



Town of Bridgewater

Town Council

February 4, 2025

7:30 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 quorum being duly present, Town Council President Kevin Perry called the meeting of the Bridgewater Town Council to order at 7:36pm on Tuesday, February 4, 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 and Town Attorney Jason Rawlins.

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

- Aloysius "Al" Sullivan, US Army Korean War Era, passed away on January 18, 2025
- Edward A. Curley, JR., US Air Force Gulf War (Desert Storm), passed away on January 15, 2025

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

a) January 21, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Councilor Chase made a motion to approve the January 21, 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 passes 8-0.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Councilor Perry reminded residents to complete their census and that dog licenses are due.

PROCLAMATIONS – None

CITIZEN OPEN FORUM

- Christina Ajemian, BCCR: discussed the raising of the Juneteenth and Pride flag. Hopeful that the flag poles will move quickly.
- Elizabeth O'Brien, 15 Willis Road: spoke about the funding issues within the school.
- Kathryn McDonald, 2 Oldfield Road: spoke about class sizes and funding issues.
- Sam Baumgarten, 60 Short Street: express appreciation for the parents being here for education. Spoke about the Town's response to the executive orders coming out of the White House.
- Ashley Mallard, 270 Grange Park: spoke about the school budget, teacher and union president.
- Jennifer Capuano, 32 Oak Street: Concerned parent speaking about school budget
- Janet Hanson, Pleasant Street: voting hours changing, disagree, stay the same. What is the tax revenue received from the retail pot shops and what has the cost been.
- Eric Hoy, 120 Oakridge Lane: teacher and parent that spoke about the future of the schools.
- Patrick Henderson, 40 Easy Street: 14 positions being added K to 8 is there space? Housing development by Friendly's how are we going to handle that? BSU students are not trained professionals. Seniors helping is an insult to union members.
- John Savage, 38 Magnolia Way: morale in the class – nothing was discussed about the students. No assistants in the classroom, teachers struggling.
- Emily, 40 Ashford Lane: 3rd grade teacher, spoke about class sizes and special education teachers; teachers are tired and defeated.
- Bill Wood, 388 Hayward Street: 25-12 Ordinance about elections – asking about restoring to the bylaws. 7am to 8pm inclusive. In the town for over 70 years.
- Jenna Thomas, 95 Magnolia Way: spoke about punting the budget to FY27. Children should not be those tough decisions.
- Amanda Haley, 1504 Old Pleasant Street: spoke about school, mom of 3 in the district.
- Chrstine Behnke, 36 Magnolia Way: spoke about the school budget and sending a letter to the State

Dr. Perry noted that we hear your passion and will see what we can do.

APPOINTMENTS

- a) Cultural Council: Matthew Putnam (2025 - 2028)
Councilor Linde made a motion to approve the appointment of Matthew Putnam to the Cultural Council, 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 – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passes 8-0.

Councilor McGrath asked how the Citizens Advisory Committee picked people and would like them to come to a meeting.

F. HEARINGS

- a) Proposed Ordinance D-FY25-002: Revisions to the Administrative Code
***Public Hearing:** Advertised in the 1/21/25 Enterprise. Rules and Procedures voted 3-0 to recommend at their 10/8/24 meeting.*

Councilor Chase noted that this Ordinance was discussed at length at a Rules meeting and amendments were made.

Councilor Perry opened the Public Hearing at 8:48pm.

Councilor Perry asked if there were any questions from the public. None
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 had questions:

Councilor Linde asked if someone is appointed to a Town Committee can they run for elected office? Town Attorney Rawlins noted that it is addressed in the Admin code and he will look into it and respond.

Councilor Perry closed the Public Hearing at 8:54pm.

Councilor Striggles made a motion to approve Ordinance D-FY25-002, which was duly seconded by Councilor Chase.

A roll-call 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 passes 8-0.

G. LICENSE TRANSACTIONS

- a) Petition P-2025-018: Alteration of Premises of a Pouring License Establishment - Black Hat Brew Works
***Public Hearing:** Noticed in the 1/21/25 Enterprise. Abutter letters sent 1/21/25.*

Councilor Perry opened the Public Hearing at 8:56pm.

Councilor Perry asked if there were any questions from the public. None
Councilor Perry asked if anyone wished to speak in favor:

- Bill Wood, Hayward Street: was on Town Council when we first approved the pouring license. Great business in town.
- Christine Ajamian, 221 Aldrich: Black Hat Brew is very supportive with fundraisers in town. I support the expansion.

Councilor Perry asked if anyone wished to speak in opposition, no one spoke.
Councilor Perry asked if any councilors had questions:

Councilor Perry closed the Public Hearing at 8:58pm

Councilor Linde made a motion to approve Petition P-2025-018, 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 – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passes 8-0.

PRESENTATIONS - None

- a) Tree Committee Presentation - Ray Ajemian, Chair

This presentation is being rescheduled to another date.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- a) Flagpole Cost Update
Acting Town Manager Robinson noted the flag pole project would include electrical service, moving one flag pole, repairing the hardscape and creating hardscape and purchasing two flag poles. Proposed price is \$20k. Did not plan the project this year so no expense budget. Possible opportunity of fundraising which the Town could match.

Councilor Perry noted that he spoke with Lisa Buzzell-Curly about possible fundraising for \$10K by April.

Councilor Linde asked if the prep work on the bottom could be done by the Vocational School. Acting Town Manager Robinson noted that she would have to ask the staff.

- b) Town Wide Crosswalk and Line Repainting Update
Acting Town Manager Robinson noted that the DPW is looking to prioritize streets that are most impactful, no funding to do all the streets in town. Crosswalks are done but some are higher volume and are contracted out because different material is used.

Councilor Striggles was asked by the BIA President Hunt to inquire about the spray spigots on the fountain. Received a letter and will send copy to Acting Town Manager Robinson. Councilor Striggles also noted that there were two residents in the audience tonight that needed an ESL interpreter, could we possibly get a volunteer at our meetings? Maybe get someone at BSU to fulfill volunteer requirements and can have someone come here.

Councilor Linde noted that Massasoit has a program and he would find out from that side.

Councilor Ellenberg noted that hearing devices for Council Chambers would be good for those that are hard of hearing and want to attend the meetings.

Councilor Murphy asked about mitigation funds for the new developments going in. Perkins Development, are there any mitigation funds involved in that?

Councilor Ellenberg noted that some of the older residents in town who can't get to a meeting are asking about hybrid meetings. Acting Town Manager Robinson noted that the meetings are live on the local cable channel and on You Tube.

Councilor McGrath asked if the Town works with MA Tourism. Acting Town Manager Robinson noted that she does not know if they have in the past.

DISCUSSIONS – None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Town Manager Search Ad Hoc Committee:

Councilor Murphy updated the council to note that 26 applicants applied for the Town Manager position. 7 candidates are being interviewed in person and then the finalists will interview with the full council at a meeting in March.

LEGISLATION FOR ACTION

- a) Ordinance D-FY25-001: Proposed Zoning Order Amendment - Senior Village Housing Development
Advertised in the 1/24/25 Enterprise. Planning Board and Community Economic Development held a joint Public Hearing on 10/16/24 and voted to recommend with amendments.

Councilor Chase made a motion to approve Ordinance D-FY25-001, which was duly seconded by Councilor McGrath.

A voice vote was taken with the results recorded as follows: McKinnon – Absent; Loreti – Absent at the time of the vote; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passes 7-0.

- b) Proposed Ordinance D-FY25-012: Proposed Amendment to Part II – Administrative Code: Chapter 60, Article I, Section 1 - Elections
Rules and Procedures voted 3-0 with amendments at their 1/15/25 meeting

Councilor Chase discussed the amendments made to the Ordinance in Rules and Procedures.

Councilor Striggles noted that she could never support removing time from someone's schedule to voice their vote.

Councilor Murphy made a motion to table Ordinance D-FY25-012, which was duly seconded by Councilor Striggles.

A roll-call 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 passes 8-0.

- c) Proposed Ordinance D-FY25-013: Proposed Amendment to Part II – Administrative Code: Chapter 290, Article I, Section 1 Shade Trees
Rules and Procedures voted 3-0 to recommend at their 1/15/25 meeting.

Councilor Chase made a motion to refer Ordinance D-FY25-013 to advertising, which was duly seconded by Councilor Striggles.

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

OLD BUSINESS – None

NEW BUSINESS

- a) Order O-FY25-037: Acceptance of Donation - Oliari Charitable Foundation
Councilor Linde made a motion to refer Order O-FY25-037 to Budget & Finance and Finance Committee. This 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 – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passes 8-0.

- b) Order O-FY25-038: Acceptance of Grant – Firefighter Safety Grant Equipment Program
Councilor Linde made a motion to refer Order O-FY25-038 to Budget & Finance and Finance Committee. This 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 – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passes 8-0.

- c) Order O-FY25-039: Adoption of a 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan
Councilor Linde made a motion to refer Order O-FY25-039 to Budget & Finance and Finance Committee. This 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 – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passes 8-0.

- d) Order O-FY25-040: General Fund Capital Transfer Order
Councilor Linde made a motion to refer Order O-FY25-040 to Budget & Finance and Finance Committee. This 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 – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion passes 8-0.

- e) Order O-FY25-041: Capital Transfer Order – Water Enterprise Fund
Councilor Striggles made a motion to refer Order O-FY25-041 to Budget & Finance and Finance Committee. This 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 passes 8-0.

- f) Proposed Ordinance D-FY25-016: Bridgewater Town Charter Article III, Section 4-3, Elected Officials Powers of Appointment
Councilor Chase made a motion to refer Ordinance D-FY25-016 to the Rules and Procedures Committee. This 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 passes 8-0.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

- Nick Bagas, 23 Church Street: noted that crosswalks are a horror show, take life in your own hand crossing the street.
- Janet Hanson, 665 Pleasant Street: thank you for tabling election. Painting – I hope the crosswalks are a priority along with the lines. Traffic change being proposed for the center – roundabout is ridiculous.
- Christine Ajamian, Aldrich Road: would like to meet with the Town Manager to discuss the flag pole project and to discuss an alternative to the raising of the flags if flag poles not completed.
- Bill Woods, Hayward Street: bicycle navigating the pot holes on High Street. Can't find anything on the town website. Roadways plan, is there an updated plan.
- MJ Spagone, 5 Lakeshore Center: democracy in action tonight, speaking before the council. Now the end of the meeting is bare. Would love to see residents that attended earlier have that same passion on the Boards and Commissions.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Councilor McGrath: attended Garden Club at the Library and they are offering a \$2k scholarship to a senior at BR.
- Councilor Striggles: thanked fellow councilors that checked in and let me know what happened at school committee meeting. Grateful to those that came out and spoke about the state of the schools and the town.
- Councilor Chase: well past the time for a bandaid approach to school funding, going to require time and attention for the council.
- Councilor Linde: important that we work together for an approach to the school funding; make it public and transparent. Get residents involved in other issues. Only 2 members of the Historical Commission did not meet, need new members.
- Councilor Murphy: thanked everyone for coming out. Movement happening in town. Have my

commitment to back the deficit, we need to start now. Every agenda has a plan to address this. How we are going to attack it.

- Councilor Ellenberg: thanked everyone who attended. We need to make the pool of money larger. An override or go to the state and get more money from them. Council consider talking to Raynham and going forward with a movement to get more money out of the state, a law suit or through our state rep.
- Councilor Loreti: thanked the parents and teachers who showed up tonight; we are committed. Encourage folks to have an open mind about apartments so we can increase the pot for everyone.
- Dr. Perry: thanked everyone that came tonight. Hear and understand, the school needs money. We just need to know where to find it. It's going to be a challenge. The answer is not going to be done overnight. An override is not going to happen in two months. We will see what other sources there are for FY26.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – None

ADJOURNMENT

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

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 passes 8-0.

Meeting adjourned at 10:18p.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, February 18, 2025, to approve the aforementioned minutes, as submitted.