



Town of Bridgewater

Town Council

January 6, 2026

5:30 PM

General Public Meeting

66 Central Square

Academy Building

Council Chambers/2nd Floor

The Town Council Meeting of the General Public was streamed Live via You Tube.

The link was posted to Town of Bridgewater Facebook Page prior to the meeting

MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being duly present, Town Council President Johnny Loreti called the General Public meeting to order at 5:31pm on Tuesday, January 6, 2026 in the Council Chambers.

Present: Adelene Ellenberg, Mary McGrath, Johnny Loreti, Paul Murphy, Marilee Hunt and Mark Linde.

Absent: Sean Kennedy, Sonya Striggles and Dr. Kevin Perry.

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

Councilor Loreti thanked everyone for attending and submitting their questions. Noting that more than 140 submissions were submitted which were consolidated down to 6 topics.

Councilor Loreti read Section 2-2. General Powers and Duties of the Charter into the record and noted that the notice was published in the 12/19/25 Brockton Enterprise; on the front page of the Town of Bridgewater Website from 12/18/25 to 12/30/25; on the Town of Bridgewater Facebook Page and a copy was placed on the bulletin board on the first floor of the Academy Building.

ITEMS OF A GENERAL NATURE THE PUBLIC WANTS ADDRESSED AND COMMUNICATED TO THE COUNCIL BY December 30, 2025:

- a) Water Supply, Quality and Infrastructure
Question 1: Re-establish Water and Sewer Commission

Jean DiBattista, 260 Lakeside Drive: noted that a water Commission would be an excellent idea, 5 personnel who have background, monitor quantity and quality on ongoing basis, work with town personnel for efforts to approve, assist in determining if Bridgewater has the ability to add, monitor the

existing users, focus on charging a higher water rate for high volume users, work with department of water, assist in finding grants and additional funding.

David Moore, 54 Flagg Street: noted he has been involved in Town Government for over 45 years, worked closely with water and sewer commissioners and we need a strong water and sewer commission, cannot be without it. Poll the town for some good professionals and get their input and get people to volunteer.

Councilor Hunt noted that we really do need a good water and sewer commission.

Councilor Ellenberg noted that she has already filed an article for the agenda and it is being reviewed by the Town Counsel.

Lincoln Andrews, Owner of Stiles & Hart: 38 years ago worked with the Selectmen to secure the acreage for Stiles & Hart. Starting with Troy have had no communication with anyone in Bridgewater.

Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that his office received an email in December and they replied and scheduled a meeting but it was rescheduled by Mr. Andrews attorney to this week.

Councilor Linde noted that all of these issues are council issues; we have committees that can deal with some of these issues. Permits issued on a project and we don't have the infrastructure to support it.

Carlton Hunt, Austin Street: would like to see what the authority they have, what is the real role of that commission. If just advisory our Charter doesn't allow it.

Councilor Ellenberg noted that her article is according to Mass General Law, set up along with the parameters with State law.

Question 2: Establishing a well head protection plan and team

Mark Peterson, 43 Church Street: noted that he submitted the question for protecting the area around the wells and to make sure departments interact with each other to protect the areas around the wells.

Councilor Loreti asked if we have done this in the past and Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that we have not done that in the past but if that is something that the council wants to look into we can discuss and add it to a future agenda.

Councilor Ellenberg noted that Mr. Andrews has conservation land so she imagines it would be wellhead protection.

Question 3: Creating rules for when new water connections are allowed and who can deny them

Councilor Loreti asked if the Town Manager could give an brief update of what the process what now.

Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that DPW, Town Counsel and Town Manager are reviewing the process now but new tie ins of development go through the planning board process, ZBA if necessary, then Building, Fire, Water and Wastewater.

Councilor Loreti noted that no projects can tie in at the moment unless they are approved and Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that there are no new tie ins for non-approved projects.

Jean DiBatista, 260 Lakeshore Drive: noted that has not been handled well in the past, improvement needed. We want to move forward and have progress but we have not looked at the cost of doing it when we add large users of water.

Councilor Hunt noted that we have not had a water and sewer commission or board and have not had anyone watching these projects.

Councilor Linde noted to Ms. DiBattista that she came up with a suggestion of an environmental committee a while ago and that all that development with a 1988 permit does not make sense.

Councilor Loreti noted that he lives in the Nip and he will be looking into that.

Donna Jewell, 50 Keith Place asked the Town Manager explain the current process and procedure before we issue a building permit, the last 6 months and now during the water emergency.

Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that this general meeting is for the public to provide policy input, we are listening and then will gather the information and will put the item on a future agenda. At this time, we are not allowing any new tie-ins for non-approved projects.

Councilor Linde asked if Broad Street was an approved project and Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted yes, it was an approved project.

David Moore, 54 Flagg Street: noted that the Broad Street project was never approved by the Planning Board, it was heard and reviewed but never approved. CED is the group that approved the Broad Street project, was done by the rules but need to take a hard look at the rules.

Councilor Loreti noted that now that MBTA is approved we will be looking at Zoning laws.

Councilor Ellenberg noted that the water commission that is established can establish a procedure that can be transparent and open to everyone.

Councilor Linde noted that it will depend on the role of the commission.

Pat, Conant Street: noted she is concerned about new development on Winter Street which abuts up to Carvers Pond, now there are homes to be approved to go there and they have been requesting Winter Street be paved for years.

Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that the council approved the pole hearing to allow the paving to be done on Winter Street and the bid to pave will go out in the Spring.

Councilor Loreti noted that they will follow up with the safety of the work being done so close to the wells.

Councilor Linde asked when the 90 day clock starts for Middleboro and Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted when the connection is done and water moving.

Councilor McGrath noted that there is a clear detailed report on every well and every street in town on the Water Department webpage and recommend that residents take a look at it, very informative.

b) Growth, Zoning and Development

Councilor Loreti noted that most of the policy suggestions in this topic were about water capacity and stopping tie-ins and those were already discussed. He asked if anyone wished to speak about growth, zoning or development.

James Walsh, 60 Pleasant Street: noted he is looking forward to the zoning review; long overdue. Cost of Community Services Study done in 2019 and use it as CPA applications – different types of land use. Residential development always costs more in community services and need to balance it out. Should also look at Accessory Dwelling Law. Zoning is outdated and should be looked at.

Councilor Loreti asked if there was historical data to see what ADA does in other communities? Is it a grandparent that already lives in the home and is just moving into something more comfortable or someone moving into it. Also how many have been done since it became a right last year. Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that we will get that information.

Pat Neary, Lakeside Drive: noted that the Conservation Commission and Planning Board plan to update their regulations and when they do that she would like to see some public participation because some of the residents know more than people on those boards.

Councilor Loreti asked what purview the aquafer overlay would be and CED Director Rulli noted it would be Conservation.

Carlton Hunt, Austin Street: noted that Pleasant Street has 5 acres that have sat for years and years, what has the CED department done to attract someone to that area. What can we do to get more commercial in town.

Councilor Linde noted that there is a big facility on Route 18 that is sitting empty. Our electrical grid in this community is old.

Mark Peterson, 43 Church Street: Aquafer is the purview of zoning not conservation.

c) Fiscal Policy

Councilor Loreti noted that there was a question about splitting the tax rate to residential and commercial and the Town Council did not think it was the right time to split the tax rate because commercial owners would pay more and it would be sent down to the small business owner who are renting from them.

Lincoln Andrews: my business paid a lot more than residents, and I have no problem paying more on my tax bill to help Bridgewater.

Councilor Ellenberg noted that we have two large state institutions in Town, perhaps a new category of institutional charges could be charged and we could make money back. Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that it is not possible, these are entities that are not taxed.

Councilor Linde noted that he applauds Mr. Andrews for being able to pay more but some small businesses cannot. The split tax rate should be looked into because we need money and we can get it.

Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that you can shift the burden but it does not give you additional revenue; Board of Assessors made up of residents gave the recommendation not to split the rate.

d) **Governance and Oversight**

MJ Spagone, Lakeshore Center: noted that she submitted several suggestions including the residency requirements for certain positions. Residents have a negative opinion towards public officials; not only will the town invest in the town but the person will be living here. Consistent leadership for a longer period of time. Another suggestion she had was that AI not be used for making any decision for the Town. Would like a cemetery commission in the Town to oversee all the cemeteries as they are in disrepair. Finance Committee is an advisory committee but limited, wants to update the charter what the Finance Committee needs to be, should be and how they operate and to change the name to Finance Committee. Why does the Charter say Financial Committee.

Councilor Linde noted that the Councilors are elected so we have to live here. Not a good idea to limit the pool to just residents for those roles. Does not know where all of our employees live but to limit the executive residency is not the right way to go.

MJ Spagone further noted that her proposal called for if they could not find residency they could apply for an exemption.

Jean Dibastita, 260 Lakeside Drive: noted residency would limit the talent pool. AI needs a guidance program, you do not want to ban it, it is imbedded into everything. Need to make sure there are processes in place.

e) **Intergovernmental and Institutional Impacts**

Councilor Loreti noted that since the time was coming up on 7:00pm and the Regular Town Council meeting would be starting, that questions submitted under intergovernmental and institutional impacts and environmental protection would be put on for discussion at the next Town Council meeting.

f) **Environmental Protection**

C. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Loreti thanked everyone for their in and hoped that they received some value and will take all the suggestions and questions and will get back to everyone.

Councilor Hunt thanked those who came tonight and participated and thanked the staff for staying for the meeting.

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

A voice vote was taken for the motion to amend with the results as follows: Kennedy – Absent; Ellenberg – Yea; Striggles – Absent; McGrath – Yea; Loreti – Yea; Perry – Absent; Murphy – Yea; Hunt – Yea; Linde - Yea. Motion passed 6-0.

General Meeting adjourned at 6:55pm.

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, January 20, 2026, to approve the aforementioned minutes, as submitted.