



Town of Bridgewater

Town Council

May 6, 2025

7:00 PM

66 Central Square

Academy Building

Council Chamber - Second Floor

The Town Council meeting was streamed Live via You Tube.

MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Current Council President Perry called the Town Council meeting to order at 7:00pm on Tuesday, May 6, 2025 in the Council Chambers.

Present: Sean Kennedy, Adelene Ellenberg, Sonya Striggles, Mary McGrath, Johnny Loreti, Dr. Perry, Paul Murphy, Marilee Hunt and Mark Linde.

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

Councilor Perry read the name of veteran who recently passed away and held a moment of silence:

- Louis P. Alberghini. US Army. Passed away on April 21st

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- a) April 22, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Councilor Striggles made a motion to approve the meeting minutes from April 22, 2025, which was seconded by Councilor Loreti.

A voice vote was taken with the results as follows: Kennedy – did not vote; Ellenberg – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Loreti – Yea; Perry – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Hunt – did not vote; Linde - Yea. Motion passed 9-0.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

- a) Outgoing Presidential Remarks

Councilor Perry noted the accomplishments that occurred over the course of him being President. Thanked fellow councilors for their commitment and noted that he was proud to support the Town of Bridgewater.

- b) Reorganization of the Council: Elect President and Vice President

Town Clerk Tina Larson conducted the President election and asked if there were any nominations.

Councilor Striggles nominated Councilor Loreti, which was duly second by Councilor McGrath.

Councilor Hunt nominated Councilor Linde, which was duly seconded by Councilor Kennedy.

Town Clerk Tina Larson used a confidential voting process and asked that each councilor write down the name of the councilor they are voting for for President of the Council.

There were 6 votes for Councilor Loreti and 3 votes for Councilor Linde. Councilor Loreti is the President of the Council.

Town Clerk Tina Larson conducted the Vice President election and asked if there were any nominations.

Councilor Striggles nominated Councilor McGrath which was duly second by Councilor Perry.

Councilor Linde nominated himself, which was duly seconded by Councilor Ellenberg.

Town Clerk Tina Larson used a confidential voting process and asked that each councilor write down the name of the councilor they are voting for for the Vice President of the Council.

There were 7 votes for Councilor McGrath and 2 votes for Councilor Linde. Councilor McGrath is the Vice President of the Council.

c) Reorganization of Council Seats

Town Clerk Tina Larson handed out playing cards to each councilor and that created the new seating assignment: Kennedy, Ellenberg, Striggles, McGrath, Loreti, Perry, Murphy, Hunt and Linde.

PROCLAMATIONS - None

CITIZEN OPEN FORUM

- Sam Baumgarten, 60 Short Street: Welcomed the newcomers, wants the councilor to stand up for everyone.
- Scott Pitta, 118 Pine Street : spoke about the last council meeting and a charter violation. Charter 2.7C. Rescind the prior vote and honor the charter.
- Dr. Michael Thomas, Magnolia way: welcomed new members. Discussed the Resolution that was tabled in March. DEI Committee in Bridgewater wants to know their mission.
- David Moore, 54 Flagg Street: spoke about the Hometown Heroes program that was established 8 years ago; privately funded. 270 veterans will be on banners that will be placed around town beginning on Saturday morning. New banner requests continue to come in (1 to 2 a month). Why are they taken down? We tried that one year and we lost banners due to the winter. Asking for help in putting the banners around town, cannot do without support.
- Ashley Mallard, 270 Grange Park: welcomed the new members to the council. The concept of not moving forward with this override is concerning. 90 plus pink slips went out last week. High School will take the biggest hit. Don't take the right away from the citizens to vote on the override. Going to

the State House on Monday to advocate for more Chapter 70 funding. I disagree with the technicality that was brought up.

- Jim Wilder, Curve Street: congratulated all the new councilors.

APPOINTMENTS - None

HEARINGS

- a) Budget Order O-FY26-001: FY2026 Annual Town Budget

This hearing has been duly advertised in the Enterprise and on the Town's website. All orders relative to the FY2026 budget may be finally voted this evening and are itemized under L: Legislation for Action. Budget & Finance voted 3-0 to recommend at their 4/14/25 meeting. Finance Committee voted 5-0 at their 5/5/25 meeting.

Councilor Loreti opened the public hearing at 7:34pm.

Councilor Ellenberg asked for a point of order and noted that she thinks we need to honor the charter objection, dive deeper into the override numbers to provide confidence and trust to the town's people and called for an emergency meeting in 48 hours.

Councilor Perry made a motion for a brief recess which was duly seconded by Councilor Striggles.

A voice vote was taken with the results as follows: Kennedy – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Loreti – Yea; Perry – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Hunt – Yea; Linde - Yea. Motion passed 9-0. The time was 7:35pm.

The meeting was called back to order at 7:43p.m.

Councilor Ellenberg asked for a Charter Objection on Budget Order O-FY26-001 so that a meeting can be called within 48 hours to have further discussion of the override and the general budget, lot of questions and effort for transparency.

Town Attorney Rawlins noted that the override is not on the agenda. Also noted that a charter objection has to occur at the first reading. Do not agree with any other interpretation, there is no case law that contradicts that. The intent is so that the process can slow down because a councilor believes there is an issue under the charter.

Councilor Striggles asked Councilor Ellenberg if putting a delay on the budget was to look at it or the intention of it to be a delay on the override conversation.

Councilor Ellenberg noted that hopefully our unions are coming in at 2% and hopefully come in at a lower rate. Should not be voting it right now.

Councilor Perry noted for the record that this hearing is the discussion on the budget.

Town Attorney Rawlins noted to the council that there is a charter objection so all the debate needs to stop. The President has to rule on this and then we can move forward.

Councilor Loreti noted that adoption means vote into place and that is where I am at a crossroads.

Town Attorney Rawlins noted that the first occasion is put to the town council if a single member objects and to me you cannot take one word out of the sentence. In my opinion the first occasion was the first reading.

Councilor Loreti noted that he is honoring Councilor Ellenberg's Charter objection.

LICENSE TRANSACTIONS – None

PRESENTATIONS – None

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

a) Update on Hydrant Flushing Schedule

Town Manager Robinson noted that the Town was not planning on hydrant flushing this spring. Two of the wells are being rehabilitated. Those two wells have been completed and the State has signed off and they will be started this week. Will be checking to see if the flow is expected and will slowly taper off Well B which brings about the brown water concerns.

Councilor McGrath asked that an update on the Summer Street park be put on the next agenda.

DISCUSSIONS

a) Override Education Discussion

Town Manager Robinson noted that the staff has been working hard on a page for the website for the residents. Page is live under Town Manager's page but will be moved to the front page once feedback is received from the councilors. Working on a schedule on public education meetings with the school district staff. Planning to put up a page where people can submit questions and will continually refresh that page.

Councilor Linde thanked Town Manager Robinson and the staff for the information that is being presented to the voters.

Councilor Kennedy thanked Town Manager Robinson for getting the information on the website, residents are concerned about the override.

Councilor Striggles thanked the staff for the breakdown, most useful tool. Wants everyone to be able to look at what their yearly tax increase will be.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Councilor Linde noted that Budget & Finance met before the Town Council meeting and voted 2-0 for the items from the last meeting.

L. LEGISLATION FOR ACTION

a) Budget Order O-FY26-002: FY26 Water Enterprise Fund

Budget and Finance voted 3-0 to recommend at their 4/14/25 meeting. Finance Committee voted 7-0 to recommend at their 5/5/25 meeting.

Councilor Linde made a motion to approve Budget Order O-FY26-002, which was duly seconded by Councilor Perry.

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

b) **Budget Order O-FY26-003: FY26 Sewer Enterprise Fund**

Budget and Finance voted 3-0 to recommend at their 4/14/25 meeting. Finance Committee voted 7-0 to recommend at their 5/5/25 meeting.

Councilor Linde made a motion to approve Budget Order O-FY26-003, which was duly seconded by Councilor Perry.

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

c) **Budget Order O-FY26-004: FY26 Transfer Station Enterprise Fund**

Budget and Finance voted 3-0 to recommend at their 4/14/25 meeting. Finance Committee voted 7-0 to recommend at their 5/5/25 meeting.

Councilor Linde made a motion to approve Budget Order O-FY26-004, which was duly seconded by Councilor Perry.

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

d) **Budget Order O-FY26-005: Authorization of Revolving Funds**

Budget and Finance voted 3-0 to recommend at their 4/14/25 meeting. Finance Committee voted 7-0 to recommend at their 5/5/25 meeting.

Councilor Linde made a motion to approve Budget Order O-FY26-005, which was duly seconded by Councilor Perry.

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

e) **Order O-FY25-057: BAA Collective Bargaining Contract Ratification**

Budget and Finance voted 2-0 to recommend at their 5/6/25 meeting. Finance Committee voted 7-0 to recommend at their 5/5/25 meeting.

Councilor Linde made a motion to approve Order O-FY25-057, which was duly seconded by Councilor Perry.

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

- f) **Order O-FY25-058: BAA Collective Contract Appropriation Transfer**
Budget and Finance voted 2-0 to recommend at their 5/6/25 meeting. Finance Committee voted 7-0 to recommend at their 5/5/25 meeting.

Councilor Linde made a motion to approve Order O-FY25-058, which was duly seconded by Councilor Perry.

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

- g) **Order O-FY25-059: Acceptance of Hanson Farm Conservation Restriction**
Budget and Finance voted 2-0 to recommend at their 5/6/25 meeting. Finance Committee voted 7-0 to recommend at their 5/5/25 meeting.

Councilor Linde made a motion to approve Order O-FY25-059, which was duly seconded by Councilor Striggles.

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

OLD BUSINESS – None

NEW BUSINESS

- a) **Budget Order O-FY26-006: CPA Reserve Accounts - FY2026**
Town Manager Robinson noted that this is a requirement to be done annually for CPA budget.

Councilor Striggles made a motion to refer Budget Order FY26-006 to Budget and Finance and Finance Committee, which was duly seconded by Councilor Linde.

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

- b) **Order O-FY25-060: Capital Plan Transfers for FY2026**
Town Manager Robinson noted this is a financial provision to pay debt on a number of leased vehicles and equipment.

Councilor Linde made a motion to refer Order O-Fy26-060 to Budget and Finance and Finance Committee, which was duly seconded by Councilor Perry.

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

- c) **Order O-FY25-061: Contractual Buyouts**
Town Manager Robinson noted that this is for contractual buyouts for employee retirements.

Councilor Linde made a motion to refer Order FY25-061 to Budget and Finance and Finance Committee, which was duly seconded by Councilor Perry.

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

- d) Order O-FY25-062: Loan Authorization: Plymouth Street Wells Project
Town Manager Robinson noted that approval needs to be in place by the end of June.

Councilor Striggles made a motion to refer Order FY25-062 to Budget and Finance and Finance Committee, which was duly seconded by Councilor Linde.

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

- e) Resolution R-FY25-012: Resolution on FY26 School District Budget Funding
Councilor Striggles noted that she had a meeting with school committee, Town of Raynham and Raynham sent letter and it was tabled by the School committee. Chairman Fitzgibbons asked to wait until Raynham meets. I do still think we should proceed with this.

Councilor Linde made a motion to retain Resolution R-FY25-012 at Town Council, which was duly seconded by Councilor Linde.

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

CITIZEN COMMENTS

- Janet Hanson, Pleasant Street: suggests that the override information be on the front page.
- Dr. Michael Thomas, Magnolia Way: wants DEI committee information to be on the website.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Councilor Linde had no comments.
- Councilor Hunt thanked Councilor Loreti for a well run meeting.
- Councilor Murphy welcomed the new councilors.
- Councilor Perry welcomed Ms. Hunt and Mr. Kennedy and asked that councilors come to the meeting prepared, ask the Town Manager. Get the answers to that the council can have a discussion.
- Councilor Striggles thanked the residents who continue to show up. Looking forward to working with everyone.
- Councilor Ellenberg congratulated the new councilors and noted that we need more detailed committee reports.
- Councilor Kennedy thanked everyone that comes to the meeting and for those that went out to vote.
- Councilor McGrath thanked the councilors for voting her as Vice President.
- Councilor Loreti thanked the voters for voting for him and the councilors for voting him in as President. He also thanked his wife who fully supports him even on rainy, cold days.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – None

ADJOURNMENT

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

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:35pm.

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, May 20, 2025, to approve the aforementioned minutes, as submitted.