



Town of Bridgewater

Town Council

February 3, 2026

7:00 PM

66 Central Square

Academy Building

Council Chambers/2nd Floor

The Town Council meeting was streamed Live via You Tube.

Link posted on the Town of Bridgewater Facebook page

MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being duly present, Town Council President Johnny Loreti called the Town Council meeting to order at 7:00pm on Tuesday, February 3, 2026 in the Council Chambers.

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

Also in attendance was Town Manager Justin Casanova-Davis, Town Attorney Jason Rawlins, Finance Director Laurie Guerrini and DPW Director Azu Etoniru.

Council President Loreti noted the death of Steven Landry, US Army Vietnam, who passed away on January 14th. A moment of silence was held.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

a) January 20, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Councilor Linde made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of January 20, 2026, which was duly seconded by Councilor Kennedy.

A voice vote was taken with the results as follows: Kennedy – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Loreti – Yea; Perry – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Hunt – Yea; Linde - Yea. Motion passed 8-0.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Council President Loreti noted that pursuant to the Bridgewater Home Rule Charter, every seven years there is a review of the Town Charter by a seven-member Charter Review Committee which comprises of residents. Council President Loreti further noted that anyone interested in the Charter Review Committee should send their interest to the Town Council Clerk by March 11th.

Council President Loreti noted that the Ribbon Cutting of the new Fire Station took place this past Saturday and recognized CED Director Bob Rulli for his work on the Fire Station.

PROCLAMATIONS - None

CITIZEN OPEN FORUM

- Carlton Hunt, Austin Street: Looking for judges for March 14th.
- Christina Ajemian, 221 Aldrich Road: made a statement about the current administration.
- Sam Baumgarten, 60 Short Street: spoke about human rights
- Ray Adjiamina, Aldrich Road: spoke about Mr. Levy who passed away a few weeks ago and how wonderful he was. Noted that Greg Martin has done a tremendous job and works hard for everyone to get their benefits.
- Matt Selines, 139 Cherry Street: speaking as a resident, spoke about the budget and the per pupil spending.
- John Donna, 261 South Street: thanked Councilor Loreti for putting together a candidates night at Black Hat Brew Works.

APPOINTMENTS

- a) Planning Board: Daniel Greenberg (2026)
Councilor Linde made a motion to ratify the appointment of Daniel Greenberg to the Planning Board, which was duly seconded by Councilor Perry.

A voice vote was taken with the results as follows: Kennedy – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Loreti – Yea; Perry – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Hunt – Yea; Linde - Yea. Motion passed 8-0.

F. HEARINGS

- a) Petition P-2026-015: Possible Revocation of the Class II Used Auto Dealers License – R.Eli.Able Enterprises LLC, 567 Main Street
7:05 Public Hearing: *Advertised in the 1/26/26 Enterprise.*
Council President Loreti opened the Public Hearing at 7:23 pm.
Council President Loreti asked if the Class II license holder would like to speak. No one came forward from the Class II license holder.
Council President Loreti asked if there were any questions from the public. No one asked any questions.
Council President Loreti asked if there were any questions from the councilors.
The Town Council Clerk noted that Reliable Enterprises LLC misrepresented that the current Class II license holder was no longer at 567 Main Street when they submitted their paperwork in November. She further noted that that Class II license holder did not return their annual renewal in time and their license expired as of 1/1/26 and the only way they could keep a license at that location is to submit new paperwork.

Councilor Ellenberg asked if Reliable Enterprises could get 30 or 60 days and it was noted that it is up to the council to decide that.

Councilor Linde noted that Reliable Enterprises misled the Town when they submitted their paperwork and that their license should be revoked.

Council President Loreti closed the Public Hearing at 7:27pm.

Councilor Perry made a motion to revoke the Class II license for Reliable Enterprises LLC located at 567 Main Street. This was duly seconded by Councilor Hunt.

A voice vote was taken with the results as follows: Kennedy – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Loreti – Yea; Perry – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Hunt – Yea; Linde - Yea. Motion passed 8-0.

Council President Loreti noted that Reliable Enterprises has 10 days to file an appeal of the revocation of the license.

b) Order O-FY26-044: Water System Improvements Loan Authorization

Public Hearing: *Advertised in the 1/20/26 Enterprise.*

Council President Loreti opened the Public Hearing at 7:28pm

Council President Loreti asked if anyone in attendance had any general questions. No one spoke.

Council President Loreti asked if anyone in attendance wished to speak in favor. No one spoke.

Council President Loreti asked if anyone in attendance wished to speak in opposition. No one spoke.

Council President Loreti asked if there were any questions from the Councilors.

Councilor Ellenberg asked when the Town would be awarded the grant and

Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted they do not know exactly when but should be in the next 30 to 45 days possibly.

Councilor Ellenberg further noted that she saw something on Facebook saying that the town was not eligible for the \$2M until 2027 and asked if that was misinformation.

Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that he did not hear anything like that.

Councilor Kennedy asked when did the Town apply for the grant and Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that they applied for the grant, we received feedback and they wanted us to refine some of the language which was done.

Councilor Murphy asked what this loan was going towards and Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that this could pay for another treatment trailer and anything that this loan is used for comes before the Council.

Council President Loreti closed the Public Hearing at 7:35pm.

Councilor Loreti made a motion to approve Order O-FY26-044, which was duly seconded by Councilor Perry.

A voice vote was taken with the results as follows: Kennedy – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Loreti – Yea; Perry – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Hunt – Yea; Linde - Yea. Motion passed 8-0.

c) Order O-FY26-026: Laying Out and Accepting a Private Way – Magnolia Way

Cont'd Public Hearing: *Advertised in the 1/13/26 Enterprise. Councilor Perry made a motion to approve Order O-FY26-026, which was duly seconded by Councilor Hunt.*

Council President Loreti asked if anyone had any questions for DPW Director Etoniru.

Councilor McGrath asked if the Town is responsible for the sidewalks and Mr. Etoniru noted that they were.

Council President Loreti asked what the incurred cost was that the town takes on; load on the department. Mr. Etoniru noted that when a developer files for acceptance of a street they have to meet design and construction of the Town, and once they meet that the Town must accept that road, as they pay taxes. We call out any errors, they address them. They have met all of the requirements of the construction of those roads and sidewalks.

A voice vote was taken with the results as follows: Kennedy – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Loreti – Yea; Perry – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Hunt – Yea; Linde - Yea. Motion passed 8-0.

- d) Order O-FY26-027: Laying Out and Accepting a Private Way – Hickory Lane

Cont'd Public Hearing: Advertised in the 1/13/26 Enterprise.

Councilor Perry made a motion to approve Order O-FY26-027, which was duly seconded by Councilor Hunt.

A voice vote was taken with the results as follows: Kennedy – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Loreti – Yea; Perry – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Hunt – Yea; Linde - Yea. Motion passed 8-0.

- e) Order O-FY26-028: Laying Out and Accepting a Private Way – Sycamore Lane

Cont'd Public Hearing: Advertised in the 1/13/26 Enterprise.

Councilor Perry made a motion to approve Order O-FY26-028, which was duly seconded by Councilor Hunt.

A voice vote was taken with the results as follows: Kennedy – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Loreti – Yea; Perry – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Hunt – Yea; Linde – Yea. Motion passed 8-0.

LICENSE TRANSACTIONS - None

PRESENTATIONS

- a) Energy Committee Presentation

Carlton Hunt, Chair of the Energy Committee gave an update on the Energy Committee.

Noting Energy Committee history; Street light costs; municipal aggregation update and solar panels.

Councilor McGrath noted that she has concerns about solar panels. Panels get so hot that they do damage to wildlife. Plus panels on roofs make them heavier. We may have electricity but we have to keep in mind our Fire department and how do we get rid of the panels when they are no longer used.

Council President Loreti asked how solar panels in the police parking lotd MR. Hunt noted it would look like the University.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

- a) Website Update

IT Director Brad Dzierzak gave an update on the website, noting launched the new website at the beginning of the year. Changed to a .gov to improve security. Lost some functionality from the old website to the new website. Meeting notifications is one of them and working with the vendor to try to get a solution.

Councilor Linde asked if we see something that is a 404 error where should we direct that?

Mr. Dzierzak noted that they should send it to IT at the moment. Creating a website feedback form so that if people find errors we can fix them. From .org to .gov there are many sights that had that source so it took Google about 5 weeks to get rid of those old short cut links.

b) DPW Storm Response/Staffing Update

Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that he is proud of the team on how they responded to the last storm.

DPW Director Azu Etoniru noted that we have not had this level of snow in over 10 years. On January 23rd reported at 9:15am and worked through the night; plowed until Monday. 3pm on Monday, they were sent home to get some sleep and then they came back. Led by the Highway Superintendent Paul Decosta who has been doing a great job with his staff. When we thought the snow was done we got another 4 inches. During the storm the snow is stockpiled but then they go back the next day to remove the stock piles.

Councilor Linde thanked the DPW for the hard work they did but he is amazed that there is no requirement for the business owners or homeowner to do the sidewalks in front of their house/business.

c) Water Update

Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that the grant was applied for and getting water from Middleboro and that in the next few weeks will have more information on Vernon Street, more opportunities for water and updates on the treatment trailer. Received information from Mr. Andrews and will look at that information.

DPW Director Etoniru noted that both water and sewer staff has helped with the work on the storm and that getting the water from Middleboro has paid off, the levels have come back. Issue with discoloration from the manganese on well 10 – have not had that issue.

Councilor Linde asked if the Blue Drop machine was back and working and Mr. Etoniru noted that more work is need and read the riot act to the vendor.

Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that they looking for a grant to help pay for an additional Blue Drop and looking for a location; looking at expanding the current size as Blue Drop; weather also has an effect on the machine and when it is working.

Councilor Ellenberg noted that there is another grant for drinking water supply protection and the funding for purchase of land. Hopefully we can get funds for long term.

Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that we need to address the immediate solution; intermediate is the treatment trailer and long term is the Andrews Property, Vernon Street. We need more revenue and if you purchase properties and take them off the tax role then there is no more revenue. Aware of the grant and will explore it but don't know if we will apply for it.

Councilor Murphy asked if there is a timeline for the recommendations to the council and Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that they are looking at Mr. Andrews information; Vernon Street; Brockton water. Once we have information we will bring it to the council. Does not want to make promises that can't be kept. Mr. Etoniru noted that a lot of those properties that may be available are

connected to the Taunton River Basin and still need to deal with treatment issues. Town Manager Casanova-Davis further noted that DEP approvals, impact on withdrawal and monetary costs are also an issue and it is not simply just acquiring property.

Council President Loreti noted he would like to see a high level comparison on what it looks like to hook up to the D-cell plant. Does it require infrastructure upgrades/improvements. Would like to see all costs associated with that, timeline. Also update on Vernon Street costs, exploring other sources cost. Council needs to understand what the next step looks like. Have emergency connection right now, treatment trailers will treat water coming out of ground at Plymouth Street but need additional capacity so how do we get there, best way to do it and cost efficient way. Would like preliminary numbers at the next meeting.

Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that we just got the information on the Andrews property yesterday; no way to give information without engineering team looking at it. Interim trailers are the priority, lot of work to it, has not been done in the Commonwealth. Have had high level preliminary discussions on Vernon Street, can give some generalized information on cost but will probably be more than the \$40m that was initially done. In terms of Brockton, that is a discussion with them and negotiating because depending on agreement, cost may look different. Important we complete until high level update is given. Will not be perfect but will give direction.

Council President Loreti noted that it is important for the Council to understand sources, connecting to D-Cell plant while exploring opportunities to have water in Bridgewater.

Councilor Kennedy asked if it was possible to get timeframe for general span for some of those different projects. Connection takes X amount of months, new well being drilled takes this time period. Received timeline for High Street which gives a parameter.

Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that is what we intend to do, met with Apex and team today and want them to come in and have high level discussions.

Council President Loreti asked what would be the treatment trailer completion potential date and Mr. Etoniru noted that it would probably about 3 to 4 months. Pilot study is being conducted now.

Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that identified the iron/manganese for treatment and working on notice of intent and vendor can give to use based on our need; 3 to 4 month timeline.

Council President Loreti noted that Middleboro closes in March what are we doing about that and Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that we appreciate the partnership with Middleboro, will give you more information at the next update.

Council President Loreti asked what is the status of building the pipeline for the Plymouth Street wells and Mr. Etoniru noted there are some items that we need to make sure the High Street facility can handle the water surge. Timeline of one year is still the accurate timeline.

Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that the most important thing is to get the treatment trailer in place and put into our distribution system, then take a step back and look at the next steps, it is not just iron, manganese there is PFAs too.

Councilor Murphy noted that the water has been an issue for quite some time and has gotten worse and asked where have we missed the mark?

Mr. Etoniru noted that he has been the DPW Director since 2021, a lot of the design work was done prior to 2021 on the High Street Plant. When High Street plant was done/being constructed there was no issue about PFAs, no discussion. A lot of aging infrastructure and prior to 2021 he cannot speculate why it was not done. There was water advisory before and they did not look at the future. A lot of the wells are over 50 years old. Then the State declared a drought for more than 5 years in the region. It is all issues coming to a head at the same time. We have to do temporary work to give ourselves the opportunity to do the rest of the work. The Town Manager has been laser focused on what needs to be done. I don't know how we got here but I can tell you what we are doing to make it better.

Councilor Kennedy asked for the High Street treatment plant, get numbers for maximum capacity of plant and what the current status is, how much room we have there. Question previously asked told it can handle once tied in. Curious what it is currently set up for, needs to be outfitted for another well, would like hard numbers to review.

d) School Capital Appropriation Update

Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that the BRR School subcommittee is looking at the MOU that is in the packet. Both communities will get an assessment, then an appropriation will be done at the same time. School Committee will provide quarterly reports and end of year on Capital projects.

Councilor Murphy asked the Town Attorney if the Town Manager can sign the agreement as it was his understanding that the Town Manager does not have the authority to sign.

Town Attorney Rawlins noted that he is not about that and will look into it further. Charter authority to enter into contracts that relates to the services of the Town can be entered into by the Town Manager.

Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that part of the agreement is that overall there needs to be a review of the overall agreement.

Councilor Murphy noted that he does not have an issue with the MOU but with the Town Manager signing on behalf of the Town. Town Attorney Rawlins suggested that the council provide a list of questions and he can provide the answers.

e) Budget Forecast/Preliminary Budget

Town Manager Casanova-Davis spoke about the budget memo and forecast for the next year. Highlighted key Town Manager elements: early part of the process looking at revenue without going through with a fine tooth comb.

Finance Director Guerrini noted that the preliminary forecast is not positive; 2 ½ % increase property taxes and left local receipts flat.

Councilor Linde suggested that the council have one or two additional meetings to just deal with the budget specifically. I spoke with the Superintendent today and he told me about the vocational tech increase in school choice \$456k they were not anticipating.

Councilor McGrath asked if we know the amount of enrollment that have left and Finance Director Guerrini noted that she can get that number.

Town Manager Casanova-Davis noted that the school would need to address the vocational issue and Ms. Guerrini noted that we still have to pay for vocational schools.

Councilor Linde noted that we need to get the information prior to the meeting; not dumped on us the night of the meeting.

DISCUSSIONS - None

COMMITTEE REPORTS - None

LEGISLATION FOR ACTION

- a) Resolution R-FY26-007: An Assessment of the Reuse of the Former Town Hall aka TOWN HOUSE
Councilor Loreti noted that at a previous meeting there was discussion about the language.

Council Ellenberg noted that she has been discussing with CPC officials and some of the language they recommend is cited but defunct Town Hall. Would like continued to next meeting.

Councilor Ellenberg made a motion to continue Resolution R-FY26-007 to the next meeting, which was duly seconded by Councilor Linde.

A voice vote was taken with the results as follows: Kennedy – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Loreti – Yea; Perry – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Hunt – Yea; Linde - Yea. Motion passed 8-0.

OLD BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS

- a) Order O-FY26-048: Appointment To A Vacant District 1 Councilor Seat
Council President Loreti noted that he sponsored this order so the council could fill the vacant seat at the next meeting.

Councilor Kennedy made a motion to retain Order O-FY26-048 at council level, which was duly seconded by Councilor Ellenberg.

Council President Loreti noted that on 2/17 the council would be interviewing interested candidates and then vote after.

Council Ellenberg suggested that the council interview the candidates tonight and take votes at the next meeting. Town Attorney Rawlins noted that the item is not on the agenda and that the candidates were not present.

Councilor Hunt noted that she has a concern appointing someone when we have an election coming up. It gives that person a leg up on the election.

Council President Loreti noted that speaking from my experience it was helpful for me and I would like to offer that opportunity, can see it from both sides.

Councilor Murphy noted that this is something that I will not vote on for the short period of time, do not believe we should be the ones to decide on a councilor. The people in District 1 should be the ones to decide.

Councilor Linde noted that he has mixed feelings; should be put on a ballot and give the District 1 residents the choice.

Councilor Perry noted that with the shortness of the timeframe he will be reluctant to vote to approve filling the seat.

Councilor Kennedy noted that as a district rep I think it is important that all districts are filled, would be a loss to the district.

Councilor Linde asked for a point of clarification; if we leave it at council level; first vote will be the order and then the interviews. Council President Loreti noted yes.

Councilor Murphy made a motion to postpone Order O-FY26-048 indefinitely, which was duly seconded by Councilor Hunt.

A roll call vote was taken for the motion to postpone with the results as follows: Kennedy – No; Ellenberg – No; McGrath – No; Loreti – No; Perry – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Hunt – Yea; Linde - Yea. Motion failed 4-4-0.

A roll call vote was taken for the motion to retain at council level with the results as follows: Kennedy – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Loreti – Yea; Perry – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Hunt – Yea; Linde - Yea. Motion passed 8-0.

- b) Order O-FY26-049: Acceptance of Donation – High Pond Residents Association
Councilor Linda made a motion to approve Order O-FY26-049, which was duly seconded by Councilor Perry.

A voice vote was taken for the motion to retain at council level with the results as follows: Kennedy – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Loreti – Yea; Perry – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Hunt – Yea; Linde - Yea. Motion passed 8-0.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

- Scott Pitta, Pine Street: noted it is important to fill the seat and he will be applying for the District 1 seat and will not be pulling papers for the position.
- John Morris, 1297 Vernon Street: very important that we have 9 councilors; endorse Scott for the position. Running for State Rep, have a list of grant opportunities; asking the Council to create an ad hoc committee for grant writing. Highly recommend finding people in town for water/sewer. Broad Street development water test study is over 5 years old and did not take into account the current water emergency. Let's make sure this does not happen again.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Councilor Linde noted that we work for the residents; have a lot of work to do with the budget.
- Councilor Hunt noted that it was a productive meeting.
- Councilor Murphy had no comments.
- Councilor Perry noted that budget picture is not a great one; not enough money to cover everything. State not giving us extra money.
- Councilor Ellenberg noted that the trees on the common and a constituent called her to replace the trees with a landscaper who would know what types of trees and solicit a donation from businesses to do the trees. Volunteered for the grant writing committee.
- Councilor Kennedy thanked the public for coming out.
- Councilor McGrath noted that she would like to see the committees come to council meeting and give updates and noted to Councilor Ellenberg that the Downtown Revitalization Committee is working on the trees.
- Councilor Loreti noted that if any resident is interested in the Charter Review committee to apply.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Council President Loreti noted that he would entertain a motion to move into Executive Session pursuant to MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21 (a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body and the chair so declares; and to adjourn from Executive Session.

Councilor Linda made a motion to move into Executive Session, which was duly seconded by Councilor Hunt.

A roll call vote was taken for the motion to retain at council level with the results as follows: Kennedy – Yea; Ellenberg – Yea; McGrath – Yea; Loreti – Yea; Perry – Yea; Murphy – Yea; Hunt – Yea; Linde – Yea. Motion passed 8-0.

- a) Executive Session pursuant to MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21 (a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body and the chair so declares.
- b) Executive Session pursuant to MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21 (a)(3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body and the chair so declares; Bridgewater Firefighters' Union and Bridgewater Police Association.

ADJOURNMENT

In accordance with the applicable provisions of the Town of Bridgewater Home Rule Charter and Town Council Rules and Procedures, the Town Council assembled voted, at their meeting on Tuesday, February 17, 2026, to approve the aforementioned minutes, as submitted.