



Town of Bridgewater

Town Council

November 4, 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, November 4, 2025 in the Council Chambers.

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

Also in attendance was Town Manager Justin Casanova-Davis, Town Attorney Jason Rawlins, Finance Director Laurie Guerrini and CED Director Bob Rulli.

Councilor Loreti asked for a moment of silence for Vincent Renzi, a US Navy veteran who passed away on October 17, 2025.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- a) October 21, 2025 Meeting Minutes
Councilor Linde made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of October 21, 2025 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 passes 9-0.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Council President Loreti noted there is a vacancy on the school committee and the Town Council and School Committee will be meeting on 11/18 to appoint. If interested required information should be sent to the Town Clerk by November 10th. Joint meeting planned for Tuesday, 11/18 with the SC. Will be a brief public comment period, interviews, deliberation and then voting. As of today, there has been one applicant interested.

Council President Loreti spoke about the cancellation of the council training in September and why it was cancelled.

Council President Loreti noted that there is a FY2026 Chapter 70 Local Contribution Study – School Financial with DESE scheduled for November 19, at Apponequet Regional High School in Lakeville from 4:30 to 6:30 pm where people can speak for 3 minutes or send in a letter to express concerns with Chapter 70 and the local contribution formula.

Council President Loreti noted that Veterans Day is November 11th and spoke about the Tri-town veterans day parade and the details.

PROCLAMATIONS - None

CITIZEN OPEN FORUM

- Jean Dibatista, 260 Lakeside Drive: spoke about water quality issues, personnel issues, roads.
- James Walsh, 60 Pleasant Street: spoke about the Planning Board blocking developments because of water supply, need to have a mechanism to deny an application.
- Janet Hanson, Pleasant Street: spoke about MBTA zoning and the possible grants.
- MJ Spagone, 5 Lakeshore Center: spoke as chair of the Finance Committee and noted that one of the members has resigned and there is now an opening.
- Mark Thomas, Chair, Parks and Recreation Committee: noted that the Order for the fields has the full support of the Parks and Rec committee.

APPOINTMENTS - None

HEARINGS

- a) Petition P-2026-003: Petition for National Grid for Pole and Wire Locations - Center Street
Public Hearing: Advertised in the 10/21/25 Enterprise.
Council President Loreti opened the public hearing at 7:27pm.

Jarad Aker, National Grid rep noted that this was to get rid of a pole for a customer and have to get rid of some to make it work.

Council President Loreti asked if anyone from the public had any questions:

- Brian Flynn, 130 Center Street: not against them moving the pole across the street, but there is a pole that is 110 feet off the curb line and I have been trying to get it removed from my property for many years. National Grid is not meeting with him and he wants the pole on his property removed. Also wants to make sure his trees are not harmed when they move the pole.

Councilor Perry also note that there was an email received from 6 Aldrich Road regarding the pole and her driveway.

- Grace Sheehan, 6 Aldrich Road: would like it moved a few feet so it's not in my driveway.

Councilor Linde made a motion to continue the Public Hearing until the next meeting which was duly seconded by Councilor Striggles.

Councilor Perry noted that he would like resolution for both parties when it is back in front of the council.

- b) Petition P-2026-004: Petition for National Grid for Joint or Identical Pole Locations – Winter Street
Public Hearing: *Advertised in the 10/21/25 Enterprise.*
Council President Loreti opened the public hearing at 7:37pm.

Jarad Aker, National Grid rep noted that this was a relocation due to a roadway project.

Council President Loreti asked if anyone from the public had any questions:

- Pauline Grenier, 319 Winter Street: asked where they are going to be relocated. Mr. Aker, National Grid rep noted it would be roughly one foot, public right of way. Would not be on her property
- Scott Smeed, 325 Winter Street: confused as we don't know where the road is going to be at this point, not sure anyone knows what they are in favor off.

Mr. Aker, National Grid Rep noted that he does not have the proposed plans from DPW or civil engineers for Winter Street so it is tough to say. These proposals are on the public way, poles will be located before these properties.

- Scott Smeed, 325 Winter Street: there is no easement on the pole that is 25 feet on my property. Mr. Aker, National Grid Rep noted that do not have exact lot line surveyed, poles being referenced are poles that are on public right of ways.

Councilor Linde made a motion to continue the Public Hearing until the next meeting which was duly seconded by Councilor Ellenberg.

LICENSE TRANSACTIONS - None

PRESENTATIONS - None

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

The following items were requested by Town Council:

Councilor McGrath would like the agreement with Taunton on Hemlock and Heritage housing authority.

Councilor Linde noted that he served on the housing authority when Bridgewater entered into the agreement and can get it from the housing authority.

Councilor Kennedy noted that a resident reached out after last meeting to ask when the water ban going to be lifted, would like an update at the next meeting.

Councilor Murphy noted that a resident had applied for the Water & Sewer Commission and was told that it is not an active commission, would like clarification at the next meeting.

Councilor Ellenberg asked if the council could seek members to fill the water commission and suggested it be with engineers and finance people

Councilor Linde noted that the Town also does not have an active Board of Health commission.

Councilor Murphy asked for an update on the social media policy for the town.

DISCUSSIONS

a) MBTA Legislation

Council President Loreti noted that this is an open discussion and can ask the chair of the Planning Board any questions.

Town Planner Shane O'Brien spoke about smart growth districts and noting that Bridgewater split into two districts. Since establishing there have been discussions but nothing has progressed.

Councilor Loreti asked if we were to overlay the Waterford overlay and the MBTA overlay would it be easier or harder to develop in that area. Mr. O'Brien noted that we would incorporate as currently to get to the 80% number.

Councilor Ellenberg asked why are we not able to use institutional land, why not assign state land (Hale St) to this. CED Director Rulli noted that it is not in the half mile radius of the existing train platform.

Councilor Murphy asked if the Planning Board has the ability to stop a project because of water. Mr. Driscoll noted that Planning Board approves the project but the water/sewer needs to approve water/sewer. It is up to the Water Department to approve what can and can't be connected to the Water.

Town Attorney Rawlins noted that they should be just discussing the MBTA Legislation and not other Planning Board projects.

Councilor Linde asked where the boundary of the MBTA district was and Mr. Rulli noted half mile from the physical location of the platform, southside of Plymouth Street.

Councilor Murphy noted that the reality of being in compliance and having to build is the problem. What has the town done or what can the town do to protect ourselves so we don't have to build these units. Mr. Rulli noted water and sewer quality and capacity, we do not disagree with that. Any new development needs to do a water impact study, there is no negotiation for that. Our water connection charges are very high and take into consideration what those projects would impact the system.

Councilor Murphy asked how the town updates our infrastructure. Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that if we do not have grants to offset costs the residents will be paying for it. More communities are compliant, Bridgewater is only conditionally compliant and that is why Bridgewater is not getting grants. Mr. Rulli noted that there is funding out there that we can apply for. Hale Street is not going to happen unless we get assistance.

Councilor Murphy noted that he will be voting to approve because being in compliance and the opportunity to apply for grants to put towards infrastructure is the right thing to do. Not being in compliance we are losing.

Councilor Linde asked about Broad Street and Mr. Rulli noted that they have not filed for water impact and until it is done they will not get a permit.

Councilor Kennedy noted that reaching 30 units per acre will probably not happen, is that accurate? Mr. Rulli noted that yes, the roads takes away acreage, looking at underlying zoning (height, parking requirements). Biggest impact is the size of the lots.

Councilor McGrath asked if residential D is the only district that will have 30 units. Mr. Rulli noted everything south of Plymouth Street to the BSU campus.

Councilor Ellenberg asked if the town will you be engaging in taking of homes and Mr. Rulli noted that the town is not doing any taking or developing, they are just having a zoning ordinance that allows for.

Councilor Ellenberg asked if the Perkins Development can be counted within the MBTA and Mr. Rulli noted that it is not within a half mile radius of the existing platform.

Councilor Kennedy noted that this is something that we need to do and he can't stand the fact that the State is pushing this on towns.

b) Budget Discussion

Councilor McGrath noted what the Fire Chief said about needing 5 new firefighters and what would happen if one of the stations needed a backup. Asked if the Ambulance reserve fund was used to fund the fire department. Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that the Ambulance Reserve fund is used to fund 33% of the fire departments budget and it is also utilized for capital projects. Mr. Casanova-Davis also noted that this past year there has been less ambulance receipts than previous years.

Councilor McGrath noted that maybe the Ambulance Reserve Fund should be used for the Fire Department or maybe we should look into using money from the stabilization fund for fund the fire department. Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that the stabilization fund and what is in it affects the towns bond rating. Reserves are looked at and the benefit for being a higher bond rating is a lower interest rate. It's considered a rainy day fund, need to be prudent about using it.

Councilor McGrath noted we have free cash, we have funds, rather than waiting for something to happen we should do it now, would like to write up an order to fund.

Councilor Striggles noted that she is a huge proponent of funding the fire department but believes that the police department should also be funded and staffed at the same time. Asked what the numbers would be, does not believe in pulling from stabilization fund as town has gotten into trouble in the past.

Councilor Perry noted that it is never a good practice to take one time money. Need a certain level for bond rating, which is very important. At a financial crossroads as a town. The size of this town we are behind \$30M to \$40M in budget numbers. If we can't fund we are going to have to shut down the Library or Senior Center. There is no wiggle room. The cost of doing business is more than the 2 ½%.

Councilor Loreti asked where the towns was at putting stabilization funds back and Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that it will be discussed at the next Town Council meeting.

Councilor Ellenberg asked that the operational changes that Mr. Casanova-Davis spoke off. Mr. Casanova-Davis noted that he submitted a memo that outlined the positions eliminated, collective bargaining agreements were asked to reduce their COLAs, worked with department heads to reduce costs this year.

COMMITTEE REPORTS - None

LEGISLATION FOR ACTION

- a) Zoning Ordinance Amendment D-FY26-001: MBTA Final Compliance Ordinance for the Town of Bridgewater
Councilor Linde noted that the CED committee met and agreed with the Planning Board and voted 3-0 to not recommend.

Councilor Striggles made a motion to amend Ordinance D-FY26-001 by changing the sponsor from herself to Councilor Perry. This 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 passes 9-0.

Councilor Striggles made a motion to amend Ordinance D-FY26-001 by changing 3.1.1.1 to read:

1. No dwelling shall be erected except on a lot fronting on a street, and there shall be not more than one principal residential building on any lot. ¹.

Footnote 1. Multiple Principal Buildings, on one lot, are permitted within the CBD-S, CBD-R, and the MBTA OVERLAY districts.

This amendment 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.

Councilor Striggles made a motion to amend Ordinance D-FY26-001 by changing 9.9.4.2 to read:

Regardless of other standards in the underlying zoning, the allowable residential density for the two MBTACOD districts is: *up to 18 units per acre in the MBTA - partial CBD-R subdistrict and up to 30 units per acre in the MBTA-Residential D district.*

This amendment 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.

Councilor Perry made a motion to refer Ordinance D-FY26-001 back to Planning Board and Community Development Committee with the amendments. This was duly seconded by Councilor Linde.

A voice vote was taken with the results as follows: Kennedy – No; Ellenberg – Yea; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Loreti – Yea; Perry – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Hunt – Yea; Linde - Yea.
Motion passed 8-1.

OLD BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS

- a) Order O-FY26-030: FY2026 Classification Tax Allocation - Adoption of Residential Factor
Councilor Perry made a motion to refer Order O-FY26-030 to Budget & Finance and Finance 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 – Yea; Linde - Yea.
Motion passes 9-0.

- b) Order O-FY26-031: Transfer Order for Prior Year Bill - Sewer Fund
Councilor Linde made a motion to refer Order O-FY26-031 to Budget & Finance and Finance Committee. This was duly seconded by Councilor Hunt.

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 passes 9-0.

- c) Order O-FY26-032: Transfer Order - Contractual Payments
Councilor Perry made a motion to refer Order O-FY26-0302 to Budget & Finance and Finance 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 – Yea; Linde - Yea.
Motion passes 9-0.

- d) Order O-FY26-033: Transfer Order – CPC Engineering for Multi-Functional Fields
Councilor Perry made a motion to refer Order O-FY26-033 to Budget & Finance and Finance Committee. This was duly seconded by Councilor Striggles.

A voice vote was taken with the results as follows: Kennedy – Yea; Ellenberg – No; Striggles – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Loreti – Yea; Perry – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Hunt – Abstained; Linde - Yea.
Motion passes 7-1-1.

- e) Ordinance D-FY26-007: Ordinance Establishing the Process for Filling a Vacant Town Councilor Role
Councilor Kennedy noted that Councilor Murphy and himself worked together on creating this ordinance to have a multi step process when filling a vacant Town Council seat.

Councilor Perry noted that the council should look at this and expand to include school committee.

Town Attorney Rawlins noted that he recommends that a separate ordinance be done for the School because this is specific to the Town Charter. The current process for the empty seat on the School Committee has been vetted with the School Committee, Superintendent and the school attorney.

Councilor Perry made a motion to refer 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 – Yea; Linde - Yea.
Motion passes 9-0.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

- Pat Driscoll, Chair of Planning Board: explained how projects are presented to the Planning Board.
- Stef D'Melia, Harvest Lane: asked several questions – 1) when a resident asks a question when do the questions get answered. 2) Do we have a water supply issue? If yes, how long have we had that issue and is there an estimated cost. 3) Do we have a water shortage issue, estimated cost. 4) Water infrastructure issues, how long and cost. 5) Water contamination issue how long and cost. 6) Water/sewer plant upgrade is it going to put an overload on the sewer treatment plant. 7) MBTA how much tax money does Bridgewater pay the MBTA for hosting the T stop. 8) How much tax money has Bridgewater paid since the T Stop has been placed in town. 9) When did Bridgewater start paying the MBTA to host that sits on state land. 10) \$850K shortfall and why was it not mentioned tonight?
- James Walsh, 60 Pleasant Street: noted that the MBTA amendment was the right thing to do; if we don't have enough water we can't pass these things. Affordable housing numbers – are we getting them on a recurring basis.
- Janet Hanson, Pleasant Street: confused, ordinance needs to be rewritten. Will the State say where are the 1,401 units. Water impact study needs to be clear on who is looking at that, needs to be clearer.
- Carlton Hunt, Austin Street: noted that the Energy Committee and CPC were invited to attend a council meeting.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Councilor Linde noted that the second Energy Aggregation session will be at the Senior Center on Wednesday.
- Councilor Hunt read where all of the food distributions were for those that needed help.
- Councilor Murphy wished a Happy Veterans Day to all the Veterans and thanked them for their service.
- Councilor Perry noted he will be attending the veterans day parade in West Bridgewater and encouraged others to do so. Also noted that it is important that we work to be MBTA compliant so that we can possibly get monies that we need. This could change with the next governors elections, we need to prepare and have our ducks in a row to keep funding open.
- Councilor Striggles thanked the resident that came out and our Planning Board Chair; Happy Veterans Day to our brave men and women who served our country. Spoke about the cause No Kid Hungry – if you are having a problem and need resources please contact me.
- Councilor Ellenberg noted that the Historical Commission that puts up the veterans banners needs volunteers on 11/15 starting at 8am at the Academy building to take them down for the year. Historical Commission needs two more to fill vacant positions. Would like to consider whether the town would pass a building moratorium because of the water issues. Local control of the situation because we don't have adequate water but would still be in compliant.
- Councilor Kennedy thanked the veterans and thanked the citizens for coming out and gave a shoutout to his daughter who turned 9 today.

- Councilor McGrath noted that she would love to have committees come and present at a council meeting.
- Councilor Loreti thanked the public for their input; will put a link out for the chapter 70 to support the schools.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- a) MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21(a) (4): to discuss the deployment of security personnel or devices, and strategies with respect thereto related to Council meeting safety; and to adjourn from Executive Session

Councilor Loreti noted that the Town Council would be going into Executive Session under MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21(a) (4): to discuss the deployment of security personnel or devices, and strategies with respect thereto related to Council meeting safety; and to adjourn from Executive Session and asked for a motion.

Councilor Linde made a motion to enter into Executive Session, which 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 – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Hunt – Yea; Linde - Yea.
Motion passes 9-0.

ADJOURNMENT

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, November 18, 2025, to approve the aforementioned minutes, as submitted.