Town of Bridgewater

Town Council

August 12, 2025
7:00 PM
66 Central Square
Academy Building
Council Chambers/2nd Floor
The Town Council meeting is being streamed Live via You Tube.
Go to the Town of Bridgewater Facebook Page for the link.

MEETING MINUTES

Due to Massachusetts Open Meeting Law requirements, discussions will not take place during Public Comment periods. If appropriate, responses to questions and concerns will be given by the Town Manager at a future Town Council meeting.

CALL TO ORDER
Council President Loreti called the Town Council meeting to order at 7:00pm on Tuesday, August 12, 2025 in the Council Chambers.

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

Absent: Marilee Hunt.

Also in attendance was Town Manager Justin Casanova-Davis and Town Attorney Jason Rawlins.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

a) July 15, 2025 Meeting Minutes
Councilor Linde made a motion to approve the July 15, 2025 meeting minutes, 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 – Absent; Linde - Yea.
Motion passed 8-0.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT
Council President Loreti noted that a TIF update will be given later on. We are planning on referring the TIF back to the TIF Ad Hoc Committee. Welcome all comments but we will not be voting on sending to advertising.

PROCLAMATIONS - None

CITIZEN OPEN FORUM

- Ed Ivaldi, 10 Boxwood Lane: spoke about Comcast being the only service in Town. and Charter Objections.
- Janet Hanson, Pleasant Street: spoke about the TIF, should not be allowed. Actual figures from the State for the BSU and Prison.
- James Walsh, 60 Crescent Street: Support for Laurie Keane and Ordinance #3 and transfer order for the church windows. Why is the MBTA district so large, would like to know why.

APPOINTMENTS

a) Laurie Keane - Conservation Commission (2025 - 2028)
Councilor Linde made a motion to ratify the appointment of Laurie Keane to the Conservation Commission. This was duly seconded by Councilor Ellenberg.

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 – Absent; Linde - Yea.
Motion passed 8-0

b) Phillip Nichols - DEIB Committee (2025 - 2026)
Councilor Linde noted that there was no resume submitted for this appointment. voting against the process.

Councilor Kennedy also noted that he was not in favor of resumes not be submitted and not in favor of DEIB committee, appears to be a public outreach committee.

Councilor Perry noted that a resume was not provided but background was put into form, not everyone has resumes, don't' think it should be a criteria.

Councilor Loreti noted that he also shared concerns about not having a resume.

Councilor Striggles made a motion to ratify the appointment of Phillip Nichols to the DEIB Committee. This was duly seconded by Councilor Perry.

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 – Absent; Linde - No.
Motion failed 4-4.

F. HEARINGS

a) Petition P-2026-001: Petition for National Grid and Verizon New England Inc. Joint or Identical Pole Location – 815 Bedford Street
***Public Hearing**: Advertised in the 7/29/25 Enterprise.*

Councilor Loreti called the public hearing to order at 7:18pm.
National Grid Representative noted that the poles were for a location on 815 Bedford Street and it was the standard request.
Councilor Loreti asked if anyone from the public had any questions. There we no questions.
Councilor Loreti asked if anyone wished to speak in favor. No one spoke.
Councilor Loreti asked if anyone wished to speak in opposition. No one spoke.
Councilor Loreti asked if any councilors had any questions. No questions were asked.
Councilor Loreti closed the public hearing at 7:19pm.

Councilor Striggles made a motion to approve Petition P-2026-001, 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 – Absent; Linde - Yea.
Motion passed 8-0.

b) Order O-FY26-008: Loan Authorization for Phase 2 Waste Water Treatment Facility (WWTF) Preliminary Design and Engineering of Phosphorous Removal Upgrade Project
Public Hearing: *Advertised in the 7/29/25 Enterprise. Budget & Finance meeting voted 3-0 at their 8/5/25 meeting. Finance Committee voted 5-0 to recommend at their 7/21/25 meeting.*

Councilor Loreti called the public hearing to order at 7:20pm.
Councilor Loreti asked if anyone from the public had any questions. There we no questions.
Councilor Loreti asked if anyone wished to speak in favor. No one spoke.
Councilor Loreti asked if anyone wished to speak in opposition. No one spoke.
Councilor Loreti asked if any councilors had any questions:

- Councilor McGrath asked who the OPM is and Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that it would be Helen Gordon and she has done many project in the Town.

Councilor Loreti closed the public hearing at 7:22pm.

Councilor Linde made a motion to approve Order O-FY26-008, 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 – Absent; Linde - Yea.
Motion passed 8-0.

c) Order O-FY26-009: Loan Authorization - Community Septic Management Program (CSMP) Title V - Homeowner Loans
Public Hearing: *Advertised in the 7/29/25 Enterprise. Budget & Finance meeting voted 3-0 at their 8/5/25 meeting. Finance Committee voted 5-0 to recommend at their 7/21/25 meeting.*

Councilor Loreti called the public hearing to order at 7:23pm.
Councilor Loreti asked if anyone from the public had any questions. There we no questions.
Councilor Loreti asked if anyone wished to speak in favor. No one spoke.
Councilor Loreti asked if anyone wished to speak in opposition. No one spoke.
Councilor Loreti asked if any councilors had any questions. No questions were asked.

- Councilor Ellenberg asked if there was a ceiling on the amount that a homeowner could ask for and Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that he did not believe there was a ceiling .

Councilor Loreti closed the public hearing at 7:24pm.

Councilor Striggles made a motion to approve Order O-FY26-009, 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 – Absent; Linde - Yea.
Motion passed 8-0.

G. LICENSE TRANSACTIONS

a) Petition P-2026-002: Alcohol Establishment - Change of Officers - Cumberland Farms of Massachusetts Inc.

Councilor Striggles made a motion to approve Petition P-2026-002, 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 – Absent; Linde - Yea.
Motion passed 8-0.

PRESENTATIONS - None

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

a) Fire Station Update
CED Director Rulli noted that the Fire Station project ahead of schedule, did not start on time but will be done with project in November/December. Scheduling furniture delivery, communication equipment going on. Paul Murphy had a tour of the facility, if any councilor would like a tour please ask Mrs. Ward and we will schedule the tour.

Councilor Murphy asked about the $160k worth of winter condition costs and what the were for. Mr. Rulli noted that most of it has to do with concrete work, bringing in heaters and blankets during the winter. Did not start the project on time so moved the schedule back.

Councilor Perry asked how are we doing on contingency with that and Mr. Rulli noted that 50% remained, some surprises but no major surprises this point forward. We negotiated the winter conditions cost down.

Councilor Linde thanked Mr. Rulli for keeping the contingency down and monitoring the project closely.

b) DPW Update
Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that he included the DPW operational update in the packet. This includes Flagg Street and some other projects that are ongoing.

DPW Director Azu Etoniru updated the council on Flagg Street: Flagg Street has been having many sinkholes, potholes and have had fill-ins. Drainage system on the road is rotted, when the pumps collapsed it weakened the soil. Former Town Manager declared an emergency on Flagg Street and used ARPA and Chapter 90 money to take care of the drainage because that is what was causing the sink holes. Drainage has been completed, in the next couple of weeks, a company will grind down a patch to get a good pavement base. It will sit through the winter and make sure there are no more issues and then it will be paved in the Spring.

Councilor Loreti asked what the timeline was for replacing the water main and Mr. Etoniru noted that it is not on the radar, we do not have the funding for it.

Councilor Kennedy asked for the timeline for the current work being done. Mr. Etoniru noted that the leveling will be done by end of September, then the basins will be adjusted to that level. Then in the Spring they will be adjusted to the final grade of the pavement.

c) MBTA Communities Funding Opportunities
Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that being a compliant housing community is a bonus, whole host of programs that are given bonus points, one being complete streets. Clean Water Trust, Housing Choice Loan Program – interest rate gets reduced.

Councilor Ellenberg asked if adopting 15 units per acre would make us compliant? Town manager Casanova-Davis noted that the letter from the State said that initially we put through we were not in compliant with that, that is why we were looking to change the language.

Mr. Rulli noted that in the CBDR we allow much more than 15 units per acre. That is a conversation that is going to happen next Wednesday. If in compliant it would help with grants, better off we are.

Councilor Linde asked that slides be available for the CED/Planning Board Joint meeting.

Mr. Rulli: One Stop Program requires that you are fully compliant and do not have any moratorium on building.

Councilor Ellenberg asked for a cost of the total water for BSU.

d) Central Square Pedestrian Crosswalks
Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that he met with the Team to see if we can make some meaningful changes to get crosswalks safer and they will be meeting again over the next few weeks.

e) Golf Course Update
Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that all of the Golf information has been on the Town Manager's page of the website. The contract was extended until 2032.

Some additional information that Councilors asked for a future meeting:

Councilor McGrath noted that there is an August meeting at the Senior Center and they would like information on 1) Senior Tax Abatement Program; can the town lower the age of that; and 2) credits are subject to taxes, how do they figure out if it's worth it.

Councilor Murphy would like an update on the Rainbow's End Status.

DISCUSSIONS - None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Rules and Procedures
Councilor McGrath noted that Rules held a meeting in July to go over Charter Ordinances from 2022.

TIF Ad Hoc Oversight Committee
Councilor Striggles noted that the TIF Ad Hoc Oversight Committee met and voted 5-0 to refer the Order back to council to refer to advertising but upon further reflection asked that the Order be referred back to committee so that every single question is answered.

Strategic Planning

Councilor Perry noted that Strategic Planning met last week to finalize the goals of the manager, will be meeting on 8/21 to finalize the goals.

LEGISLATION FOR ACTION

a) Ordinance D-FY25-015: Ordinance Establishing the Process for Filling a Vacant Town Councilor Role

Rules and Procedures voted 3-0 to recommend with amendments at their 4/10/25 meeting.

Councilor Murphy made a motion to amend Ordinance D-FY25-015 by changing (E) to (5) under Section 1 and changing "Home Rule" to "Town of Bridgewater's Town" under Section 5, 1. This was 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 – Absent; Linde - Yea.
Motion passed 8-0.

Councilor Murphy made a motion to amend Ordinance D-FY25-015 by accepting the amendments made in the Rules and Procedures Committee. This 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 – Absent; Linde - Yea.
Motion passed 8-0.

Councilor Ellenberg noted that she was not in favor of rank choice voting – controversial and not as straight up.

Councilor Kennedy also noted that he was not in favor of rank choice voting.

Councilor Striggles noted that after having lived through the process, having the process is the best way to start. If rank choice voting does not work then we at least have a starting point.

Councilor McGrath noted the she also does not like the rank choice voting, we could come up with a better way, seems complicated.

Councilor Murphy noted that he agreed,it is a complicated process, we were trying to address if 7 or 8 people are applying for one seat we wanted them to all be able to speak. Open to any suggestions to include hearing from all candidates.

Councilor Loreti noted that the Charter is written pretty clearly on how to fill the seat, rank choice is a little confusing.

Councilor Perry noted that this fills the gap that the Charter lists. Great attempt to fill that, feels like councilors have questions on the process, may want to send this back to Rules before sending to advertising.

Councilor Kennedy noted that he would work with Councilor Murphy on the language of the Ordinance.

Councilor Striggles made a motion to retain Ordinance D-FY25-015 at council level, 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 – Absent; Linde - Yea.
Motion passed 8-0.

b) Proposed Zoning Ordinance D-FY25-018: ZONING MAP AMENDMENT: Business B and Residence C Districts In the Bedford Street, Winter Street and Flagg Street Area
Advertised in the 8/1/25 Enterprise. Planning Board voted 5-0 and Community and Economic Development voted 3-0 to recommend at a Joint Public Hearing held on 4/16/25.

Councilor Perry noted that this is an amendment to the zoning map to incorporate some residential land that was in a commercial district.

Councilor Perry made a motion to approve Ordinance D-FY25-018, which was duly seconded by Councilor McGrath.

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 – Absent; Linde - Yea.
Motion passed 8-0.

c) Order O-FY25-071: An Order Establishing a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District for 60-86 Broad Street

Councilor Striggles noted that there were many unanswered questions and would like the Order referred back to the Ad Hoc Committee.

Councilor Striggles made a motion to refer Order O-FY25-071 back to the Ad Hoc Oversight Committee. This 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 – Abstained; Murphy – Yea; Hunt – Absent; Linde - Yea.
Motion passed 7-0-1.

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

a) Proposed Ordinance D-FY26-002: Amendment to Bridgewater Town Charter: Article IV, Section 4-1 Town Manager Term of Office

Councilor Kennedy noted that this ordinance would put a limit on the Town Manager contract to 3 years.

Councilor Kennedy made a motion to refer Ordinance D-FY26-002 to Rules and Procedures, 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 – Absent; Linde - Yea.
Motion passed 8-0

b) Proposed Ordinance D-FY26-003: Amendment to Bridgewater Town Charter Article VIII, Section 8-2 Citizen Referendum Petition Timeframe

Councilor Ellenberg made a motion to refer Ordinance D-FY26-003 to Rules and Procedures, which was duly seconded by Councilor Kennedy.

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 – Absent; Linde - Yea.
Motion passed 8-0

c) Proposed General Ordinance D-FY26-004: Amendment to Chapter 3, Article II, Section 1 - Business Ethics and Conduct

Councilor Kennedy wanted to update the list and add any committees who are touching grants, tried to exclude some committees. Try to create transparency for the public.

Councilor Linde made a motion to refer Ordinance D-FY26-004 to Rules and Procedures, 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 – Absent; Linde - Yea.
Motion passed 8-0

d) Order O-FY26-014: Transfer Order - CPC First Parish Unitarian Church Window Project

Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that he received an approval request from the CPC for windows for the First Parish Church.

Councilor Linde noted that he is recusing himself as he is a member of that church.

Councilor Striggles made a motion to refer Order O-FY26-014 to Budget & 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 – Absent; Linde - Abstained.
Motion passed 7-0-1

e) Resolution R-FY26-001: Town River Landing Phase 1 Improvements

Councilor Loreti noted that Al Lacerda and the group are the Stewards of the Town River Landing and have been doing some great events. Master Plan has been provided, an extensive plan to revitalize the area. This Resolution is just asking our town manager to consider applying through the CPC to help getting the gazebo completed.

Councilor McGrath noted that Town River Landing is very successful and we should support him.

Councilor Striggles made a motion to retain Resolution R-Fy26-001 at Town Council, which was duly seconded by Councilor Striggles.

Councilor Kennedy thanked Councilor Loreti for putting this forward, this brings in people and what they have done there with no funding has been great. I hope we can assist him with whatever we can.

Councilor Linde thanked Al and his group for all the work they have done.

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 – Absent; Linde - Yea.
Motion passed 7-0-1

CITIZEN COMMENTS

- Janet Hanson, Pleasant Street: thanked the committee for the Charter Ordinances. Spoke about MBTA compliance, needs to be a balance.
- James Walsh, 60 Crescent Street: thanked Justin for attaching documents to the Town Manager's report, thanked Mr. Rulli about complaining the MBTA overlay, confused about – maybe some bullet points would be helpful. June 30th asked about a question about Chapter 40B – how many more housing units until we are out of compliance. If out of compliance then developers can apply to the state.
- Al Lacerda, Comfort Street: appreciate that you took that up and discussed Town River Landing.
- Ed Ivaldi, Boxwood Lane: appreciate the council that they want the public more involved.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Councilor Linde: thanked the citizens for being at the meeting, would like to see advertising posted on the webpage, noted that Verizon stopped building years ago.
- Councilor Murphy: if DEIB is a committee you no longer feel is necessary then submit legislation to remove the committee; I know the resume piece perhaps doing legislation that it is a requirement. Thanked Al and his team for the work at Town River Landing.
- Councilor Perry: thanked Al for his energy and his passion for Town River Landing.
- Councilor Striggles: agrees with Councilor Murphy about DEI Committee, thanked everyone who came to the meeting and the TIF Ad Hoc meeting. Agree with Councilor Murphy on the DEIB Committee, we need to figure it out. Ask for prayers for Marie Hunt and her family for her tragic passing.
- Councilor Ellenberg: thanked Mr. Lacerda for his wonderful work and setting a good example to civic engagement. Complimented Councilor Kennedy for bringing charter changes.
- Councilor Kennedy: thanked the public for coming out, Al for all his work and the councilors for another good meeting.
- Councilor McGrath: thanked the Town Manager for the information on the website.
- Councilor Loreti: thanked the Town Manager for his diligence, thanked all of the committees, thanked Al for all that he does. If you want to get involved, reach out to Al.

<u>EXECUTIVE SESSION</u> - None

<u>ADJOURNMENT</u>

Councilor Striggles made a motion to adjourn, 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 – Absent; Linde - Yea.
Motion passed 8-0

Meeting adjourned at 8:45pm.

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, September 2, 2025, to approve the aforementioned minutes, as submitted.