

Charles B. Ryan
President
At Large

Shannon L. Hume
At Large

Julia C. Flaherty
District 1

Joseph Reynolds
District 2



David M. Ringius, Jr.
Vice President
At Large

Elizabeth Maglio
District 3

Annmary Quilty
District 4

Meredith Boericke
District 5

Peter Morin
District 6

OFFICE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

Tuesday, OCTOBER 21, 2025

MINUTES

A Meeting of the Town Council was held in the Cahill Auditorium, Braintree Town Hall, on Tuesday, October 21, 2025, beginning at 7:30p.m.

Council President Ryan was in the chair.

President Ryan asked for a moment of silence for our first responders and all those serving our military home and abroad.

Clerk of the Council, Susan M. Cimino conducted the roll call.

Present: Charles Ryan, President
David M. Ringius, Jr., Vice President
Shannon Hume
Julia Flaherty
Joseph Reynolds
Annmary Quilty
Elizabeth Maglio
Meredith Boericke
Peter Morin

Others: Erin V. Joyce, Mayor
Michael Esmond, Finance Director
Denver Gibbs
Jeff Madeiras
Matthew R. Sisk

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **033 25** Mayor/Council President: Recognition – Babe Ruth State Champions (13year old division)

The Mayor and Town Council extend their congratulations in recognition of the 2025 Babe Ruth 13U team winning the Eastern Massachusetts State Championship.

Councilors all stated how proud the town is of this team/coaches/parents.

Recess was taken at 7:20pm to resume the meeting at 7:25pm.

- **034 25** Mayor Joyce: Update on Braintree Schools Master Planning Process

Mayor Joyce stated I wanted to give you all an update on where the Braintree Schools Master Planning Process is at. There is a collaboration with the mayor's office and the school department. Last spring during the schools budget season we were looking at consolidation of elementary schools and potential operational savings that could offer the district. There were concerns raised at both the town council and school committee level, the school committee did not take any action to redistrict and consolidate schools. What's next and what is our plan? We want to better structure where we could be going, were we to consider schools consolidation, future building projects, how that lines up with the town's budget, and just as you will recall, for our fiscal year 26 budget, we projected revenues and expenses for the next three years. When we look at our anticipated spending against what we expect for our revenue, even at modest growth (targeting the schools growth at 3 ½% and town side government at 2%) we are starting to see an imbalance in that in the years ahead. We want to structure to the community what that would mean so that we could be in a better position to talk about trade-offs. If we preserve neighborhood schools what is the cost of that? We spend 63% of our budget on the schools. Anything we can do to vision and present the information to the community so they can start to see what are the trade-offs we are making. This summer we began with Phase 1 of the master planning work which we brought on a company called ERS. ERS had previously identified cost drivers for us. We asked them to dive deeper. Are there different educational differences in each space or given number of students at a given school.

Phase 2 we also brought on a consultant Cropper GIS to look at very detailed future demographic enrollment study for the schools. Those two phases have been updated.

Phase 3 we take the information from ERS's work and Cropper GIS enrollment/demographic studies and the effort that Sandboard did last year with redistricting and try to tie them together in a way to talk to the community about what choices do we want to make for the schools in the years ahead. What do we want to use our buildings? What do we want the experience to be?

In Phase 3 ERS will be working with Perkins Eastman, which is an architectural space planning group. The first step is what is our student experience in our schools and formulate what we want the learning environment and student experience to be for Braintree students and then use that to compare it to some of the experiences throughout the schools both at the elementary, middle and high school levels. We will also look at the magnitude costs for maintenance and investment costs. We hope at the end of this we make informed decisions and be better about talking about those trade-offs.

We will be rolling out participation forums, online surveys and we want to spread the word to the whole community. The decision to move forward will take a community effort. We hope to finish it up in early spring. We will send a survey to all of the Councilors from the Chief of Staff to hear your thoughts.

Councilor Boericke asked if projected new student enrollment is included in this study as we will see new housing coming online in the near future.

Mayor Joyce stated yes those numbers are included.

Mayor Joyce explained a map and detailed information was presented at the last school committee meeting which you can watch that meeting and see the documents posted online. There are reports on Phase 1 and Phase 2.

Councilor Morin stated we agree to have informed decisions as to what the trade off is or what you gain and what you may lose. My concern is this is fair and grounded on data and non-bias in its gathering and how it is processed. People should get to have a say. Not only the elected officials here or at the school committee, but the residents themselves get a vote on how we proceed. We want a broad spectrum of our community and not just a subset and we can make a transparent and open process for this decision.

• **035 25** Mayor: Moody's Rating

Michael Esmond, Finance Director stated on the 15th of October Moody made the decision to downgrade or lower the credit rating of the town from their AA2 to their AA3.

Mayor Joyce put out for immediate release the following statement:

TOWN OF BRAINTREE RECEIVES UPDATED CREDIT GRADE FROM MOODY'S RATING

BRAINTREE, MA – Moody's Ratings – one of three common bond rating agencies for Municipalities in Massachusetts – downgraded the Town of Braintree's credit rating from Aa2 to Aa3. Moody's lowered the rating unilaterally and not in anticipation of Braintree issuing bonds. The Town has held the Aa2 rating since 2010. The status of the credit rating impacts the costs of future Town borrowing. "While we recognize and respect the important role that ratings firms serve in the municipal finance market, this result does not reflect all of the hard work that the Town of Braintree and its residents have collectively undertaken to right the Town's fiscal position since I took office in early 2024," said Mayor Erin V. Joyce. "Our Town's leadership and residents have worked hard in the last two years to make difficult decisions to bring spending in-line with revenue, to boost revenue with a voter-approved \$8M tax override, to replenish depleted reserves, and to continue difficult and overdue conversations related to advocacy for new growth and investment in our Town," continued Joyce. "We will bring financial stability to the years ahead and it is disappointing that the downgraded bond rating weighs greater the actual results of Fiscal Year 2024 – which was passed in 2023, the year prior to my taking office – than it does to our recent accomplishments and our future."

In its rating, Moody's notes that the key drivers in their decision to downgrade the Town of Braintree from Aa2 to Aa3 was the Town's close-out of Fiscal Year 2024 where the Town utilized over \$6M in Free Cash, depleting reserves to the lowest levels in decades and the substantial expense (\$11.9 million) the Town incurred with the settlement of the Weichel vs. Braintree litigation.

Mayor Joyce will discuss the recent Moody's opinion at the next Town Council Meeting on Tuesday, October 21st at 7:30 PM.

###

Michael Esmond, Finance Director stated it is important to note the determination and even why this even happened. Why Moody's was even reviewing our credit was in lieu of the fiscal 24 financial results their analyst essentially noted there was a score card flag and essentially what was driving that was one key

factor which was the town's reserves. The reserves had dropped so substantially and as a measurement of our operating revenues, we are automatically flagged immediately for a downgrade.

The mayor joined me on a call to defend the town and highlight a lot of the efforts that we have been making across a wide spectrum of approaches to right the town's financial position. That includes making tough decisions on spending and tough decisions with the residents and ultimately getting their approval for an override. Also some of the things we are doing on the management level. The reality this decision by Moody's is one that is very much a rearview mirror decision and they were clear about that. There is only so much, frankly comfort you can take from that. We were disappointed. We made a couple follow up efforts and worked with our financial advisory team. We have a lot of important work underway but also needs to continue. We have a continuing job to address the reserves and continue to build those back. We have to keep this in mind with capital investments and any short-term and long-term investments that the town may pursue.

Councilor Boericke stated I want to note this is truly a look back between fiscal 24 and today but this look back doesn't necessarily reflect where we are now or where I see us going.

Councilor Morin stated thank you for being transparent about this news. In my view this is a transitional moment not a permanent one. It focuses primarily on actions taken before corrective actions have been taken. It was a time when problems hadn't been addressed. The override voted by the residents, work on controlling spending and projected growth we are identifying. We are also identifying potential for gaps between growth and revenue and we are addressing revenue as well. We've had a return to economic growth and activity that we hadn't seen in the time that was being evaluated under this rating. It is disconcerting of the lower rating but I do not think it will be a permanent circumstance.

Councilor Maglio asked when the next audit would happen.

Director Esmond stated they would look at our rating when we release new financials for fiscal 25. Moody's does have their own time schedule. We do intend to be likely back in the market and a potential challenge. We put a good faith effort into projections and where we are going. The analyst was very clear they are working with the data that is sort of official and when they present to their committee we are not in the room. They are ultimately looking at the things that got flagged as the key ratios and metrics.

President Ryan stated when Mayor Joyce got this news she called me and asked to be on the agenda so she could let all the Councilors and everyone in the Town of Braintree know about this. I appreciate that transparency.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- July 8, 2025

Motion: by Councilor Ringius to approve the Minutes of July 8, 2025

Second: by Councilor Boericke

Vote: For (9 – Boericke, Flaherty, Hume, Maglio, Morin, Quilty, Reynolds, Ringius, Ryan),
Against (0), Absent (0), Abstain (0)

- August 5, 2025

Motion: by Councilor Ringius to approve the Minutes of August 5, 2025

Second: by Councilor Boericke

Vote: For (9 – Boericke, Flaherty, Hume, Maglio, Morin, Quilty, Reynolds, Ringius, Ryan),
Against (0), Absent (0), Abstain (0)

OLD BUSINESS

- **25 059** Mayor: Appointment to Herring and Fisheries Commission - Jeff Madeiras or take up any action relative thereto

Council President Ryan asked for a recommendation from, Councilor Boericke, Chairwoman of the Committee of Ways & Means.

Chairwoman Boericke stated the Committee of Ways & Means met this evening and sends this to the full Council with a unanimous favorable recommendation on Order 25 059.

Council President Ryan asked does anyone wish to speak on this?

Mayor Joyce stated we have been working hard to establish this commission and have people super excited about fish and our community.

Mayor Joyce stated before you tonight is Jeff Madeiras who expressed his interests and his children's interest and involvement in the local environmental issues. He is a member of Sustainable Braintree as well.

Jeff Madeiras stated I have been in the town for 25 years and raised my family here. I have always been an enthusiast of the environment here.

Council President Ryan asked is there a Motion on Order 25 059?

Motion read by Councilor Ringius:

MOTION: Upon request of her Honor, Mayor Joyce, the Town of Braintree, through the Braintree Town Council and in accordance with Section 2-10 and 3-3 of the Town Charter, approves the appointment of Jeff Madeiras to the Herring and Fisheries Commission.

Motion: by Councilor Ringius to approve Order 25 059

Second: by Councilor Boericke

Vote: For (9 – Boericke, Flaherty, Hume, Maglio, Morin, Quilty, Reynolds, Ringius, Ryan),
Against (0), Absent (0), Abstain (0)

- **25 060** Mayor: Appointment to Herring and Fisheries Commission - Denver Gibbs or take up any action relative thereto

Council President Ryan asked for a recommendation from, Councilor Boericke, Chairwoman of the Committee of Ways & Means.

Chairwoman Boericke stated the Committee of Ways & Means met this evening and sends this to the full Council with a unanimous favorable recommendation on Order 25 060.

Council President Ryan asked does anyone wish to speak on this?

Mayor Joyce stated Denver Gibbs is a member of the Rotary and the Chamber and his own business. I didn't know he was such an avid fisherman and had such an interest in this work. He is capable and excited to support.

Mr. Gibbs stated I have been in Braintree for 16 years and raised my two boys here. I have been a fan of the Herring and fishing for a very long time. It is an honor to participate with the Town of Braintree.

Councilor Maglio stated in the Committee of Ways & Means we spoke for about another 30 to 40 minutes and I also spoke about the Fore River Basin and how we're all part of the same ecosystem. We thoroughly vetted the group in committee.

Council President Ryan asked is there a Motion on Order 25 060?

Motion read by Councilor Ringius:

MOTION: Upon request of her Honor, Mayor Joyce, the Town of Braintree, through the Braintree Town Council and in accordance with Section 2-10 and 3-3 of the Town Charter, approves the appointment of Denver Gibbs to the Herring and Fisheries Commission.

Motion: by Councilor Ringius to approve Order 25 060

Second: by Councilor Boericke

Vote: For (9 – Boericke, Flaherty, Hume, Maglio, Morin, Quilty, Reynolds, Ringius, Ryan),
Against (0), Absent (0), Abstain (0)

- **25 061** Mayor: Appointment to Herring and Fisheries Commission - Matthew R. Sisk or take up any action relative thereto

Council President Ryan asked for a recommendation from, Councilor Boericke, Chairwoman of the Committee of Ways & Means.

Chairwoman Boericke stated the Committee of Ways & Means met this evening and sends this to the full Council with a unanimous favorable recommendation on Order 25 061.

Council President Ryan asked does anyone wish to speak on this?

Mayor Joyce stated Matthew R. Sisk who was very helpful in getting the Monatiquot River online. He has a personal and professional interest in being a good steward for the environment.

Mr. Sisk stated I am a lifelong resident in Braintree. It is a great honor to be here and to be appointed. This is my life's work. Migratory fish I am crazy about them. It is an environmental issue and an economic issue. These fish grow up to go out to our oceans.

Councilor Boericke stated to all appointees thank you for volunteering your time for the benefit of Braintree. In committee we spoke about the work this commission will do directed by the Department of Marine Fisheries Stream Maintenance Program which is fairly prescriptive and super important for our conservation efforts and our environment here in Braintree and for their outreach efforts.

Councilor Flaherty stated this past Thursday I watched at the Sunset Lake dam these individuals starting to do this job that needed to be done before they're even officially appointed.

Councilor Hume stated Mr. Sisk I am not going to be supporting your appointment tonight. Two reasons: The DCR issue, but more specifically in Braintree when you ran for District 6 Councilor, in my opinion you didn't allow for the fair democratic process in electing someone when you took out papers in the last hour. You are being appointed to a Braintree board and your actions in the past were, in my opinion, detrimental to the town and to this board.

Mr. Sisk stated I appreciate that. My philosophy is life is lived forward and learned backwards. I made mistakes, I paid for them and I apologize for them.

Councilor Ringius stated I appreciate you giving your time back to your community. The river walk is a wonderful addition. It will be great to see what that will become as you do your work.

Council President Ryan stated serving your community is an honorable thing to do.

Council President Ryan asked is there a Motion on Order 25 061?

Motion read by Councilor Ringius:

MOTION: Upon request of her Honor, Mayor Joyce, the Town of Braintree, through the Braintree Town Council and in accordance with Section 2-10 and 3-3 of the Town Charter, approves the appointment of Matthew R. Sisk to the Herring and Fisheries Commission.

Motion: by Councilor Ringius to approve Order 25 061

Second: by Councilor Boericke

Vote: For (8 – Boericke, Flaherty, Maglio, Morin, Quilty, Reynolds, Ringius, Ryan),
Against (1-Hume), Absent (0), Abstain (0)

NEW BUSINESS

- None

Topics the Chair does not reasonably anticipate will be discussed

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

Next Council Meeting is scheduled for: [Wednesday, November 5, 2025@7:30pm](#)

ADJOURNMENT

It was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:56p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan M. Cimino
Clerk of the Council

Recording of meeting found at: <https://www.youtube.com/bcamtv>