



Town of Bridgewater

Town Council

January 21, 2025

7:00 PM

66 Central Square

Academy Building

Council Chambers/2nd Floor

The Town Council meeting was streamed Live via You Tube.

MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

A. 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 21, 2025 in the Council Chambers.

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

Absent: Brad McKinnon

Also in attendance was Acting Town Manager Blythe Robinson, CED Director Bob Rulli and Town Attorney Jason Rawlins.

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

- Richard Donahue: US Army Vietnam – Passed away on December 14, 2024
- Robert Desreuisseau: US Air Force, Vietnam Era – Passed away on December 20, 2024
- Charles Kelly: US Navy, Vietnam Era – Passed away on December 25, 2024
- Donald Sweeney: US Navy – Passed away on January 3, 2025
- Harold Madan: US Army, Korea – Passed away on January 9, 2025
- Walter Hand: US Air Force, Korea Era – Passed away on January 11, 2025

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

a) January 7, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Councilor Chase made a motion to approve the January 7, 2025 meeting minutes, which was duly seconded by Councilor Linde.

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

B. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Councilor Perry read a reminder from Town Clerk's office about completing their Town Census and Dog License Renewals.

C. PROCLAMATIONS – None

D. CITIZEN OPEN FORUM

- Janet Hanson, Pleasant Street: BSU presentation on downtown changes, disappointed that they concentrated on the roundabout. Don't think it will work.
- Laurene Powers, 41 Sunrise Drive: who is looking into the cost for the flagpole Order.

E. APPOINTMENTS - None

F. HEARINGS

a) Proposed Ordinance D-FY25-006: Bridgewater Town Charter Amendment for Gender Neutral Language

Public Hearing: *Advertised in the 1/6/25 Enterprise. Rules and Procedures voted 3-0 to recommend at their 11/13/24 meeting.*

Councilor Perry opened the Public hearing at 7:09pm.

Councilor Murphy noted what the changes he is requesting.

Councilor Perry asked if there were any questions from the public.

- Janet Hanson, Pleasant Street: was on Charter Review committee and went through line by line and it's in the presentation.

Councilor Chase noted that what was presented by Charter Review was recommendations and this is what this is based upon.

Councilor Perry asked if anyone wished to speak in favor. No one spoke.

Councilor Perry asked if anyone wished to speak in opposition. No one spoke.

Councilor Perry asked if any councilors any question. No questions from Councilors.

Councilor Ellenberg noted that as of today the Federal government voted there are only 2 sexes.

Will be voting no on this.

Councilor McGrath asked if Chairman should be changed to Chairperson.

Councilor Loreti noted that Chairman is mentioned a dozen times in the Charter, suggest discuss it here or table the Ordinance.

Councilor Loreti made a motion to refer Proposed Ordinance D-FY25-006 back to Rules and Procedures. This motion was seconded by Councilor Ellenberg.

A roll-call vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon – Absent; Loreti – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – No; Perry – No; Linde – No; Chase – No; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion fails 4-4-0.

Councilor Perry closed the Public Hearing at 7:18pm.

Councilor Chase made a motion to approve Proposed Ordinance D-FY25-006, which was duly seconded by Councilor Linde.

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

- b) Ordinance D-FY25-009: Veterans Volunteer Services Program (Work-off)
Public Hearing: Advertised in the 1/6/25 Enterprise. Rules and Procedures voted 3-0 to recommend with amendments at their 12/12/24 meeting.

Councilor Perry opened the Public Hearing at 7:20pm.

Councilor Perry asked if there were any questions from the public. No questions were asked

Councilor Perry asked if anyone wished to speak in favor. No one spoke.

Councilor Perry asked if anyone wished to speak in opposition. No one spoke.

Councilor Perry closed the Public Hearing at 7:21pm

Councilor Linde made a motion to approve Proposed Ordinance D-FY25-009, which was duly seconded by Councilor Striggles.

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

G. LICENSE TRANSACTIONS

- a) Petition P-2025-017: The Granting of an Annual Entertainment License – Fire for Effect Foundation

Councilor McGrath noted that Al Lacerda has a schedule of events for the upcoming year and has requested an annual license for these events.

Al Lacerda, Fire for Effect Foundation President noted that he is running not-for-profit events and has entertainment set up starting in April and looking to get an annual license.

Councilor Ellenberg made a motion to approve Petition P-2025-017, which was duly seconded by Councilor McGrath.

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

H. PRESENTATIONS – None

I. TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- a) Fire Station Update
CED Director Rulli gave a Fire Station Update. Design 100% complete. Project photos are in report. Included duration, how long project should take and finish date. 6 weeks ahead of schedule but probably interruptions over the last two days because of the weather. Discuss as a team every Monday afternoon and Wednesdays. Most changes are minor, not uncommon.
- b) Status of Library Feasibility Study
Acting Town Manager Robinson noted that six responses received. Team was put together to review the RFPs, came back with a recommendation to interview two of the responses. Selected GRA to do the work. Strong team to come in and do the assessment. Working through the contract issues, should be resolved this week. Work can be completed within 2 ½ months. \$27k to be included in the Capital Budget.

Councilor Linde asked if the appearance of the front columns could be fixed prior to the work being done.

Councilor Ellenberg asked what the changes are.

Acting Town Manager Robinson noted that we are asking the company to do an evaluation of the building and it's systems so we can understand what needs to be updated and replaced. Windows, mechanical systems, columns, doors, etc. Recommending certain needs.

Councilor Murphy asked where the \$27k was coming from and Acting Town Manager Robinson noted that it will be on the capital plan that will be in front of the council in the next month.

- c) Status of Senior Day Program
Acting Town Manager Robinson noted that the Town applied for a grant about a year ago for

programming for seniors, Bridgewater offered a dementia program and was awarded to Bridgewater and Halifax together. One year program ending on 3/31/25. Launched program in Bridgewater and it has been successful. COA Director is actively working on grant opportunities because it has been a real need for this. Difficult to put into the FY26 budget.

Councilor Linde asked what the cost was to fund this program and Acting Town Manager Robinson noted that she would have to get the cost from Finance.

Councilor Perry asked if the Town was looking to continue this just for Bridgewater and Acting Town Manager Robinson noted that yes just Bridgewater, no need for two towns.

Councilor Murphy asked that a town paving update be put on a future agenda, a progress report. Also water and sewer upgrades progress report.

J. DISCUSSIONS - None

K. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilor Chase noted that Rules and Procedures met last week and discussed 1) Flag Ordinance voted 3-0 to continue the matter to a future meeting and 2) voting hours order was also discussed and Rules voted 3-0 with amendments.

Councilor Murphy reminded residents that the community forum is tomorrow night at 6pm at the Senior Center. Ad Hoc will be meeting in executive session on 1/30/25 to review applicants. Received 15 applicants to date.

Councilor Perry noted that CED met last week on the Right of First refusal for Oldfield estates and voted 3-0 to recommend.

L. LEGISLATION FOR ACTION

- a) Order O-FY25-034: Right of First Refusal - Oldfield Estates n/k/a Oldfield Preserve
Community and Economic Development voted 3-0 to recommend at their 1/13/25 meeting.
Councilor Striggles made a motion to approve Order O-FY25-023, which was duly seconded by Councilor Chase.

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

- b) Order O-FY25-035: Vote to Authorize Acting Town Manager Blythe Robinson to Sign on Behalf of the Town of Bridgewater
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 Perry noted that this is for the project on Plymouth Street, already built and developed. Owners need this in order to go forward.

Councilor Striggles made a motion to approve Order O-FY25-035, which was duly seconded by

Councilor Ellenberg.

Councilor Ellenberg noted that people are concerned with the water issue.

Councilor Ellenberg made a motion to amend by adding the word “only”, this was duly seconded by Councilor Linde.

Attorney Rawlins noted that the Order is written as the Acting Town manager only being able to sign for this one project. Up to the council to decide whether to add.

Councilor Perry noted that he does not think it needs to be put in.

Councilor Ellenberg asked that it be noted in the minutes tonight that it is for just this project and withdrew her motion.

A voice vote was taken on the motion to approve with the results recorded as follows:

McKinnon – Absent; Loreti – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – No; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passes 8-0-0.

- 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

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 Perry noted that this related to money for the Summer Street Park project.

Acting Town Manager Robinson noted that the Council has already done this but the State wanted it redone to reflect all the money being spent. Language came from the State. Not therefore section, change to Town Manager.

Councilor Striggles made a motion to amend to change anywhere it says “city” change to “town”. This was duly seconded by Councilor Chase.

A voice vote was taken on the motion to approve with the results recorded as follows:

McKinnon – Absent; Loreti – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – No; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passes 8-0-0.

Councilor Striggles made a motion to approve Resolution R-FY25-005 with amendments. This was duly seconded by Councilor Chase.

A voice vote was taken on the motion to approve with the results recorded as follows:

McKinnon – Absent; Loreti – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – No; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passes 8-0-0.

M. OLD BUSINESS - None

N. NEW BUSINESS

- a) Ordinance D-FY25-015: Ordinance Establishing the Process for Filling a Vacant Town Councilor Role

Councilor Murphy noted that this ordinance clarifies the gray area of a resignation from the council.

Councilor Linde made a motion to refer Ordinance D-FY25-015 to Rules and Procedures, which was duly seconded by Councilor Striggles.

Councilor McGrath noted that not sure about a brief interview and responds to questions. The process we currently just did was the voting.

Councilor Murphy noted that it's important they have a 3 minute presentation to speak. Interview portion was the intent to ask questions if we so choose.

Councilor Linde noted that he thinks resume is important. Good start, need something

A voice vote was taken on the motion to refer with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon – Absent; Loreti – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – No; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passes 8-0-0.

- b) Order O-FY25-036: Laying Out and Accepting a Private Way - Firefly Lane

Councilor Chase noted that this is simply a matter of laying out and accepting the private way. In accord with our zoning, advisable owners are seeking town ownership of their right of way.

Councilor Striggles made a motion to Take the Way, which was duly seconded by Councilor McGrath.

A voice vote was taken on the motion to refer with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon – Absent; Loreti – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – No; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passes 8-0-0.

Councilor Linde made a motion to refer Order O-FY25-036 to the Planning Board, which was duly seconded by Councilor Chase.

A voice vote was taken on the motion to refer with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon – Absent; Loreti – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – No; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passes 8-0-0.

O. CITIZEN COMMENTS

- Janet Hansen, 665 Pleasant Street: voting time changes – still feel that we should stick with 8am to 8pm voting hours. How do you educate people with the time changes. People want the road paved/repared. Would like lines repainted and crosswalks redone throughout the town.

P. COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Councilor Loreti: No comments

- Councilor Ellenberg: – request that the Town Manager update on water situation. BSU is on our Town water, we should be asking the State for more money for our water treatment plant because the state is taking from Bridgewater. Spoke with the Town Clerk about election hours – should stay 8am to 8pm.
- Councilor Murphy – reminded people about the open forum on Wednesday night. If you cannot make it reach out to him.
- Councilor Linde – noted there are plenty of vacancies on plenty of boards. Cultural Council does not have enough members.
- Councilor Chase: – reminded people about the open forum.
- Councilor Striggles – reminded people about attending the Town Manager Open Forum tomorrow night. Martin Luther King Jr. Day was yesterday and I will never be silent.
- Councilor McGrath: no comments
- Dr. Perry – meeting tomorrow night about the Town Manager open position. Opportunity to let your voice be heard. Earlier today the Governor was at BSU looking at the Cyber program. Noted to her that we as a town with a regional school system is struggling. She agreed that the formula is flawed.

Q. EXECUTIVE SESSION – None

R. ADJOURNMENT

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

A voice vote was taken on the motion to refer with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon – Absent; Loreti – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – No; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passes 8-0-0.

Meeting adjourned at 8:28pm.

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, February 4, 2025, to approve the aforementioned minutes, as submitted.