kim Larcom, 50 Curve Street: spoke about the POW/MIA flag and in favor of the POW/MIA flag flown with the United States flag.
- Pat Neary, 225 Lakeside Drive: 1) uploading of You Tube of the meetings – concom, tree committee not uploaded to You Tube. ConCom meets on Thursday night so the meeting cannot

be viewed until the following Wednesday. 2) regulation protocol – Claremont Project was approved without a hearing without a wetland protection act, what do we do about that? Does ConCom need education? Conservation Wetland Act? Our by-laws are not being adhered to by a board or committee. Cease and desist filed and being discussed outside of regular ConCom meetings.

- Melissa Ramondetta, 317 Lakeside Drive: spoke about the Conservation Commission and why is it under the direction of the Community and Economic Department. Should be independent of Planning and zoning.
- Johnny Loretta, 300 Black Mallard Road: POW/MIA flag should remain outside of the academy building at all times.
- Nick Bagas, 23 Cherry Street: Planning Board public hearing notice that he received. Tried to virtually attend the meeting but could not get in. Concern about the project is lack of parking. Why we cannot attend meetings in person?
- Angela Foley, 195 Grange Park: supports flying of the POW/MIA flag, it is the wishes of the veterans in town.
- Daniel Gilmette, Louie's grandson: spoke about the POW/MIA flag and the many missing men and women.

E. APPOINTMENTS

a) Veterans Council:

David Siden (2024 - 2027)

Councilor McKinnon made a motion to appoint David Siden to the Veterans Council, which was duly seconded by Councilor Linde.

A voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passed 8-0.

b) Disability Commission:

Estelle Wenson (2024 - 2027)

Councilor McKinnon made a motion to appoint Estelle Wenson to the Disability Commission, which was duly seconded by Councilor Chase.

A voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passed 8-0.

c) Board of Assessors:

David Werthessen: (2024 - 2026)

Councilor Striggles made a motion to appoint David Werthessen to the Board of Assessors, which was duly seconded by Councilor McKinnon.

A voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passed 8-0.

d) Appointment to the Town Manager Preliminary Screening Ad Hoc Committee:

Councilor Mary McGrath
Councilor Linde recused himself and left the meeting prior to the motion and vote.

Councilor Striggles made a motion to appoint Councilor Mary McGrath to the Town Manager Preliminary Screening Ad hoc Committee, which was duly seconded by Councilor Chase.

A voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Recused; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passed 7-1.

Councilor Linde came back into the meeting after the vote.

Councilor McKinnon made a motion to take New Business out of order, which was duly seconded by Councilor Linde.

A voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passed 8-0.

F. HEARINGS - None

G. LICENSE TRANSACTIONS - None

H. PRESENTATIONS - None

I. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- a) Fire Station Update
Blythe Robinson gave an update on the Fire Station project including the topping off ceremony held last week.

Councilor Murphy asked if the procedure memo that was submitted is a standard memo from construction firms or if more information could be added. Ms. Robinson noted that a budget section can be added for future meetings.

Councilor McGrath noted that she listened to open space and trees being cut down, would like to request that the Tree Committee come to a meeting and guide us on how we can save some of the trees and the importance of older trees. Councilor Perry acknowledge that the Tree Committee can be looked at for a future meeting.

Councilor Ellenberg asked about ConCom and it's recent order and how the Town Council could recommend that they rescind their order on the wetlands. Town Attorney Rawlins noted that the Town Council does not have the authority to recommend decisions of the ConCom.

J. DISCUSSIONS- None

K. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilor Murphy noted that the Ad Hoc committee met last week with the firm Community Paradigm and discussed how long it would take. Town survey ongoing online, emailed business owners and residents, have seen it on social media. We are already in the tops of responses to Community Paradigm. Things going well, positive. Meeting the week of 12/16 to tie up results of survey and put

together a job description and posting.

Councilor Striggles commended the committee for choosing Community Paradigm. Keep sharing the input is there. I encourage all the councilors to speak with Mr. Lynch. Keep answering the survey.

L. LEGISLATION FOR ACTION

- a) Order O-FY25-018: Acceptance of Grant Funds - Police Municipal Road Safety Grant
Budget and Finance meeting 11/26/24. Finance Committee voted 5-0 to recommend at their 11/18/24 meeting.

Councilor Linde made a motion to approve Order O-FY25-018, which was duly seconded by Councilor McKinnon.

A voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea;
Motion passed 8-0.

- b) Order O-FY25-019: Acceptance of Gift - Town River Landing Pavilion
Budget and Finance meeting 11/26/24. Finance Committee voted 5-0 to recommend at their 11/18/24 meeting.

Councilor Linde made a motion to approve Order O-FY25-019, which was duly seconded by Councilor Chase.

A voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea;
Motion passed 8-0.

- c) Order O-FY25-020: Acceptance of Grant - Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC)
Budget and Finance meeting 11/26/24. Finance Committee voted 5-0 to recommend at their 11/18/24 meeting.

Councilor Linde made a motion to approve Order O-FY25-020, which was duly seconded by Councilor Ellenberg.

A voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea;
Motion passed 8-0.

- d) Order O-FY25-021: Renaming of the Bridgewater Middle School
This measure was not referred to committee. 14 days has elapsed per Section XVII of the Council Rules & Procedures, therefore this measure may be finally considered this evening.

Councilor Linde made a motion to approve Order O-FY25-021, which was duly seconded by Councilor Striggles.

A voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea;
Motion passed 8-0.

- e) Order O-FY25-022: Reappointment - Acting Town Manager Blythe Robinson
This measure was not referred to committee. 14 days has elapsed per Section XVII of the Council Rules & Procedures, therefore this measure may be finally considered this evening.

Councilor Striggles made a motion to approve Order O-FY25-022, which was duly seconded by Councilor McKinnon.

A voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passed 8-0.

- f) Order O-FY25-023: FY2025 Classification Tax Allocation - Adoption of Residential Factor Refer to Advertising. Budget and Finance meeting 11/26/24. Finance Committee voted 5-0 to recommend at their 11/18/24 meeting.

Councilor Linde made a motion to refer Order O-FY25-023 to advertising, which was duly seconded by Councilor Ellenberg.

A voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passed 8-0.

- g) Order O-FY25-025: Acceptance of Donation - Oliari Charitable Foundation Budget and Finance meeting 11/26/24. Finance Committee voted 5-0 to recommend at their 11/18/24 meeting.

Councilor Linde made a motion to approve Order O-FY25-025, which was duly seconded by Councilor McKinnon.

A voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passed 8-0.

- h) Order O-FY25-026: General Fund Free Cash Allocation Budget and Finance meeting 11/26/24. Finance Committee voted 5-0 to recommend at their 11/18/24 meeting.

Councilor Linde made a motion to approve Order O-FY25-026, which was duly seconded by Councilor McKinnon.

A voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passed 8-0.

- i) Order O-FY25-027: Transfer Order - Legal Employment and Collective Bargaining Agreement Budget and Finance meeting 11/26/24. Finance Committee voted 5-0 to recommend at their 11/18/24 meeting.

Councilor Linde made a motion to approve Order O-FY25-027, which was duly seconded by Councilor Ellenberg.

A voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passed 8-0.

- j) Order O-FY25-028: Sewer Enterprise Fund Transfer Budget and Finance meeting 11/26/24. Finance Committee voted 5-0 to recommend at their 11/18/24 meeting.

Councilor Linde made a motion to approve Order O-FY25-028, which was duly seconded by Councilor McKinnon.

A voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passed 8-0.

- k) Order O-FY25-029: Transfer Station Retained Earnings
Budget and Finance meeting 11/26/24. Finance Committee voted 5-0 to recommend at their 11/18/24 meeting.

Councilor Linde made a motion to approve Order O-FY25-029, which was duly seconded by Councilor Striggles.

A voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passed 8-0.

- l) Order O-FY25-030: Bridgewater Raynham Regional School District Capital Plan Transfers
Budget and Finance meeting 11/26/24. Finance Committee voted 5-0 to recommend at their 11/18/24 meeting.

Councilor Linde made a motion to approve Order O-FY25-030, which was duly seconded by Councilor McKinnon.

A voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passed 8-0.

- m) Resolution R-FY25-003: FY2026 Budget Resolution
Budget and Finance meeting 11/26/24. Finance Committee voted 5-0 to recommend at their 11/18/24 meeting.

Councilor Linde made a motion to approve Resolution R-FY25-003, which was duly seconded by Councilor McKinnon.

A voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passed 8-0.

- n) Proposed Ordinance D-FY25-002: Revisions to the Administrative Code
Refer to Advertising. Rules & Procedures voted 3-0 to recommend with amendments at their 10/8/24 meeting.

Councilor Chase noted that Rules and Procedures was presented with amendments to our Admin code, housekeeping/administrative in nature, voted on 11 specific items.

Councilor McKinnon made a motion to refer Ordinance D-FY25-002 to advertising, which was duly seconded by Council Chase.

Councilor Ellenberg noted that Community Preservation has not been made ministerial ad Councilor Chase replied that there was no an amendment made.

Dr. Perry noted that another Ordinance would need to be drafted.

A voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon – Yea; Ellenberg – No; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passed 7-1.

M. OLD BUSINESS

N. NEW BUSINESS

a) Order O-FY25-024: An Order to Raise the POW/MIA Flag

Councilor Chase noted that he appreciates the comments from the citizens tonight and that there is some confusion of what the nature and purpose of the proposed order is. It would require the town to fly the POW/MIA flag at the war memorial in the common at all times, highly appropriate place for the POW/MIA to be flown. Order has nothing to do with any other flag that could be flown under the flag ordinance. Nothing to do with the Ordinance that is in committee. Introduced two weeks ago but a member of the council raised a charter objection. Charter objection immediately squashes discussion and prevents the vote, a delay. Motion to Table is the better way to go.

Councilor Linde noted that the whole issue goes back to POW/MIA recognition day, the flag was not flown for many years, spoke with the Town Manager a year and a half ago but did not get an answer. Need to figure out how to put up another flag pole.

Councilor Striggles made a motion to retain Order O-FY25-024 at council level, which was duly seconded by Councilor McKinnon.

Councilor McKinnon asked what the process was of getting another flag pole. The current flag pole is an issue and we do not even fly the State flag. Ms. Robinson noted that would need to be decided on where it will go and what flags would fly on what flagpole.

Councilor Murphy made a motion to table Order O-FY25-024, which was duly seconded by Councilor Ellenberg.

Councilor Linde asked for a point of clarification and asked when this order could be discussed again. Town Attorney Rawlins noted that tabling it is ending it.

A roll call vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – No; Linde – No; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passed 6-2-0.

b) Order O-FY25-031: Appointment To A Vacant Councilor-At-Large Seat

Councilor Perry noted that this is for the vacant council seat. 21 days to submit their interest for the vacant seat. 12/17 meeting will have the candidates come in front of the council and will vote to appoint someone. SS, BM –

Councilor Striggles made a motion to retain Order O-FY25-031 at Town Council, which was duly seconded by Councilor McKinnon.

Councilor Chase noted that Councilor Linde and himself were introduced to fill vacancies of short terms but district council seats. At-large seat is what is open now. There is more than ample representation of the town to not fill the at-large council position for the few short months. Urge interested parties to wait until January and run for a full term in April.

Councilor Perry noted that is it a point well taken and an option for the council, but should go through the process and see how many candidates are interested.

Councilor Linde asked for a point of clarification – in reading the Charter, there is no automatic appointment for the third runner up because of the time table. Town Attorney Rawlins noted that it has to do with the time period the councilor served.

Councilor Linde wanted it noted for the record that he agrees with Councilor Chase.

A voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passed 8-0.

c) Resolution R-FY25-004: Town Council Meeting Dates – 2025

Councilor Striggles made a motion to retain Order O-FY25-031 at Town Council, which was duly seconded by Councilor McKinnon.

A voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passed 8-0.

O. CITIZEN COMMENTS

- Sam Baumgarten, 60 Short Street: concerned and unhappy about the comments heard this evening. Not everyone is included and feel it is important that the government makes a statement about making them feel welcome.
- Lisa Buzzell-Curley, 91 Atkinson Drive: it was never about removing the pride or Juneteenth flag. It was about righting a wrong and flying the POW/MIA flag. The 911 flag pole is not where the POW/MIA flag belongs. Not going to get anywhere by tabling it.
- Janet Hanson, Pleasant Street: doesn't understand why it has to be an ordinance, it is a federal thing. Agree with Councilor McGrath and the Tree Committee. Concerned about Section 14.
- MJ Spagone: voted as Chair of the FinCom and look forward to working with the council for 2026.

P. COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Councilor McGrath: thanked the Fire Chief for the invitation to the Fire Station ceremony. Wish everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.
- Councilor Striggles: excellent ceremony, loved putting her name on that beam. Congratulated the Bridgewater Varsity Cheerleaders for winning. Publicly thanked Councilor Robinson. Condolences to the family of Chris Renzi, very devoted to the Bridgewater Badgers. Takes both flags seriously as well as the United States Flag, don't want to go backwards.
- Councilor Chase: noted that Chris Renzi was a good friend and neighbor and gave his condolences to the family. Plan to introduce an order that a flag pole be considered, feasibility

study on where it could be located. Wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

- Councilor Linde: would like to invite the Town Clerk to speak about the recent election, the group did a great job with the lights, would like to go back to in person meetings for Boards and commissions and the Fire Department ceremony was excellent.
- Councilor Murphy noted that tabling was nothing more than knowing the full scope of what we were voting for, do more homework and come back with a plan. Wished everyone a happy Thanksgiving.
- Councilor Ellenberg: noted that Mass Maritime has a flag with two flags and a T formation and diamond formation. Answers to the public – need to have in person meetings. Have council comments at the beginning and at the end of the meeting.
- Councilor McKinnon noted that he appreciates the 4 wanting to step up for the vacant position.
- Councilor Perry noted that the Fire Station Ceremony was great and looking forward to the completion. Extended his condolences to the Renzi family. Lions putting up the decorations on Saturday. Christmas on the Common is on 12/1. Thanks to BIA for the lights. Will find a way to compromise on the flag poles. Encourage people to put their names in. Agrees with in person meeting but zoom is allowing some people to be on committees because of where they work.

Q. EXECUTIVE SESSION - None

R. ADJOURNMENT

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

A voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – No; Linde – No; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passed 6-2-0.

Meeting adjourned at 9:42pm

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, January 7, 2025, to approve the aforementioned minutes, as submitted.