



Town of Bridgewater Rules and Procedure Committee

May 27, 2025

7:00 PM

The meeting will be held virtually via Zoom.

To attend via video, click on the link below:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83275109787>

To attend via phone, dial: 1(646) 876-9923

Meeting ID: 832 7510 9787

MEETING AGENDA

Disclosure: Pursuant to Section 20 of Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2020, An Act Relative to Extending Certain Covid-19 Measures Adopted During the State of Emergency, and the March 31, 2025, extension granted by Chapter 22 of the Acts of 2022, this meeting for the Town of Bridgewater will be fully remote and accessible to the public through remote participation to the greatest extent possible. No in-person attendance is permitted. Citizens who wish to tune in to the meeting may do so via Zoom.

A quorum of the Town Council may be in attendance

A. Call to Order

B. Public Comment

C. Items Referred

- a) Proposed Ordinance D-FY25-010: Proposed Amendment to Chapter 157, Article II, Section 1
- b) Proposed Ordinance D-FY25-016: Bridgewater Town Charter Article III, Section 4-3, Elected Officials Powers of Appointment
- c) Proposed Ordinance D-FY25-017: Proposed Amendment to Part II – Administrative Code: Chapter 60, Article I, Section 1 - Elections
- d) Ordinance D-FY25-019: Adoption of Clause 22I of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 59, Section 5 (“HERO Act”)
- e) General Ordinance D-FY25-020: Adoption of Clause 22J of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 59, Section 5 (“HERO Act”)

D. Public Comment

E. Adjournment of Meeting



Bridgewater Town Council

Introduced By: Mary Mcgrath
 Mark Linde, Councilor
 Date Introduced: 10/15/2024
 First Reading: 10/15/2024
 Second Reading:
 Amendments Adopted:
 Third Reading:
 Date Adopted:
 Date Effective:

Proposed Ordinance D-FY25-010: Proposed Amendment to Chapter 157, Article II, Section 1

WHEREAS, in accordance with the Federal Public Law; 116-67, the National POW/MIA Flag Act, which states; The POW/MIA flag is required to be displayed at specified locations to all days on which the U.S. flag is displayed.

WHEREAS, tens of thousands of American veterans have been held captive or are believed missing in action, arising from wars over the course of many decades: and

WHEREAS, the Town of Bridgewater is committed to showing respect and gratitude to those Americans who are classified as prisoners of war or missing in action by flying the POW/MIA flag at the Academy Building at all times.

ORDERED, that the Town Council assembled votes to amend Chapter 157, Article II, Section 1 “Flag Raising” as follows:

4. Flag of the United States *and POW/MIA*: During any Period of Display, a flag approved for public display in the manner permitted hereby shall be flown beneath the flag of the United States *and POW/MIA, which both shall be continuously flown*, in a manner consistent with the United States Code (4 U.S.C. Section 7).

Committee Referrals and Dispositions:

Referral(s)	Disposition(s)
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Attachments: 1. General Code - Flag Raising on Town Property

NOT FOR ACTION - FIRST READING

Chapter 157. Parades and Public Gatherings

Article I. Permit Required

Section 1. Parades

No person shall form or conduct any parade in any public street, public sidewalk or public way within the town, or form or conduct for the purpose of display or demonstration, any procession or assembly of people, except a military funeral or funeral parade or procession, within such public street, sidewalk or way, without first obtaining a written permit from the Chief of Police; and no person shall take part in any such parade, procession or assembly which is not authorized by such a permit.

Section 2. Public Address

No person shall give any public address, speech or harangue in any public street, public square or public park within the town, without a written permit from the Chief of Police.

Article II. Flag Raising on Town Property

Section 1. Flag Raising

The Town of Bridgewater, acting through its Town Council, may allow the raising of a flag on the flagpole located at the Academy Building in observance of an event or occasion, subject to this ordinance (the "Ordinance") and the attached rules appended to this Ordinance (the "Rules"), each as may be amended by the Town Council from time-to-time.

1. Request Procedure. An organization or individual (in either case being resident in the Town of Bridgewater) may request that the Town raise a particular flag by written request presented to the Town Council Clerk. Such request must be received by the Town Council Clerk sufficiently in advance of a regularly scheduled meeting of the Town Council to conform with public notice requirements. The requested period of display (the "Period of Display") may commence no sooner than thirty (30) days following receipt of the request by the Town Council Clerk.

The Town Council will consider approval of the request in accordance with all rules and procedures applicable to matters before the Town Council. A decision to approve or deny the raising of a flag is made in the sole and complete discretion of the Town Council.

2. Appropriate Events. The events and occasions for which a request pursuant to this Ordinance may be considered are limited to events or occasions designated within a formal proclamation duly issued by a governmental authority, as follows:
 - a) A Proclamation issued by the President of the United States;
 - b) A Proclamation issued by the Congress of the United States;
 - c) A Proclamation issued by the Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; or
 - d) A Proclamation issued by the Town Council of Bridgewater, Massachusetts.
3. Period of Display. The Period of Display of a flag to commemorate an event or occasion above-described shall be limited in the following manner:

- a) A flag raising intended to coordinate with a proclamation designating one (1) day of honor, recognition, celebration or remembrance shall be limited in duration to one (1) day of public display to take place on the date set-forth within the proclamation;
- b) A flag raising intended to coordinate with a proclamation designating one week of honor, recognition, celebration or remembrance shall be limited in duration to one (1) week of public display to commence and cease in accordance with the dates specified within the proclamation, or as closely thereto as practicable; and
- c) A flag raising intended to coordinate with a proclamation designating one (1) month of honor, recognition, celebration or remembrance shall be limited in duration to no less than one (1) week and no longer than (1) month of public display, such period to commence in accord with the earliest date set-forth within the proclamation, or as closely thereto as practicable.

4. Flag of the United States and POW/MIA: During any Period of Display, a flag approved for public display in the manner permitted hereby shall be flown beneath the flag of the United States and ***POW/MIA, which both shall be continuously flown***, in a manner consistent with the United States Code (4 U.S.C. §7).

Section 2. Rules Governing Flag Raising

The Flag Raising Ordinance of the Town of Bridgewater (the “Ordinance”) shall be administered in accordance with the following rules (the “Rules”):

1. At no time will the Town of Bridgewater display a flag deemed to be inappropriate or offensive in nature, or a flag supporting discrimination, prejudice or reference to any religious movement. A determination of impropriety in this regard shall be rendered by the Town Council in its sole discretion.
2. A flag proposed for public display shall be considered for approval which features words, symbols, designs or colors customarily associated with the event or occasion to be commemorated and which does not otherwise, in the determination of Town Council, convey or suggest policies, positions or proposals beyond the intended scope of the proclamation with which it is purported to correspond.
3. A photograph of the actual flag proposed for display under this Ordinance shall be provided to the Town Council Clerk together with the written request for display and shall be deemed to constitute a necessary component of the request.
4. A flag proposed for display under this Ordinance shall be clean and serviceable, and corresponding in size with the flag of the United States beneath which it will be flown.
5. Flag raisings must occur on a normal business day during regular business hours as may be determined appropriate by Town administration. Requests outside of normal business days hours cannot be accommodated.

6. A flag delivered for public display must be presented to the Town Council Clerk during normal business days and regular business hours and, following the Period of Display, promptly retrieved from the Town Council Clerk. Neither the Town nor the Town Council Clerk shall bear responsible for flags not promptly retrieved.
7. If the President or other appropriate authority orders that the U.S. Flag be flown at half-staff, no other flag may be flown therewith during the pendency of such order.
8. The Town of Bridgewater shall bear no responsibility for the loss of or any damage to a flag presented for public display under this Policy.
9. The Town Council may amend or rescind this Policy or the Rules hereunder at any time and any authorization for display made pursuant to this policy may be amended or withdrawn upon appropriate action by the Town Council for any reason.

Chapter 160. Peace and Good Order

Article I. Profane or Obscene Language

Section 1. Disorderly Conduct

No person shall behave himself in a rude or disorderly manner, nor use any indecent, profane or insulting language, in any public way or place in the town.

Article II. Public Nudity

Section 1. Nude Bathing

No person shall bathe in any water of this town, in a state of nudity, in places exposed to public view, or in immediate sight of the occupants of any dwelling.

Article III. Public Nuisance

Section 1. Dangerous Conduct

No person shall throw balls, snowballs, or other missiles nor unnecessarily make any alarming or tumultuous noise, not make or light bonfires, or other fires, not ride upon the hind part of any vehicles without leave, not play at football or other games in any street, public way or square of this town.

Article IV. Impeding a Public Way

Section 1. Obstruction of a Public Way

No person shall loiter or continue to stand on any sidewalk or public place in the town as to obstruct the passage of or to impede or in any matter annoy other persons; nor shall any person in a street or way stand or loiter after being directed by a police officer to move on. No person being a member of an assembly of three or more persons shall disturb the peace by using obscene or profane speech in any public place, or obstruct and interfere with the free passage of foot traffic.



Bridgewater Town Council

Introduced By: Kevin Perry, Councilor
 Date Introduced: 2/4/2025
 First Reading: 2/4/2025
 Second Reading:
 Amendments Adopted:
 Third Reading:
 Date Adopted:
 Date Effective:

Proposed Ordinance D-FY25-016: Bridgewater Town Charter Article III, Section 4-3, Elected Officials Powers of Appointment

ORDERED that the Town Charter, Article III, Section 4-3 be amended as noted below:

(b) Multiple Member Appointive Organizations. - Except as otherwise provided by this charter, the town manager shall appoint all boards, committees and agencies *except ad hoc committees established by a majority vote of the Town Council to assist the Town Council in carrying out the Council's responsibilities*. Members of all appointed boards and committees shall be residents of the town. All appointments of boards, committees and agencies, as defined within the administrative code, shall be subject to the ratification of the town council. The town manager shall form a citizen's advisory committee to help in evaluating and selecting those individuals for appointment. The number and terms of office of the committee shall be established by ordinance.

Said Amendment shall only become effective and is contingent upon approval by the Town Council, the State Legislature and the voters of the Town of Bridgewater

Committee Referrals and Dispositions:

Referral(s)	Disposition(s)
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•	•

NOT FOR ACTION - REQUIRES MAJORITY OF THOSE PRESENT AND VOTING

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Attachments: None

NOT FOR ACTION - REQUIRES MAJORITY OF THOSE PRESENT AND VOTING



Bridgewater Town Council

Introduced By: Johnny Loreti, Councilor
 Date Introduced: 2/18/2025
 First Reading: 2/18/2025
 Second Reading:
 Amendments Adopted:
 Third Reading:
 Date Adopted:
 Date Effective:

Proposed Ordinance D-FY25-017: Proposed Amendment to Part II – Administrative Code: Chapter 60, Article I, Section 1 - Elections

WHEREAS, in accordance with the provisions of Section 2-06 of the Bridgewater Home Rule Charter relative to amendments to the Town ordinances, it is therefore:

ORDERED, that the Town Council assembled votes to amend the Administrative Code, Chapter 60, Article I, Section 1 by removing current section and replace with:

Chapter 60. Elections
 Article I. Hours
 Section 1. Election Hours

For all elections, the polls shall be open at 7:00 a.m. and shall remain open until 8:00 p.m.

Explanation:

This amendment ensures that all elections held in the Town of Bridgewater—whether Annual Town Elections, Special Town Elections, or State Elections—will have uniform polling hours from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., eliminating any discrepancies in voting hours.

Committee Referrals and Dispositions:

Referral(s)	Disposition(s)
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Attachments: None



Bridgewater Town Council

Introduced By: Johnny Loreti, Councilor
Fred Chase, Councilor
Sonya Striggles, Councilor

Date Introduced: 4/8/2025

First Reading: 4/8/2025

Second Reading:

Amendments Adopted:

Third Reading:

Date Adopted:

Date Effective:

Ordinance D-FY25-019: Adoption of Clause 22I of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 59, Section 5 (“HERO Act”)

WHEREAS, the HERO Act mandates that property tax exemptions under clauses 22, 22A, 22B, 22C, 22E, or 22F shall be increased annually by the amount equal to the increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for that year, as determined by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Revenue shall annually inform each municipality of the amount of such increase to ensure that veterans' exemptions maintain their value over time; and

WHEREAS, the HERO Act helps provide meaningful and sustainable financial relief to eligible veterans.

NOW THEREFORE, in accordance with Section 2-06 of the Bridgewater Home Rule Charter, the Town Council hereby adopts the following as a General Ordinance of the Town:

SECTION 1: PURPOSE

The purpose of this ordinance is to adopt Clause 22I of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 59, Section 5, in order to provide CPI-adjusted property tax exemptions to eligible veterans beginning in Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26).

SECTION 2: ADOPTION OF CLAUSE 22I – CPI-ADJUSTED PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS

Pursuant to Clause 22I, the Town of Bridgewater shall adjust property tax exemptions for eligible veterans based on the annual Consumer Price Index (CPI). The exemption amounts shall be revised each fiscal year in accordance with the CPI as determined by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The projected FY26 adjustment is 3.3%.

- **Eligibility:** Veterans currently receiving property tax exemptions under Chapter 59, Section 5.

NOT FOR ACTION - FIRST READING

SECTION 3: IMPLEMENTATION & ADMINISTRATION

(a) The Bridgewater Board of Assessors shall be responsible for administering these exemptions and applying annual CPI adjustments.

(b) Eligible veterans must meet existing requirements under G.L. c. 59, §5 and submit applications as required by the Bridgewater Assessor’s Office.

(c) The Veterans’ Services Office shall confirm the eligibility of applicants under Clauses 22, 22A, 22B, 22C, 22E, or 22F.

(d) The exemptions shall be reflected in the tax bills issued for the applicable fiscal year.

SECTION 4: EFFECTIVE DATE

This ordinance shall take effect upon passage and approval as required by law and shall be applicable beginning Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26).

SECTION 5: SEVERABILITY

If any provision of this ordinance is found to be invalid or unenforceable, the remaining provisions shall continue in full force and effect.

Committee Referrals and Dispositions:

Referral(s)	Disposition(s)
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•	•

Attachments: None



Bridgewater Town Council

Introduced By: Johnny Loreti, Councilor
Date Introduced: 5/20/2025
First Reading: 5/20/2025
Second Reading:
Amendments Adopted:
Third Reading:
Date Adopted:
Date Effective:

General Ordinance D-FY25-020: Adoption of Clause 22J of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 59, Section 5 (“HERO Act”)

WHEREAS, the HERO Act provides for increased property tax exemptions to service-connected disabled veterans to further recognize and support their service; and

WHEREAS, Clause 22J of the Act authorizes municipalities to double current exemption amounts for disabled veterans; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Bridgewater seeks to offer enhanced financial relief to those with service-connected disabilities.

NOW THEREFORE, in accordance with Section 2-06 of the Bridgewater Home Rule Charter, the Town Council hereby adopts the following as a General Ordinance of the Town:

SECTION 1: PURPOSE

The purpose of this ordinance is to adopt Clause 22J of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 59, Section 5, in order to increase property tax exemptions for service-connected disabled veterans beginning in Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26).

SECTION 2: ADOPTION OF CLAUSE 22J – INCREASED EXEMPTIONS FOR DISABLED VETERANS

Pursuant to Clause 22J, the Town of Bridgewater shall increase property tax exemptions for service-connected disabled veterans by up to 50% of their current exemption amount, effective FY26.

- **Veterans with a 10%-90% disability rating** shall receive an exemption increase from \$400 to \$600.
- **Veterans with a 100% disability rating** shall receive an exemption increase from \$1,000 to \$1,500.
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NOT FOR ACTION - FIRST READING

SECTION 3: IMPLEMENTATION & ADMINISTRATION

- (a) The Bridgewater Board of Assessors shall be responsible for administering these exemptions.
- (b) Eligible veterans must meet existing requirements under G.L. c. 59, §5 and submit applications as required by the Bridgewater Assessor’s Office.
- (c) The Veterans’ Services Office shall confirm the eligibility of applicants under Clauses 22, 22A, 22B, 22C, 22E, or 22F.
- (d) The exemptions shall be reflected in the tax bills issued for the applicable fiscal year.

SECTION 4: EFFECTIVE DATE

This ordinance shall take effect upon passage and approval as required by law and shall be applicable beginning Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26).

SECTION 5: SEVERABILITY

If any provision of this ordinance is found to be invalid or unenforceable, the remaining provisions shall continue in full force and effect.

Committee Referrals and Dispositions:

Referral(s)	Disposition(s)
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•	•
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Attachments: None