



Town of Bridgewater

Town Council

September 2, 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

Council President Loreti called the Town Council meeting to order at 7:00pm on Tuesday, September 2, 2025 in the Council Chambers.

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

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

Councilor Loreti read the names of recent veterans who have passed and asked for a moment of silence.

- James “Leo” Tuite, US Army – Passed away on August 8th
- Joseph Campbell, US Air Force – Passed away on August 7th
- James Taxiera, Jr US Air Force (Afghanistan) – Passed away on July 25th

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

a) August 5, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Councilor Striggles made a motion to approve the August 5, 2025 meeting minutes, which was duly seconded by Councilor Linde.

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

b) August 12, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Councilor Linde made a motion to approve the August 12, 2025 meeting minutes, which was duly seconded by Councilor Hunt.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Councilor Loreti noted that the TIF District will be discussed later and is being voted on to be referred to advertising. It is to create a TIF District which would open discussions to developers, it is not a discussion on a TIF Agreement.

Councilor Loreti announced that Sandra Wright from the Plymouth County Commissioners was in attendance to present the Town with an ARPA check.

Ms. Sandra Wright welcomed the new Town Manager Justin Casanova-Davis. Thanked Councilor Linde for being on the advisory board. Thanked Mr. Dutton for his work with the County Commissioners when he was Town Manager.

Ms. Wright presented the Town Manager and Council President with a check in the amount of \$248,130.50 in accordance with its Water Master Capital Plan and Drinking Water planning.

Councilor Loreti announced that Mr. Fred Clark, President of BSU was in attendance to present the Town with a check.

Mr. Clark President of BSU thanked the Councilors for their service as it is not an easy time to serve. BSU turned 185 years old in 2025. Horace Mann had an idea to bring education to the masses at a secondary level because only privileged had that. BSU is the third teacher training school founded in America and is the only one that is in the place that it started. Number one school for teachers and social workers. Ranked the 3rd safest University in America. Town is the 25th safest college town in America. Ranked top 7 of the most beautiful college towns. Homecoming is October 18th.

Mr. Clark presented the Town Manager with a check for \$55k that will go towards the Police, Fire and DPW.

Councilor Striggles thanked Mr. Clark for his service to a school she loves very much.

Councilor Linde noted that BSU Library is also open to residents, BSU is an asset to the Community.

Councilor Hunt noted that while she was Bridgewater's elected Town Clerk working in the Old Town Hall, responses from BSU were always incredible. A few years after the Town Hall basement was flooded it became a dangerous mess and bad for everyone's health and when called, BSU came immediately to clean it up. When she digitized all of our Annual Town Reports and went to our IT department asking to put the documents on-line, they said we did not have that capacity. She called the University and they were quick to have all the documents on line and available to the public.

Councilor Ellenberg asked how much water does the university use and what is the percentage of the town water that goes to the university.

Mr. Clark noted that he can get that information but also noted that the water they use they pay for.

Councilor Ellenberg asked about the Boots on the Ground meetings and if the councilors are invited to that. Mr. Clark noted that it is up to the Town Manager but having a quorum of the Town Council would make it a public meeting.

Councilor Ellenberg noted that residents have asked if students can do internships in the school system. Mr. Clark noted that they have a very close relationship with the school system.

Councilor Kennedy thanked Mr. Clark for the donation and the information provided.

PROCLAMATIONS – None

CITIZEN OPEN FORUM

- Sam Baumgarten, 60 Short Street: spoke about the appointment of Philip Nichols and how some see the DEIB committee.
- Janet Hanson, Pleasant Street: spoke about the TIF District and asked who initiated the TIF request.
- Lisa Buzzell-Curley: noted that councilors should not stop people from applying to committees because they do not like the committee, they should be given the opportunity.
- Keith Buohl, 10 Fieldcrest Drive and Chairman of the CAC Committee: disappointed to see the votes on Mr. Nichols, he was qualified and we put that in the recommendation that we submitted. Noted that the current Chair of the DEI is a disabled veteran and because of DEI he got help that allowed him to live. It is not only about race, gender or sexual orientation.
- Frank Sousa, 596 Main Street: spoke about ADU changes and how he is trying to get one on his property.
- Michael Doherty,: spoke about people walking in the crosswalks and how cars are not stopping. Wants undercover police to be in the center of town.
- James Walsh, 60 Crescent Street: thanked the Town Manager for the open office hours and looking forward to continuing working with him. Also spoke about the TIF and would like to know the benefit/cost to the town. On Town Manager goals we should look at water consumption and lowering that. Affordable housing percentage 10.79% in 2023.
- John Donna, 261 South Street: spoke about the Ad Hoc TIF committee meeting and the questions asked. March 4th meeting and what Jonas noted, does the TIF have enough water to sustain these units.
- Donna Jewell, 50 Keith Place: noted that the Town Manager meetings at the Senior Center and office hours were well attended. Also spoke about the TIF and read a letter into the record.
- MJ Spagone, 5 Lakeshore Center: noted that the TIF Order was not referred to the Finance Committee, disappointed and concerned it did not occur.
- David Moore, 54 Flagg Street: spoke against the TIF Agreement noting he sent an email to each councilor and consider putting this on a referendum in the Fall.
- Mike Flaherty, 468 Forest Street: spoke about TIF and the town should look to get businesses in.

APPOINTMENTS

a) Philip Nichols - DEIB Committee (2025 - 2026)

Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that after the last meeting it was found that a resume was submitted but was missed, asking the council to allow the resubmission of the appointment.

Councilor Striggles made a motion to allow the Town Manager to resubmit the application which 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.

Councilor Striggles made a motion to ratify Philip Nichols to the DEIB Commitee, which was duly seconded by Councilor Linde.

Councilor Striggles noted that she was contacted by several residents and their own beliefs and how it could impact boards and commissions. What service are we doing if we say no to people raising their hands. For this appointment this time and last time, did not need to see a resume to know that he was a good fit.

Councilor Ellenberg will not be voting for this as we do not need a DEI committee in our town. Many constituents I have spoken to scorn the DEI committee. We should go for excellence and merit.

Councilor Linde noted that he was for his appointment but wants to see a resume.

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.

HEARINGS - None

LICENSE TRANSACTIONS - None

PRESENTATIONS - None

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- a) Boards & Committee Appointments
Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that he had several conversations with councilors and the request for resumes. Our process is unique from other towns. CAC asks a lot of important questions unlike other communities. Recommendations are submitted, has attended several committees and a majority of them did not have a quorum. Some people may not have a resume. Moving forward I am going to require the resume to be submitted when they apply. Appreciate and am pleased with the CAC members.
- b) Rainbow's Edge
Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that the State paid for the clean-up of that property, it is state owned property. No other work going on there and property has been cleaned up.
- c) BSU Water Usage Update
Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that BSU uses about 9% water flow, there will be a presentation in October.

Councilor Ellenberg asked how gallons does 9% account for and Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that it will be in the presentation.

Councilor Linde noted that BSU is the largest user of water and sewer and Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that yes they are and if they did not pay what they pay, the residents would be paying more.

Councilor Ellenberg would like to know how much water the prison uses also.

- d) Town Hall Fire Hydrant Inquiry
Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted the hydrant was removed because it was hit several times and expensive to replace it. Spoke with Chief Schlitz and there are multiple hydrants around town hall within 500 feet of the Town Hall. There is also multiple levels of fire technology inside Town Hall.

Councilor McGrath asked that the Council training scheduled for 9/30 take place in council chambers and residents could come as they do not understand the rules.

Councilor Murphy would like an update on paving, use of chapter 90 money and current plan and downtown improvement for crosswalks.

Councilor Linde invited the Town Manager to come to a CED meeting and would like the training recorded in the Council Chambers.

Councilor Loreti asked about the line painting on South Street for the start of school.

DISCUSSIONS - None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Strategic Planning

Councilor Perry noted that the Strategic Planning Committee met twice in August to finalize the Town Manager goals.

LEGISLATION FOR ACTION

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

Refer to Advertising: TIF Ad Hoc Oversight Committee voted 5-0 to recommend at their 8/21/25 meeting.

Councilor Striggles made a motion to refer Order O-FY25-071 to advertising, which was duly seconded by Councilor McGrath.

Councilor Striggles thanked the Ad Hoc committee members for their commitment and time. Believes at this time that it is worthy of opening the door to establish a TIF district. Want to focus and narrow down that this is a district conversation, not an agreement. No one has seen numbers, this is the proper procedure/process.

Councilor Hunt asked if the Order has gone down to our professionals to provide information of what the district should include and Councilor Striggles noted that a discussion took place to see if we should keep as written or add other properties.

Councilor Murphy made a motion to amend Order O-FY25-071 by deleting the second paragraph. This was duly seconded by Councilor Linde.

Councilor Striggles noted that she is in agreement with that amendment.

Councilor Linde asked why the Council was creating a TIF district for one specific property.

Councilor Kennedy made a motion to call the question.

A voice vote on the motion to call the question 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.

A voice vote on the motion to amend was taken with the results as follows: Kennedy – Yea; Ellenberg – No; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Loreti – Yea; Perry – Abstained; Murphy – Yea; Hunt – No; Linde - Yea.

Motion to amend passed 6-2-1.

Councilor Murphy noted that there is no date and asked how long the time period would be.

Attorney Rawlins noted that the Mass Leads Act is unclear. Reached out to the State because found contradictory language but has not heard back yet. There are many steps that happen after this. This would not get sent out to the Planning Board for any recommendations.

Councilor Murphy asked what purview the Town council had once the District was approved.

Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that the agreement would be brought forward to the Town Council for approval.

Councilor Ellenberg noted that many constituents do not want to give money away, we should vote it down now.

Councilor Kennedy asked if the Town Council would vote on a TIF Agreement and Town Attorney Rawlins noted that he did not know if there is anything to limit him to have that say, but noted that the Town Manager has mentioned several times that he would bring the agreement to the Town Council.

Councilor McGrath noted that we are making a district for the developer not making the district to bring in a developer. Also asked if we vote no to forward with advertising what happens to this Order.

Town Attorney Rawlins noted that it gets stalled out, not moving forward. Also further noted that just because you are setting a District does not mean that it will happen, the development needs to meet certain criteria. It does not place any obligation to the Town, the agreement has to make sense for the town.

Councilor Murphy noted that without passing this tonight we will not know the real revenues/cost to the town. We have never heard from our assessor, what is the economic development, excise taxes, etc. We are not even at that point and if we don't open the door the property will stay vacant. It's about opening the door so we can understand what those numbers look like.

Councilor Striggles noted that it is her understanding that if we move forward with this we could amend and make larger in the future. This is the first time our town thought of doing something like this.

Councilor Murphy made a motion to amend Order O-FY25-071 by adding in the 3rd paragraph in the beginning after the word “the”, “Town Council has designated that the”. This was duly seconded by Councilor Striggles.

A voice vote on the motion was taken with the results as follows: Kennedy – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Loreti – Yea; Perry – Abstained; Murphy – Yea; Hunt – Yea; Linde – Yea.

Motion to amend passed 8-0-1.

A roll call vote on the motion to refer to advertising was taken with the results as follows: Kennedy – Yea; Ellenberg – No; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Loreti – Yea; Perry – Abstained; Murphy – Yea; Hunt – No; Linde – No.

Motion to refer to advertising passed 5-3-1.

b) Order O-FY25-074: Town Manager Goals

Voice vote for approval. Strategic Planning voted 3-0 to recommend with amendments at their 8/21/25 meeting. Councilor Perry noted that the Strategic Planning Committee met several times and made some amendments which were included in the packet.

Councilor Perry made a motion to amend Order O-FY25-074 as noted in the packet. This was duly seconded by Councilor Striggles.

A voice vote on the motion 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 to amend passed 9-0.

Councilor Striggles noted that it was a pleasure to work with Councilors Loreti and Perry on the goals, enjoyed the process and hope the Town Manager sees the goals as obtainable.

Councilor Perry noted that the amendments would be added to the back page of the review sheet as a checklist.

Councilor Perry made a motion to approve Order O-FY25-074 with amendment, which was duly seconded by Councilor Striggles.

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

Councilor Murphy noted that he appreciates the work that the Strategic Planning Committee put in to give the Town Manager measurable goals.

Councilor McGrath thanked the committee for their work on the goals.

Councilor Kennedy also thanked the committee for their work and noted that this covers a lot.

- c) **Resolution R-FY26-001: Town River Landing Phase 1 Improvements**
Voice vote for approval. This measure was not referred to committee. 14 days has elapsed per Section XVII of the Council Rules & Procedures, therefore this measure may be finally considered this evening.
Councilor Loreti noted that this is to ask the Town Manager to apply for CPC funds for the Town River Landing phase 1 of their master plan. The Town is applying on the town's behalf.

Councilor McGrath noted that Al Lacerda is bringing in more activities and more people to the Town.

Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that Justin: this is town property, we have to go thru a procurement process. This is important and will explore it but there is a town procurement process.

Councilor Striggles made a motion to approve Resolution R-FY26-001, 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 – Abstained; Murphy – Yea; Hunt – Yea; Linde - Yea. Motion passed 9-0

M. OLD BUSINESS

N. NEW BUSINESS

- a) **Order O-FY26-015: Laying Out and Accepting a Private Way – Oldfield Road**
Refer to Planning Board
Councilor Striggles made a motion to refer Order O-FY26-015 to the Planning Board, which was duly seconded by Councilor Perry.

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

- b) **Order O-FY26-016: Laying Out and Accepting a Private Way – Timber Lane**
Refer to Planning Board
Councilor Striggles made a motion to refer Order O-FY26-016 to the Planning Board, which was duly seconded by Councilor Perry.

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

- c) **Order O-FY26-017: Laying Out and Accepting a Private Way – Erbeck Circle**
Refer to Planning Board
Councilor Perry made a motion to refer Order O-FY26-017 to the Planning Board, which was duly seconded by Councilor Striggles.

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

- d) **Order O-FY26-018: Acceptance of Donation – Howard Foundation**
Refer to Budget & Finance and Finance Committee

Councilor Linde made a motion to refer Order O-FY26-018 to Budget & Finance and Finance Committee, which was duly seconded by Councilor Perry.

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

- e) Order O-FY26-019: Acceptance of Donation to Parks & Recreation Department - Ron Enos
Refer to Budget & Finance and Finance Committee
Councilor Perry made a motion to refer Order O-FY26-019 to Budget & Finance and Finance Committee, which was duly seconded by Councilor Linde.

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

- f) Order O-FY26-020: Acceptance of Gift - Bridgewater State University
Refer to Budget & Finance and Finance Committee
Councilor Hunt made a motion to refer Order O-FY26-020 to Budget & Finance and Finance Committee, which was duly seconded by Councilor Linde.

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

CITIZEN COMMENTS

- Janet Hanson, Pleasant Street: disappointed that TIF went to advertising and spoke about the Nip development.
- James Walsh, 60 Crescent Street: affordable housing below 10% developers can bypass zoning.
- Carlton Hunt, Austin Street: spoke about benches at Stile and Hart. Project is stalled, issues around access near the river. CPC denied Town River Landing because of the license that has a clause in it.
- Al Lacerda, Laurel Street: the agreement is a 5 year right of use, it would be unreasonable to expect that we would use our non-profit money to fund. We are not putting up major structures, we are improving this property and bringing in events that the town has never seen before. I hope there is a way to help get us going.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Councilor Linde: noted there is a Nip cleanup taking place this weekend; thanked the citizens for coming out tonight.
- Councilor Hunt: thanked James Walsh for bringing up affordable housing;
- Councilor Murphy: no comments
- Councilor Perry: welcome to Fall. Wish all the fall sports teams good luck in their season this year; noted about the Middle School being renamed.
- Councilor Striggles: thanked everyone who came tonight; we did our best to be as thorough as possible, we do believe we are in a good spot, appreciate everything everyone had to say. Extend well wishes for all the kids starting school today.
- Councilor Ellenberg: thanked the residents for coming and thanked them for their comments.
- Councilor Kennedy: thanked the public for coming out; now have a hearing and both sides can discuss.

- Councilor McGrath: noted that this Saturday there will be a Farmer's Market at Town River Landing.
- Councilor Loreti: also noted that there is a Farmer's Market this Saturday and a car show on 9/21.
Support those efforts and that group. Nip cleanup is this Saturday at 10am.

EXECUTIVE SESSION - None

ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Kennedy made a motion to adjourn, which was duly seconded by Councilor Linde.

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

Meeting adjourned at 9:55pm.

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, October 7, 2025, to approve the aforementioned minutes, as submitted.