



Town of Bridgewater

Town Council

February 18, 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 quorum being duly present, Town Council President Kevin Perry called the meeting of the Bridgewater Town Council to order at 7:00pm on Tuesday, February 18, 2025 in the Council Chambers.

Present: Fred Chase, Paul Murphy, Mary McGrath, Kevin Perry, 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:

- Barbara Dipoli, US Air Force & US Army Iraqi Freedom, passed away January 14, 2025
- Frank McAlpine, US Army Vietnam War, passed away February 2, 2025

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- a) February 4, 2025 Joint Meeting with Town Council, Finance Committee and Bridgewater-Raynham School Committee Meeting Minutes

Councilor Striggles made a motion to approve the February 4, 2025 Joint meeting minutes, which was duly seconded by Councilor Chase.

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

- b) February 4, 2025 Town Council Meeting Minutes

Councilor Loreti made a motion to approve the February 4, 2025 Town Council meeting minutes, which was duly seconded by Councilor Linde.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Councilor Perry once again noted that residents should complete their census and the deadline for registering dogs to avoid a late fee is February 28th.

Council Vice President Murphy read a statement regarding the Resolution that is being introduced tonight. He noted that the resolution does not make Bridgewater a sanctuary city, nor is it designed to promote Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives.

PROCLAMATIONS – None

CITIZEN OPEN FORUM

Councilor Linde made a motion to allow Jenise-Campbell Means to speak. This motion as duly seconded by Councilor Striggles.

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

- Jenise Campbell-Means, BCCR President: noted the resolution on the wall on the first floor because of a hate incident in the town and what it represents.
- Marilee Kenney Hunt, 80 Austin Street: thanked Councilor Murphy for the definition of the resolution and thanked that the fountain is on the agenda.
- Carlton Hunt, 80 Austin Street: met with Town Manager Robinson today and Summer Street Park acquisition, submission of final design and specifications by June 1, 2025 – what is the plan for completing the park design by June 1, 2025?
- Beryl Domingo, 36 Saddle Drive: thank you for your commitment to serving the town. Spoke about the resolution on the welcoming community for all. Thanked the council.
- Sam Baumgarten, 60 Short Street: thanked Mr. Murphy for bringing forth the resolution and the statement.
- Karen Sigel, 75 Three Rivers Drive: community page is not transparent, not user friendly. Found out about Resolution on a Boston page.
- Jim Wilder, 185 Curve Street: does not change anything, why do we need to write this resolution. Language says regardless of federal laws, have a problem with that.
- Kelly, 5 Jessica Way: found out about resolution on a Boston Twitter page. Feel like it is a very inclusive place to live, came from Brockton. Going to get more involved with Town Council meetings.

APPOINTMENTS – None

HEARINGS

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

***Public Hearing:** Advertised in the 2/3/25 Enterprise. Rules and Procedures voted 3-0 to approve at their 12/12/24 meeting.*

Councilor Perry opened the Public Hearing at 7:21p.m.

Councilor Linde gave a brief update on the Ordinance.

Councilor Perry asked if anyone in the audience had any questions. No questions were asked.

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

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

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

Councilor McGrath asked if there would be more traffic on the other streets and Councilor Perry noted that this would be keeping the trucks off of the smaller roads.

Councilor Perry closed the Public Hearing at 7:26pm.

Councilor Linde made a motion to approve General Ordinance D-FY25-011, which was duly seconded by Councilor Chase.

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

LICENSE TRANSACTIONS – None

PRESENTATIONS

a) Tree Committee Presentation - Ray Ajemian, Chair

Ray Ajamian, Chair of the Tree Committee gave an update on the history of the tree committee.

Noted who the current members are. Spoke about different trees in town.

Mitigation for tree removal, an applicant may be required to make a payment. There is a shade tree ordinance that takes care of the town trees. If you cut down a shared tree it is a violation in town and can be fined. Developments are required to plant trees (street trees). In operation for two years, have some accomplishments but still have work to do.

Arbor Day in 2023; Williams School Arbor Day 2024, also had a contest with students to draw trees. Signs will be put up throughout the town.

Proposed update to Chapter 290, Shade Trees sent to Town Manager. Proposed Tree Mitigation Schedule. Planning Board adopted a list of street trees good for the town. Planted trees on Broad, Main, and at the Senior Center. Held a forum last year and will be having another one on April 1st.

The State requires towns to have Tree Wardens. We are working with the Town Manager for an on-call Tree Warden. Tree Committee should have an arborist but the way the code was written it had to be a town resident, but that was recently changed.

Would like to do a tree survey, would like an established budget, forestry department/bucket truck reinstituted and public education venue.

National Grid contacts the Tree Warden when they are coming into town to cut trees.

Trees are important and the town has to take accountability.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

a) Fire Station Update

Acting Town Manager Robinson gave a update on the Fire Station and noted that even though it's been cold weather the project still remains ahead of schedule by a month. Progress made every day. National Grid responded about the pole relocation, transformer cannot be delivered until date set. In the packet is the change order log, committee meets every Wednesday.

b) Academy Building Fountain

Acting Town Manager Robinson noted that she spent time with Facilities Coordinator and the process is every Spring it is opened, cleaned and serviced and pump calibrated. Pressure adjustments need to be made, that might require a new pump (approximately \$2,500) or a new fountain head. In the past few years the fountain was turned off because there was water limitations.

Councilor Linde noted that the BIA donated to the town, has the history, maybe talk to those folks.

c) Public Meetings - Hybrid Options and ESL Services

Acting Town Manager Robinson noted that there have been requests for hybrid meetings and they are working on how to achieve that in Council Chamber. Technology changes would need to take place, another staff member would need to run the Zoom. Not an easy task, working on it.

Acting Town Manager Robinson also noted that the law does require that if someone lets us know 24 hours in advance that they need certain services to participate in a meeting, we would have to get the State to help – approx. cost is \$500 per meeting. Have not had any requests. There is equipment to buy but have not looked into it yet.

Councilor Linde noted that he will inquire to Stoughton about what they use for hearing impaired.

d) Perkins Development Mitigation

Acting Town Manager Robinson noted that it is up to \$200k in mitigation for this project which could include sidewalks, etc. but it has not started yet and there is currently no start date.

Councilor Linde asked if the deadlines for Summer Street Park could be met. Would like the topic on the next agenda.

DISCUSSIONS – None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councilor Linde noted that a joint hybrid meeting between the Finance Committee and Budget and Finance Committee took place prior to the Town Council meeting.

Councilor Murphy noted that the Town Manager Ad Hoc Committee held interviews on 2/8/25 and 4 individuals are being put forth to the full council.

LEGISLATION FOR ACTION

- a) Order O-FY25-032: Acceptance of Non Recurring Revenue to Capital - Department of Corrections
Budget & Finance voted 3-0 and Finance Committee voted 5-0 at a joint meeting held on 2/28/25.

Councilor Linde made a motion to approve Order O-FY25-032, which was duly seconded by Councilor Striggles.

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

- b) Order O-FY25-037: Acceptance of Donation - Oliari Charitable Foundation
Budget & Finance voted 3-0 and Finance Committee voted 5-0 at a joint meeting held on 2/28/25.

Councilor Linde made a motion to approve Order O-FY25-037, which was duly seconded by Councilor Chase.

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

- c) Order O-FY25-038: Acceptance of Grant – Firefighter Safety Grant Equipment Program
Budget & Finance voted 3-0 and Finance Committee voted 5-0 at a joint meeting held on 2/28/25.

Councilor Linde made a motion to approve Order O-FY25-038, which was duly seconded by Councilor Striggles.

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

- d) Order O-FY25-039: Adoption of a 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan
Budget & Finance voted 3-0 and Finance Committee voted 5-0 at a joint meeting held on 2/28/25.

Councilor Linde made a motion to approve Order O-FY25-039, which was duly seconded by Councilor Striggles.

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

- e) Order O-FY25-040: General Fund Capital Transfer Order
Budget & Finance voted 3-0 and Finance Committee voted 5-0 at a joint meeting held on 2/28/25.

Councilor Linde made a motion to approve Order O-FY25-040, which was duly seconded by Councilor Striggles.

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

- f) Order O-FY25-041: Capital Transfer Order – Water Enterprise Fund
Budget & Finance voted 3-0 and Finance Committee voted 5-0 at a joint meeting held on 2/28/25.

Councilor Linde made a motion to approve Order O-FY25-041, which was duly seconded by Councilor Striggles.

Councilor Ellenberg asked if the water the college uses will be in the study and will money come back to the Town. Councilor Ellenberg also asked if the college is charged for their water and how much do they pay. Acting Town Manager Robinson noted that all water

Councilor Murphy asked if we knew who the company was doing the study. Acting Town Manager Robinson noted that the Town has reached out to firms and that the general taxpayers are not paying for the study. – do we know the company that is doing the study? BR – reached out to firms. General taxpayers are not paying for the study.

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

- g) Petition P-2025-019: Town Election Warrant - April 26, 2025
Councilor Chase made a motion to approve Petition P-2025-019, which was duly seconded by Councilor Loreti.

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

OLD BUSINESS – None

NEW BUSINESS

- a) Order O-FY25-042: Transfer Order - CPC Purchase and Restoration of Samuel Edson's Coroners Book
Councilor Linde made a motion to refer Order O-FY25-042 to Budget and Finance and Finance Committee, which was duly seconded by Councilor Chase.

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

- b) Order O-FY25-043: CPC Additional Funds - Restoration of Parthenon Frieze
Councilor Chase made a motion to refer Order O-FY25-043 to Budget and Finance and Finance Committee, which was duly seconded by Councilor Striggles.

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

- c) Order O-FY25-044: Contract Ratification - Town Manager
Councilor Striggles made a motion to retain Order O-FY25-044 at Town Council, which was duly seconded by Councilor Chase.

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

- d) Resolution R-FY25-006: Asking the Town Manager to explore applying for the Emerging Contaminants in Small or Disadvantaged Communities (EC-SDC) Grant as Part of a Comprehensive Strategy to Fund PFAS Remediation
Councilor Ellenberg made a motion to retain Resolution R-FY25-006 at Town Council, which was duly seconded by Councilor Striggles.

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

- e) Resolution R-FY25-007: A Resolution Affirming Bridgewater as a Welcoming Community for All
Councilor Chase noted that he is supportive of this resolution and that Councilor Murphy's comments earlier helped to explain why.

Councilor Striggles noted that today was a challenging day as a councilor, Twitter post naming her personally, no one coming to her defense.

Councilor Striggles made a motion to retain Resolution R-FY25-007 at Town Council which was duly seconded by Councilor Chase.

Councilor Murphy made a motion to amend Resolution R-FY25-007 by removing all words after "valued: in paragraph 3 and all words after "individuals" in paragraph 6. This motion was duly seconded by Councilor Striggles.

Councilor Loreti read proclamation on the first floor, declaring Bridgewater a welcoming community. We all live in this community as stated. Not sure this is needed. Appreciate the spirit. This resolution does not do anything new. Could be held accountable.

Councilor Ellenberg noted that trying to be DEI and sanctuary city, concerns of federal funding.

Councilor McGrath noted that the town is already kind, feels it will divide the community, cannot support this.

Councilor Perry asked for a 5 minute recess at 8:30pm.

At 8:37pm Town Council meeting was back in session. Councilor Perry reminded the audience to keep the talking to a minimum.

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

Councilor Loreti made a motion to table Resolution R-FY25-007, which was duly seconded by Councilor Ellenberg.

Councilor Linde read the proclamation on the wall that is hanging on the first floor that was adopted by the Town Council noting that it needed to be updated.

Councilor Loreti noted that perhaps the proclamation downstairs gets amended. Attorney Rawlins noted that Resolutions are statements of the current board, not a prior board so a new resolution would need to be drafted.

Councilor Ellenberg noted that she is a person of faith and actions speak louder than words.

A roll call vote was taken for the motion to table with the results recorded as follows: Loreti – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – No; Perry – No; Linde – No; Chase – No; Striggles – No; McGrath – Yea; Motion to Table defeated 3-5.

A roll call vote was taken for the motion to retain at Town Council with the results recorded as follows: Loreti – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Perry – Yea; Linde – Yea; Chase – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Motion to keep at council passed 8-0.

- f) Proposed Ordinance D-FY25-017: Proposed Amendment to Part II – Administrative Code: Chapter 60, Article I, Section 1 – Elections
Councilor Striggles made a motion to refer Ordinance D-FY25-017 to Rules and Procedures, which was duly seconded by Councilor McGrath.

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

- g) Order O-FY25-045: Acceptance of Donation - Discovery Channel's Expedition X Circle the Globe Production
Councilor Linde made a motion to refer Order O-FY25-045 to Budget and Finance and Finance Committee, which was duly seconded by Councilor Chase.

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

CITIZEN COMMENTS

- Laurene Powers, Sunshine Drive: people commented that this resolution was not needed but Councilor Striggles noted what she just went through. How can they say it is not needed.
- John Healey, - document says immigration status, putting ourselves at risk for federal laws, funding.
- Shawn Kennedy, 475 summer street: urge you to vote no. intent is vague, puts national politics into our local community.
- Marilee Hunt, Austin Street: when we moved to Bridgewater we did because it was welcoming.

- Ray Ajamian: proclamation on first floor came about because of a hate incident at the post office. However you vote on this, I hope you do not vote on the basis of fear.
- Sam Baumgarten, 60 Short Street: who is creating all this fear, the federal government. We are afraid of federal funds, statements are important. If we are a welcoming community what is the harm of bringing another statement forward.
- John, 261 South Street: thanked Councilors Murphy and Linde about having an open session a few weeks ago, took advantage of that, found it very useful. Encourage others to take advantage of it when it is offered again. Councilor Loreti said it the best on the resolution, Bridgewater is a welcoming community.
- Carlton Hunt, Austin Street: spoke about not being welcome in a town and feels that it is happening in this town.
- Brandon, 1093 High Street: my generation is welcoming to all people. Immigration status is not on the proclamation downstairs. Discrimination is wrong and my generation is tired of listening to it.
- MJ Spagone, 5 LakeShore Center: first woman to be appointed as chair of the Finance committee. Committee is in need of 2 additional members. Implore someone in this room to join me on the finance committee. How welcoming this community has been to me. Have the courage to stand up and speak from my heart and mind.
- Sandra Wright: never experienced hate or discrimination, need to earn respect. It's how you are brought up in your home.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Councilor McGrath: noted that she was sorry that Councilor Striggles was going through what she was going through.
- Councilor Striggles: no comments
- Councilor Chase: noted that it is within the Town Council to make resolutions from time to time. It is a statement on our feelings on a particular subject. That is our free speech. No action, does not require anything.
- Councilor Linde: would like to see some kind of middle ground.
- Councilor Murphy: believes it's a time to reaffirm our commitment and will continue to work with folks to amend. Still a commitment to be made. To Councilor Striggles - the council supports you and are saddened to see what was put out today.
- Councilor Ellenberg: DEI and Sanctuary city subfortuse language which can be determined by the Feds. I do not think it leads us in a good position. As a person of faith we need to treat everyone with respect and dignity. Resolution is not needed.
Ad hoc committee had 26 applicants but only 4 are being sent forward. Opened up to the rest of the council.
- Councilor Loreti: sorry that Councilor Striggles received what she received.

- Dr. Perry: noted that Councilor Striggles did not deserve to be treated like she was treated. No one is coming together in the middle. We are all here as volunteers, no pay, trying to do a good job for the citizens of Bridgewater.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- a) MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21(a) (2): To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel.

Councilor Perry read the Executive Session language into the record.

Councilor Chase made a motion to go into Executive Session, which was duly seconded by Councilor Linde.

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

ADJOURNMENT

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