



Town of Bridgewater **Rules and Procedure Committee**

February 20, 2026

10:00 AM

66 Central Square

Academy Building

Conference Room 201A/2nd Floor

and via Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87261055237>

MEETING AGENDA

A. Call to Order

B. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- a) November 14, 2025 Meeting Minutes

C. Public Comment

D. Legislation Referred

- a) Proposed General Ordinance D-FY26-004: Amendment to Chapter 3, Article II, Section 1 - Business Ethics and Conduct
- b) Proposed Ordinance D-FY26-008: Proposed Amendment to Part III – Administrative Code: Chapter 14, Article I, Section 1 Dogs
- c) Proposed Ordinance D-FY26-011: Amend Part II Administrative Code, Chapter 1, Article III. Multiple Members Appointive Bodies
- d) Proposed Ordinance D-FY26-012: Amend Part II Administrative Code, Chapter 2, Article I. Section 3 D. Department Heads

E. Adjournment of Meeting



Town of Bridgewater Rules and Procedure Committee

November 14, 2025

11:00 AM

66 Central Square

Academy Building

Conference Room 201A/2nd Floor

and via Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88082377215>

MEETING AGENDA

A Quorum of the Town Council May be in Attendance

Call to Order

Councilor McGrath called the Town Council Rules & Procedures Committee meeting to order at 11:00am on Friday, November 14, 2025. The meeting was held in Conference Room 201A/2nd Floor of the Academy Building and via Zoom.

Council Members Present:

Councilor McGrath

Councilor Linde

Councilor Kennedy (via Zoom)

Approval of Meeting Minutes

- a) September 9, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Councilor Linde made a motion to approve the September 9, 2025 meeting minutes, which was duly seconded by Councilor Kennedy.

A roll-call vote was taken with the results as follows: McGrath – Yea; Linde – Yea; Kennedy – Yea.
Motion passed 3-0.

Public Comment - None

Items Referred

- a) Ordinance D-FY26-007: Ordinance Establishing the Process for Filling a Vacant Town Councilor Role

Councilor Linde noted that this is a much better process if a councilor leaves.

Councilor McGrath noted that it is clearer than the previous version.

Councilor Kennedy noted that this puts us in a position to be able to vote for multiple candidates if you agree with more than one. Process laid out if cannot come to an agreement.

Councilor McGrath noted that having public comments part of it gives resident a chance to weigh in.

Adjournment of Meeting

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

A roll-call vote was taken with the results as follows: McGrath – Yea; Linde – Yea; Kennedy – Yea.
Motion passed 3-0.

Meeting adjourned at 11:10am.



Bridgewater Town Council

Introduced By: Sean Kennedy, Councilor
Date Introduced: 8/12/2025
First Reading: 8/12/2025
Second Reading: 10/21/2025
Amendments Adopted: 2/17/2026
Third Reading: 2/17/2026
Date Adopted:
Date Effective:

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

ORDERED that pursuant to M.G.L., Chapter 268A; the Town Council of the Town of Bridgewater, Massachusetts in Town Council assembled vote to amend the Bridgewater General Ordinances, Chapter 3, Article II, Section 1, Business Ethics and Conduct as follows:

Replace the existing language with the following:

The continued success of the Town is dependent upon our citizens' trust, and we are dedicated to preserving that trust. The Town will comply with all applicable laws and regulations and expects its department heads, supervisors, and employees to conduct business in accordance with the letter, spirit, and intent of all relevant laws, and to avoid any illegal or unethical conduct.

In order to comply with the 2009 Ethics Reform Act, all public employees are required to complete an ethics training program every two years. New employees must complete the training within 30 days of becoming a public employee and every two years thereafter. All public employees must also acknowledge receipt of the Summary of the Conflict of Interest Law within 30 days of hire and annually thereafter, as required by the State Ethics Commission. For purposes of this section, "acknowledge receipt" means the employee shall complete the electronic acknowledgment through the State Ethics Commission's online portal. Records of such acknowledgments are retained at the state level, and the Town Clerk may request verification as needed.

Ethics Training website – <https://massethicstraining.skillburst.com>

In accordance with Section 9-1 of the Bridgewater Home Rule Charter, certain exempt employees are required to complete a Statement of Financial Interest. The statement is a supplement to the State Conflict of Interest Law and prohibits Town employees from making, or participating in making, any decision on any issue in which they have an economic interest, unless they comply with the State Ethics Commission's advice or rulings

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under the Conflict of Interest Law, G.L. c. 268A.

Required reporting employees must complete and submit the statement within seven (7) days of employment, appointment, transfer, or promotion. Any employee who does not comply with the terms of this Ordinance shall be subject to appropriate discipline including suspension or termination, consistent with the requirements of the state civil service law and the Bridgewater Home Rule Charter, as well as to civil or criminal prosecution under any other applicable state laws.

Pursuant to the provisions of Ordinance #D-FY26-004 (effective date:) the Required Reporters are listed as the following:

A. Heads of the following departments:

- Board of Assessors (Principal Assessor)
- Fire and EMS (Fire Chief)
- Public Works (Director, including Roadways/Highway)
- Community and Economic Development (Director, including Building and Zoning Official/Inspector of Buildings)
- Plumbing and Gas Inspector
- Police (Police Chief)
- Sealer of Weights and Measures
- Finance (Director/Town Accountant, including Treasurer/Collector)
- Wiring Inspector/Assistant Inspector
- Human Resources (Director)
- Informational Technologies (Director)
- Hearings Officer
- Elder Affairs (Director)
- Library (Director)
- Veterans' (Director/Veterans' Agent)
- Parks and Recreation (Director)

B. The following Town officials and Town employees:

- Conservation Agent
- Health Agent and Assistant Health Agent
- Town Council (All Members)
- Town Counsel and Associate Town Counsel
- Town Manager and Assistant Town Manager

C. All members of the following Boards, Committees, or Commissions:

- Affordable Housing Trust
- Board of Assessors
- Community Preservation Committee
- Conservation Commission
- Financial Committee
- Board of Health
- Historic District Commission
- Housing Authority

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- Planning Board
- Water and Sewer Board
- Zoning Board of Appeals

Explanation:

The purpose of this ordinance is to amend the Business Ethics and Conduct section of Chapter 3, Article II, Section 1 of the Bridgewater General Ordinances, superseding Ordinance #D-2013-002 (effective November 15, 2013), to update the list of required reporters for the Statement of Financial Interest to promote transparency and accountability in compliance with the Bridgewater Home Rule Charter (Article I, Section 1-8) and M.G.L. c. 268A. It updates outdated references (e.g., changing "Roadways (Highway)" to "Public Works"), includes new departments formed after 2013, and expands the list to include members of boards, committees, and commissions with moderate to high risk of conflicts (e.g., those with regulatory, permitting, or fiscal authority, per M.G.L. c. 268A, Sections 19-23).

Committee Referrals and Dispositions:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8/12/25: Referred to Rules & Procedures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rules & Procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9/9/25: Voted 3-0 to recommend with amendments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10/21/25: Motion to continue
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2/17/26:: Amendments made and referred back to Rules & Procedures

Attachments: None

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Bridgewater Town Council

Introduced By: Sean Kennedy, Councilor
 Date Introduced: 11/18/2025
 First Reading: 11/18/2025
 Second Reading:
 Amendments Adopted:
 Third Reading:
 Date Adopted:
 Date Effective:

Proposed Ordinance D-FY26-008: Proposed Amendment to Part III – Administrative Code: Chapter 14, Article I, Section 1 Dogs

WHEREAS, in accordance with the provisions of Section 2-06 of the Bridgewater Home Rule Charter relative to amendments to the Town ordinances, it is therefore:

ORDERED, that the Town Council assembled votes to amend the Administrative Code Part III, Chapter 14, Article I, Section 1 as attached.

Committee Referrals and Dispositions:

Referral(s)	Disposition(s)
•	•
•	•
•	•

Attachments: 1. Dog Ordinance changes

NOT FOR ACTION - FIRST READING
 REFER TO RULES & PROCEDURES

Part III: General Ordinances

Chapter 14. Animals

Article I. Canine Control

Section 1. Dogs

A. Nuisance and Dangerous Dogs

1. Definitions

a. A Nuisance dog is a dog that:

- i. By excessive barking or other disturbance is a source of annoyance to a sick person residing in the vicinity;
- ii. by excessive barking, causing damage or other interference, behaves in a manner that a reasonable person would find disruptive to quiet and peaceful enjoyment; or
- iii. has threatened or attacked livestock, a domestic animal, or a person in a manner ~~not grossly disproportionate under all the circumstances.~~

b. Dangerous dog is a dog that either;

- i. without justification, attacks a person or domestic animal causing injury or death; or
- ii. behaves in a manner that a reasonable person would believe poses an unjustified imminent threat of physical injury or death to a person or to a domestic or owned animal

c. No dog shall be deemed dangerous:

- i. solely based upon growling, barking, or both.
- ii. based upon the breed of the dog; or
- iii. If, at the time of the incident in question, the dog was reacting to another animal or person in a manner not grossly disproportionate to any of the following circumstances:
 - a. the dog was protecting or defending itself, its offspring, another domestic animal, or a person from attack or assault.
 - b. the person attacked or threatened by the dog was committing a crime upon the person or property of the owner or keeper of the dog.
 - c. the person attacked or threatened was engaged in teasing, tormenting, battering, assaulting, injuring, or otherwise provoking the dog; or
 - d. at the time of the attack or threat, the person or animal attacked or threatened had breached an enclosure or structure, including but not limited to a gated and fenced-in area, in which the dog was kept apart from the public, without being authorized to do so by the owner of the premises

A child under age 7 shall be rebuttably presumed not to have been committing a crime, provoking the dog, or trespassing at the time of the attack or threat.

2. Complaint. Any person may file a written complaint with the Town Manager's Office that a dog kept in the Town is a nuisance dog or a dangerous dog.

- 3. Disposition. The Town Manager’s Office shall investigate ~~or cause to be investigated~~ the complaint, including an examination under oath of the complainant at a public hearing. Based on credible evidence and testimony presented at the public hearing, the Town Manager or its designee (hereinafter referred to as the “Hearing Authority”) shall take the following action:
 - a. Nuisance dog. If the dog is complained of as a nuisance dog, the Hearing Authority shall either (a) deem the dog a nuisance dog; or (b) dismiss the complaint.
 - b. Dangerous dog. If the dog is complained of as a dangerous dog, the Hearing Authority shall either (a) deem the dog a dangerous dog; (b) deem the dog a nuisance dog; or (c) dismiss the complaint.
 - c. Report to Town Clerk. The Hearing Authority shall report any finding that a dog is a nuisance dog or a dangerous dog to the Town Clerk.
 - d. Order valid throughout Commonwealth. Unless later overturned on appeal, any order of the Hearing Authority shall be valid throughout the Commonwealth.

4. Remedies.

- a. Nuisance dog. If the Hearing Authority has deemed the dog a nuisance dog, it may order the owner or keeper of the dog to take remedial action to ~~ameliorate~~ **rectify** the cause of the nuisance behavior.
- b. Dangerous dog. If the Hearing Authority has deemed the dog a dangerous dog, it may order one or more of the following remedies:
 - i. that the dog be humanely restrained, but no order shall require a dog to be chained or tethered to an inanimate object such as a tree, post, or building;
 - ii. that the dog be confined to the premises of the owner or keeper, meaning
 - securely confined indoors or confined outdoors in a securely enclosed pen or dog run area that has a secure roof, has either a floor secured to all sides or is embedded into the ground for at least two feet, and provides the dog with proper shelter from the elements;
 - and
 - iii. when removed from the premises of the owner or keeper, the dog be securely and humanely muzzled and restrained with a chain or other tethering device with a maximum length of three feet and a minimum tensile strength of three hundred pounds;
 - iv. that the owner or keeper provide (i) **(a)** proof of insurance of at least \$100,000 insuring the owner or keeper against any claim, loss, damage, or injury to persons, domestic animals, or property resulting from the intentional or unintentional acts of the dog; or (ii) **(b)** proof that reasonable efforts were made to obtain such insurance;
 - v. that the owner or keeper provide to the Town Clerk, the Animal Control Officer, or other entity as directed with identifying information for the dog including but not limited to photographs, videos, veterinary records, tattooing, microchip implantations, or a combination of these;
 - vi. that the dog be altered so as not to be reproductively intact, unless the owner or

keeper provides evidence of a veterinary opinion that the dog is medically unfit for such alteration; or

vii. that the dog be humanely euthanized.

c. Restrictions following dangerousness finding

- i. No dog that has been deemed dangerous shall be ordered removed from the Town.
- ii. No person over the age of 17 who has actual knowledge that a dog has been deemed dangerous under this ordinance shall permit a child under the age of 17 to own, possess, or have care or custody of that dog. 187
- iii. No person shall transfer ownership or possession of a dog that **has** been deemed dangerous under this ordinance or offer such dog for sale or breeding without informing the **dogs'** recipient of the ~~dog of the~~ finding of dangerousness
- iv. If a hearing authority or a district court has deemed a dog to be a dangerous dog and such dog wounds a person or worries, wounds or kills any livestock or fowl, the owner or keeper of the dog shall be liable in tort to the person injured by the dog for three times the amount of damages sustained by such person.

5. Appeal. Within 10 days after an order has been issued under this ordinance, the owner or keeper of such dog may bring a petition in **before** the district court within the judicial district in which the order relative to the dog was issued, ~~addressed to the justice of the court praying that the order be reviewed by the court or the magistrate of the court.~~ After **giving** notice to all parties, the magistrate shall, under MGL c. 221, section 62C, review the order of the hearing authority, hear the witnesses and affirm the order unless it shall appear that it was made without proper cause or in bad faith, in which case the order shall be reversed. A party shall have the right to request a de novo hearing on the complaint before a justice of the court. All proceedings referred to under this section of the ordinance (Section 5, Appeal) shall be held in compliance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 140, Section 157.

6. Impoundment Pending Appeal.

- a. Order of impoundment. Pending an appeal, the Hearing Authority may petition the district court for an order to impound the dog at a shelter facility used by the Town. Failure to request such impoundment will not result in liability for the Town, the Hearing Authority, or any of the Town's agents or employees. The district court shall consider this petition in accordance with MGL c. 140, section 157.
- b. Costs of impoundment during appeal process.
 - i. If the district court affirms the Hearing Authority's order of euthanasia, the owner or keeper shall reimburse the Town for all reasonable costs incurred for the housing and care of the dog during the period of impoundment. The Town may recover unpaid charges by any of the following methods: (a) a lien on any real property owned by the owner or keeper of the dog; (b) an additional, earmarked charge on the vehicle excise of the owner or keeper of the dog; or (c) a direct bill sent to the owner or keeper of the dog.
 - ii. If the district court reverses the Hearing Authority's order of euthanasia, the Town

shall pay all reasonable costs incurred for the housing and care of the dog during the period of impoundment.

7. Penalties.

a. Seizure/impoundment. If an owner or a keeper of a dog is found in violation of an order issued under this section, the dog shall be subject to seizure and impoundment by a law enforcement or animal control officer. If it is the keeper in violation, all reasonable efforts shall be made to notify the owner of such seizure and impoundment and the owner may, within seven days, petition the Hearing Authority for return of the dog.

b. Capture/euthanasia. A dog found to be in violation of a Hearing Authority order or district court issued under this section may be captured or detained by a police officer, animal control officer, or constable. In the case of a threat to public safety or of if the dog is living

in

a wild state, the police officer, animal control officer, or constable may euthanize it humanely.

c. Fines/imprisonment. A dog owner or keeper who fails to comply with an order of a Hearing Authority or the district court issued under this section may be punished by a fine of not more than \$500 or imprisonment in a jail or house of correction for not more than 60 188 days, or both for a first offense or by a fine of not more than \$1,000 or imprisonment in a

jail

or house of correction for not more than 90 days, or both for a second or subsequent offense.

d. Future licensure. Any owner or keeper who fails to comply with an order of a Hearing Authority or the district court issued under this section shall be prohibited from licensing a dog within the Commonwealth for five years.

B. Chaining or Tethering Dogs

1. No person owning or keeping a dog shall chain or tether a dog to a stationary object including, but not limited to, a structure, dog house, pole or tree for longer than 24 consecutive hours. A tethering so employed shall not allow the dog to leave the owner's, guardian's or keeper's property. The tether shall be designed for dogs and no logging chains or other lines or devices

not

designed for tethering dogs shall be used. No chain or tether shall weigh more than 1/8 of the dog's body weight. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit a person from walking a dog on a hand-held leash. No dog under the age of 6 months shall be tethered outside for any length of time.

2. A person owning or keeping a dog may confine such dog outside, subject to the restrictions in this section, through the use of any of the following methods:

a. inside a pen or secure enclosure, if the following conditions are met:

i. the pen or secure enclosure shall have adequate space for exercise with a dimension of at least 100 square feet; provided, however, that commercial dog kennels with pens intended for the temporary boarding of dogs shall be exempt from this requirement;

ii. the pen or secure enclosure is constructed with chain link or other similar material as determined by the Building Inspector, with all four sides enclosed; and

iii. the minimum height of the fence shall be adequate to successfully confine the dog;

b. a fully fenced, electronically fenced or otherwise securely enclosed yard, wherein a dog has the ability to run but is unable to leave the enclosed yard; or

c. a trolley system or a tether attached to a pulley in a cable run, if the following conditions are

met:

i. only 1 dog shall be tethered to each cable run;

ii. the tether shall be attached to a properly fitting collar or harness worn by the dog, with enough room between the collar and the dog's throat through which 2 adult fingers may fit; provided, however, that a choke collar and a pinch collar shall not be used to tether a dog to a cable run;

iii. there shall be a swivel on at least 1 end of the tether to minimize tangling of the tether;

iv. the tether and cable run must each be at least 10 feet in length. The cable must be mounted at least 4 feet but not more than 7 feet above ground level; and

v. the length of the tether from the cable run to the dog's collar or harness shall allow continuous access to clean water and appropriate shelter at all times as described herein; provided, however, that a trolley system or tether shall be of appropriate configuration to confine the dog to the owner's, guardian's or keeper's property, to prevent the trolley system or tether from extending over an object to an edge that could result in injury to or strangulation of the dog and to prevent the trolley system or tether from becoming tangled with other object or animals.

3. A person owning or keeping a dog confined outside in accordance with this section shall provide the dog with access to clean water and appropriate dog shelter. The dog shelter shall allow the dog to remain dry and protected from the elements and shall be fully enclosed on at least three sides, roofed and have a solid floor. The entrance to the shelter shall be flexible to allow the dog's entry and exit, and sturdy enough to block entry of weather elements. The shelter shall contain clean bedding and shall be small enough to retain the dog's body heat and large enough to allow the dog to stand, lie down and turn comfortably. The enclosure shall be structurally sound and in good repair. Suitable drainage shall be provided so that water, ice or waste is not standing in or around the shelter.

~~4. No person owning or keeping a dog shall leave a dog chained or tethered outside for longer than 24 consecutive hours.~~ Already part of #1 in section B

~~5.~~ 4. Exceptions to the above restrictions on outdoor confinement shall be made for dogs actively engaged in conduct directly related to the business of shepherding or herding cattle or other livestock or engaged in conduct that is directly related to the business of cultivating agricultural products, if the restraint is reasonably necessary for the safety of the dog.

~~6.~~ 5. No person owning or keeping a dog shall subject the dog to cruel conditions or inhumane

chaining or tethering at any time. For the purposes of this subsection, “cruel conditions and inhumane chaining or tethering” shall include, but not be limited to, the following conditions:

- a. filthy and dirty confinement conditions including, but not limited to, exposure to excessive animal waste, garbage, dirty water, noxious odors, dangerous objects that could injure or kill a dog upon contact or other circumstances that could cause harm to a dog's physical or emotional health;
- b. taunting, prodding, hitting, harassing, threatening or otherwise harming a tethered or confined dog; and
- c. subjecting a dog to dangerous conditions, including attacks by other animals.

7. 6. A person who violates this section shall, for a first offense, be issued a written warning or punished by a fine of \$50, for a second offense, be punished by a fine of \$100 and for a third or subsequent offense, be punished by a fine of \$300, and be subject to impoundment of the dog in a local shelter at the owner’s or guardian’s expense pending compliance with this section, or loss of ownership of the dog

8. 7. Any fine issued under the aforementioned Section B. “Chaining and Tethering” may be assessed

through non-criminal process in accordance with M.G.L. Ch. 40, Section 21 D. Each day on which any such violation continues shall be considered a separate violation of this section. The availability of non-criminal process herein shall not preclude the use of criminal process or other means of enforcement.

Section 2. Leashing of Dogs

A. Leash Required No person owning or keeping a dog in the Town of Bridgewater shall permit such dog to be at large in the Town of Bridgewater elsewhere than on the premises of the owner or keeper, except if it be on the premises of another person with the knowledge and permission of such other person. Such owner or keeper of a dog in the Town of Bridgewater, which is not on the premises of the owner or upon the premises of another person with the knowledge and permission of such person shall restrain such dog by a chain or leash not exceeding six feet in length. In any prosecution hereunder, the presence of such dog at large upon premises other than the premises of the owner or keeper of such dog shall be prima facie evidence that such knowledge and permission was not had. This provision shall not apply, however, in any area designated by the Parks and Recreation Department as a “Dog Park”, “Dog Run” or “Dog Exercise Area”. In areas so designated, dogs are not required to be restrained by a leash provided the owner or keeper of such dog is present and attentive to the dog. The Park and Recreation Department may designate a dog park, dog run, or dog exercise area only if same is enclosed by appropriate fencing to preclude the escape 190 of any dog into any other area of the park or playground not so designated as a dog park, dog run, or dog exercise area.

B. Enforcement. Any dog found to be at large in violation of this ordinance shall be caught and confined by the dog officer who shall notify forthwith the licensed owner or keeper of said dog giving the owner or keeper a period of seven days within which to recover the dog. Return of the dog to the licensed owner or keeper shall be dependent on admission of ownership or the keeping of

the dog and the assumption of responsibility by the licensed owner or keeper. The dog officer shall enter and prosecute a complaint against the owner or keeper of any dog taken into his custody under this section, as provided for in this ordinance. A dog officer having custody of a dog confined under this ordinance shall be allowed the sum of \$40 per day for each day of confinement for the care of such dog, payable by the owner or keeper thereof to the Town of Bridgewater.

- C. Fines. Violations of this Section (Section 2) of this Article shall be punishable as follows: First offense by a fine of \$75.00 Second offense by a fine of \$100.00 Third offense by a fine of \$150.00 Fourth and each subsequent offense by a fine of \$200.00 Any fine issued under this Section may be assessed through non-criminal process in accordance with M.G.L. Ch. 40, Section 21 D. Each day on which any such violation continues shall be considered a separate violation of this section. The availability of non-criminal process herein shall not preclude the use of criminal process or other means of enforcement.

Section 3. No Fouling of Sidewalks, Etc.

- A. Duty to Dispose. It shall be the duty of each person who owns, possesses or controls a dog to remove and dispose of any feces left by his-her dog on any sidewalk, street or other public area in the Town. It shall further be the duty of each person who owns, possesses or controls a dog to remove and dispose of any feces left by his-her dog on any private property neither owned nor occupied by said person.
- B. Duty to Possess Means of Removal. No person who owns, possesses, or controls such dog shall appear with such dog on any sidewalk, street, park or other public area without the means of removal of any feces left by such dog. Furthermore, no person who owns, possesses, or controls such dog shall appear with such dog on any private property neither owned nor occupied by said person without the means of removal of any feces left by said dog.
- C. Method of Removal and Disposal. For the purposes of this regulation, the means of removal shall be any tool, implement, or other device carried for the purpose of picking up and containing such feces, unexposed to said person or the public. Disposal shall be accomplished by transporting such feces to a place suitable for the disposal of canine feces, or as otherwise designated as appropriate by the Board of Health.
- D. Fines. Violation of Section 3 of this Article shall be punishable as follows: First offense by a fine of \$75.00 Second offense by a fine of \$100.00 Third and each subsequent offense by a fine of \$150.00 Any fine issued under this section may be assessed through non-criminal process in accordance with M.G.L. Ch. 40, Section 21 D. The availability of non-criminal process herein shall not preclude the use of criminal process or other means of enforcement. 191
- E. Exemption. This regulation shall not apply to a dog accompanying any handicapped person who, by reason of his-her handicap, is physically unable to comply with the requirements of this Ordinance, or to any individual who utilizes a guide dog.
- F. Severability. The provisions of this section are severable; and if any of the provisions of this section shall be held unconstitutional or otherwise invalid by any court of competent jurisdiction, the decision of such court shall not affect or impair any of the remaining provisions.

Section 4. Licensing

A. Licensing Requirement.

1. License required. The owner or keeper of any dog over the age of six months kept in the

Town of Bridgewater shall obtain a license for the dog from the Town Clerk.

2. Annual renewal. Licenses issued under this section shall be renewed on an annual basis in accordance with procedures to be determined by the Town Clerk.
3. Transfer. Within 30 days of moving into the Town within a licensing period, the owner or keeper of a dog must apply to the Town Clerk to transfer the dog's license. The Town Clerk shall issue a transfer license for a fee and in accordance with procedures that the Town Clerk shall determine.

B. Conditions.

1. Rabies vaccination. The Town Clerk shall not grant a license unless (i) (a) -the license applicant provides a veterinarian's certification or notarized letter that the dog has been vaccinated against rabies; or (ii) (b) the dog is exempted from the vaccination requirement by the Town of Bridgewater Health Department or the Town Clerk in accordance with MGL c. 140, section 145B.
2. Control. Any license granted under this section is granted on the condition that the licensed dog shall be controlled and restrained from killing, chasing, or harassing livestock or fowl.
3. Previous conviction of animal cruelty. Town Clerk shall not grant a license under this section

or

Section 5, below, to an applicant who has been convicted of one or more of the offenses set forth in MGL c. 140, section 137D within the preceding five years.

C. License Forms.

1. Symptoms of rabies. Every license issued to the owner of a dog shall have a description of the symptoms of rabies printed thereon, as supplied by the state Department of Public Health.
2. Description of dog. The owner of a dog to be licensed under this section may add to the license application form up to ten descriptive words indicating the dog's color, breed, weight, or any special markings.

D. Tags.

1. Issuance. ~~Along with the license,~~ the Town Clerk shall issue a durable tag inscribed with the license number, designation of the Town of Bridgewater, and the year of issue.
2. Affixed to dog. The owner or keeper of the licensed dog shall keep a collar or harness of leather or other suitable material affixed around the dog's neck or body to which the tag shall be securely attached.
3. Lost tags. If the tag is lost or destroyed, the owner or keeper shall immediately secure a substitute tag from the Town Clerk for a fee to be determined by the Town Clerk.
4. All dogs over 6 months of age must wear rabies tags at all times and individual dog license Tags (when required under Chapter 140 Sec 137)

E. Exemptions.

The requirements of this section shall not apply: (1) to a person to whom the applicable kennel license has been issued under this ordinance and remains in force; or (2) to a dog housed in a research institution.

F. Fees.

1. Annual license fees. Annual licenses shall be for the period January 1 through December 31.

The annual license fees are as follows:

Prior to March 1:

- a. female: \$20
- b. spayed female: \$15
- c. male: \$20
- d. neutered male: \$15

March 1 or after:

- a. Female: \$30
- b. Spayed Female: \$25
- c. Male: \$30
- d. Neutered male: \$25

To be charged the lower fee for licensing a spayed or neutered dog, the license applicant must provide proof of spay or neuter in the form of either: (a) a certificate from the veterinarian who spayed or neutered the dog; (b) a veterinary bill for performing the procedure; or (c) a statement signed under the penalties of perjury by a veterinarian registered and practicing in the Commonwealth describing the dog and stating that the veterinarian has examined the dog and that the dog appears to be spayed or neutered and therefore incapable of propagation.

The Town Clerk shall send annual licensing reminders to all residents by mail as part of the annual census.

2. Failure to comply; penalties.

Failure to comply with this section shall result in a fine of up to \$250 assessed to the owner or person in control of the dog under the following conditions:

- a. the dog is unlicensed; and
- b. the Police Department, the Health Agent, or the Animal Control Officer responds to a complaint or a stray dog report concerning the animal.

Failure to comply with this section shall result in a fine of up to \$350 assessed to the owner or person in control of the dog under the following conditions:

- a. the dog is unlicensed; and
- b. the Police Department, the Health Agent, or the Animal Control Officer responds to a complaint or a stray dog report concerning the animal; and
- c. the dog has not received a rabies vaccine pursuant to Section 4.B.1

3. Waiver of fees.

- a. Service animal. No fee shall be charged for the licensure of a service animal as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act or regulations promulgated thereunder.
- b. Owner aged 70 and over. If the Town so votes in accordance with MGL c. 140, section 139(c), no fee shall be charged for the licensure of a dog owned by a person aged 70 years and older.

4. Removal from list - No refund of fees. No license fee paid under this section shall be refunded, in whole or in part, due to mistake or due to the subsequent death, loss, spay or neuter, removal from the Town or the Commonwealth, or other disposal of the licensed dog. At any time during the annual license period that the licensed dog dies, is removed from Town, or is otherwise not subject to licensing under this section, the licensee may notify the Town Clerk, and the Town Clerk shall remove the dog from the list of licensed canines. The Town Clerk may require proof that the dog no longer is subject to licensure in the Town prior to removing it from the list.

Section 5. Kennels

A. Personal Kennel (~~Kennel A~~)

~~1. License optional (Kennel A-1). An owner or keeper of four or fewer dogs, three months or older, may elect to secure a Personal Kennel License from the Town Clerk rather than licensing each dog under Section 4, above.~~

1 2. License mandatory (Kennel A-2). An owner or keeper of five or more dogs, three months or older, must secure a Personal Kennel License from the Town Clerk or other type of kennel license as may be applicable under this section.

2 3. Definition. A Personal Kennel is a pack or collection of five or more dogs ~~(or fewer dogs, as in the case of a License-Optional Personal Kennel (Kennel A-1) as defined above at Section 5.A.1),~~ three months or older, owned or kept under single ownership for private personal purposes.

3 4. Breeding. Breeding of dogs owned or kept under a Personal Kennel License may be done only for the purpose of improving, exhibiting, or showing the breed; for legal sporting activity; or for other personal reasons.

4 5. Sales allowed. Dogs bred at a Personal Kennel may be sold, traded, bartered, or otherwise distributed only by private sale to other breeders or individuals and not to wholesalers, brokers, or pet shops.

5 6. Sales prohibited, restricted. No holder of a Personal Kennel License may sell, trade, barter, or otherwise distribute any dog not bred from a personally owned dog, except dogs temporarily housed at a Personal Kennel in conjunction with an animal shelter or rescue program registered with the state Department of Agricultural Resources if the sale, trade, barter, or other distribution is not for profit.

B. Other Types of Kennels.

1. Commercial Boarding or Training Kennel (Kennel B) is an establishment used for boarding, holding, day care, overnight stays, or training of animals that are not the property of the owner of the establishment where such services are rendered for a fee or other consideration and generally rendered in the absence of the owner of the animal. A "Commercial Boarding or Training Kennel" (a) shall not include an animal shelter or animal control facility, a pet shop licensed by the state Director of Animal Health, a grooming facility operated solely for the purpose of grooming animals and not for overnight boarding, or an individual who temporarily and not in the normal course of business boards or otherwise cares for animals owned by

others. (b) they shall maintain records of individual dog licenses for all dogs in its care that are required to be licensed under Chapter 140 Sec 137. (c) Shall report to the licensing authority injuries to animals or people that occur on their premises and the licensing authority shall investigate all reports. Under the new MGLs, MDAR has the authority to assist with

investigations

and enforcement when necessary.

2. Commercial Breeder Kennel (Kennel C) is an establishment, other than a Personal Kennel, engaged in the business of breeding animals for sale or exchange to wholesalers, brokers, or pet shops for a fee or other consideration.

3. Domestic Charitable Corporation Kennel (Kennel D) is a facility operated, owned, or maintained by a domestic charitable corporation registered with the state Department of Agricultural Resources or an animal welfare society or other nonprofit organization incorporated for the purpose of providing for and promoting the welfare, protection, and humane treatment of animals, including a veterinary hospital or clinic operated by or under the supervision of a licensed veterinarian that operates consistent with such purposes while providing veterinary treatment and care.

4. Veterinary Kennel (Kennel E) is a veterinary hospital or clinic that boards dogs for reasons in addition to medical treatment and care; a "Veterinary Kennel" shall not include a hospital or clinic used solely to house dogs that have undergone veterinary treatment or observation or will do so only for the period of time necessary to accomplish that veterinary case.

C. License Requirements

1. License required. A person or entity maintaining any type of kennel listed in this section (except a License-Optional Personal Kennel (Kennel A-1) as defined above at Section 5.A.1) shall obtain the appropriate kennel license from the Town Clerk and in accordance with procedures that the Town Clerk shall determine.

2. 4. Licensing inspection and authority. No kennel license shall be issued or renewed until a kennel has passed inspection by the Town Animal Control Officer or designee. A licensing authority must specify the type of kennel license and the maximum number of animals allowed in a kennel and this number must be on their kennel license. A licensing authority shall issue, suspend, renew and revoke kennel licenses.

3. 2. Renewal. Licenses issued under this section shall be renewed periodically in accordance with a schedule and procedures to be determined by the Town Clerk. No kennel license can be renewed without the ACO performing an inspection.

4. 3. License fees, calculation, exemption. The fees for licenses issued under this section will be established by the Town Clerk. For purposes of calculating kennel license fees, only dogs over the age of six months shall be counted in the total number of dogs kept in a kennel. No kennel license fee shall be charged to a domestic charitable corporation incorporated exclusively for the purpose

of protecting animals from cruelty, neglect, abuse, or suffering.

5. Failure to comply, penalty. Failure to comply with the licensing requirements of this section shall be punishable by a fine of \$50.

D. Kennel Operation.

1. Standards. Kennels must be operated and maintained in a sanitary and humane manner.
2. Records. The name and address of the owner of each dog kept in a kennel, other than dogs belonging to the person maintaining the kennel, shall be kept at the kennel and available for inspection at any time.
3. Kennel tags. **Dog tags** ~~A holder of a kennel license shall cause each dog kept in its kennel to wear, while in the kennel, a collar or harness of suitable material to which a tag shall be securely attached. This tag shall be inscribed with the number of the kennel license, name of the Town of Bridgewater, and year of issue. Such tags shall be issued by the Town Clerk in such number as the number of dogs kept in the kennel.~~ **dogs at a kennel and OWNED by the kennel licensee are exempt from individual dog licensing. Dogs owned by someone other than the kennel owner must be individually licensed if they are over 6 months**
4. Inspections. The Chief of Police, the Animal Control Officer, the Health Agent or the agent of any of these ("Inspecting Authority") may inspect any kennel at any time for compliance with the above requirements.
5. License suspension, revocation. If the Inspecting Authority determines that the kennel is not being maintained in a sanitary or humane manner or if records are not properly kept, the Inspecting Authority may revoke or suspend the kennel license.

E. Citizen Complaints.

1. Filing. Twenty-five citizens of the Town may file a petition with the Town Manager stating that they are aggrieved or annoyed to an unreasonable extent due to excessive barking or other conditions associated with a kennel.
2. Hearing. Within seven days of the filing of such petition, the Town Manager or its designee ("Hearing Authority") shall give notice to all interested parties of a public hearing concerning the petition to be held within fourteen days after the date of the notice.
3. Investigation. At the hearing, the Hearing Authority may cause an investigation of the kennel that is the subject of the petition or take such other action as it deems prudent.
4. Disposition. Following the public hearing and any investigation or other proceedings, the Hearing Authority may suspend or revoke the kennel license, may take other such action to regulate the kennel that it deems prudent, or may dismiss the petition. The Hearing Authority shall cause written notice of any order issued under this section to be mailed immediately to the holder of the kennel license and the Town Clerk.
5. Appeal. Within ten days of the issuance of any order under this paragraph, the holder of the affected license may bring a petition for judicial review in the district court for the judicial district in which the

kennel is located, which shall consider the petition in accordance with MGL c. 140, section 137C

6. Penalties. A person maintaining a kennel after revocation or during suspension of a license under this section shall be punished by a fine of \$250.”

Section 6. Enforcing Authorities

Any police officer of the Town, the Health Agent or the Animal Control Officer of the Town may enforce the provisions of this Article as well as those articulated under Massachusetts General Laws.

Section 7. Non-Criminal Dispositions

Fines assessed under Sections 2, 3, 4 and 5 of this ordinance, as previously stated herein, may be assessed through non-criminal process in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40, Section 21 D. The availability of non-criminal process under this article shall not preclude the use of criminal process or other means of enforcement.



Bridgewater Town Council

Introduced By: Sean Kennedy, Councilor
Date Introduced: 2/17/2026
First Reading: 2/17/2026
Second Reading:
Amendments Adopted:
Third Reading:
Date Adopted:
Date Effective:

Proposed Ordinance D-FY26-011: Amend Part II Administrative Code, Chapter 1, Article III. Multiple Members Appointive Bodies

WHEREAS, In accordance with the provisions of the Bridgewater Home Rule Charter relative to amendments to the Administrative Code, it is therefore;

ORDERED that; the Town Council of the Town of Bridgewater, Massachusetts in Town Council assembled vote to amend the Bridgewater Administrative Code, Part II, Chapter 1, Article III, Multiple Members Appointive Bodies as follows:

Section 3. Agricultural Commission

Delete entire section.

Section 5. Cable Advisory Committee

Delete entire section.

Section 7. Community Preservation Committee

A. Establishment and term of office. There shall be a Community Preservation Committee consisting of nine members. The Town Manager shall, based upon recommendations from the respective committees, appoint the following: one member of the Conservation Commission; one member of the Bridgewater Historic District Commission; one member of the Historical Commission; one member of the Planning Board; ~~one member of the Affordable Housing Trust Committee~~; one member of the Housing Authority; one member of the Open Space Committee; and one member of the Parks and Recreation Commission. These appointees will not require ratification from the Town Council. The Town Manager shall appoint ~~two~~ **two** ~~one~~ at-large members, whose appointments shall be ratified by the Town Council. Members will serve for three-year staggered terms

B. Authorities and responsibilities.

(1) Acquisition and preservation

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- (a) The Community Preservation Committee shall make recommendations to the Town Council for the acquisition, creation and preservation of open space; for the acquisition, preservation, rehabilitation and restoration of historic resources; for the acquisition, creation and preservation of land for recreational use; for the creation, preservation and support of community housing; and for the rehabilitation or restoration of open space, land for recreational use and community housing that is reacquired or created as provided in MGL c.44B. With respect to community housing, the Community Preservation Committee shall recommend, whenever possible, the reuse of existing buildings or construction of new buildings on previously developed sites. Annually, the Committee, with the assistance of the Finance Director, shall make budget recommendations to the Town Manager for inclusion in the annual Town budget.
- (b) The Community Preservation Committee may include in its recommendation to the Town Council a recommendation to set aside for later spending funds for specific purposes that are consistent with community preservation but for which sufficient revenues are not then available in the Community Preservation Fund. The Committee may recommend to the Town Council that funds be borrowed and repaid with Community Preservation funds to accomplish Community Preservation objectives.
- (c) In considering its recommendations, the Community Preservation Committee shall use as a guideline local and regional open space plans, housing plans, 59 and the Master Plan. The Committee may develop its own guidelines concerning Community Preservation expenditures with the active participation of other Town multiple member bodies as well as public participation. The Community Preservation Committee is a ministerial committee of the Town.
- (2) Needs study. Annually, the Community Preservation Committee shall study the needs, possibilities and resources of the Town regarding community preservation. The Committee shall consult with existing Town multiple member bodies, including the Conservation Commission, the Historical Commission, the Open Space Committee, the Planning Board, Parks and Recreation, and the Housing Authority, in conducting such studies. As part of its study, the Committee shall hold one or more public informational hearings on the needs, possibilities and resources of the Town regarding community preservation possibilities and resources, notice of which shall be posted publicly and on the Town's web site two weeks prior to the scheduled public informational hearing
- (3) Monitor. The Community Preservation Committee shall monitor progress of CPA funded projects.
- (4) Management. Real property interests acquired with community preservation funds shall be owned and managed by the Town unless otherwise specified by vote of the Town Council.

C. Interrelationships

- (1) Town Council: The Committee shall meet at least annually with the Town Council to discuss issues pertaining to acquisition and preservation pursuant to the Community Preservation Act.
- (2) Town Manager: The Committee meets as necessary with the Town Manager and all municipal departments and other administrative staff to effectuate accomplishment of its mission.
- (3) Other Bodies: The Committee meets as necessary with any Board, Commission or Committee of the Town, particularly the Affordable Housing Trust and the Financial Committee, to effectuate accomplishment of its mission.

Reference: MGL c. 44B

Section 27. Water and Sewer Board

- A. Term of office. There shall be a Water and Sewer Board consisting of three members who have **water or wastewater engineering or public health** experience. The members shall serve for staggered three year terms.
- B. Authorities and responsibilities. The Water and Sewer Board is responsible for recommending improvements to the municipal water pollution control facilities and water treatment and distribution

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facilities in the Town, and serves as an advisory board to the Public Works Director for establishment of rules and regulations governing the operation of all Town water pollution control facilities and water treatment and distribution facilities. ~~The Water and Sewer Board recommends user rates to the Town Manager subject to Town Council ratification.~~ The Water and Sewer Board is an advisory committee of the Town.

C. Interrelationships.

- (1) Town Council: The Water and Sewer Board interacts with the Town Council concerning policies and legislation governing operation of water pollution control and collection facilities and the water treatment and distribution facilities.
- (2) Town Manager: The Water and Sewer Board interacts with the Town Manager concerning implementation of the rules and regulations referenced, as well as ensuring that adequate administrative personnel are available to ensure the effective operation of such facilities.
- (3) Other Bodies: The Water and Sewer Board interacts with other multiple member appointive bodies as necessary to accomplish its purposes.

Committee Referrals and Dispositions:

Referral(s)	Disposition(s)
•	•
•	•
•	•

Attachments: None



Bridgewater Town Council

Introduced By: Sean Kennedy, Councilor
Date Introduced: 2/17/2026
First Reading: 2/17/2026
Second Reading:
Amendments Adopted:
Third Reading:
Date Adopted:
Date Effective:

Proposed Ordinance D-FY26-012: Amend Part II Administrative Code, Chapter 2, Article I. Section 3 D. Department Heads

WHEREAS, In accordance with the provisions of the Bridgewater Home Rule Charter relative to amendments to the Administrative Code, it is therefore;

ORDERED that; the Town Council of the Town of Bridgewater, Massachusetts in Town Council assembled vote to amend the Bridgewater Administrative Code, Part II, Chapter 2, Article I, Section 3 D. Department Heads:

D. Department Heads

(1) The term “department head” as used in this section shall mean the following positions:

- (a) Building **Commissioner/Zoning Enforcement Officer**
- ~~(b) Chief Assessor~~
- ~~(c) Collector~~
- (d) Community and Economic Development Director
- ~~(e) Conservation Agent~~
- (f) Elder Affairs Director
- (g) Finance Director
- (h) Fire Chief
- ~~(i) Hearings Officer~~
- (j) Health Agent
- (k) Human Resources Director
- (l) ~~Information Technology Director~~ **Chief Information Officer**
- (m) Library Director
- (n) Parks and Recreation Director
- (o) Police Chief
- (p) Public Works Director

NOT FOR ACTION - FIRST READING

VOICE VOTE TO REFER TO RULES & PROCEDURES

- ~~(q) Roadways Superintendent~~
- ~~(r) Town Accountant~~
- (s) Town Attorney
- ~~(t) Treasurer~~
- ~~(u) Water Pollution Control and Water Supply Director~~
- (v) Veterans ~~Director~~ **Agent**

(2) Appointments of department heads made by the Town Manager shall become effective upon ratification by the Council after submission of such appointments in accordance with rules made by the Council from time to time governing the approval of such appointments. The appointments of all other officers and employees shall be deemed, for the purposes of Section 4-3 of the Charter, to have been approved when made by the Manager.

Committee Referrals and Dispositions:

Referral(s)	Disposition(s)
•	•
•	•
•	•

Attachments: None