



Town of Bridgewater **Budget & Finance Committee**

January 20, 2026
6:00 PM
66 Central Square
Conference Room 201A
Bridgewater, MA

MEETING AGENDA

A Quorum of the Town Council May Be In Attendance

- A. Call to Order**
- B. Approval of Meeting Minutes**
- C. Legislation Referred**
 - a) Order O-FY26-046: Acceptance of Donation - Oliari Charitable Foundation
 - b) Order O-FY26-047: Acceptance of Donation - Bridgewater Police Association
 - c) Ordinance D-FY25-019: Adoption of Clause 22I of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 59, Section 5 (“HERO Act”)
 - d) Order O-FY26-038: Transfer Order – CPC Town Owned Cemetery Assessment
- D. Public Comment**
- E. Discussion**
 - a) FY27 Budget Timeline
 - b) Budget Workshop
 - c) Meeting Frequency
 - d) Tax Exemptions
- F. Public Comment**
- G. Adjournment of Meeting**



Bridgewater Town Council

Introduced By: Town Manager
 Date Introduced: 1/6/2026
 First Reading: 1/6/2026
 Second Reading:
 Amendments Adopted:
 Third Reading:
 Date Adopted:
 Date Effective:

Order O-FY26-046: Acceptance of Donation - Oliari Charitable Foundation

WHEREAS: Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 44, §53A, states as follows: “An officer ... of any city or town ... may accept grants or gifts of funds from ... from the commonwealth ... or an agency thereof, ... and may expend such funds for the purposes of such grant or gift ... with the approval of the city manager and city council...;” and

WHEREAS: The Town of Bridgewater has received a Donation award from Oliari Charitable Foundation for \$45,000.00 to be split equally between the Bridgewater Police Department, the Bridgewater Fire Department and the Bridgewater Public Library.

NOW THEREFORE, in accordance with Chapter 44, §53A of the Massachusetts General Laws, the Town Council votes to take the following action:

ORDERED that the Town Council of Bridgewater, Massachusetts in Town Council assembled vote to accept and to expend the grant in accordance with stated purpose thereof.

Explanation:

The Oliari Charitable Foundation., has graciously donated \$45,000 to be split equally between the Bridgewater Police Department, the Bridgewater Fire Department and the Bridgewater Public Library and the funds are to be used at the sole discretion of the respective department heads.

Committee Referrals and Dispositions:

Referral(s)	Disposition(s)
•	•

NOT FOR ACTION - FIRST READING
 REFER TO BUDGET & FINANCE AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

•	•
•	•

Attachments: 1. Oliari Donation - December 2025



8 December 2025

Town of Bridgewater
Attn: Town Manager Justin Casanova-Davis
66 Central Square
Bridgewater, MA 02324

Dear Mr. Casanova-Davis:

This letter is to attest that The Oliari Charitable Foundation is making a donation in the amount of \$45,000.00 to the Town of Bridgewater to be split equally between the Bridgewater Police Department, the Bridgewater Fire Department, and the Bridgewater Public Library. The funds are to be used at the sole discretion of the respective department heads.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation in this matter. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Danielle Oliari", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Danielle M Oliari
Board Chairperson
Oliari Charitable Foundation
Danielle.oliari@cntdep.com



Bridgewater Town Council

Introduced By: Town Manager
 Date Introduced: 1/6/2026
 First Reading: 1/6/2026
 Second Reading:
 Amendments Adopted:
 Third Reading:
 Date Adopted:
 Date Effective:

Order O-FY26-047: Acceptance of Donation - Bridgewater Police Association

WHEREAS: Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 44, §53A, states as follows: “An officer ... of any city or town ... may accept grants or gifts of funds from ... from the commonwealth ... or an agency thereof, ... and may expend such funds for the purposes of such grant or gift ... with the approval of the city manager and city council...;” and

WHEREAS: The Town of Bridgewater has received a Donation award from the Bridgewater Police Association for the Bridgewater Veterans for \$1,050.00 to support the mission of the Bridgewater Veteran's Office.

NOW THEREFORE, in accordance with Chapter 44, §53A of the Massachusetts General Laws, the Town Council votes to take the following action:

ORDERED that the Town Council of Bridgewater, Massachusetts in Town Council assembled vote to accept and to expend the grant in accordance with stated purpose thereof.

Explanation:

The Bridgewater Police Association has graciously donated \$1,050 to the Bridgewater Veterans Office to be used at the sole discretion of the Veteran's Agent to support the mission of the Veteran's office.

Committee Referrals and Dispositions:

Referral(s)	Disposition(s)
•	•

NOT FOR ACTION - FIRST READING
 VOICE VOTE REFER TO BUDGET & FINANCE AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

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•	•

Attachments:

1. Veterans Donation December 2025



Town of Bridgewater Veteran's Council

Municipal Office Building

66 Central Square
Bridgewater, MA 02324
508-697-0908

December 18, 2025

Town Council (Attn: Deb Ward)
66 Central Square
Bridgewater, MA 2025

Dear Mrs. Ward,

I am requesting Town Council acceptance of a donation of \$1,050.00 from the Bridgewater Police Association. These funds are to be used at the discretion of the Veteran's Agent to support the mission of the Bridgewater Veteran's Office.

Sincerely,

Gregory Martin
Bridgewater Veteran's Services Officer



Bridgewater Town Council

Introduced By: Johnny Loreti, Councilor
Fred Chase, Councilor
Sonya Striggles, Councilor

Date Introduced: 4/8/2025
First Reading: 4/8/2025
Second Reading: 6/3/2025
Amendments Adopted:
Third Reading:
Date Adopted:
Date Effective:

Ordinance D-FY25-019: Adoption of Clause 22I of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 59, Section 5 (“HERO Act”)

WHEREAS, the HERO Act mandates that property tax exemptions under clauses 22, 22A, 22B, 22C, 22E, or 22F shall be increased annually by the amount equal to the increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for that year, as determined by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Revenue shall annually inform each municipality of the amount of such increase to ensure that veterans' exemptions maintain their value over time; and

WHEREAS, the HERO Act helps provide meaningful and sustainable financial relief to eligible veterans.

NOW THEREFORE, in accordance with Section 2-06 of the Bridgewater Home Rule Charter, the Town Council hereby adopts the following as a General Ordinance of the Town:

SECTION 1: PURPOSE

The purpose of this ordinance is to adopt Clause 22I of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 59, Section 5, in order to provide CPI-adjusted property tax exemptions to eligible veterans beginning in Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26).

SECTION 2: ADOPTION OF CLAUSE 22I – CPI-ADJUSTED PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS

Pursuant to Clause 22I, the Town of Bridgewater shall adjust property tax exemptions for eligible veterans based on the annual Consumer Price Index (CPI). The exemption amounts shall be revised each fiscal year in accordance with the CPI as determined by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The projected FY26 adjustment is 3.3%.

VOICE VOTE: REFER TO BUDGET & FINANCE AND FINANCE COMMITTEE
REQUIRES MAJORITY OF THOSE PRESENT AND VOTING

- **Eligibility:** Veterans currently receiving property tax exemptions under Chapter 59, Section 5.

SECTION 3: IMPLEMENTATION & ADMINISTRATION

- (a) The Bridgewater Board of Assessors shall be responsible for administering these exemptions and applying annual CPI adjustments.
- (b) Eligible veterans must meet existing requirements under G.L. c. 59, §5 and submit applications as required by the Bridgewater Assessor’s Office.
- (c) The Veterans’ Services Office shall confirm the eligibility of applicants under Clauses 22, 22A, 22B, 22C, 22E, or 22F.
- (d) The exemptions shall be reflected in the tax bills issued for the applicable fiscal year.

SECTION 4: EFFECTIVE DATE

This ordinance shall take effect upon passage and approval as required by law and shall be applicable beginning Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26).

SECTION 5: SEVERABILITY

If any provision of this ordinance is found to be invalid or unenforceable, the remaining provisions shall continue in full force and effect.

Committee Referrals and Dispositions:

Referral(s)	Disposition(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4/8/25: Referred to Rules and Procedures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rules & Procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5/27/25: Voted 3-0 to recommend with amendment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6/3/25: Refer to Budget & Finance and Finance Committee

Attachments: None

VOICE VOTE: REFER TO BUDGET & FINANCE AND FINANCE COMMITTEE
REQUIRES MAJORITY OF THOSE PRESENT AND VOTING



Bridgewater Town Council

Introduced By: Town Manager
 Date Introduced: 12/16/2025
 First Reading: 12/16/2025
 Second Reading: 1/6/2026
 Amendments Adopted:
 Third Reading:
 Date Adopted:
 Date Effective:

Order O-FY26-038: Transfer Order – CPC Town Owned Cemetery Assessment

ORDERED, in accordance with section 6-4 of the Bridgewater Home Rule Charter, vote to appropriate \$200,000 from Historic Preservation Reserve Account (Account Number 324200) towards Town Owned cemetery restoration and assessment.

Explanation:

See CPC recommendation attached.

Committee Referrals and Dispositions:

Referral(s)	Disposition(s)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget & Finance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1/5/26: voted 3-0 to recommend with amendment.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance Committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12/22/25: Voted 5-3 to recommend.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1/6/25: Voted 7-0 to refer back to Budget & Finance Committee

- Attachments:
1. Recommendation - Cemetery Assessment
 2. Historic Cemetery Assesment CPA Application

VOICE VOTE FOR APPROVAL
 REQUIRES MAJORITY OF THOSE PRESENT AND VOTING



Town of Bridgewater, MA

Community Preservation Committee

66 Central Square

Bridgewater, MA 02324

November 20, 2025

Mr. Justin Casanova-Davis, Town Manager
Town of Bridgewater
66 Central Square
Bridgewater, MA 02324

Re: Recommendation to Town Council – Cemetery Assessment

Dear Mr. Casanova-Davis:

In response to an application submitted by the Community Preservation via your office, dated October 14, 2025, for the assessment of town-owned cemeteries, the following motion was made by William Smith and duly seconded by Harry Bailey at the CPC's October 22nd meeting with a friendly amendment by Carlton Hunt. The motion passed unanimously with the amendment.

The motion: Move that the CPC allocate \$200k toward the cemetery restoration and assessment.

The amendment added: that the amount should come from the Historic Preservation reserve account 324200 which has a balance of \$638,070.95.

To the Town Council, care of the cemeteries was discussed by residents and included in both the 2019-2024 and the 2025-2029 CPC plans. The restoration is a phased project with the assessment being Phase 1. Depending on the results of the assessment, additional phases will be submitted to restore the cemetery stones. The discussion leading to the motion can be viewed on the meeting recording <https://youtu.be/rUt8Q4NT4uEat>, minutes 9'32"- 17'00".

Please see that this information is placed on the Town Council agenda for their next meeting and that the attached application and related documents are forwarded to the Council as backup to the Order.

I would appreciate it if you would let me know when the Council acts on the Order so we can prepare the award letter.

Sincerely,

Gina Guasconi, Chair
Community Preservation Committee

att: Application

cc: Josh McGraw
Johnny Loreti
Laurie Guerrini
Debra Ward
Carlton Hunt



Project Application

Community Preservation Committee

Bridgewater, MA


Cover Sheet

An electronic copy of this application and all supporting materials should be submitted to the CPC Chair at cpc@bridgewaterma.org and the CPC's administrative assistant (McGraw, Joshua <JMCGRAW@bridgewaterma.org>). Applications should be submitted **no later than 4:00PM at least two weeks prior to the CPC's meeting (the CPC meets on the fourth Wednesday of each month).**

Complete applications received by this date will be reviewed at the next CPC meeting and considered for recommendation to the Town Council. Applications received after this will be reviewed at the following month's meeting, unless you receive an exception from the CPC chair for cases related to real estate purchase opportunities.¹ Projects may have timelines extending to a maximum of five years.

Projects will be favored by the CPC where:

- The project addresses at least one goal of the current CPC 5-yr. plan <https://www.bridgewaterma.org/DocumentCenter/View/2928/Community-Preservation-Committee-Plan?bidId=>
- the applicant has site control of the proposed project parcel or involvement of the site owner.
- there is demonstrated community support for the project from elected officials, abutters, user groups, civic associations, and community organizations.
- applicants can demonstrate their capacity to implement their project and have a plan for ongoing maintenance and stewardship. projects occur on public space or private space with public access.

• Applicant Signature:  Date Submitted: 10/14/25

¹ For cases related to real estate purchase opportunities, the CPC may consider emergency requests for funding outside of their regular meeting schedule. If you think you might be eligible for emergency consideration, please contact the CPC Chair. The CPC Chair has the authority to accept exceptions or extensions. They will consider such requests on a case-by-case basis and is under no obligation to grant any requested extensions or exceptions.



TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER

Historic District Commission

Bridgewater, MA 02324

10 September, 2025

Dr. Carlton Hunt

Vice-Chair CPC

Town of Bridgewater

Dear Dr. Hunt:

Bridgewater is the home of ten town-controlled cemeteries, several of which are of national importance. The oldest cemetery on Summer Street was established in the early 1700s and is the burial ground of grandchildren of the original Pilgrim settlers in Plymouth. In other cemeteries in town are buried patriots from the Revolutionary War.

Though the Town mows the cemetery lawns, these cemeteries are in sore need of a major restoration and preservation as many tombstones have begun to lean and effaced by the elements of several hundred years. These cemeteries are too historically significant to be neglected any longer, and the CPC under your leadership has proposed a complete assessment of these monuments, a task that should be undertaken haste-post-haste. Once such an assessment is completed, the Town and the CPC can determine which cemeteries should be restored immediately.

The Historic District Commission enthusiastically supports such an assessment of these ten cemeteries. Though the Summer St. Cemetery, one of the town's most historical and oldest cemeteries, is not directly in the historic district, it is adjacent to properties in the district and serves as a gateway to the town's historic center. The HDC hopes that the assessment can take place soon and the restoration of these cemeteries can begin in the spring.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

William S. Smith

William S. Smith, Chair

Historic District Commission



BRIDGEWATER
STATE UNIVERSITY

September 17, 2025

Councilor Johnny Loretto
President
Bridgewater Town Council
66 Central Square
Bridgewater, MA 02324

Dear President Loretto,

I write today on behalf of Bridgewater State University in support of the Community Preservation Act request to fund a survey of the seven Historic Cemeteries in the Town of Bridgewater.

Bridgewater State University has a longstanding connection with the Historic First Cemetery which was initially created in 1717. Beyond sharing locations on Summer Street and Plymouth Avenue, the University's ties to the First Cemetery include hosting Historic Archives of the Town's early settlers. As recently as 2023, BSU faculty Dr. Emily Field and Dr. Jamie Hoffs led a research project funded by the University that documented the History of African American and Indigenous residents of early Bridgewater, some of whom are buried at the First Cemetery.

The work proposed by the Community Preservation Committee will help to increase awareness of the town's history and lead to potential preservation strategies for these Historic Cemeteries. Bridgewater State University looks forward to learning more about these Historic properties and supporting the goal of preserving them

Sincerely,

Frederick W. Clark, Jr., Esq.
President



Project Application

Community Preservation Committee

Bridgewater, MA

Complete Application Check List

Please submit the application in this order:

- Project Application Cover Page (signed)
- Project Narrative and Timeline
- Budget Narrative and cost breakdown
- Required Project Attachments including:
 - Documentation of who has site control on the property (if other than the applicant)
 - Photographs of project site (at least three (3))
 - Map of project site showing nearest major roads or intersections
 - Letters of support from relevant Town departments, officials, and boards/commissions
 - Letters of commitment (from any organizations or individuals providing funding to the project)
- Other attachments as applicable and available to your project.

Note: Applicants may be required to submit additional supporting materials and documentation, as requested by the CPC, to aid the committee in their decision-making process.



Project Application

Community Preservation Committee

Bridgewater, MA

GENERAL INFORMATION

Project Name: _____

Project Location (address and neighborhood): _____

Legal Property Owner of Record: _____

CPA Program Area (check all that apply):

- Open Space
 Historic Preservation
 Community Housing
 Recreation

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Short Project Description: _____

Estimated Start Date: ____ **Estimated Completion Date:** ____

Amount Requested: \$ _____ **Total Project Cost:** \$ _____

PROJECT CONTACT

Contact Person: _____

Telephone: _____ **Email:** _____

Project Sponsor/Organization (check one below):

- Town Committee or Department
 Public Charity/Non-Profit
 Private

Have you or this organization applied for or received CPA funding before? Yes No
If yes, what project and when?

ASSURANCE

I _____Justin Casanova-Davis_____hereby certify under the penalties of perjury the
 (Print the name of the fiduciary agent)

following application information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and I
 am legally able to enter into a contract on behalf of _____ (with the
 Town of Bridgewater for Community Preservation Funds.

Signature _____
Justin Casanova-Davis

Date _____

Title _____Town Manager



Project Application

Community Preservation Committee

Bridgewater, MA

Project Narrative

Use as much space as needed and refer to the CPC’s Project Application Guidance for requirements

1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION, TASKS, & ANTICIPATED OUTCOME:

2. CPC GOALS AND PRIORITIES:

3. COMMUNITY NEEDS:

4. COMMUNITY SUPPORT: List of Letters of Support

Name <i>(committee, department, official, organization, etc.)</i>	Date Requested	Date Submitted

5. IMPLEMENTATION AND TIMELINE:

6. ORGANIZATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND CAPACITY:

7. MAINTENANCE:

8. MULTI-YEAR PROJECTS:

9. See Attachments Checklist for additional required materials, if applicable and available.

APPLICANT SIGNATURE: 

DATE SUBMITTED: _____



Project Application Community Preservation Committee Bridgewater, MA

Project Application Attachments (see Application Guidance)

1. **SITE CONTROL**
2. **COMMUNITY SUPPORT**
3. **VISUAL MATERIALS:**
4. **MAPS:**
5. **FUNDING SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS**
 - a. Historic Preservation Proposals
 - b. OPEN SPACE PROPOSALS
 - c. RECREATION PROPOSALS
 - d. COMMUNITY HOUSING PROPOSALS
 - e. Proposals Involving Real Property
 - f. Proposals Involving Design and Construction

Check out the CPC's webpage for more information:

<https://www.bridgewaterma.org/1353/Community-Preservation-Committee>

If you have questions, please contact the Community Preservation Committee Chair at cpc@bridgewaterma.org



Project Application

Community Preservation Committee

Bridgewater, MA

Project Budget Narrative

PROJECT COST:

Project Budget Overview

Total Project Cost	CPA Amount Requested	Other Funding Sources	CPA Funds: % of Total
\$	\$	\$	%

LEVERAGING FUNDING:

Sources of Funding Overview

Source <i>(private, federal, state, or local government)</i>	Amount	Status <i>(received, pending, will apply)</i>
	\$	
	\$	
	\$	
	\$	
	\$	

ANTICIPATED PROJECT EXPENSES:

PROJECT COST ASSUMPTIONS:

ACQUISITION OF AN INTEREST IN REAL ESTATE:

BONDING AGAINST CPA FUNDS:



Project Application

Community Preservation Committee

Bridgewater, MA

Project Budget Attachment

BUDGET OVERVIEW

Total Project Cost	CPA Amount Requested	Other Funding Sources	CPA Funds: % of Total
\$	\$	\$	%

INCOME – OTHER SOURCES OF PROJECT FUNDING

Source <i>(private, federal, state, or local government)</i>	Amount	Status <i>(received, pending, will apply)</i>
	\$	
	\$	
	\$	
	\$	
	\$	

SUMMARY OF PROJECT EXPENSES²

	CPA Funds	Other Funding	Total
Personnel	\$	\$	\$
Equipment	\$	\$	\$
Supplies	\$	\$	\$
Design and Contracts	\$	\$	\$
Construction	\$	\$	\$
Other	\$	\$	\$
TOTAL	\$	\$	\$

² Equipment is generally defined as an item with a useful life expectancy of more than one year. Supplies are defined as an item with a useful life of less than one year. Construction means all types of work done on a particular property or building including erecting, altering or remodeling.



Project Application

Community Preservation Committee

Bridgewater, MA

DETAILED PROJECT EXPENSES

Personnel

	CPA Funds	Other Funding	Total
<i>Ex: Project Manager</i>	\$5,000	\$50,000	\$55,000
Ex. Inspectional Services	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
TOTAL	\$	\$	\$

Equipment³

	CPA Funds	Other Funding	Total
<i>Ex: Furniture</i>	\$	\$5,000	\$50,000
	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
TOTAL	\$	\$	\$

Supplies⁴

	CPA Funds	Other Funding	Total
<i>Ex:</i>	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
TOTAL	\$	\$	\$

Design and Contracts

	CPA Funds	Other Funding	Total
Ex: Deed Restriction	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Ex: Appraisal	\$12,000	\$0	\$12,000
	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
TOTAL	\$	\$	\$

³ Equipment is generally defined as an item with a useful life expectancy of more than one year.

⁴ Supplies are defined as an item with a useful life of less than one year.



Project Application

Community Preservation Committee

Bridgewater, MA

Building and Construction⁵

	CPA Funds	Other Funding	Total
<i>Ex: Picnic Pavilion</i>	\$	\$50,000	\$50,000
	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
TOTAL	\$	\$	\$

Other

	CPA Funds	Other Funding	Total
<i>Ex: Land Acquisition</i>	\$1,000,000	\$500,000	\$1,500,000
	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
TOTAL	\$	\$	\$

Task based task (scope) costs identifying funding source

	CPA Funds	Other Funding	Total
<i>Ex: Accessible Entrance</i>	\$100,000	\$15,000	\$115,000
<i>Ex: Accessible Elevator</i>	\$75,000	\$0	\$75,000
	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$
TOTAL	\$	\$	\$190,000

Attach Letters of support and other key documents.

⁵ Construction means all types of work done on a particular property or building including erecting, altering or remodeling.

Bridgewater's Historic Cemeteries Assessment Plan

September 2025

The Community Preservation Committee (CPC) is interested in restoration/rehabilitation of the Town owned historic cemeteries. The Massachusetts Cultural Resources Information System (MACRIS) lists fourteen(14) historic burial grounds in Bridgewater; ten (10) are under the control of the Town (see Figure 1). Restoration/rehabilitation of these historic properties necessitates a thorough understanding of the gravestone conditions, the cemetery boundary marker condition, and signage. This understanding can only be achieved through a professional assessment of the cemeteries' conditions.

The goal of the assessment is to develop budgeting estimates for the restoration/rehabilitation of gravestones, crypts, and other cemetery features. Funding the cemetery restoration assessment will address *Goal 5. Preserve and restore outdoor public historic places and public monuments, including places of Indigenous significance, such as the Titicut Conservation Area, as well as cemeteries*” articulated in the CPC’s FY2025-2029 5-Yr Plan historic preservation chapter (https://www.bridgewaterma.org/DocumentCenter/View/6019/BridgewaterCPP_Plan_FinalAsApproved_012725).

According to the CPA Coalition’s website, *“communities have appropriated over \$4.5 million of CPA funds to preserve historic burying grounds and cemeteries. CPA funded projects include a variety of preservation activities: gravestone and monument conservation; restoration of chapels and tombs; stabilization of retaining walls; surveys, inventories, and management plans; as well as rehabilitation of fencing and signage. These projects can be costly, ranging anywhere from a few thousand dollars to over \$350,000 depending on the scope of work, but in Newburyport they’ve figured out a way to bring costs down substantially.*

<https://www.communitypreservation.org/burying-grounds>. The per stone cost of restoration can range between \$100 and \$500. Any restoration must adhere to federal guidelines on historic burial ground rehabilitation/restoration.

Moving the conservation forward requires a professional assessment of Bridgewater’s historic cemeteries to develop a conservation plan and determine potential restoration costs. Historic burial ground rehabilitation/restoration plans would include cemetery specific tasks, schedules, and budgets, thus compels a systematic approach to create a cemetery condition ranking and rehabilitation needs so funding can focus on the highest to lowest restoration need. Ranking factors would include number of grave markers, their condition, and rehabilitation/restoration requirements. The assessment would include research on the history and significance of the cemetery to the Town. Preliminary evaluation factors are considered in the attached table (Figure 1). Once the ranking is complete a phased funding plan can be developed.

The following criteria were used to make a preliminary recommendation for restoration: First Use Date, Location’s Visibility, Number of Headstones, Headstone/Crypt Condition, Relevance of Interred individuals to Bridgewater’s history including founding and significant families, revolutionary soldiers, interred minority individuals, and relevance to downtown redevelopment projects.

Based on the information included in MACRIS BRD-811 and other more recent studies, the First Cemetery (MACRIS inventory BRD 811) (Figure 2 through 4) at the intersection of Summer and Plymouth St. appears to be the most documented of the Town-owned graveyards. Available information suggests from 500 to ~2,000 interments are possible since 1717. Numerous headstones are leaning, falling over, need cleaning, or may be covered with soil. Note: Many interred individuals were moved to the Mount Prospect St. cemetery when it opened.

The cemetery assessments must include a visual survey of the site, documentation of the person memorialized, characterization of each head/foot stone and crypt condition, restoration options. Examination and recommendations for restoration/rehabilitation of the graveyard boundary features such as stone walls and fences would be included. Draft and final reports detailing the assessment methodology, results and recommendations will complete the assessment. Review of prior reports on a cemetery's history such as the database for the first cemetery as discussed in the "*A Shared Past*" by John Winters, in the Fall 2023 Bridgewater State University Magazine (https://www.bridgew.edu/sites/bridgew/files/media/pdf_document/Fall2023-November14-LowRes.pdf) and other documented history would be included in the restoration report.

Many historic cemeteries have hidden features. Thus, locating underground head and foot stones or other evidence of burials may be discovered with Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR). A simpler method such as a pine flag survey conducted by volunteers or other civic or community service organizations such as Scouting organizations, while less costly, is possible but would miss evidence of below-surface soil disturbances. Recommendations for methods to assess the hidden features of the graveyards will be part of the procurement scope for budgeting purposes.

Importantly, restoration of the First Cemetery will improve the visual appeal of Bridgewater's downtown area. The restoration is consistent with Bridgewater's downtown revitalization effort which includes improvements to the "Summer St. Park" (former Mobile Station parcel) and the Bridgewater Improvement Association's Flora T. Little Park (FTLP) which are adjacent to the cemetery. The members of the BIA plan to add a fully accessible path soon. Other improvements to the area include a "Complete Streets" upgrade from Central Sq. to the railroad crossing including the Summer St./Plymouth St. intersection.

The other nine historic cemeteries are included in the evaluation for future budget planning. Based on these assessments, a phased restoration plan would be developed. The CPC/Town will also identify additional funding sources such as grants to support the restorations.

The assessment project tasks include: 1) project scope development, 2) procurement, 3) contract award, 4) cemetery assessments and 5) draft and final reports. The assessment schedule will be determined through the procurement scope and contract process. The assessment project is anticipated to take place between January 1, 2026, and December 31, 2026.

The CPC recommends a historic cemetery assessment budget of \$200K (average \$20K/cemetery). Appropriate municipal procurement processes will be followed.

MACRIS #	Name	Alternative Name	Parcel #	Bk & Pg (Cert)	Deed Date	Street Location	Earliest Death Date	Area (Sq Ft.)	Approximate # of Headstones	1984 Assessment of Art Work	Condition in 1984	Enclosure Features	Major Use Period	Most Frequent Names
BRD.811	Bridgewater Old Graveyard		34-278	NA-NA	1900-01-01	Summer St. and Plymouth St.	1717	44,388	531 (+700) [55 Revolutionary War Veterans]	See Art Assement in BRD.811 and other extensive documentation	Poor to Good	Rubblestone "common balance wall" 1796 rebuilt in 1844	1716-1863	Washburn, Perkins, Carver, Packard
BRD.806	Trinity Church Cemetery	Old Trinity Church Cemetery	10-67	NA-NA	-	Main St. (Opposite Rowayne Park)	1748	579,348 (14.5 Ac)	75	See Art Assement in BRD.806	Fair to Good	Deteriorating Rubblestone wall; front; fencing not present; Over looked "The Jurgury Swamp"	1748-1870	Edson
BRD.805	Jennings Hill Cemetery	Japan Cemetery	25-2	2153-093	1951-06-21	High St & Plain St.	C1750	36,600	200	See Art Assement in BRD.805	Good	Not available in designation record	1750-1830	Hayward, Dunphc, Darling, Carr, Bolding, Mitchell
BRD.812	Vernon Street Cemetery	Alden Cemetery	117-1	NA-NA	-	Vernon St. & Cross St.	C 1750	28,000	100-150	See Art Assement in BRD.812	Good	Low rubble stone wall	1751-1840	Wilber (Wilbar), Leach, Hayward, Fobes
BRD.808	Scotland Burial Ground		72-7	NA-NA	-	Pleasant St.	1753	2.21 Ac	400-500	See Art Assement in BRD.808	Generally good many stones deteriorating; may be graves in the north portion (GPR may have been performed; David Moore 2025)	Rubblestone wall 3 sides and fragments of iron Greek Revival fence	1753-1850	Fobes, Keith, Leach, Bassett, Sprague, Keonard, Child, Snow, Carver, Wood, Pratt, Bosworth, Bolton, Dyer, Smith, Hill, Starr, Dunbar, Conant, Andrews
BRD.810	South Street Burial Ground	Keith Cemetery	111-6	3594-644	1970-06-02	South St. between Cross St. & Keith Place	1756	43,560 + 0.491 Ac	~500	See Art Assement in BRD.810	Good	Rubblestone retaining wall/Granite gate posts, iron gate	1757--1850	Keith, Fobes, Wilber, Amos
BRD.804	Small Pox Cemetery	To the rear of this burial ground is the more extensive M.C.I. Bridgewater cemetery.	89-5	NA-NA	1900-01-01	Conant St. (opposite #625)	1788	38,986	~ 7 in the Smallpox enclosure; MCI Internments: "rows of simple concrete markers are located on the graves of prisoners"	See Art Assement in BRD.804	Poor to Good	Enclosed by a wooden fence with substantial posts and wide boards	1788 -1789	Alen, Fuller, Latham
BRD.800	Hillside Cemetery	AUBURN STREET OR BENSON TOWN /CEMETERY	77-17	NA-NA	-	Auburn, near Curve St. (opposite #204 Auburn St.)	1813	33,000	150	See Art Assement in BRD.800	Good to Exelent with a few stones toppled over	Low rubblestone walls on 3 sides; two rod and granite post fence; mid 19th century cast iron with Greek Revival motifs	1810 -1860	Allen, Whitman, Mitchell, Wood, & Washburn
BRD.803	Conant St.		89-4	NA-NA	1900-01-01	Conant St. near Flagg St.	1829	11,021	75	See Art Assement in BRD.803	Good	Rubble stone walls	1829-1910	Leonard, Conant, Leach, Waterman, Hayward & Holmes
BRD.813	Pratt Town Burial Ground		37-121	NA-NA	1900-01-01	Walnut St. & Orange St.	C1790	27,138	100 (Includes Revolutionary War Veterans)	See Art Assement in BRD.813	Good to Exellent	Two iron rod fences with granite posts along streets; low rubble stone walls on other sides	1830 -1870	Leonard, Hatward, Pratt, Hooper, Pope, Keith
BRD.802	Cherry Street Burial Ground	Harlow Cemetery	67-12	NA-NA	-	Cherry St.	1840	13,700	75-100	See Art Assement in BRD.802	Good	Rubblestone walls, two rod fence with rock face gnaet posts	1850 -1860	Harlow & Wilber

Figure 1. Bridgewater owned historic cemetery details from MACRIS documents.

MACRIS #	Name	17th century colonizer names	First Use Date Rank	Major Use Period	Location's Visibility	Number of Headstones	Headstone/ Crypt Condition	History of Interred Individuals	Revolutionary soldiers	Minority Individuals	Relevance to Redevelopment
BRD.811	Bridgewater Old Graveyard	Y	1	1716-1863	H	550	P/G	H	55	Y	Downtown
BRD.806	Trinity Church Cemetery	N	2	1748-1870	H	75	F/G	?	?	?	N
BRD.805	Jennings Hill Cemetery	Y	3	1750-1830	M	200	G	?	?	?	N
BRD.812	Vernon Street Cemetery	N	4	1751-1840	M	150	G	?	?	?	N
BRD.808	Scotland Burial Ground	Y	5	1753-1850	H	500	G	?	?	?	N
BRD.810	South Street Burial Ground	Y	6	1757--1850	M	500	G	?	?	?	N
BRD.804	Small Pox Cemetery	Y	7	1788 -1789	L	7	P/G	?	?	?	N
BRD.800	Hillside Cemetery	Y	8	1810 -1860	L	150	G/E	?	?	?	N
BRD.803	Conant St.	Y	9	1829-1910	L	75	G	?	?	?	N
BRD.813	Pratt Town Burial Ground	y	10	1830 -1870	M	100	G/E	?	Y	?	N
BRD.802	Cherry Street Burial Ground	?	11	1850 -1860	L	100	G	?	?	?	N

Figure 2. Preliminary ranking of historic cemetery restoration priorities. Characterizations drawn from the 1984 Cemetery condition survey (MACRIS). The deeper the shade of color the higher the priority for restoration.



Figure 3. First Cemetery (1717) Summer St. Bridgewater, MA. BRD. 811

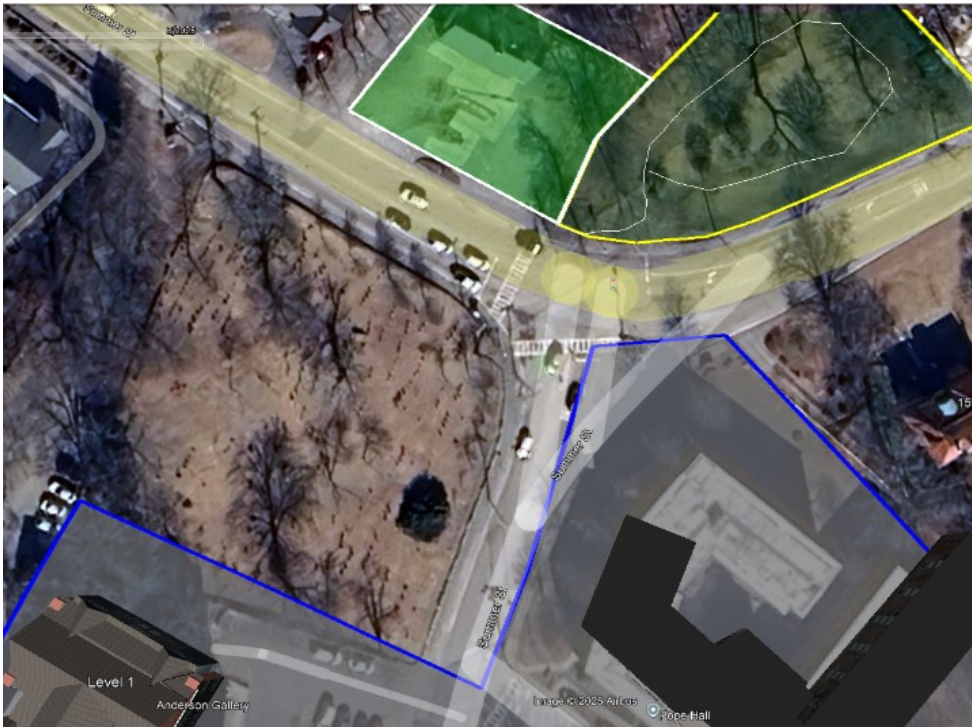


Figure 4. Aerial view 1st Cemetery and contiguous parcels Google Earth, March 2025.



Figure 5. Hillside Cemetery, Auburn St - BRD.800



Figure 8. Smallpox Cemetery, Conant St.- BRD.804



Figure 6. Cherry St. Cemetery, Cherry St. - BRD.802.



Figure 9. Figure 10. Jennings Hill Cemetery, High and Pine Ss. - BRD.805



Figure 7. Conant St. Burial Ground – Conant St. - BRD.803.



Figure 10. Jennings Hill 2023



Figure 11. Trinity Cemetery, Main St. - BRD.806



Figure 14. Pratt Town Burial Ground, Walnut and Orange St. - BRD. 813



Figure 12. South St. Cemetery, South St. - BRD.810



Figure 13. Vernon St. Cemetery Vernon St.- BRD.812