



Town of Bridgewater Town Council

January 7, 2025
7:00 PM

MEETING MINUTES

Due to Massachusetts Open Meeting Law requirements, discussions will not take place during Public Comment periods. If appropriate, responses to questions and concerns will be given by the Town Manager at a future Town Council meeting.

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, January 7, 2025 in the Council Chambers.

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

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

Councilor Perry read the names of veterans who have recently passed away and held a moment of silence:

- Dale Shoemaker, US Navy, passed away on November 17, 2024
- Gordon Reed, US Air Force, passed away on November 17, 2024
- Wayne Gunnison, US Navy, passed away on December 11, 2024
- James Brown, US Navy, Vietnam, passed away on December 20, 2024
- Stanley Kravitz, US Army, Vietnam, passed away on December 17, 2024. Former Bridgewater selectman and a Purple Heart recipient from the Vietnam War.

A. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- a) November 26, 2024 Meeting Minutes
Councilor McKinnon made a motion to approve the November 26, 2024 meeting minutes, which was duly seconded by Councilor Linde.

A voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon – Yea; Loreti – did not vote; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passed 8-0.

- b) December 3, 2024 Meeting Minutes
Councilor Chase made a motion to approve December 3, 2024 meeting minutes, which was duly seconded by Councilor Striggles.

A voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon – Yea; Loreti – did not

vote; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passed 8-0.

- c) December 17, 2024 Meeting Minutes
Councilor Striggles made a motion to approve the December 17, 2024 meeting minutes, which was duly seconded by Councilor McKinnon.

A voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon – Yea; Loreti – did not vote; 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 – None

E. APPOINTMENTS – None

F. HEARINGS – None

G. LICENSE TRANSACTIONS

- a) Petition P-2025-015: The Annual Licensing of A Common Victualler Establishment (Non-Alcohol) - Bridgewater House of Pizza
Councilor Linde made a motion to approve Petition P-2025-015, which was duly seconded by Councilor Loreti.

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

- b) Petition P-2025-016: The Annual Licensing of Class III Auto Dealer - Best Auto Parts, Inc.
Councilor Perry noted that this was an existing Class III dealership, going through some changes. Ralph from Best Auto was in attendance and Councilor Perry noted that he did a great job cleaning up the land but asked about fencing. Ralph noted that once the ground softens up he will be putting up a fence.
Councilor McKinnon made a motion to approve Petition P-2025-016, which was duly seconded by Councilor Chase.

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

H. PRESENTATIONS

- a) Police Department Update: Chief Delmonte
Chief Delmonte gave a presentation regarding the Police Department:

Chief Delmonte thanked the council for inviting him to the meeting and thanked the community for their strong community support. Chief Delmonte noted that there are some great men and

women that work for the Police Department.

Chief Delmonte discussed the department structure, noting that recruitment is a serious problem – currently have 4 open positions and added that they utilize Police cadets who are local residents who work the desk – 9/11 calls, walk ins, prisoners.

Chief Delmonte discussed personnel assignments; 41 working – have detectives, WEB Majors Crimes & Drug task force, school resource officer, patrol K9; court prosecutor. Member of SEMLEC since 2003, officers get assigned to different assignments and agencies (SWAT, Drone unit, bicycle response team, etc). Bridgewater Police has been an accredited police agency since 2016 – go through the process every 3 years. Will be evaluated in 2025. Use best practice in policing.

Some of the Community Events that the Police Department are involved in include: Halloween safety day; high five Fridays; Dare Summer Camp (one week camp); Law Enforcement Torch run for special Olympics; 10th Year BPD 5K Run; BSU partner with Washington Mendela fellows; Bridgewater Class escorted to the State House for a tour; Thanksgiving dinner for seniors – 25 years; No Shave November to raise money for local charities

Some of the Programs that the Police Department offer include: Citizens Police Academy; BRRHS Criminal Justice at the HS and Career Fairs at BSU.

Chief Delmonte noted that mental health calls have increased. Reported deaths have increased and are usually labor intensive. Detectives need to investigate which takes time. Operating under the influence of liquor or drugs has increased. 31 arrests in 2024. 2024 there were 3 fatal motor vehicle fatalities. Trying to stay proactive in this area – 2 officers are assigned to traffic enforcement. Restraining Order violations has increased – 37 violations in 2024.

Chief Delmonte discussed the future for the Police Department: Where should staffing be? 50 to 52 officers. Full Time mental health/substance abuse clinician. 2 Full Time WEB TF Investigator – have 2 part time currently; and second School Resource Officer.

Chief Delmonte noted the department challenges which included: Health and wellbeing of personnel; Nature and scope of mental health & substance abuse calls – many and complex; recruitment of Police Officer candidates. Civic Service Community and rules have recently changed – can hire outside the exam itself.

Chief Delmonte discussed continued and emerging threats: Newer and more deadly illegal drugs; lack of available mental health substance abuse treatment facilities; accountability of serious crimes and crimes involving technology

Chief Delmonte discussed training that the Police Department goes through which included: FBI National Academy – Lt. Hiles attending now; use of Force Summit; annual mandatory hostile event response training and continued advanced professional unit training.

Chief Delmonte concluded his presentation and spoke about infrastructure needs which included: looking at solar panels for parking lot for energy purposes and readiness and portable vehicle

barriers for July 4th, Memorial Day and Veterans Day Parades.

Councilor Chase congratulated Chief Delmonte on being selected as the President of the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association and asked how special of an event is it being chose for the FBI academy. Chief Delmonte thanked Councilor Chase and noted that the departments strategy is to get better training and that Lt. Hile is the third police officer from Bridgewater in the last 20 years to be selected, very few candidates are selected. We have many talented and educated leaders in our police department.

Councilor Linde asked what the Town needs to do to get those solar panels for the Police Department. Chief Delmonte noted that there are not a lot of grants on the law enforcement side but perhaps the Energy Committee could look into the solar panels.

Councilor Murphy asked about recruiting and why is it a challenge today. Chief Delmonte noted that this is not unique to Bridgewater and many not going into law enforcement because of what is seen in the media.

Councilor Murphy asked about the relationship with BSU. Chief Delmonte noted that Bridgewater swears in all of BSU police officers as special police officers so there is never any issue of jurisdiction.

Councilor Murphy asked what residents can do to support the Bridgewater Police Department. Chief Delmonte noted that the police department serves the public and that this community has always supported the Police department. We have never felt that the community has left us.

Councilor Striggles thanked the police for Sunday and how the staff handled the accident and being transparent and honest.

Councilor Perry thanked the Chief for coming tonight and thanked him for the leadership he has given the town and the entire department.

- b) Dennis Gallagher, State Representative 8th Plymouth District: Introductions and Brief overview of upcoming legislative session.

Dennis Gallagher who was sworn in on January 1, 2025 as the State Representative for the 8th Plymouth District introduced himself and gave a brief overview of the upcoming legislative session which included: December revenues in the State have indicated being better. 19 new State Representatives waiting for committee assignments and offices. Mr. Gallagher introduced Evan Frances, his Legislative Aid. MMA/Connect 351 is usually when you hear from the governor and what the budget will be, encourage councilors to attend. Some of things I am going to advocate for is mental health and roads and sidewalks. Deadline to file anything is Friday, January 17th and only got access on January 6th. If there are issues that need to be filed on behalf of Bridgewater let him know. Refiled 4 pieces of legislation that his predecessor filed. School funding is very important to communities. Mr. Gallagher noted that he will come to meetings as often as necessary but encouraged phone calls or emails to him.

Councilor Linde noted that he would like Mr. Gallagher to get us as much money as he can and to push through Charter changes that have been pending. Mr. Gallagher noted that he would look into those and gave his phone number of 617-722-3600 and email address. Dennis.gallagher@mahouse.gov Will advocate for funds for Bridgewater. Regional school caucus on Beacon Hill. Home Rule Petitions can be filed at any time but it takes time for them to process.

Acting Town Manager Robinson noted that EMS responds to the prison and the company the State hired to process the payments went bankrupt and the Town is still owed money – about \$140k. Not sure what the DOC is doing about it. Mr. Gallagher noted that he would look into that.

Councilor Perry thanked Mr. Gallagher for coming tonight and noted that the Councilor will be meeting with the school committee in February and asked for his support for the regional school system.

I. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- a) Fire Station Update
Acting Town Manager Robinson noted that there was nothing new to report on the Fire Station.
- b) Old Town Hall Discussion Update
Acting Town Manager Robinson noted that they are continuing to resolve the records stored in the building. Previous archivist put together a record of documents and will be meeting with the new archivist to figure out what is needed to do to get them out and digitized/stored. Have asked staff to get over there when the weather is warmer and work with the archivist to look into the documents. \$247k set aside and has not been used. Long term decision on what to use the building for.
- c) Tree Mitigation Schedule Update
Acting Town Manager Robinson noted that she has been meeting with Ray Ajamian and was provided with 2 documents. Proposed tree preservation ordinance – expansion of the current shade tree ordinance. Tree mitigation schedule- will be discussed with Planning to work through a few details. Tree Committee would like a full time Tree Warden.
- d) EV Charging Stations at Academy Building Update
Acting Town Manager noted that there are two charging stations added and not sure why there was not a charge added. They are not separately metered so do not know the cost. There are grants out there to change to ones that people would need to pay for and for town use could be given an access card.

Councilor Linde noted that when the two charging stations were put in, part of the agreement was that there wouldn't be a charge. Should talk to the Energy Committee.

Councilor Ellenberg noted that funding has run out for transit cares which is for low income people to do their errands. Are we able to find money in the budget to get the Transit Care up

again. Acting Town Manager Robinson discussed this with the COE director and have applied for funding and waiting to hear. We also have our own van.

Councilor Murphy would like to add the Feasibility Study Update for the Library on the next agenda.

Councilor Linde asked that the Library Director be on a future agenda to do a presentation and would also like to talk about possible changes in the role of the library board of trustees.

J. DISCUSSIONS - None

K. COMMITTEE REPORTS

L. LEGISLATION FOR ACTION

a) Order O-FY25-033: An Order for the Placement of Flagpoles

Councilor Chase noted that he is proposing an amendment as it relates to the interaction with the Town Manager needed to be changed.

Councilor Striggles made a motion to amend Order O-FY25-033 as noted by Councilor Chase, which was duly seconded by Councilor Linde.

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

Councilor Striggles made a motion to approve Order O-FY25-033 as amended, which was duly seconded by Councilor McKinnon.

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

b) Proposed Ordinance D-FY25-008: Proposed Amendment to Part II – Administrative Code: Chapter 1, Article III, Section 1B (2)

Councilor Perry noted that this would be to allow the Town Council President to make appointments to Council Ad Hoc Committees.

Councilor Linde made a motion to refer Order O-FY25-0008 to advertising, which was duly seconded by Councilor Striggles.

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

Town Attorney Rawlins noted that this might need to be a charter change and will look at it and get back to the Town Council Clerk.

- c) General Ordinance D-FY25-011: General Ordinance - Amend Chapter 300, Article II, "Truck Exclusions"

Councilor Perry noted that this would be exclude trucks from certain parts of Hayward and High Street, which was approved by the State.

Councilor Linde made a motion to refer Order O-FY25-0011 to advertising, which was duly seconded by Councilor McKinnon.

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

M. OLD BUSINESS – None

N. NEW BUSINESS

- a) Order O-FY25-035: Vote to Authorize Acting Town Manager Blythe Robinson to Sign on Behalf of the Town of Bridgewater

Acting Town Manager Robinson noted that when the Town Attorney looked at this the charter did not give the Acting Town Manager Authority to sign.

Councilor Murphy made a motion to retain Order O-FY25-035 at Council, which was duly seconded by Councilor Chase.

Councilor Perry noted that this is a regulatory agreement that needs a signature from ATM ad has been in the works.

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

- b) Proposed Zoning Ordinance D-FY25-014: Zoning Amendment for Accessory Dwelling Units

Councilor McKinnon made a motion to refer Proposed Zoning Ordinance D-FY25-014 to Planning Board and Community and Economic Development. This was duly seconded by Councilor Striggles.

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

- c) Resolution R-FY25-005: A Resolution to File and Accept Grants with and From the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs for the Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities Program for Improvements to Summer Street Park

Councilor McGrath made a motion to retain Resolution R-FY25-005 at Council, which was duly seconded by Councilor Linde.

Councilor McGrath asked how many phases there were and if the driveway will be shared. Acting Town Manager noted that she did not know the answer but would look into it.

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

O. CITIZEN COMMENTS

- Carlton Hunt, 80 Austin Street: CPC is looking at funding a historical study. Solar panels for the Police Department – been advocating for two years. Have a presentation about solar panels and would be happy to present to you.
- MJ Spagone, 5 Lakeshore Center: thanked the Chief for the presentation. EV charging stations – LEED certification, intended for only town fleet vehicles. Can there be a shut off switch.

P. COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Councilor McGrath: noted she is a CERT Team member and encouraged resident to volunteer.
- Councilor Striggles: congratulated Councilor Loreti and thanked Chief Delmonte and State Rep Gallagher for attending the meeting, both make our town extremely proud.
- Councilor Chase: noted that Chief Delmonte's presentation was very informative. It was also good to see Dennis Gallagher here tonight who knows the Town.
- Councilor Linde: noted that we are going to have good luck by having a former Town Councilor at the State House. Would like to invite the new State Senator to a meeting.
- Councilor Murphy: thanked the Chief and the entire department, Rep Gallagher for attending tonight.
- Councilor Ellenberg: noted that there are still many boards and committees which are not filled. Meetings need to be televised and BTV needs volunteers as well. Compliment Chief Delmonte on an excellent presentation.
- Councilor Loreti: thank you for being welcoming. Presentation by Chief was very impressive.
- Councilor McKinnon: echo the council comments on Chief Delmonte and State Rep Gallagher and welcome to Councilor Loreti.
- Councilor Perry: welcomed councilor Loreti and thanked the Chief and Dennis for their presentations.

Q. EXECUTIVE SESSION - None

R. ADJOURNMENT

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

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:10pm.

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 21, 2025, to approve the aforementioned minutes, as submitted.