

Peter Morin
President
District 6

David M. Ringius, J
At Large

Julia C. Flaherty
At Large

Ryan Sterling
At Large



Elizabeth Maglio
Vice President
District 3

James Daiute
District 1

Joseph Reynolds
District 2

Annmary Quilty
District 4

Meredith Boericke
District 5

OFFICE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

Tuesday, February 3, 2026

MINUTES

A meeting of the Town Council was held in the Cahill Auditorium, Braintree Town Hall, on Tuesday, February 3, 2026 beginning at 7:30p.m.

Council President Morin was in the chair.

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

Present: Peter Morin, President
Elizabeth Maglio, Vice President
David M. Ringius, Jr.
Ryan Sterling
James Daiute
Joseph Reynolds
Ann Quilty
Meredith Boericke

Not Present: Julia Flaherty

Also Present: Michael Esmond, Finance Director
Kenneth Rossetti, Town Solicitor
Peter Matchak, Director Planning & Community Development
Elizabeth (Biz) Inglis, Festival of Trees

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- January 20, 2026

Motion: by Councilor Maglio to approve Minutes of January 20, 2026

Second: by Councilor Ringius

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **004 26** Council President: Lunar New Year Festival, Sunday, February 15, 2026 (BHS 12pm-4pm)
Braintree's 4th Annual Lunar New Year event hosted by CAAB (Chinese American Association of Braintree) Braintree High School, 128 Town Street (Free Admission)

- **005 26** Council President: Community Forum Sessions – Master Facilities Planning Process.
Dates: 2/4/26 South Middle, 2/12/26 via Zoom, 2/11/26 BHS further information on the town website

Councilor Reynolds stated Saint Francis Collaborative – Wednesday, February 4, 2026 is holding community meals at 5:30pm open to all residents.

Councilor Quilty stated February is Black History Month – This month was chosen to coincide with the birthdays of Abraham Lincoln and abolitionist Frederick Douglas and building on existing black community celebrations of these figures and their contributions to freedom.

Councilor Reynolds stated last week we had quite a storm. I received a number of calls about some challenges that our residents had in the district. I first want to acknowledge the hard work and effort by the DPW staff and contractors. It was a difficult storm and long duration.
A post-storm operational review is planned by the mayor/administration.

President Morin stated there is scheduled a **Veterans' coffee hour**: Tuesday, February 24, 10 AM at 74 Pond Street, second floor; attendees include Mayor Joyce, Senator Keenan, Senator Driscoll, Representative Cusack; councilors invited.

OLD BUSINESS

- **25 070** Mayor: Proposed Zoning Ordinance Text Amendment Section 135-711 Site Plan Review or take up any action relative thereto (**Public Hearing**)

Council President Morin asked for a Motion to Open the Public Hearing on Order 25 070

Motion by Councilor Maglio to Open Public Hearing for Order 25 070

Motion: by Councilor Maglio to Open the Public Hearing for Order 25 070

Second: by Councilor Ringius

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

Council President Morin asked for a recommendation from Councilor Ringius, Chairman of the Committee on Ordinance & Rules.

Chairman Ringius stated the Committee on Ordinance & Rules met on January 20th and voted for a unanimous favorable recommendation to the full Council on Order 25 070.

Council President Morin asked if anyone from the mayor's staff would like to speak on this.

Peter Matchak, Director of Planning & Community Development stated there is some new language adding an element under the site plan review which really addresses any new proposed use that would come under MGL Chapter 40A Section 3 which is also known as the Dover amendment. These are exempt uses and therefore Braintree should have something in the bylaws on proposals that come in so there is a review process. This language was drafted by myself and Attorney Carolyn Murray as a sounding board to develop the draft language. There is additional new language proposed around conversations regarding the ADU. Along with Attorney Carolyn Murray we added a new sentence to reflect that all proposed ADUs follow the bylaw (135-618) that was adopted by this council regarding ADUs.

Chairwoman Boericke stated the proposed change she requested is really a clarification so that it doesn't appear as if the town of Braintree would be owning or operating accessory dwelling units and also to ensure that all the work that this body did last year in getting 135-618 which is our accessory dwelling unit bylaw, that it is clearly codified under that component of the zoning code. So, I would offer this change, and thank you to the director and to, Attorney Murray for their assistance just to add clarification so that it doesn't appear as if the town's going to be operating ADUs accessory dwelling units.

Councilor Quilty stated I will be supporting this. Currently under the Dover Amendment the law is too broad and too lopsided. It helps with abutters by implementing reasonable restrictions.

President Morin explained the Dover Amendment basically applies to structures or uses that are exempted from local regulations except for certain types of local regulations, correct?

Director Matchak stated that is correct.

The Dover Amendment historically has been known to cover a piece of Mass General Law, Chapter 40A Section 3 and that is to protect religious and educational institutions, and therefore, they do not have to follow local zoning code. And so, churches and religious institutions, educational facilities can really be placed anywhere without regard for local zoning. So, with that essence in identifying that in the bylaw there is no certain call out that if one was proposed, what becomes the process? So here this bylaw as

proposed create some guidelines. The proposed uses will have to file a site plan review. There'll be a public hearing through the planning board. The abutters will be notified, and then the planning board can insert reasonable restrictions. And reasonable restriction is the term that has been pulled out of case law for over the years. That is really the question of their case law has kind of come to consistency and reasonable restrictions. And that is kind of like the test almost for the review process. And so, so yes, we are adding some basic oversight.

President Morin stated so, the Dover Amendment basically applies to structures or uses that are exempted from local regulations except for certain types of local regulations, correct?

Director Matchak stated that is correct.

The Dover Amendment historically has been known to cover a piece of Mass General Law, Chapter 40A Section 3 and that is to protect religious educational institutions, and therefore, they do not have to follow local zoning code. And so, churches and religious institutions, educational facilities can really be placed anywhere without regard for local zoning. So, with that essence in identifying in the bylaw there is no certain call out that if one was proposed, what becomes the process? So here this bylaw is proposed create some guidelines that the proposed uses will have to file a site plan review. There'll be a public hearing through the planning board. Abutters will be notified, and then the planning board can insert reasonable restrictions. And reasonable restriction is the term that has been pulled out of case law for over the years. That is really the question of case law has kind of come to consistency and reasonable restrictions and that is kind of like the test almost for the review process. And so, so yes, we are adding some basic oversight.

President Morin explained so, what this proposed amendment to the bylaw does is provides for site plan review for circumstances where the proponent of the project is invoking a Dover amendment. So that it allows for review and the imposition, potential imposition of reasonable regulations, which the attorney general has identified recently in a memo that went out to all municipalities. As you cited, these have all come from case law. Things like bulk and height structures, yard sizes, lot area setbacks, open space parking and building coverage requirements. Those can all be are all seen as reasonable restrictions as long as they're properly considered by a municipality in their regulatory process. So, you're just guaranteeing that those factors will be this bylaw basically or this ordinance change guarantees that those factors will be considered when a Dover amendment is being invoked a proponent.

Director Matchak stated that's correct.

President Morin stated I think that's a very approved response by the community. I appreciate your work on doing this, and I appreciate the work of the ordinance and rules committee in bringing this forward and Councilor Boericke on her efforts to improve upon it.

Councilor Reynolds stated I think this is a very important amendment to our site plan review. Having been a member, uh, longtime member of the planning board for two different occasions, um, I've had the opportunity to have discussions as a board in a public hearing with applicants who have invoked the Dover amendment and depending upon who the applicant is, what the use is, what their intentions are to make changes, I have to first say that the Dover amendment was necessary when it was initially implemented. There was somewhat of there was there was plenty of evidence that churches and school university entities were somewhat discriminated against in their means of trying to expand their uses of their property as well as perhaps look for opportunities to generate needed funds to keep their operations going. This was a measure, I believe, from my historical research that went too far initially. This is a correction of that initial intent to protect the rights of those two types of entities. And I think it

was really important that the President made the point to talk about what exactly is the Dover amendment, and what does it apply to in our community. The site plan review itself is an extremely, extremely important process that enables that ensures proper application and protection of both our zoning laws for the property owners who are intending to build, develop, or change a use of some type on their own property but at the same time, be able to provide a level of protection for the abutters in the community and general in the vicinity. We talk a lot of times about harmony of uses in individual areas and introduction of perhaps modifications and changes in some way or shape to the areas in question, affected areas. Of course, this is long overdue change that will protect not only property owners, and it will even the playing field. Absolutely, evening the playing field for the community. It's important for us that these types of activities have the ability to grow to expand as their needs expand, but at the same time in a responsible manner. That's the key word that the director used: reasonable use. So I think this is an excellent opportunity for the town of Braintree to implement a very reasonable change to our site plan review.

Council President Morin asked if anyone from the general public would like to speak on Order 25 070. Seeing none.

Council President Morin asked for a Motion to CLOSE the Public Hearing for Order 25 070

Motion by Councilor Maglio to CLOSE the Public Hearing for Order 25 070

Motion: by Councilor Maglio to CLOSE the Public Hearing for Order 25 070

Second: by Councilor Ringius

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

Councilor Boericke read the new language to be included in Order 25 070 (*in red*):

135-711 B (5) Any new structure or alteration of an existing structure or change of use in any structure for an entity claiming exemption under MGL c. 40A, s3; provided, however, that site plan review shall not be applicable to any municipally owned or operated preschool, elementary school, middle school or high school. *Further Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) shall be governed by section 135-618 of the Braintree Zoning Bylaws.*

President Morin stated there is an amendment made by Councilor Boericke. Is there a second to her amendment?

Motion: by Councilor Boericke to amend Order 25 070

Second: by Councilor Ringius

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

Council President Morin asked for the Motion on the Order as Amended for Order 25 070:

Councilor Maglio read the following Motion:

MOTION: To accept the proposed Zoning Ordinance Text Amendments Section 135-711: Site Plan Review (SPR) of multifamily, apartment, business and commercial developments with Planning Board Recommendations.

Motion: by Councilor Maglio to approve Order 25 070

Second: by Councilor Ringius

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

- **26 005 Mayor:** FY2026 Supplemental Appropriations #1 or take up any action relative thereto (**Public Hearing**)

Council President Morin asked for a Motion to Open the Public Hearing on Order 26 005

Motion by Councilor Maglio to Open Public Hearing for Order 26 005

Motion: by Councilor Maglio to Open the Public Hearing for Order 26 005

Second: by Councilor Ringius

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

Council President Morin 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 we had a very robust discussion and voted for a unanimous favorable recommendation to the full Council on Order 26 005. One of the Motions here is distinct from the Tri-Town request. I just want to bring that to everybody's attention. It is a transfer of funds, regarding legal service fees. So all other motions do pertain to the Tri-Town Water Treatment Plant operations.

Council President Morin asked if anyone from the mayor's staff would like to speak on this.

Director Esmond stated the bulk of these motions in front of you relate to the soon-to-be Operational Water Treatment Plant. It's important to note the motions here relate really just for Fiscal 2026. We have identified that as what we call a stub year, where that will last for the duration of the time in fiscal 26, when the plant will become operational, and where the town of Braintree, will essentially perform the operational services on behalf of the Tri-Town district. To be clear, when after the legislation was adopted by the General Court was adopted, each of the three towns, Braintree, Holbrook and Randolph executed a Joint Powers Agreement that addressed a number of issues, including the plant's operations. Clearly states in that agreement that the town of Braintree will be responsible for the day to day operations of the plant, and that is also inclusive not just for the staffing, supplying sort of the things we think of when we think of operations, but also for the personnel management, human resources, finance et cetera. So we have endeavored over the past many months working with the district. For to identify a stub year operations budget that would be apportioned for the district, and then apportioned to each of the three communities. Braintree, will be essentially performing as a contracted operator. We will have for beginning of fiscal twenty seven, a formal maintenance operations agreement adopted in both between the Tri-Town District and the town of Braintree, Which will memorialize some of the issues that we are continuing to work through right now. These appropriations that are represented in motions tonight in front of the council are important so that we have a funding structure in place for us to be able to begin to incur the costs we anticipate related to the operations of the plant. That, we are able to track that using the town of Braintree's chart of accounts closely, And then use that information to then invoice back through your respective communities that make up the Tri-Town District and ultimately have a structure in place that serves and corresponds to how the plant will be operated. It's really also important to note from the conversation we had with the Ways & Means. What we're talking about tonight is really just about the operations of the plant itself. The water department for the town of Braintree consists of other activities that aren't just simply the plant, particularly water such as distribution, maintaining operating and maintaining distribution system throughout the town. We have meter reading division and other important functions that are performed by the water department. Those are not going to be affected really by this agreement. Those will continue. Each town, including,

Braintree will continue to perform its community specific responsibilities related to those key water department responsibilities outside of the plant operations. So, what we're really just talking about is the operations of the plant. In total, the appropriations that are in front of the committee related to these five towns, total \$2.2million dollars.

I just want to share a little bit of perspective on that for the council. We put this budget together, sort of using the best information that we have available. I do expect these amounts will be will in turn ultimately be conservative, I think because of the nature of us really putting together our first sort of pro forma budget. We work closely when I say "we," a team Braintree specific is especially led by Lou Dutton, who's our water and sewer superintendent. Folks from the DPW, myself, Kristina O'Connell, who's our not only the town's treasurer but has been identified as the Tri-Town Water District's treasurer, and a number of other folks. We have advised the communities of these. We've presented them to their staff and then to the Tri-Town District. The Tri-Town District Board adopted motions adopting fiscal twenty six and twenty seven budgets that are reflected here, and each community has been presented what their allocation percentage share will be. The town of Braintree will, in fiscal twenty-six, bill for the two quarters of twenty-six, and bill back their communities for what are the actual costs as they are finally recorded following each quarter. And then beginning in fiscal twenty-seven, pursuant to the joint powers agreement, we will then begin to bill each community in advance for quarterly allocations of the budget. I really don't know that we will have full appreciation of the operations, its costs and other factors until we get through probably the first eighteen months of the plant. I think there is a lot, if I could speak for Lou, There is a lot to learn and I think we'll work to make sure we're reporting back routinely back to the committee and town council on progress.

Certainly, during the budget, I am sure we'll be able to have some additional perspective. But these appropriations will help us move forward, and they are timely in the sense that we expect the plants will become operational, and we are beginning to incur costs now as part of this study. The sixth motion that's been raised, as Chair Boericke noted, is unrelated to the tri-town. It is exactly that it's appropriating and transferring funds from our insurance recovery fund to the legal services to the legal department related to costs anticipated to be incurred in the near term related to litigation and ongoing related expenses of the town. Those funds have been deposited there from the results of other litigation matters and are available for this purpose and supporting and defraying those costs.

Council President Morin asked if anyone from the general public would like to speak on Order 26 005. Seeing none.

Council President Morin asked for a Motion to CLOSE the Public Hearing for Order 26 005

Motion by Councilor Maglio to CLOSE the Public Hearing for Order 26 005

Motion: by Councilor Maglio to CLOSE the Public Hearing for Order 26 005

Second: by Councilor Ringius

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

Council President Morin asked for the Motions for Order 26 005:

Councilor Maglio read the following Motions 1 through 6:

1. Tri-Town District Administration

Motion: That the sum of \$110,250 be transferred from Fiscal Year 2025 Certified Water Sewer Fund Retained Earnings to the Tri-Town Treatment Plant / District Administration.

Motion: by Councilor Maglio to approve Order 26 005 (1)

Second: by Councilor Ringius

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

2. Treatment Plant Management

Motion: That the sum of \$1,078,923 be transferred from Fiscal Year 2025 Certified Water Sewer Fund Retained Earnings to the Tri-Town Treatment Plant / Treatment Plant Management.

Motion: by Councilor Maglio to approve Order 26 005 (2)

Second: by Councilor Ringius

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

3. Treatment Facilities

Motion: That the sum of \$431,500 be transferred from Fiscal Year 2025 Certified Water Sewer Fund Retained Earnings to the Tri-Town Treatment Plant / Treatment Facilities.

Motion: by Councilor Maglio to approve Order 26 005 (3)

Second: by Councilor Ringius

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

4. Treatment Operations

Motion: That the sum of \$506,250 be transferred from Fiscal Year 2025 Certified Water Sewer Fund Retained Earnings to the Tri-Town Treatment Plant / Treatment Operations.

Motion: by Councilor Maglio to approve Order 26 005 (4)

Second: by Councilor Ringius

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

5. Reservoir Operations

Motion: That the sum of \$95,500 be transferred from Fiscal Year 2025 Certified Water Sewer Fund Retained Earnings to the Tri-Town Treatment Plant / Reservoir Operations.

Motion: by Councilor Maglio to approve Order 26 005 (5)

Second: by Councilor Ringius

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

6. Legal Department

Motion: That the sum of \$200,000 be transferred from the Insurance Recoveries Fund (Fund 3504) to the Legal Department / Administration Program.

Motion: by Councilor Maglio to approve Order 26 005 (6)

Second: by Councilor Ringius

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

- 003 26 Council President: Town Council FY27 Budget (v2)

Account Description	Explanation of Spending	Proposed FY 27 Budget	FY 26 Budget	FY 25 Budget	FY 24 Budget	Notes
Administrative/Clerical	Town Charter	\$89,606 plus COLA	\$89,606	\$83,645	\$80,809	Clerk of the Council salary
Cell Phone	24/7	\$600	\$600	\$600.00	\$600.00	Clerk of the Council cell phone
Elected Officials	Town Charter	\$47,500	\$47,500	\$47,500	\$47,500	Stipend
Auditor Fee	Town Charter	\$57,000	\$57,000	\$57,000	\$57,000	P&S now (CBIZ)
Consultant	Cut in FY25	\$30,000	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	Consultants
Advertising	Legal Ads	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	M.G.L. newspaper publications for public hearings
Technology	Cut in FY24	\$2,500	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	new iPads
Postage	Cut in FY24	\$100	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Printing	Reduced by \$100 in FY25	\$300	\$350	\$350	\$450.00	Approx. cost of one box business cards for each Councilor (\$50)
Office Supplies	Only covers printer cartridges	\$1,500	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200	Printer Cartridges ~ \$600 per purchase and need 2x per year
Council Meetings	Reduced by \$200 FY25	\$2,000	\$1,800	\$1,800	\$2,000	All other office supplies and meeting needs, commendations, etc.
Mileage	Cut to zero FY24	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	In TC Rules
Dues/ Memberships/ Subscrip.	Covers cost of one MMA conference per Councilor	\$3,500	\$3,000	\$2,250	\$2,250	In TC Rules (approx. \$300 pp)
Reserve Fund	Cut in FY23	\$100,000	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	MGL40 Section 5A Emergent/unforeseen
Town Auditor (CLA)	Previous years we budgeted about \$75,000 3-yr. average spent is ~\$61K; ~\$7K encumbered each year	\$62,500	\$62,500	\$65,000	\$65,000	Town Charter

Motion made by Councilor Maglio:

Motion: by Councilor Maglio to Take off the Table item 003 26

Second: by Councilor Ringius

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

This was tabled so members could review the proposed budget and submit any revisions or proposals they may have.

Councilor Boericke stated I just want to echo my comments from the last council meeting. I greatly appreciate you opening this up for discussion and for the sake of transparency. I don't know that this has been done before, so really appreciate the opportunity and before I, walk through my suggestions and very open to you know discussion by all means. That was the point of this. I want to, or I guess President Morin, you could confirm that and for residents watching, the council actually cannot add any dollars to the budget. So this is going to be submitted to the mayor's office for consideration. We are going to ask for what we want, however, there is no guarantee that it will come back to us with the total dollar amount that we're requesting. Do I have that right?

President Morin stated that's correct. We are just formulating our request to the mayor for consideration in her proposed budget, and what comes from that request is going to be left to her. But I just wanted the council to be able to discuss in public what we think we should be requesting in our budget.

Councilor Boericke has a three suggestions:

- **Legal Consultant - \$30,000**
 - I have received many requests over the years to look at current or work on new ordinances. This request becomes almost impossible to do in a timely fashion without access to our own legal counsel (as evidenced by the fact that it took me more than 2 years to complete the tree protection ordinance). Additionally, should the Council have other legal questions or come under legal scrutiny for any reason, we are currently reliant solely on the discretion of the Mayor to grant us access to the town's solicitor. This puts the Council in a precarious position.
- **Technology - \$5,500 (*AMENDED to \$2,500 to purchase 2 new iPads per year*)**
 - Simply put, Councilors should not have to rely on their own personal devices to do the business they were elected to do. Without functioning iPads we are presupposing Councilors have the means to own and use their own devices. This is also to save paper.
 - The \$5,500 is a rough estimate for 9 iPads (~\$600 each).
- **Reserve Account - \$100,000**
 - This is not for the council to use at its own discretion but rather to have an account for unforeseen expenses that the mayor would have to ask for as an appropriation. I thought \$100,000 was more reasonable as we try to bring back up our reserves.

Councilor Maglio asked is the consultant line just for legal?

President Morin stated No, it's a consultant line. To be used for any consultant that we use. Council Boericke is pointing out circumstances that have in the past delayed work on Ordinances, you know, It's probably not as much in the last two years as we've seen in prior years. Where it was a dilatory tactic, one would say to stall action by the council and one of those circumstances was legal work, but there are other consultants that we could use in environmental situations and accounting, auditing, you know, episodic situations that we may use.

Councilor Ringius stated thank you for the transparency of this budget. We have not done this in the past. Right now each department is putting together their budget and it gets submitted to the mayor and formulated into our next fiscal year. Per the charter we do not get to determine what that will be. We are like any other department and can only make recommendations.

I have been Chair for Ordinance & Rules for many years. I always like to ensure that we have some sort of legal sort of opinion on any kind of ordinances, whether we are proposing, which are ultimately going to refer to council for voting. And in years past, that has been a process that has been slow, and there have been emergencies. It could have been a lot faster, having had that. I think, as noted in some of these comments, I always use this sort of term of art, I guess, that we have to imagine everyone as faceless people. It's not going to be the same nine councilors. It's not going to be the same mayor. It's not going to be the same council in any sort of position. And I think it's important that when you're making these decisions, you look at it as those faceless people and I think we could ultimately at some point be in a position where we need legal advice, and I think that having our own funds to do that is important. It's not a reflection of anyone, but oftentimes our town solicitor I mean, we have some citizens who serve as the town solicitor, the town solicitor or chief staff becomes an extension of the mayor in some respects. They're part of the executive branch, and we are you can forget that sometimes we are our own branch as the Legislative branch of the town. We should be able to seek outside help again on a number of things if we need it. I think restoring it to an amount that works is important. The Reserve Account was cut a number of years ago. It is important. It puts us in a position where we look much more fiscally responsible for not having to go out to bid.

Councilor Reynolds stated I agree with the previous speakers and endorse these in the budget.

President Morin reviewed the proposed budget requests.

Council President Morin asked for the Motion for Order 003 26:

Motion by Councilor Maglio:

MOTION: To adopt the proposed FY27 Town Council Budget

Motion: by Councilor Maglio to adopt the proposed FY26 Town Council Budget

Second: by Councilor Ringius

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

NEW BUSINESS

Council President Morin stated we have a Request for Same Night Action.

Council President Morin asked does any Councilor object to Same Night Action on Order 26 007?

Ok - Hearing none. We will take up Order 26 007.

Refer to the Committee of Ways & Means

- **26 007** Mayor: Authorization to Accept a Donation – Festival of Trees or take up any action relative thereto (*Same Night Action Request*)

Elizabeth (Biz) Inglis was present stating it's my pleasure to be standing in front of you all again for the second year, just after our second year in the Festival of Trees. You know, after the first year, we hoped that we could increase our tree number and our participation from town residents and businesses and we did that greatly this year. Our tree numbers went up by twenty percent. We were able to get a lot more people involved, businesses involved. This year we had a first responder night, we had a children's night, we had senior day and an adult night. I think one of the highlights of the week was the first responder night.

This year, we had the fire station set up a coffee hour over there across the street in the fire truck phase. The fire department themselves did a lot of fundraising, which brought their uh building into uh light through the holiday season, too. So without their efforts we wouldn't have had their building lit up also. So we thank them. We also had an Adult night, which was a huge success. We ended up selling out; there were two hundred tickets sold. And we plan to do that again next year. Every year I say it's going to be better than last year, But I don't really know how we're going to keep that going because every year we're amazed by the turnout, by the participation, by the generosity of the town, and we just hope to be able to keep doing and putting back in.

MOTION: That the Town of Braintree be and hereby is authorized, in accordance with Section 53A of Chapter 44 of the Massachusetts General Laws to accept the following gift upon the conditions attached and herein set forth:

<u>DONOR</u>	<u>GIFT</u>	<u>PURPOSE</u>
Festival of Trees	\$12,000	Town Christmas Lights

Motion made by Councilor Maglio:

Motion: by Councilor Maglio to approve Order 26 007

Second: by Councilor Ringius

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

NEW BUSINESS

President Morin asked is there a Motion to move all remaining items under new business to their respective committee(s)?

Councilor Maglio made a MOTION: to refer all new business to their respective committee(s):

Refer to the Committee on the Department of Public Works

- 26 006 National Grid Petition: Andersen Road or take up any action relative thereto
 - Motion:** by Councilor Maglio to refer to the Committee on the Department of Public Works Order 26 006
 - Second:** by Councilor Ringius
 - Vote:** For (8 – Boericke, Daiute, Maglio, Morin, Quilty, Reynolds, Ringius, Sterling), Against (0), Absent (1 - Flaherty), Abstain (0)

Next Council Meeting is scheduled for: Tuesday, February 24, 2026 @ 7:30pm

ADJOURNMENT

It was unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:37p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan M. Cimino, Clerk of the Council