



Town of Bridgewater Charter Review Committee

June 4, 2026

7:00 PM

Academy Building

66 Central Square

Conference Room 201A/2nd Floor

and Via Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85106189353>

Meeting ID: 851 0618 9353

MEETING MINUTES

Call to Order

Town Council President Paul Murphy called the Charter Review Committee meeting to order at 7:00pm. The meeting took place in Conference Room 201A and via Zoom.

Charter Review Committee members present:

Eric Dias, Scott Pitta, Jean DiBattista, Ed Ivaldi, Lynsy Marshall, James Walsh and Brad McKinnon.

Town Council President Paul Murphy was also in attendance.

Town Council President Comments

Town Council President Murphy thanked everyone for volunteering for this important role for the town. Noted that it is important that they 1) listen to residents, their input matters; 2) always focus on what is best for Bridgewater. 3) read everything carefully; watch prior meetings, not just Town Council meetings. 4) do your homework. If there are people to interview, ask thoughtful questions, be prepared to answer those questions. 5) Speak up, don't feel like you need to be quiet.

Organization of the Charter Review Committee

Council President Murphy asked if anyone had any nominations for Chair.

Mr. McKinnon nominated Mr. Pitta, which was seconded by Ms. Marshall.

Ms. DiBattista nominated Mr. Ivaldi, which was seconded by Mr. Walsh.

Mr. Ivaldi noted that he feels that he has been chair and would like to withdraw his name but thanked Ms. DiBattista for the nomination.

A Voice Vote was taken for the nomination for Mr. Pitta with the results as follows: Dias – Yes; Pitta – Yea; DiBattista – Yea; Ivaldi – Yea; Marshall – Yea; Walsh – Yea; McKinnon – Yea.

Mr. Pitta was nominated as Chair.

Ms. DiBattista withdrew her nomination of Mr. Ivaldi.

Mr. Pitta asked if anyone had any nominations for Vice Chair.

Ms. Marshall nominated Mr. Dias, which was seconded by Mr. Ivaldi.

A Voice Vote was taken for the nomination for Mr. Pitta with the results as follows: Dias – Yes; Pitta – Yea; DiBattista – Yea; Ivaldi – Yea; Marshall – Yea; Walsh – Yea; McKinnon – Yea.

Mr. Eric Dias was nominated Vice-Chair.

Mr. McKinnon nominated himself for secretary, which was duly seconded by Mr. Pitta.

A Voice Vote was taken for the nomination for Mr. Pitta with the results as follows: Dias – Yes; Pitta – Yea; DiBattista – Yea; Ivaldi – Yea; Marshall – Yea; Walsh – Yea; McKinnon – Yea.

Mr. Brad McKinnon was nominated Secretary.

Public Comment - None

Next Steps

Mr. Pitta noted that need to establish a threshold question - do we want to continue with this form of government or do we want to change. We need to schedule some listening sessions.

Mr. Ivaldi noted that we need to take a step back, develop a plan on what we want accomplished. First few meetings should be about strategizing.

Mr. Pitta noted that we need to get the input of the employees, management and the citizens of the town.

Ms. DiBattista noted that it is important for us to listen to the citizens, need to know what the overall strategy needs to be. Former Charter Review Committee went line by line even the punctuation. I want to make sure whatever government we choose is serving the residents. We need to let residents know that this group is looking at the Charter, not the Administrative Code.

Mr. Pitta noted that the way the Charter is situated on the website confuses the citizens. The charter is from the State on how the Town can rule their town.

Council President Murphy noted how Administrative Code Changes are done per the request of Jean.

Mr. Ivaldi noted that the goal of the meeting should be to come up with a plan, decide how and when we are going to meet; come up with action items. Mr. Ivaldi further noted in February of 2008 the Board of Selectmen formed a study group to look at everything of the government. In May of 2009 Selectmen formed a charter group to form a Charter and it took 3 months for the Charter to come back from the State. April of 2010 53% of the residents voted to change the form of government. September 2010 the first council was formed and in January 2011 was when they started.

Mr. Walsh noted that it would be valuable to learn as he would not want to revert back if it did not work.

Mr. Ivaldi noted that not every Charter change needs to go on a ballot.

Mr. Pitta noted that last time the Charter Review Committee had to decide what type of government we are going with, there are different forms of government. I think it is too early to make those decisions.

Mr. Dias noted that he has heard from several older people that have said they think that the town worked better under the old form of government.

Ms. Battista noted that we should look at towns that are similar size and see how they are operating, how effective it has been for them.

Ms. Marshall noted that after discussing with the residents I think we need to have some meetings to understand all of the information.

Mr. Dias noted that many residents do not understand how the Town Manager and the Town Council work together, maybe we need to educate the residents to understand better, Q&A Session. If residents understand better it will help us understand what they are looking for.

Mr. Ivaldi noted that we did public education forums and then data collection, there is a lot that goes into the pros and cons. Also noting that people automatically blame the form of government and it is not always that.

Mr. Dias noted that all forms of government have their pros and cons and there are new residents around the table that were not around for old form of government so re-educating might be helpful in what is provided to us.

Ms. DiBattista noted that she has a document regarding forms of government that she can share with the group.

Mr. Pitta noted that if a document is to be shared to other committee members, need to avoid any appearance of an open meeting law violation.

Mr. Walsh noted that a lot of residents feel not heard, want to make sure we look at all opportunities so they feel heard.

Mr. Dias noted that it is important for the residents to understand what this group can actually do. There are many Facebook groups and we do not want residents walking away thinking their comments were ignored.

Mr. Pitta noted that as we do the listening sessions, if there are recurring themes that come up outside of the Charter, we can brief the Town Council at a council meeting to give them an idea of where we are. For instance, public comments at meetings and there was a reason that it was set up like that.

Mr. Ivaldi noted that the Charter Review Committee may want to discuss whether to engage on Facebook on what the group is discussing or take the position of taking a step back from that and work as a committee and take input from people through the ways we determine to do that, ie. Survey, forums, etc. Want to be cautious with Facebook and how much we use that as part of this group.

Mr. Dias noted that he tends to agree with Mr. Ivaldi, as these matters need to be discussed at this table in an open meeting and those that want to hear can attend the meeting. Thinks it would be inappropriate for any individual member of this group to discuss these matters on some form of social media. You are not representing your personal opinion by doing that.

Mr. Dias made a motion that Charter Review Committee does not discuss matters associated with the Charter independently on social media. This motion was duly seconded by Mr. Ivaldi.

Mr. Pitta noted that he agrees with Mr. Dias in practice but does not think we can limit people's free speech. Noting that the open meeting law is when a quorum of the committee comments on a post.

Mr. Ivaldi noted from his perspective, why introduce the risk. The more of the group that goes on Facebook and discusses the group, the temptation is going to be there for people to do this and it is going to open the door.

Ms. DiBattista noted that we need to trust each other; I will be cautious on saying anything about this group on Facebook but we can speak freely in this country. Trust each other and try to choose wisely.

Mr. Dias noted that his intention behind the motion was not to limit anyone's free speech and withdrew his motion. Noting that he will personally commit that he will not be commenting on Facebook during this time period.

Mr. McKinnon noted that Facebook could be used for collecting data.

Mr. Walsh noted that if we do open it up to social media you cannot identify someone's identity, so we do open ourselves up for the risk. Facebook is accessible but can we find ways for people that can't make a meeting.

Mr. Ivaldi noted that he would have a problem which each member going out and doing their own individual survey, how do you consolidate the data, etc. A survey should be done as a group.

Mr. Pitta asked if anyone had experience crafting, researching surveys and Mr. Walsh noted that he has some in customer service.

Mr. Ivaldi noted that he will be sending out documents to Mr. McKinnon to look over prior to the next meeting. Ms. DiBattista will also be sending a document.

Mr. Dias noted that to him the appropriate next step would be for the group to review the data that is being sent, read through the Charter.

Mr. Ivaldi noted that June, July and August during the last Charter Review was all data collecting from a different variety of sources.

Mr. Walsh noted that he wants to listen to the residents and asked if it was helpful to set milestones.

Mr. Pitta noted that last time was broken up to two chapters per person and we reviewed those two chapters every meeting. Originally met once a month but then started meeting twice a month. Knew exactly was chapters we were looking at. One chapter took an entire month.

Ms. Marshall noted that she agrees with milestones, maybe doing that as part of the next meeting and then map out what it is going to look like.

Mr. Dias noted that if we spend June, July and August on research then we have a cut off date.

Next Meeting Date(s)

A discussion on upcoming meetings was held and the decision was made that the following would be the next meeting dates: June 24th; July 8th; July 22nd; August 12th and August 26th. All meetings will start at 7:00pm.

Mr. Dias wanted to note that he was the engineer on the Fire Department project and wanted to disclose it but does not think it is an issue and he will be calling the State Ethics to make sure not an issue.

Adjournment of Meeting

Mr. Ivaldi made a motion to adjourn which was duly seconded by Mr. Dias.

A Voice Vote was taken with the results as follows: Dias – Yes; Pitta – Yea; DiBattista – Yea; Ivaldi – Yea; Marshall – Yea; Walsh – Yea; McKinnon – Yea.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10p.m.

The Charter Review Committee assembled voted, at their meeting on Thursday, June 4, 2026, to approve the aforementioned minutes, as submitted, by a vote of 7-0.