



Town of Bridgewater Budget & Finance Committee

August 5, 2025

6:00 PM

66 Central Square

Academy Building

Conference Room 201A/2nd Floor

MEETING MINUTES

A Quorum of the Town Council may be in attendance.

A. Call to Order

Councilor Loreti called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. The meeting took place in Conference Room 201A, 2nd Floor of the Academy Building.

Committee members present: Councilor McGrath, Councilor Loreti and Councilor Murphy came into the meeting at 6:07pm.

Also in attendance was Town Manager Justin Casanova-Davis and Finance Director Laurie Guerrini.

Councilor Linde and Councilor Ellenberg were also in attendance.

B. Approval of Meeting Minutes

a) June 30, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Councilor McGrath made a motion to approve the June 30, 2025 meeting minutes, which was duly seconded by Councilor Loreti.

Roll-call vote was taken with the results as follows: Loreti – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Murphy – Absent at the time of the vote. Motion passed 2-0.

C. Public Comment

Councilor Ellenberg would like more information on Water and Sewer rates.

D. Legislation Referred

a) Order O-FY26-007: Acceptance of Gift - Lopieke's Family Trust

Finance Director Guerrini noted that the policies will be put in place on how the funds will be spent, ie. Library passes and community events.

Councilor Loreti noted that the Town is Gracious for the gift.

Councilor McGrath made a motion to recommend Order O-FY26-007, which was duly seconded by Councilor Loreti.

Roll-call vote was taken with the results as follows: Loreti – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Murphy – not present at the time of the vote.

Motion passed 2-0.

- b) Order O-FY26-008: Loan Authorization for Phase 2 Waste Water Treatment Facility (WWTF) Preliminary Design and Engineering of Phosphorous Removal Upgrade Project

Finance Director Guerrini noted that this is phase 2 for water treatment facility, removal of nitrogen and phosphorous, \$56M/\$57M project, preliminary design and engineering phase. This allows us to go for low interest rates.

Councilor McGrath asked how many phase there are. Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that there are multiple phases, believes 5 but would want Azu and Jonas to speak about that. It is specific for wastewater. Need to do this work for the next phase in 2027, noticeable work.

Councilor McGrath made a motion to recommend Order O-FY26-008, which was duly seconded by Councilor Loreti.

Roll-call vote was taken with the results as follows: Loreti – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Murphy – Yea. Motion passed 3-0.

- c) Order O-FY26-009: Loan Authorization - Community Septic Management Program (CSMP) Title V - Homeowner Loans

Finance Director Guerrini noted that this for the authorization for the town to apply for loans through the State for 2% loans for homeowners who need to get their septic systems to code. : The town is allowed to charge more than 2% but the borrowed amount for the town is 2%. They cannot get the loan and sell their property, it is to help them to stay in their property.

Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that the liability is based on the property not on others, last authorized in 2021. If homeowner sells their home within the 10 years they have to pay an additional fee.

Councilor Murphy made a motion to recommend Order O-FY26-009, which was duly seconded by Councilor McGrath.

Roll-call vote was taken with the results as follows: Loreti – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Murphy – Yea. Motion passed 3-0.

- d) Order O-FY26-011: FY26 Water Rates

Councilor Loreti noted that he likes that it is a more equitable distribution, BSU will be paying a higher rate than homeowners. Over time homeowners would see a cost savings.

Councilor McGrath noted that she is worried about the small businesses having to spend more. A 1” non-resident is a small business.

Councilor Murphy asked if it was possible for a report of how many residents are on Tier 1.

Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that this is a great process but have asked the consultant where we are compared to other communities. Let see how this goes for one year and then we will see how it goes.

Councilor Murphy asked if is it a Planning Board decision to determine the size and Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that it is a collaborative decision with several departments.

Councilor Murphy made a motion to recommend Order O-FY26-011, which was duly seconded by Councilor Loreti.

Roll-call vote was taken with the results as follows: Loreti – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Murphy – Yea. Motion passed 3-0.

- e) Order O-FY26-012: FY26 Sewer Rates

Councilor Murphy made a motion to recommend Order O-FY26-012, which was duly seconded by Councilor Loreti.

Roll-call vote was taken with the results as follows: Loreti – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Murphy – Yea. Motion passed 3-0.

E. Discussion

- a) Discussion of Order O-FY26-010: Post Override Supplemental Appropriation

Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that the School Committee finished the assessment for the Capital. Typically Bridgewater has funded capital when cash is certified. DESI is saying that we are not in compliance with the budget so the School Committee reduced their budget. The school will then vote to amend the budget in the Fall to add the Capital. It is in compliance with the State. Raynham has done capital process different. They approve the number but they wait for an invoice to pay the money. Bridgewater in the past has just sent over the money, may look into doing the invoice process.

Councilor McGrath noted that all these freezes are for 6 months. Hopefully we can find a way to fund the Police and Fire. I think we should only freeze the Assistant Town Manager for 3 months, a lot had to be put on hold.

Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that some of these positions are for 6 months and some are for a year. Believe in this recommendation, do not want to take any more from stabilization and ask departments to lose more, would appreciate the support.

Councilor Murphy asked why the employee liability fund was chosen and Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that reserves and stabilization funds are important, especially for bond rating. We chose the employee liability fund because we are not looking at a huge draw on that

fund. We are hoping to put money back into that fund with Free Cash in the Fall. We thought this decision made sense.

Councilor Murphy asked do we fill positions in 6 months without tapping into these funds?

Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that is what we are going to have to look into, working with unions and collective bargaining.

Finance Director Guirriini noted that using this fund leaves the rainy day fund alone and hopefully with free cash we can replenish the employee liability fund. Honing in on what needs to be paid out for retirements in the next five years. Trying to realize savings in 2027, working with the staff so they can be part of the solution. Next year is going to be difficult, residents, employees, schools know it. We are looking at every single item, every dollar spent and what can be cut.

Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that this year we need to collaborate with the residents also, we cannot always ask to do more with less.

Councilor Loreti noted that he thinks this is our best option at the moment, only had 45 days to come up with a solution so that the schools could be funded. If we do not do this it would be further cuts to teachers, this approach is our best option. I look forward to working with this team and work on the budget process for 2027 and the future.

F. Public Comment

Councilor Linde: understand what Free Cash is but the general public does not. Free Cash should be explained a little better. They think we have a pot of money to play with. I hope this committee will meet with the school subcommittee meetings.

G. Adjournment of Meeting

Councilor Loreti made a motion to adjourn, which was duly seconded by Councilor Murphy.

Roll-call vote was taken with the results as follows: Loreti – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Murphy – Yea.
Motion passed 3-0.

Meeting adjourned at 6:42p.m.

In accordance with the applicable provisions of the Town of Bridgewater Home Rule Charter and Town Council Rules and Procedures, the Budget & Finance Committee assembled voted, at their meeting on Tuesday, September 16, 2025, to approve the aforementioned minutes.