



Town of Bridgewater

Town Council

June 30, 2025

7:00 PM

Special Town Council Meeting

66 Central Square

Academy Building

Council Chambers/2nd Floor

The Town Council meeting was streamed Live via You Tube.

MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Council President Loreti called the Special Town Council meeting to order at 7:00pm on Monday, June 30, 2025 in the Council Chambers.

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

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

Councilor Loreti noted that there were no veterans that passed away but asked for a moment of silence for all veterans and their families.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Councilor Loreti noted that thanks to the recent work of the Finance Department, Library staff and Councilor Murphy confirmed release of funds from the Dolores Lepieke Trust. The town will be making a one time donation of \$10,000 to the Fourth of July Committee. Councilor Loreti recognized the Fourth of July committee for all of the work that they do. The Fourth of July committee thanked the Town Council.

Councilor Hunt introduced the Mandela Fellows from BSU and spoke about what they do.

CITIZEN OPEN FORUM

- Shannon Cambria, 3 Candy Lane: noted that she is disappointed and scared about the upcoming school year; one child to West Bridgewater schools, waiting for others to get accepted. We need help.
- Melissa Ramondetta, 317 Lakeside Drive: spoke about the project at The Nip and asked that the councilors get involved.
- James Walsh, 60 Crescent Street: spoke about FY26 and adopting the residential exemption tax rates – shifts tax rate to non-residents/landlords.
- Nancy Chiappini, 8 Birch Hill Road: spoke about the potential project by the Nip.
- Janet Hanson, Pleasant Street: spoke about the TIF Ad Hoc Committee and the project at the Nip.

- Donna Jewel, Keith Place: spoke about public requests she sent and received to the school; would like to know where they are holding the money that was sent to them by the towns and noted that should hold off on the TIF.
- Casey Rodrigues, 45 Janes Way: special education teacher who also lives in town spoke about being out of compliance with special education.
- Eric Hoy, 120 Oakridge: English teacher at the High School and a resident who noted he will have 35 students per class and concerned about school safety, not enough supervision.
- MJ Spagone, Lakeshore Center: spoke about Town Council facing difficult challenges; tax rates are too low.
- Jon Algarin, 19 Heather Lane: asked if SAVE volunteers could be used at the schools.

APPOINTMENTS

- a) TIF Ad Hoc Oversight Committee for 60-86 Broad Street:
1. Dan Greenberg
 2. Fred Chase

Councilor Linde and Councilor Hunt made a charter objection. Appointments will be on the next agenda.

DISCUSSIONS

- a) Town Fiscal Outlook: FY26 Budget, School District Assessment and Override Implications
Discussion to include the Bridgewater-Raynham School District budget, the recent override vote, and overall FY26 municipal revenues and expenditures.

Councilor Loreti noted that this is just an open discussion, not make any decisions. \$849k increase is needed in the budget to fund what the school committee voted on. Have 45 days – which is 8/8/25. Both towns must approve or joint town meeting can be called by the school committee.

Councilor Murphy noted that he hoped to hear from all Town Councilors in favor of supporting the number. Thinks the new Town Manager and Finance Director should work together to come up with a plan.

Councilor Linde noted that he is in favor of supporting but need to look at everything.

Councilor Kennedy noted that need to look at not filling vacant positions; stabilization funds should not be used. Taxpayers want to know where the money is being spent at the school, people want an outside source to come in.

Councilor Striggles noted that we need to do better for the students, should not take from stabilization fund. Need to gain the faith of the residents.

Councilor Ellenberg noted that the focus should be on revenue; find out what is going on.

Councilor Hunt read an email from Pat Driscoll and noted that she agrees with it, should use stabilization funds and do an audit.

Councilor McGrath commented on the 2024 audit report and asked if an amount was still in the budget.

Councilor Loreti noted that this council needs to look at numbers and what can we do about regionalizing services; people are not happy with what they are getting.

Councilor Ellenberg noted that Claremont could invest in the town, can they build another well.

Councilor Kennedy noted that confidence needs to be better and maybe future overrides may pass.

Councilor Striggles noted that long term conversations are needed to make sure schools have what they need, need to stay away from stabilization fund.

Town Manager Robinson noted that a supplemental budget will be done by the new Town Manager which then must be advertised and public hearing held.

Councilor Loreti noted that FY27 work will begin shortly so it does not wait until last minute.

LEGISLATION FOR ACTION

- a) Order O-FY25-068: United Steel Workers Bargaining Contract Ratification
Budget and Finance voted 2-1 at their 6/30/25 meeting. Finance Committee voted 5-0 to recommend at their 6/23/25 meeting.

Councilor Striggles made a motion to approve Order O-FY25-068, which was duly seconded by Councilor Murphy.

Councilor Ellenberg asked if step raises and COLA amounted to 8% raise and Town Manager Robinson noted that step is 2 1/2 %.

Councilor Murphy noted that he supported the contract as written; should be careful with spending but not with contracts.

Town Manager Robinson noted that the team looked at cost effectiveness, banking time has changed. Step 12 is the last step, would only get COLA no step raises after that.

Councilor McGrath noted that want to keep the good department heads.

Councilor Loreti noted that he voted no in Budget & Finance as need to keep/focus on budget.

A roll-call vote was taken with the results as follows: Kennedy – No; Ellenberg – No; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Loreti – No; Perry – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Hunt – Yea; Linde - Yea. Motion passed 6-3.

- b) Order O-FY25-069: United Steel Workers Collective Bargaining Appropriation Transfer
Budget and Finance voted 2-1 at their 6/30/25 meeting. Finance Committee voted 5-0 to recommend at their 6/23/25 meeting.

Councilor Striggles made a motion to approve Order O-FY25-069, which was duly seconded by Councilor Murphy.

A roll-call vote was taken with the results as follows: Kennedy – No; Ellenberg – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Loreti – No; Perry – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Hunt – Yea; Linde - Yea. Motion passed 7-2.

- c) Order O-FY25-070: Non-Union Affiliated Positions Appropriation Transfer
Budget and Finance voted 2-1 at their 6/30/25 meeting. Finance Committee voted 5-0 to recommend at their 6/23/25 meeting.

Councilor Hunt made a motion to approve Order O-FY25-070, which was duly seconded by Councilor Striggles.

Town Manager Robinson noted that these were for 2% COLA and step raises for non-union employees.

Councilor Murphy noted that they were good employees who deserved raises.

Councilor Ellenberg noted that should would like to see 1% raise.

A roll-call vote was taken with the results as follows: Kennedy – No; Ellenberg – No; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Loreti – No; Perry – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Hunt – Yea; Linde - Yea. Motion passed 6-3.

- d) Order O-FY25-072: Acceptance of onation - Oliari Charitable Foundation Bridgewater Public Library
Budget and Finance voted 3-0 at their 6/30/25 meeting. Finance Committee voted 5-0 to recommend at their 6/23/25 meeting.

Councilor Striggles made a motion to approve Order O-FY25-072, which was duly seconded by Councilor Kennedy.

A roll-call 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-FY25-073: Town Clerk's Salary
Budget and Finance voted 2-1 at their 6/30/25 meeting. Finance Committee voted 5-0 to take no action at their 6/23/25 meeting.

Councilor Murphy made a motion to amend Order O-FY25-073 to change the salary from \$93,270.71 to \$89,305.18. This was duly seconded by Councilor Striggles.

Councilor Linde made a motion to suspend the rules to allow MJ Spagone to speak. This was duly seconded by Councilor Hunt.

A roll-call 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.

Finance Committee Chair MJ Spagone read her memo into the record noting that the Finance Committee voted to not take action on Order O-FY25-073 at their 6/23/25 meeting and asked that if there are any amendments that the Order be referred back to Finance Committee.

A roll-call vote was taken on the amendment 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.

Councilor Murphy made a motion to refer Order O-FY25-073 back to Finance Committee. This was duly seconded by Councilor Linde.

A roll-call 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.

NEW BUSINESS

- a) Resolution R-FY25-014: A Resolution Requesting an Independent Operational and Financial Review of the Bridgewater-Raynham Regional School District

Councilor Loreti noted that need an understanding of finances, need to rebuild trust.

Councilor Striggles made a motion to retain Resolution R-Fy25-014 at Town Council This was duly seconded by Councilor Kennedy.

Councilor Striggles noted that the school committee put forth a budget that does not help the students. Would like to know who would pay for an operational review.

Councilor Loreti noted that this is for an operational review, not a forensic audit, was \$50 to \$60k for another town.

Councilor Murphy noted that the cost is a concern, who will be paying and will we get that money back if they find anything. Also, can we or should we be dictating something like this.

A roll-call 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

- Lynette Delano-Chase, 60 Old Farm Road: safety is an issue, agree with Mr. Kennedy. Also noted that need to leave the Nip alone and regarding the TIF, someone is trying to develop and we cannot keep kicking the can down the road
- Fred Chase, 60 Old Farm Road: spoke about the Ad Hoc Committee and the process. Charter objection is not intended to delay a vote. In 7 years, a charter objection was used one time. In the last 9 months, it has happened 3 times.
- James Walsh, 60 Crescent Street: asked how many housing units can be built before 40B.
- Melissa Ramondetta, 317 Lakeside Drive: noted that Erik Moore did an excellent presentation when he was a councilor, also asked the council to look at massmapper and look at Lake Nip.
- Casey Rodrigues, 45 Janes Way: noted that when she spoke with people they spoke about the mistrust with the town not the schools.
- Eric Hoy, 120 Oakridge: noted that there was so much hate put towards teachers; all contracts for schools are on-line, not all town departments are.

- Janet Hanson, Pleasant Street: spoke about Claremont and what can be done. Hopes TIF does not go through and asked if there is a timeframe on when another override can be done.
- Gina Guasconi, 35 Ball Avenue: noted that she would like stabilization funds to be used; departments are already cut. Claremont is an environmental issue.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Councilor Linde: thanked Town Manager Robinson for her time here. Glad looking for more information but would like to see stabilization funds used.
- Councilor Hunt: noted that Juneteenth celebration at BSU and Firefight Sunday were both great events.
- Councilor Murphy: thanked Town Manager Robinson and the 4th of July Committee.
- Councilor Striggles: thanked everyone who attended, wished everyone a happy 4th of July and thanked Town Manager Robinson for her service and commitment to Bridgewater.
- Councilor Ellenberg: thanked Town Manager Robinson, in favor of audits for school and town, cost savings can be found. Thanked Fire for Effect Foundation for the Farmers Market.
- Councilor Kennedy: thanked Town Manager Robinson and the 4th of July committee. Noted that it was a great debate tonight.
- Councilor McGrath: noted that she attended the retirement of Firefighter Beatty and presented the Proclamation on behalf of the Town Council.
- Councilor Loreti: thanked Town Manager Robinson and those fighting for the Nip.

ADJOURNMENT

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

A roll-call vote was taken with the results as follows: Kennedy – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Loreti – Yea; Perry – Left the meeting; Murphy – Yea; Hunt – Yea; Linde - Yea. Motion passed 8-0.

Meeting adjourned at 9:40pm.

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, July 15, 2025, to approve the aforementioned minutes, as submitted.