

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES-WEDNESDAY,MAY 7, 2025

The council met on Wednesday, May 7, 2025, and called to order at 6:45 p.m. in the Town Hall, Council Chambers, Council Chairman Calouro presiding:

PRESENT: Council Chairman, Nathan Calouro
Vice-Chairwoman, Mary Parella
Councilman, Antonio "Tony" Teixeira
Councilman, Timothy Sweeney
Councilman, Aaron Ley

ALSO PRESENT: Town Administrator, Steven Contente
Town Solicitor, Michael Ursillo, Esq
Town Sergeant, Archie Martins

Public Service Interviews and Appointments

Recreation Board - 1 three-year unexpired term set to expire February 2027 **(see agenda item G3)**

a. Timothy L Palmer, 7 Church Cove Road - interest/appointment

The Council heard from Mr. Palmer who expressed his interest in becoming a member of the Recreation Board Discussions ensued between members of the Council and Mr. Palmer pertaining to Mr. Palmer's qualifications and experiences. Mr. Palmer also stated why he would consider himself to be a good fit for the position.

Recess:

At this point in the meeting, Council Chairman Calouro declared a brief recess from 6:55 PM until 7:00 PM.

Motion RE: Consent Agenda - To Approve the Consent Agenda

Sweeney/Teixeira- Voted unanimously to approve the Consent Agenda.

Special Recognition- Proclamation- Lieutenant Ricardo Mourato

Chief Lynch called up Lieutenant Ricardo Mourato and his wife Gigi. Chief Lynch spoke about Lt. Mourato 's 25 years of service, highlighted Lieutenant Mourato's instrumental role in securing and maintaining national and state accreditation for the department, his service on the Rhode Island Police Accreditation Commission, and his leadership in organizing Bristol's annual "National Night Out" event—an effort that has become a signature community tradition. He praised Lieutenant Mourato's dedication to building strong community relations and noted that the Town is better because of his contributions.

Town Administrator Steven Contente commended Lieutenant Mourato's professionalism and diligence, adding that he consistently paired strong community engagement with high standards of service. A commemorative retirement watch was presented on behalf of the Town.

Council members each expressed appreciation for Lieutenant Mourato's impact on public safety and community trust, acknowledging initiatives such as the lockbox program and his efforts to promote clear property identification for emergency response. Several noted his well-timed wit, integrity, and steadfast leadership.

Lieutenant Mourato offered remarks of gratitude to the Chief, Town leadership, and his colleagues, sharing reflections on his early years with the department and expressing pride in the Bristol Police Department's culture of community-oriented policing. He emphasized the collective commitment of the department to serving residents with integrity and care.

The Town Council presented Lieutenant Mourato with a formal proclamation, thanking him for his honorable service and wishing him all the best in retirement.

A round of applause followed the presentation.

A. Submission of Minutes of Previous Meeting(s)

- A1.** Town Council Meeting Minutes - April 23, 2025
- A2.** Town Council Meeting Executive Session Minutes
(sealed, council only) - April 23, 2025
- A3.** Town Council Special Meeting Minutes - April 28, 2025

Teixeira/Sweeney- Voted unanimously to approve the minutes of April 23, 2025 and the Executive Session Minutes of April 23, 2025, and special meeting of April 28, 2025 as prepared and presented.

B. Public Hearings

- B1.** Charles Eli Dunn, 301 Hope Street Folklore, LLC d/b/a Folklore Provisions request for Class BV Liquor License and expansion of premises **(see also C1, C2 and D1, D2, D3)**

Sweeney/Teixeira-Voted unanimously to close the public hearing

Prior to the vote taken, Council Chairman Calouro opened the Public Hearing. Alayne White, a neighbor, spoke in favor of the request, praising Dunn's responsibility and positive impact on the neighborhood.

It is hereby recorded that no further testimony was provided by members of the public either in favor or opposition to the matter.

- B2.** Public Hearing - Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Application regarding proposed activities for inclusion in the Town of Bristol's 2025 Community Development Block Grant application, including Renovation of the Walley School building - \$800,000 and Renovation of the food pantry portion of the East Bay Food Pantry & Thrift Shop - \$250,000. Also under consideration is the adoption of a resolution authorizing the Town to file the CDBG application in the amount of \$1,050,000.

a. Draft Resolution

Sweeney/Teixeira-Voted unanimously to close the public hearing

Teixeira/Parella-Voted unanimously to adopt the resolution authorizing the Town of Bristol to file the CBDG application in the amount of \$1,050,000

Prior to the vote taken, Council Chairman Calouro opened the Public Hearing. Clerk Cordeiro noted a received a meeting item in regards to public comment received by Sandra Darling, 7 Fort Hill Road.

Community Development Director, Diane Williamson, presented the application, which included \$800,000 for the Wally School building renovation and \$250,000 for renovations to the East Bay Food Pantry and Thrift Shop.

It is hereby recorded that no further testimony was provided by members of the public either in favor or opposition to the matter.

C. Ordinances

- C1.** Ordinance 2025-03 - Chapter 17, Article II Alcoholic Beverages Establishments, Section 17-82 - (to decrease the number of limited BV Licenses from 8 to 7) **(2nd Reading)**

Sweeney/Teixeira- Voted unanimously to consider this action to constitute the Second Reading for the adoption of Ordinance #2025-03. Advertise in the local newspaper

- C2.** Ordinance No. 2025-04 Chapter 17, Article II Alcoholic Beverages Establishments, Section 17-82 Number of Licenses (to increase the number of Class BV Licenses from 32-33) **(2nd reading)**

Sweeney/Teixeira - Voted unanimously to consider this action to constitute the Second Reading for the adoption of Ordinance #2025-04. Advertise in the local newspaper

- C3.** Ordinance No. 2025-05 - Chapter 16 - Motor Vehicles and Traffic, Article V - Stopping Standing and Parking (no parking box located across from 28 Shaws Lane)
(2nd reading)

Teixeira/Sweeney- Voted unanimously to consider this action to constitute the Second Reading for the adoption of Ordinance #2025-05. Advertise in the local newspaper

- C4.** Ordinance No. 2025-06 Chapter 16 Motor Vehicles and Traffic, Article IX Residential Parking, Sec. 16-343 Designated residential parking zone and Sec 16-345 Designated residential parking streets (To include portions of Hope Street to the Residential Zone and update designated residential parking zones) **(2nd Reading)**

Teixeira/Sweeney - Voted unanimously to consider this action to constitute the Second Reading for the adoption of Ordinance #2025-06. Advertise in the local newspaper

Prior to the vote being taken, Councilman Teixeira requested clarification on the purpose of the ordinance.

Town Clerk Cordeiro explained that when the Council adopted an ordinance in November 2024 to extend the residential parking district, a portion of Hope Street—from Franklin Street north to Washington Street—was inadvertently omitted from the language. This amendment corrects that oversight by formally including that section of Hope Street in the residential parking zone.

Additionally, the ordinance clarifies and updates the “meets and bounds” description of the residential parking zone in a separate subsection to ensure consistency with the newly amended boundaries.

Chairman Calouro asked for further clarification regarding how this impacts residents on Hope Street. Clerk Cordeiro noted that the homes along the affected portion of Hope Street, some of which lack private driveways, were

previously excluded from the residential parking zone. As a result, residents were not eligible to receive residential parking permits and were prohibited from parking on nearby "finger streets" like Oliver Street, which are part of the zone. The amendment ensures that these residents will now be eligible for residential parking permits, allowing them to park near their homes.

C5. Ordinance No. 2025-08 Chapter 8, Sec 72 Independence Park Boat Ramp (Vehicle load restrictions) (1st reading)

Teixeira/Sweeney - Voted unanimously to consider this action to constitute the first reading of Ordinance #2025-08. Advertise in the local newspaper.

Prior to the vote being taken, Councilman Teixeira requested clarification on item #3 and directed a question to the Harbormaster, who was present.

Harbormaster Marsili explained that the goal of the ordinance is to prevent damage to the newly reconstructed boat ramp caused primarily by large landing crafts that deploy bow ramps directly onto the ramp surface. In particular, the larger landing crafts, when loading heavy vehicles such as triaxle trucks, must power forward onto the vessel, causing their bow doors to press into and degrade the ramp structure. These operations contributed significantly to the rapid deterioration of the previous ramp.

Harbormaster Marsili noted that while smaller vessels—such as those launching from the adjacent beach—will still be able to operate with minimal impact, the heavier equipment has proven detrimental. The new ramp, reconstructed at a cost of over one million dollars, has a maximum load limit of 32,000 pounds per axle, as determined by Pare Engineering.

To preserve the long-term integrity of the ramp for public use, the ordinance prohibits vessels or equipment—including landing crafts, bow ramps, external ramps, gangways, grounded vessels, and barges—from using the ramp unless prior permission is granted by the Harbormaster.

In response to a question regarding enforcement, the Harbormaster confirmed that his office will be responsible for enforcing the ordinance, and will request assistance from the police department as needed. Town Solicitor Ursillo advised that it was not necessary to specify the enforcing authority in the ordinance, as most ordinances are understood to be enforced by either the Police Department or Town Official, depending on the subject matter.

The Harbormaster added that signage will be installed at the boat ramp upon final passage of the ordinance to inform users of the restrictions

D. Licensing Board - New Petitions

D1. Charles Eli Dunn, Folklore, LLC d/b/a Folklore Provisions, 301 Hope Street - Request for Class BV Liquor License and expand the Alcohol Service Area (**see also B1, C1, C2, D2, D3**)

a. recommendation - Town Administrator and Chief of Police

b. recommendation - Town Administrator and Fire Chief

c. recommendation - Department of Community Development

Teixeira/Sweeney-Voted unanimously to grant this license per the recommendations received and conditions, if any, as delineated, and also subject to conformance to all laws and ordinances and payment of all fees, taxes, and levies ; Subject to a six-month review

D2. Charles Eli Dunn, Folklore, LLC dba Folklore Provisions, 301 Hope Street - Request to expand the sidewalk alcohol service license area

a. recommendation - Town Administrator and Chief of Police

b. recommendation - Town Administrator and Fire Chief

c. recommendation - Town Administrator and Director of Public Works

d. recommendation - Town Administrator and Code Compliance Coordinator

Teixeira/Parella-Voted unanimously to grant this license per the recommendations received and conditions, if any, as delineated, and also subject to conformance to all laws and ordinances and payment of all fees, taxes, and levies ; Subject to a six-month review

D3. Charles Eli Dunn, Folklore, LLC d/b/a Folklore Provisions, 301 Hope Street - re Dancing and Entertainment License (2-3 person entertainment)

a. recommendation - Town Administrator and Chief of Police

b. recommendation - Town Administrator and Fire Chief

Sweeney/Parella-Voted unanimously to grant this license per the recommendations received and conditions, if any, as delineated, and also subject to conformance to all laws and ordinances and payment of all fees, taxes, and levies ; Subject to a six-month review

Prior to the vote being take, Charles "Eli" Dunn, owner of Folklore, provided an overview of the establishment's current and planned entertainment offerings. He shared that while Folklore is primarily open during the day, they currently host one evening special event per month and hope to increase that to a few per month in the future. Entertainment would be limited to small acoustic acts, such as jazz musicians, a pianist, or a solo guitarist—typically as background music during events like a "jazz brunch" or "supper club." He emphasized that there is no stage and that performances would be low-volume and space-conscious.

Eli noted that construction on the business's expansion is nearing completion, with flooring installation scheduled and a tentative goal to open the expanded space in June.

He expressed heartfelt appreciation for the strong sense of community and support Folklore has experienced since opening, especially from neighboring businesses and residents in the Lower Hope Street area—referred to affectionately as “LoHo.” This prompted a lighthearted exchange among Council members about potentially formalizing the name “LoHo,” with playful mention of a possible resolution. When asked whether there was also an “Upper Hope” or “LoHo,” Eli responded with humor, noting that for them, everything is LoHo.

Council members responded positively to the business’ plans and admired Folklore for its growing presence and creative community events. Several members commended the owners for their strong reputation and the role the business plays in enhancing the vitality of the downtown area.

- D4.** Rosa Paiva, St. Elizabeth’s Church United Brotherhood Committee, 577 Wood Street – Request for One-Day Dancing and Entertainment License (Live Auction), June 7, 2025 from 5:30PM – 11:00PM

a. recommendation – Town Administrator and Chief of Police

b. recommendation – Town Administrator and Fire Chief

Teixeira/Parella-Voted unanimously to grant this license per the recommendations received and conditions, if any, as delineated, and also subject to conformance to all laws and ordinances and payment of all fees, taxes, and levies

- D5.** Rosa Paiva, St. Elizabeth’s Church United Brotherhood Committee, 577 Wood Street – Request for One-Day Dancing and Entertainment License, June 13, 2025 (6PM – 11PM), June 14, 2025 (6PM – 11PM), and June 15, 2025 (6PM – 10PM)

a. recommendation – Town Administrator and Chief of Police

b. recommendation – Town Administrator and Fire Chief

Teixeira/Parella-Voted unanimously to grant this license per the recommendations received and

conditions, if any, as delineated, and also subject to conformance to all laws and ordinances and payment of all fees, taxes, and levies

D6. Rosa Paiva, St. Elizabeth's Church Santo Cristo Committee, 577 Wood Street - Request for One-Day Dancing and Entertainment License, June 20, 2025 (6PM - 11PM), June 21, 2025 (6PM - 11PM), and June 22, 2025 (6PM - 10PM)

a. recommendation - Town Administrator and Chief of Police

b. recommendation - Town Administrator and Fire Chief

Teixeira/Parella- Voted unanimously to grant this license per the recommendations received and conditions, if any, as delineated, and also subject to conformance to all laws and ordinances and payment of all fees, taxes, and levies

E. Licensing Board - Renewals

F. Petitions - Other

F1. Selcan and Marlon Mckenzie, 56 Greenway Drive, request for acquisition of town land, described as Plat #159 Lot #1057 on Greenway Drive

a. recommendation - Town Administrator and Chief of Police

b. recommendation - Town Administrator and Bristol Fire Chief

c. recommendation - Town Administrator and Director of Public Works

d. recommendation - Town Administrator and Director of Community Development

e. recommendation - Town Administrator and Tax Assessor

Sweeney/Teixeira- Voted unanimously to authorize the Administration to move forward with the proposed sale of the subject property, described as Plat #159 Lot #1057 on Greenway Drive, with the understanding that the process will require the drafting of a resolution for consideration, the scheduling and advertisement of a public hearing, and final approval by vote of the Council following that hearing.

Prior to the vote being taken, Selcan and Marlon Mckenzie, 56 Greenway Drive addressed the Council to request the purchase of a narrow, town-owned strip of land measuring approximately 5 feet wide by 95 feet long, located adjacent to their property. Mr. McKenzie explained that the parcel had been maintained by them for years under the mistaken belief that it was part of their property. After discovering it was town-owned, they expressed interest in purchasing the land to improve and landscape it with low-maintenance plantings or fencing.

Council Chairman Calouro opened the discussion by acknowledging that he is generally opposed to selling town-owned land, but noted that after reviewing this particular case—along with recommendations from the Town Administrator—it appeared to be unique. He emphasized that the strip does not provide access between streets, contains no utilities or infrastructure, and has no practical municipal use, making its highest and best use likely private ownership.

Chairman Calouro outlined several conditions that would be necessary for the Council to consider approving the sale. First, the resolution would need to include formal findings of fact to ensure the action does not set a precedent for future requests to purchase town-owned land. Second, the proposed sale would require public notice and a hearing, giving the public an opportunity to express interest or concerns. Third, while the Council is not obligated to accept the highest monetary offer, it may take into account the reasons and justifications provided by prospective buyers when making its decision. Lastly, all costs associated with the sale—including advertising, deed recording, and any other conveyance-related expenses—would need to be assumed by the purchaser.

Community Development Director Williamson added that this parcel is one of several similar narrow strips of land in the neighborhood that were deeded to the Town in 1975. She noted that the origin of these parcels is unclear, as they are not

shown on the recorded plat and do not appear to serve any utility or right-of-way purpose. She speculated that they may have resulted from miscalculations during the subdivision process of the former Pallazzini development.

Town Solicitor Ursillo advised that, should the Council wish to proceed, a formal motion should be made to authorize the Administration to prepare for the potential sale. The process would include drafting a resolution, scheduling and advertising a public hearing, and returning to the Council for a final vote on conveyance of the property.

F2. Ana Isabel dos Reis Couto-RI Day of Portugal Committee re request to fly Portuguese Flag with a flag-raising ceremony on June 2, 2025, 11:00 AM

a. memo from Clerk of Canvassers re
qualifying signatures received

Teixeira/Sweeney-Voted unanimously to approve this petition, allowing that a 3 X 5 foot 'Portugal' flag may be flown on a Town Hall on June 2, 2025 with the Town assuming no responsibility for the care of this flag beyond its raising.

G. Appointments

G1. Rogers Free Library Board of Trustees- (2 unexpired three-year terms set to expire January 2027 and January 2028)

a. Nancy Kellner, 10 Hope Street- interest/appointment

b. Thomas "Bart" Ferris, 142 High Street -
interest/appointment

c. Chris Allen, 423 Hope Street, Unit D -
interest/appointment

d. Kaitlyn Carmody, 12 Ellen Street -
interest/appointment

e. David Perry, 15 Ambrose Drive -
interest/appointment

f. Christina (Tina) Palmer, 7 Church Cove Road - interest/appointment (not present for TC interview)

g. recommendation - RFL Board of Trustees

Parella/ Ley- Voted unanimously to appoint Thomas "Bart" Ferris to the Rogers Free Library Board of Trustee with a term set to expire in January 2027 and to appoint Nancy Kelner to the Rogers Free Library Board of Trustee with a term set to expire in January 2028

Prior to the vote being taken, Council members noted that the applicant pool for the Library Board was exceptionally strong, with several highly qualified candidates, including two librarians and two attorneys. Members expressed appreciation for the professional diversity, civic dedication, and love for the library reflected in the interviews. Mr. Ferris's veteran status and outreach and business experience were highlighted as valuable additions to the board.

Chairman Calouro noted for the record that he was particularly impressed with candidate Chris Allen, whose background as a librarian at Harvard University and thoughtful responses during the interview stood out. Although he stated he would support the motion before the Council, he hoped Mr. Allen would be considered for future openings.

Other council members agreed with the chairman's assessment, expressing that Mr. Allen was an outstanding candidate and would likely remain engaged with the library. Councilman Sweeney echoed this sentiment and added that while he supported the current motion, Kaitlyn Carmody also presented a compelling candidacy and would be a strong consideration for future vacancies.

Council members remarked on the high caliber of all applicants and the privilege of having such a dedicated group of individuals interested in serving the community. The interviews totaled nearly two hours, reflecting the Council's commitment to a thoughtful and thorough selection process.

G2. Harbor Commission Advisory Committee - 3 three-year terms, 2 set to expire August 2025 and 1 term set to expire August 2026

- a. Michael Cabral, 10 Alves St.- interest/appointment
- b. Jeff Doran, 4 Dolly Drive - interest/appointment
- c. Raymond DeLeo, 3 Captain St. - interest/appointment
- d. Paul Labonte, 22 Casey Drive- interest/appointment

Sweeney/Parella- Voted unanimously to appoint Paul Labonte & Jeff Doran to the Harbor Commission Advisory Committee with a term set to expire in August 2025 and to appoint Raymond DeLeo to the Harbor Commission Advisory Committee with a term set to expire in August 2026

G3. Recreation Board - (1 three-year unexpired Alternate term set to expire February 2027)

- a. Patti Nenna, 12 Greg Drive - interest/appointment
- b. Timothy L Palmer, 7 Church Cove Road - interest/appointment

Teixeira Sweeney- Voted unanimously to appoint Pattie Nenna to the Recreation Board with a term set to expire in February 2027

G4. Alayne White, Chairwoman of the Bristol 250th Commission, re consideration to expand the number of commission members.

Sweeney/Teixeira- Voted unanimously to continue to the May 28, 2025, and to authorize the Commission Chair to submit recommendations for up to three

or more alternate candidates, as deemed appropriate, for Council consideration.

Prior to the vote being taken, Alayne White Chairwoman of the Bristol 250th Commission, requested the addition of new members to help with the workload and ensure quorum at meetings. The council discussed adding members as alternatives to maintain flexibility. Council members discussed the typical process of advertising vacancies and interviewing candidates. However, due to time constraints and the urgency of ensuring the Commission can meet and vote on necessary items, the Council agreed to an expedited process for this instance. It was proposed that Chairwoman Coderre identify three candidates and submit their names to the Council in advance of the next meeting, along with brief written statements from each outlining their interest and qualifications.

Chairman Calouro suggested that the Council could review and, if in agreement, appoint the recommended individuals at its May 28th meeting. The Council also expressed openness to appointing more than three members if deemed appropriate. Councilwoman Parella added that several previously interviewed candidates who were not appointed to other boards may still be interested and should be considered. To address concerns about maintaining quorum, it was further proposed that some of the new appointees could be classified as "alternate members." Alternates would participate fully in meetings and discussions and would be eligible to vote in the absence of a quorum from full members.

(ADDED ITEM) At this point in the meeting, Council Chairman Calouro requested that the Council add an item to the agenda to pull Consent Agenda item GG4 for separate consideration.

Ley/Sweeney-Voted unanimously to withhold Consent Agenda item GG4 until the end of the regular order of business. Matters relating to GG4 appear in the agenda where the item is listed.

H. Old Business

- H1.** Director Williamson, Community Development re Program Update for Curbside Compost Collection 2-year Pilot

Sweeney/Ley- Voted unanimously to support the proposed administrative change to the compost pilot program, including administration through the Eastern Rhode Island Conservation District and the use of 11th Hour Racing funding.

Prior to the vote being taken, Director Diane Williamson provided an update on the curbside compost collection pilot program. She explained that the town had initially applied for a USDA grant for the two-year pilot program but did not receive it. However, Eleventh Hour Racing, a partner in the project, stepped up to fully fund the program, negating the need for the USDA grant.

To streamline administration and avoid placing the Town in a direct grant management role, the pilot will now be administered through the Eastern Rhode Island Conservation District, which is also overseeing a similar program in Barrington. The pilot is a two-year program designed to encourage residential composting through subsidized curbside pickup services. The grant will cover the cost of bins, liners, public outreach, and vendor management. The Town will contribute in-kind support through advertising and outreach assistance, including the involvement of the Conservation Commission.

Advertising and public engagement will be key components of the program, with plans for a mailer or brochure to raise awareness within the community. Public engagement will also involve participation in farmers markets and state street fairs, along with seeking assistance from the Conservation Commission to help promote the program.

A graduated subsidy model is being proposed: a two-thirds subsidy in year one, one-third in year two, with residents transitioning to full private pay by year three. The Council expressed strong support for the program's environmental and financial benefits, and emphasized the importance of setting clear metrics and deliverables from the outset.

Council members discussed the administrative changes, affirmed the alignment with town waste and sustainability goals, and asked clarifying questions regarding outreach, vendor responsibilities, and program metrics. There was consensus that periodic progress updates should be provided during the course of the pilot. Councilman Ley expressed support for the pilot program and stated his intention to personally participate,

saying, "I will commit right now to being a participant in this program."

Council members also emphasized the importance of tracking and reporting measurable outcomes during the two-year pilot. They requested that periodic updates be provided to the Council, including data on participation, waste diversion, and potential savings in tipping fees.

I. Other New Business Requiring Town Council Action

11. Dylan Ferreira, RI DEM Fish & Wildlife Division - Deer Archery Co-Op Updates

Parella/Sweeney- Voted unanimously to receive and file

Dylan Ferreira from the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) appeared before the Council to provide an update on the 2023-2024 archery-only deer hunting season conducted under the Bristol Hunting Cooperative. The program, which is a collaboration between the Town of Bristol, DEM, the local police department, and town planners, spans from September 15 through January 31 annually and is limited to archery deer hunting. Participation requires a hunting license, deer permits, hunter education, and archery proficiency certification.

Mr. Ferreira reviewed the four designated hunting parcels in town: two properties near Hopeworth Avenue and Skater's Pond, one in the Hundred Acre Woods near Tupelo Street, and another behind the landfill known as Midterm. A total of 59 deer were harvested during the season—down slightly from 63 the prior year—with the majority taken on town-managed cooperative properties. Mr. Ferreira explained that this decline in harvest, along with a similar decline in reported deer-vehicle collisions, is likely indicative of a reduction in the overall deer population, attributed to the success of the prior year's hunting activity.

A table of enforcement incidents was shared, showing 24 total incidents across Bristol for the season. Ferreira clarified that these were largely minor compliance issues, including a few hunting violations and 20 citations related to the illegal feeding of deer—particularly in Colt State Park. He emphasized that no injuries to the public were reported, a data point required by law and considered highly significant by the Council.

Mr. Ferreira also discussed DEM's ongoing aerial survey research, conducted this winter using thermal imaging (FLIR) technology to estimate deer populations across the state. Colt State Park was surveyed intensively, and exact deer counts for that area are expected by fall 2025. He added that the data will be used to assess population trends and guide permit issuance—either increasing or decreasing tags based on population density targets of 10-20 deer per square mile, which is ideal for ecosystem balance.

Council members asked detailed questions regarding population targets, license regulations, enforcement trends, and the ecological and public safety concerns caused by deer feeding. Mr. Ferreira explained that feeding deer can disrupt their digestion, increase aggression toward humans, artificially inflate herd sizes, and degrade forest understory, particularly in areas like Colt State Park. Increased enforcement in Bristol has been aided by DEM's ongoing presence under the cooperative agreement, improving the agency's ability to respond to complaints and monitor compliance.

Council members commented on the positive impact of the program, noting Bristol's trend in reduced deer-vehicle collisions while statewide numbers remain stable or are increasing. They discussed the importance of maintaining current levels of hunting effort to prevent population rebound and expressed appreciation for the transparent reporting and responsible management practices.

It was noted that the Bristol co-op provides DEM with more consistent presence and oversight in the region, which was lacking in the past. Councilmembers also acknowledged the absence of any injuries to the public and praised that outcome as a central concern when the program was launched.

I2. Public Notice from CRMC, re Heritage Foundation of RI/Blithewold Inc., 101 Ferry Road, requires a response by May 22, 2025

a. recommendation - Town Administrator and Harbor Master

b. recommendation - Town Administrator and Director of Community Development

Teixeira/Sweeney- Voted unanimously to receive and file

I3. Town Administrator Contente re Solid Waste and Recycling Services - RI Resource Recovery Corp

Sweeney/ Teixeira- Voted unanimously to authorize the Town of Bristol to enter into a management agreement for the solid waste and recycling service through RI Resource Recovery Corp

Prior to the vote being taken, Town Administrator Contente provided an update on the upcoming two-year contract with the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation (RIRRC). The per-ton disposal rate will remain fixed at \$63 per ton through the duration of the contract. Public Works Director Chris Parella was present to provide additional details, if needed.

Administrator Contente noted that the Town's total waste tonnage delivered to the Johnston facility continues to trend downward, a result of both the 2019 automation of waste collection and changes in commercial waste handling policies. The implementation of 95-gallon collection carts and associated limits have likely encouraged greater waste management efficiency and a shift toward private collection for certain users.

Town Administrator Contente noted that the Town's recycling ratio remains strong, currently at twice the required level, indicating sustained compliance and successful diversion of materials from the landfill.

In response to a Council inquiry, Town Administrator Contente clarified that automation has played a key role in limiting household overflow and encouraging responsible disposal. He also emphasized Bristol's excellent record regarding rejected loads, with only one load rejected in the past year, which compares very favorably to other municipalities statewide.

Councilmembers acknowledged the efforts of the Department of Public Works and commended staff for their diligence and the overall success of the waste management program.

I4. DPW Director Parella re Council consideration of a resolution in support of House Bill 5393 and Senate Bill 0057, which would designate the State as responsible for all maintenance of sidewalks along state highways, excluding snow and ice removal

a. (draft) Resolution

Sweeney/Teixeira-Voted unanimously to support the Resolution in support of House Bill 5393 and Senate Bill 0057, which would designate the State as responsible for all maintenance of sidewalks along state highways and direct the Clerk to transmit a copy of this resolution to the Governor and members of the Town of Bristol State Legislative Delegation

DPW Director Chris Parella addressed the Council to express support for pending state legislation that would shift the responsibility for maintenance of sidewalks along state highways to the State of Rhode Island, with the exception of snow and ice removal, which would remain a municipal responsibility. Director Parella noted that sidewalk maintenance has become a significant financial and operational burden on municipalities across the state, and that the Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns is in support of the proposed change.

- He explained that while the Town of Bristol has proactively invested in sidewalk infrastructure, most notably along Hope Street—comprehensive repairs often trigger additional ADA compliance requirements. For example, over a three-year period, the Town installed more than 30 ADA-compliant ramps as part of its sidewalk upgrades, which required precise grading and the use of concrete over more affordable materials like asphalt.

Director Parella added that sidewalk damage caused by tree roots is another recurring issue, and that limitations on pruning or root management—especially on state property—further complicate local maintenance efforts. He emphasized that without full control over the surrounding conditions, it becomes increasingly difficult for municipalities to maintain sidewalks effectively and affordably.

Council members expressed support for the proposed legislation, noting the reduction in municipal liability and long-term financial exposure. The Council agreed that the measure would help protect local taxpayers while ensuring state infrastructure is maintained to appropriate safety and accessibility standards.

15. Tax Assessor Leadam regarding proposed changes to the property tax rates by classification for owner/non-owner occupied

Sweeney/Teixeira -Voted to adopt Scenario 1, as presented, implementing an owner-occupied (homestead) tax rate of \$9.60 and a non-owner-occupied property tax rate of up to \$10.71.

Prior to the vote being taken, Chairman Calouro opened the discussion by revisiting the Town Council's prior effort, in partnership with the Town Administrator and local legislators, to obtain legislative approval allowing municipalities to implement a multi-tiered property tax structure. This meeting marked the Council's first formal consideration of such a system in Bristol. He explained that, historically, tax rates were a function of the approved municipal budget and property valuations. However, with new authority granted by the General Assembly, the Town now has the opportunity to apply separate tax rates to owner-occupied (homestead) and non-owner-occupied properties. This initiative is designed to provide potential tax relief to full-time residents who filed a owner-occupied (homestead) declaration.

Town Administrator Steven Contente reported that out of 7,109 total residential properties in Bristol, 4,430 qualified for the homestead rate following an extensive outreach process. This included multiple rounds of direct mailings and public advertisements encouraging residents to apply. He then introduced Tax Assessor Kris Leadam, who was tasked with presenting the fiscal impact and policy implications of this change.

Clerk Cordeiro noted for the record that a revised version of the tax rate split scenario sheet was provided by the tax assessor as a received at meeting item.

Tax Assessor Leadam began by summarizing the effects of the revaluation alone, prior to considering any split in tax rates. He emphasized that property values do not increase uniformly during a revaluation. For example, single-family homes, which had an average assessed value of \$400,000 prior to revaluation, saw increases of approximately 45%, raising the average post-revaluation value to around \$580,000. Without any change to the tax structure, a typical single-family homeowner would see about a 5.5% increase in taxes—a result of both the increased assessed value and the approved town budget. Two- to five-family homes

and condominiums followed a similar trend, increasing in value (approximately 40%).

Tax Assessor Leadam explained that mixed-use and commercial properties (excluding large apartment buildings, six or more units) experienced an average decrease of 4% in value and would have seen slight tax relief under the existing flat rate structure. However, apartment buildings with six or more units appreciated more significantly—by about 12%—due to high rental demand and low vacancy rates, a trend consistent across the region. These buildings would have seen a tax increase of approximately 12% solely due to the revaluation, without any policy change.

Tax Assessor Leadam then walked the Council through Scenario 1, which proposed a homestead (owner-occupied) rate of \$9.60 and a non-owner-occupied rate of \$10.61 per \$1,000 of assessed value. Using the example of a \$580,000 single-family home, the homeowner would pay approximately \$5,568 in 2025, resulting in a 0.5% increase from the prior year. The same home, if non-owner-occupied, would be taxed approximately \$6,154, reflecting an 11.3% increase. This would result in a savings of \$585 annually for the owner-occupant compared to a non-owner-occupied property of the same value, or about \$264 in savings when compared to what they would have paid under a single-rate structure.

Under this scenario, apartment buildings, of 6 or more units, would see a total tax increase of 18.2%, magnifying their 12% valuation increase with an additional 5.5% increase from the split tax rate. Mixed-use and commercial properties, which are not eligible for the homestead exemption, would experience relatively flat tax obligations under the higher rate, due to their overall lower revaluation.

Tax Assessor Leadam noted that Scenario 2 would provide a more modest version of the split rate structure, using a homestead rate of \$9.75 and a non-homestead rate of \$10.43. This would reduce the burden shift to non-owner-occupied properties and result in more limited homeowner savings. In this model:

- The same \$580,000 home would be taxed \$5,655 if owner-occupied, a 2.2% increase from 2024.
- The non-owner-occupied equivalent would be taxed at \$6,049, a 9.4% increase.
- The resulting homeowner savings would be approximately \$394 compared to a non-owner-occupied unit, and about \$177 relative to a flat-rate system.

Tax Assessor Leadam emphasized that while both scenarios provide relief to full-time residents, Scenario 1 offers more significant savings but results in a higher tax shift to non-resident property owners. Scenario 2 offers a smaller benefit but a more balanced impact across classes. He also noted that under Rhode Island law, once a split rate is adopted in a revaluation year, the percentage differential between the two rates must remain constant for the remainder of the revaluation cycle, although the number of properties qualifying for the homestead exemption may increase in future years.

During discussion, Councilman Sweeney raised the question of fairness, noting that some members of the public might ask whether it is fair to tax similar homes at different rates. He emphasized that owner-occupants are often full-time residents who invest in the community, vote in local elections, and send their children to school here—and that offering them a modest break seemed like a reasonable policy goal.

In response, Assessor Leadam clarified that while it's not his role to take a position on policy, the data showed that the split rate in Scenario 1 provided a meaningful benefit to homeowners without placing an excessive burden on others. He acknowledged that there was a shift, but that the impact on non-owner-occupied properties remained within reason. He added that nearly 50% of rate-able properties in town have qualified for the homestead rate, meaning the cost of the shift is shared across a broad base. He reminded the Council that any savings given to homeowners would need to be offset elsewhere and should be weighed against the added impact on other taxpayers.

Councilman Ley expressed interest in the underlying data, particularly the composition of the apartment category. Tax Assessor Leadam responded that Bristol has 47 parcels classified as apartment buildings, encompassing 386 units—an average of eight units per parcel. He estimated the average per-unit assessment post-revaluation to be \$136,000, resulting in an average per-unit tax increase of \$213 compared to last year.

Vice Chairwoman Parella spoke on the record, stating her view that the owner-occupied (homestead) exemption should be regarded as a starting point rather than a final solution. She acknowledged the variety of perspectives discussed in past meetings, including proposals for broader relief for seniors and long-term residents. Vice Chairwoman Parella emphasized that while helpful, the current plan alone will not solve affordability challenges for those struggling to remain in town. She called for continued research and policy development over the next few years.

Chairman Calouro reinforced the point that even modest changes—such as the proposed \$264 average tax break—have significant ripple effects. He noted that this scenario represents a \$0.34 decrease from the previously estimated working rate of \$9.94. He reminded the Council that each penny on the tax rate equates to approximately \$35,000 in municipal revenue, underscoring the importance of precision and fiscal balance.

Additional discussion included acknowledgment from Councilor Teixeira regarding the importance of weighing tax relief against the corresponding shift in burden. He cautioned that each exemption requires someone else to pay more and encouraged careful consideration of equity and responsibility.

Vice Chairwoman Parella also reflected on the impact of rapidly increasing property values in Bristol, which she argued was the primary driver of higher tax bills—more so than changes in the tax rate itself. She was aware of the Council and administration for keeping municipal budgets lean and efficient but noted that market demand and rising home values remain major challenges for affordability.

Chairman Calouro and Tax Assessor Leadam clarified that any split rate adopted in the revaluation year would remain proportionally fixed for the next three years, pursuant to state law. Tax Assessor Leadam requested flexibility in setting the non-homestead rate up to \$10.71 to allow for minor adjustments in final certified assessments.

Councilman Sweeney asked about public communication regarding the new rates, particularly for landlords and tenants. Administrator Contente responded that local media outlets closely follow Council business and will likely provide coverage. Formal outreach is expected to follow.

It was noted that the final tax rate(s) would also be dependent on the certification of the tax roll.

CF. Citizens Public Forum

*PERSONS WISHING TO SPEAK DURING THE CITIZENS PUBLIC FORUM
MUST NOTIFY THE COUNCIL CLERK PRIOR TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF
THE MEETING*

J. Bills & Expenditures

J1. Bid No 1064 Pedestrian Improvements - Gooding Avenue

Teixeira/Sweeney- Voted unanimously to refer this matter to the Town Administrator to act in the best interest of the Town.

Prior to the vote being taken, Clerk Cordeiro presented the following bid tabulations for the bids received, as outlined below:

- Narragansett Improvement Comp., with a total base bid amount of \$435,000
- D'Ambra Construction Co. Inc., with a total base bid amount of \$393,700
- Universal Construction Co., with a total base bid amount of \$429,937
- True North Civil, LLC., with a total base bid amount of \$299,240
- JML Excavation, Inc., with a total base bid amount of \$474,688

It was noted that the project would be financed using state funding.

K. Special Reports

K1. Tri-Town Monthly Report - April 2025

Sweeney/Teixeira- Voted unanimously to receive and place this matter on file.

(ADDED ITEM) At this point in the meeting, Town Administrator Contente requested that the Council add an item to the agenda to recognize Municipal Clerks week.

Ley/Teixeira- Voted unanimously to add a discussion item recognizing Professional Municipal Clerks Week.

Clerk Cordeiro addressed the Council and audience, noting that this week marks the 56th Annual Professional Municipal Clerks Week, a time to recognize municipal clerks for their role in promoting transparency and accessibility in government. She highlighted the significance of the profession and expressed pride in serving as the Town Clerk for the Town of Bristol.

Clerk Cordeiro extended appreciation to her deputy, Carla, for coordinating decorations and activities in celebration of the week. She emphasized that the success of the Clerk's Office is

made possible through the support of staff, department heads, the administration, and the Town Council.

Throughout the week, various activities have taken place to engage staff and the public, including games and daily acknowledgments. Clerk Cordeiro announced that popcorn would be available to the public the following day in the Clerk's Office, and invited participation in a game to guess the number of feathers in a jar. The winner will receive a Fourth of July-themed jacket as a prize.

She concluded by thanking everyone for their continued support and for allowing her to share the recognition of this important week

L. Town Solicitor

M. Executive Sessions

M1. Executive Session - 42-46-5(a)(2): Litigation, SU-2025-0036-A, City of Newport v. 6365 Fourth Avenue Corp (short-term rental regulation)

Sweeney/Teixeira- Voted unanimously to convene in Executive Session pursuant to RIGL Section 42-46-5 (a) (2) concerning Litigation, SU-2025-0036-A, City of Newport v. 6365 Fourth Avenue Corp (short-term rental regulation) at 9:28PM.

Teixeira/Sweeney- Voted unanimously to resume open session and seal the minutes of the Executive Session at 9:43PM.

Consent Agenda Items:

(CA) AA. Submission of Minutes - Boards and Commissions

Approval of consent agenda = "motion to receive and place these items on file"

(CA) AA1. BCWA Personnel Committee Minutes - February 27, 2025

- (CA) AA2. BCWA Board Meeting Minutes - February 27, 2025
- (CA) AA3. BCWA Properties Committee Meeting Minutes - March 13, 2025
- (CA) BB. **Budget Adjustments**
- Approval of consent agenda = "motion to approve these adjustments"**
- (CA) CC. **Financial Reports**
- Approval of consent agenda = "motion to receive and place these items on file"**
- (CA) DD. **Proclamations, Resolutions & Citations**
- Approval of consent agenda = "motion to adopt these Proclamations, Resolutions and Citations as prepared and presented"**
- (CA) DD1. Proclamation - Mental Health Awareness Month (signed)
- (CA) DD2. Citation - Mt. Hope Huskies Swim Team (signed)
- (CA) DD3. Resolution No. 2025-4-23-I3 Pokanoket Management Group (signed)
- (CA) DD4. Resolution No. 2025-4-23-F1 Removal of accessible parking of 28 Shaws Lane (signed)
- (CA) DD5. Proclamation - 2025 Police Week May 11-17, 2025 (signed)
- (CA) DD6. Proclamation - 2025 Professional Municipal Clerks Week May 4-10, 2025 (signed)
- (CA) EE. **Utility Petitions**
- Approval of consent agenda = "motion to approve these petitions"**
- (CA) FF. **City & Town Resolutions Not Previously Considered**
- Approval of consent agenda = "motion to receive and place these items on file"**
- (CA) GG. **Distributions/Communications**

Approval of consent agenda = "motion to receive and place these items on file"

- (CA) GG1. Award of Bid No. 1058-Town Administrator Contente to Christopher Cronin, Beta Group regarding Award of Bid No. 1058 - Professional Engineering Services Related to Wastewater Treatment Facility and Collection System Projects
- (CA) GG2. DEM Bureau of Environmental Protection (Compliance and Inspection) to Town Administrator Contente re Notice of Violation resolution
- (CA) GG3. Amended Town Administrators 2024 Annual Report
- (CA) GG4. Craig Evans, Bristol-Warren Village Organization

Craig Evans appeared before the Council to provide an update on a new community initiative called the Bristol Warren Village, which has recently been approved as an official chapter of the Village Common of Rhode Island. The initiative is designed to create a community of mutual support for older adults in Bristol and Warren.

Mr. Evans shared that over the past year, approximately 70 volunteers—about two-thirds from Bristol—have been recruited and trained. The group is now launching its membership phase, offering services such as transportation to appointments or events, technology assistance, social and cultural programming, friendly visits or calls, help with errands or shopping, and light household support.

He encouraged Council members and the public to refer any older adults who may benefit from these services to the organization for more information about membership and dues. Mr. Evans noted that additional details would be available in upcoming local news coverage, including an article in The Bristol Phoenix.

Parella/Sweeney- Voted unanimously to receive and place this matter on file.

- (CA) HH. **Distributions/Notice of Meetings**
(Office copy only)

Approval of consent agenda = "motion to receive and place these items on file"

- (CA) HH1. CRMC Meeting Notice re 267 Thames Street - May 13, 2025
- (CA) HH2. Bristol Fourth of July Sub Committee Parade - May 6, 2025
- (CA) HH3. Bristol Fourth of July General Committee Meeting - May 6, 2025
- (CA) HH4. Conservation Commission Meeting - May 6, 2025

(CA) II. Claims (Referrals)

Approval of consent agenda = "motion to refer these items to the Insurance Committee and at its discretion to the Interlocal Trust"

(CA) JJ. Miscellaneous Items Requiring Council Approval

Approval of consent agenda = "motion to approve these items"

(CA) KK. Curb cut petitions as approved by the director of public works

Approval of consent agenda = "motion to grant these curb cuts per the recommendation of, and conditions specified by, the Director of Public Works"

There being no further business, upon a motion by Councilman Sweeney, seconded by Vice Chairwoman Parella and voted unanimously, the Chairman declared this meeting to be adjourned at 9:44 pm.

Melissa Cordeiro, Town Clerk

Council Clerk