

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 19, 2026

President Letterie calls the meeting to order at 6:00 PM in the Harvey Hearing Room

Motion by Councilor Dimes to enter in Executive Session

2nd by Councilor Romano

ROLL CALL

Yes: Councilor Costigan, Councilor Tassinari, Councilor Millar, Councilor Dimes, Councilor Romano, Councilor Reardon, Councilor Finn, Vice President Swope, President Letterie

Enter into Executive Session

Motion by Councilor Millar to Adjourn Executive Session

2nd by Councilor Finn

ROLL CALL

Yes: Councilor Costigan, Councilor Tassinari, Councilor Millar, Councilor Dimes, Councilor Romano, Councilor Reardon, Councilor Finn, Vice President Swope, President Letterie

Adjourn Executive Session

ENTER INTO OPEN SESSION

ROLL CALL

Yes: Councilor Costigan, Councilor Tassinari, Councilor Millar, Councilor Dimes, Councilor Romano, Councilor Reardon, Councilor Finn, Vice President Swope, President Letterie

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE-Councilor Romano

MOMENT OF SILENCE

John Lyons - DPW Employee Kevin

Trainor-State Police Officer

MINUTES

Motion by Councilor Dimes to Approve the Minutes of May 5, 2026, as circulated.

2nd by Councilor Romano

Motion Passed

GENERAL INFORMATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

WPD-Officers Swearing In

Officer Michael Connolly Promoted to Sargent

Officer David Brown Promoted to Sargent

Public Health Director Meredith Hurley

Presents the Safety Net Program (Please see website for Slide Presentation)

PUBLIC HEARING

None

PUBLIC COMMENT

Marcy Hamilton P2-Discusses the action plan for Winthrop, and we don't want cheaper we want it done correctly...our climate issues are not going away, we have to think of the future....

Celeste Ribiero Hewitt P1-Discusses the CDICR and the challenges that are faced.

Mark Sennott P2-Discusses the easement at PPYC and why are we negotiating? We should just be notifying them where the easement is going. The parking a lot they use for the boats is not correctly used.

Terry Delehanty P6- Comments on budget and thanks the Public Health dept. for the Health Safety Net.

Fears the budget will be cut and after 10 years the advancement that this department has made will be at a loss.

Lee Foley P6-Comments that she requested certain phone records as a public request and has not received the information requested.

CORRESPONDENCE

None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Rules & Ordinance-Councilor Millar reports on the committee currently reviewing the Houseboat Ordinance, The Use Variance, Rule 2(c), Video recordings, Tree Committee Ordinance.

Councilor Swope reports on her meetings on the Public Health Safety & Works Committee

Please see website for all committee meeting minutes.

SCHOOL DEPARTMENT REPORT

Council President reports that Graduation is May 29th. Ongoing negotiations are still moving ahead and have come to an agreement, WTA will be ratifying contract for FY26,

UPDATE ON POLICY MAKING COMMITTEES

None

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

Memorial Day Services begin at 9:45 AM. Preparing for the Girdlestone & Tileston Rd. project. We need to move the current easement as currently the foot and diameter of the pipe will not fit. We need an estimate of 20'. This is why it is being rerouted.

Councilor Romano asks about the Shirely St. paving project.

DPW reports it has been completed today.

Councilor Dimes reports the meeting for the 250-year celebration on July 4th is going well. We can definitely use more volunteers....

Vice President Swope discusses the grant due on May 30th.,

Town Manger reports, the Assistant Town Manager is working on it.

Vice President Swope also comments on the Climate Grant not being allowed and that the state should not have denied it due to MBTA 3A.

Town Manager is still reviewing....

Vice President Swope discusses on the list of past issues that should be brought to all attention and reported on.

Councilor Millar asks about parking for the July 4th festivities and not forgetting about the traffic that the town will be involved with with the Tall Ships Visit.

Councilor Costigan questions about the pipe fitting that is needed for the Girdlestone and Tileston project.

DPW Director discusses the size of the current pipe being too small for the new pipe coming in.

Requests a cost comparison of this project and the plans. He is curious if other areas in this location will be tied into this project that could elevate the cost and we have responsibility for cost for the public.

OLD BUSINESS

Motion by Council President that the Provisions of Section 17.52.030 of the Winthrop Town Ordinances, titles Variances, be amended by striking the words "use or" be sent to the Winthrop Planning Board for review.
(Please see copy of entire motion)

Vice President Swope sent a draft that she is interested in the Planning Board also reviewing.

Town Manager reports the Planning Board can review all drafts sent by the Town Council

Council President reports that all drafts will be sent to the Planning Board.

Motion by Councilor Romano that the Town Council vote to Approve that all multiple member body meetings that have zoom or other virtual attendance capabilities shall be recorded and posted to the Town's website... (Please see copy of motion)

2nd by Councilor Costigan

Motion by Councilor Romano to include all Town Council Sub Committee Meetings

2nd by Councilor Finn

Amendment Passes

Discussion

Mike Cabral at WCAT stated as long as meetings are zoomed, they can be posted. He asks that the committee begin and end the meeting in a clear condition.

Councilor Tassinari asks if there is a cost to the town for storage of these videos.

Town Manager reports there will not be.

Main Motion as Amended

Roll Call Vote

Yes: Councilor Costigan, Councilor Tassinari, Councilor Millar, Councilor Dimes, Councilor Romano, Councilor Reardon, Councilor Finn, Vice President Swope, President

Main Motion as Amended Passes

Amend Town Council Rules & Procedures Rule 2 (c)-

Town Attorney Cipoletta reports that he submitted this to the AG Office for review and our current rule 2 (c) violates this.

He discusses and explains the current proposal that has been submitted. It seems with the Open Meeting Law this boils down to the public and what is going to be deliberated on and the OML requires that the agenda must list all topics the chair reasonably anticipated. This is a notice to the public about what is going to be discussed and the OML requires that the agenda must list all topics that will be discussed. If there is something else within the 48 hours that is anticipated, a new agenda can be amended, but considering our current Rule 2 (c) should be reviewed to change from majority to unanimous would also be in violation of this current rule.

The AG Open Government Division did state that the Town Council can consider a topic not on agenda only if the circumstances demand immediate action, other than that the AG Office states it should be on an agenda properly noticed to the public.

The motion should not be considered as there is a question on our current Rule 2 (c) being in violation and should be reviewed for further consideration. The public should be made aware of what will be discussed on the agenda. A new topic can be discussed but should be put on the next agenda for review so the public is made more aware.

Vice President Swope asks if there is a topic on the agenda and not stated clearly, can it still be discussed?

Town Attorney agrees, he believes the word "majority" should be deleted.

The Open Meeting Statue wants to make sure the public is well aware of what will be discussed at a meeting.

Councilor Romano does not believe that most of this information is irrelevant and since the Rules & Ordinance has already voted on this with a Positive Recommendation, he would like to continue with this motion and vote on it.

Attorney Cipoletta states he expects the chair to know what will be discussed and understands that it is the chair who is responsible for what is on the agenda.

Councilor Romano states that he has not read in the law that if you want to discuss something on the agenda, it should be able to be discussed, it is an intent of the law and the majority of the council should be able to add something to the agenda, nothing in the law prohibits this.

Attorney Cipoletta understands what Councilor Romano believes but the chair should not take up any information that is not noticed on the agenda, this is really what the Open Meeting Law consists of, and it should not be done. This motion would allow something to be discussed that is not on the agenda and this is not being transparent to the public.

Councilor Tassinari states we are taking a risk as there could be other liabilities involved.

Attorney Cipoletta reports that if something comes to the attention of the Council President it can be posted on the agenda as an amended agenda.

Councilor Tassinari comments that the Town Council has already amended Rule 2 (b) which would actually allow this.

Councilor Dimes believes it is very clear that the council is here to serve the public, why would the council ever consider passing a motion that is in clear violation of the Open Meeting Law? We are here to be transparent. Vice President Swope asks if it was an unusual circumstance could that be discussed if 4 councilors requested is this acceptable with Rule 2 (b).

Councilor Romano asks how the AG Challenge works?

Attorney Cipoletta states someone would have to make a notice or claim to the Open Government Division to be investigated.

It would be up to the AG Office for them to make a decision on what would happen in this case. Something that was adopted could be struck down.

Councilor Tassinari believes that though the AG Office could strike something down it is more of a risk to us if the public does not this, we are transparent with information....

Councilor Millar believes our constituents should know what is on the agenda with a reasonable amount of time.

Council President states having something come up unanimously or majority is wrong if not on agenda and the public not aware.

He does not believe anyone's intention is to have something "get by" but it could be argued if something that is not on the agenda for the public to be made aware of it could be construed this way.

Attorney Cipoletta brings up conception. The Town Council must be transparent....

Motion by Councilor Romano that other than amendments to existing motion, no business shall be considered by the Town Council unless: There is a unanimous vote of the Council to waive this rule.

2nd by Councilor Costigan

Discussion

Councilor Dimes once again states this motion should not be a considered.

Attorney Cipoletta states he takes the law as his legal opinion, he may not like it, but it is the law.

Council President asks Attorney Cipoletta that though this motion seems to be in violation, can the council still vote.

Attorney Cipoletta states, he does not see how they can't....

ROLL CALL VOTE

Yes: Councilor Costigan, Councilor Romano, Councilor Reardon, Councilor Finn

No: Councilor Tassinari, Councilor Millar, Councilor Dimes, Vice President Swope, President Letterie

Motion does Not Pass

Town Council Review Ordinance Committee Recommendations -Scooters (*Continue Rules & Ordinance*)

Vice President Swope would like items to be considered and voted on in a quicker manner. President Letterie agrees but unfortunately government does not do things quickly.

Town Council Review Ordinance Recommendation from the Tree Committee -*Attorney Cipoletta opinion will be sent to the Planning Board for review.*

Motion by Vice President Swope to waive the reading memo from Attorney Cipoletta

2nd by Councilor Romano

Motion Passed

NEW BUSINESS

President Letterie refers to the Finance Committee that the Town Council vote to appropriate Certified Free Cash/Revolving Fund Close out FY26.

President Letterie refers to the Finance Committee that the Town Council vote to authorize Unpaid Bills of Prior Year

Proclamation-Juneteenth-Councilor Tassinari

Councilor Tassinari reads the Juneteenth Proclamation (Please see copy on Website)

President Letterie believes in the proclamation but disagrees with raising different flags.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON PROCLAMATION

Yes: Councilor Costigan, Councilor Tassinari, Councilor Millar, Councilor Dimes, Councilor Romano, Councilor Reardon, Councilor Finn, Vice President Swope, President Letterie

Motion by Councilor Romano to send a letter to the MBTA Letter –

2nd by Vice President Swope

Discussion

Councilor Romano has drafted a letter that will be sent to the MBTA in reference to the Point Shirley Stops for bus 712/713.

Town Manager reports that the MBTA may change their schedule on that point and has mentioned bus shelters.

1-Abstention-Councilor Tassinari

Motion Passes

PUBLIC COMMENT

Celeste Ribeiro Hewitt P1-Comments on flag issue and as a member of the CDICR, she is in favor of raising all flags. Comments on violation of open meeting law have been witnessed at the Council Table and the fact that several councilors voted to ignore Attorney Cipoletta's opinion and vote to break the open meeting law is wrong.

Karin Chavis P2-Comments on several factors of the town's problems and believes if one is effective by any bus stop's being stopped, that is one too many....it is time for MBTA to listen to Winthrop and at least maintain what we have. Winthrop has no breaks on paying to enter the tunnel or take the bridge as E. Boston and Chelsea residents do. She comments on the OML and that one time she was brought up against a committee she was on was written up for a violation. To see that 4 councilors voted for something totally against the Open Meeting Law was a disgrace.

Jack Dowd P4-Discusses the last Rules & Ordinance Meeting he attended and was not happy how it was run.

Erin Barcellos P5-Discusses the OML are there for us, we need more people to be engaged in our government. The blatant disregard for the OML in reference to a vote tonight was totally wrong. Comments on her public records request which have not been answered yet. Disagreements are expected by blatant disregard of the law, is wrong.

Marcy Hamilton P2-Hopes that we all have a copy of the Climate Commission Plan, we need to have funding and be ready to begin.

Lisa Plotnick P6-Comments on being happy with the shuttle service for our 250 yr. celebration. Happy to hear the words of support for the residents in reference to the MBTA. She suggests asking about the last MBTA Survey, a lot have not been honored.

Terry Delehanty P6-Comments on the engineering trust he has in DPW Director Calla and his knowledge of not only today's problems but the problems of the future, especially with the Girdlestone and Tileston Project. Thank the Council for not violating his statutory rights. The public needs to be aware of what is on an agenda, prior to the meeting.

PUBLIC RELATIONS / UPCOMING EVENTS

Memorial Day Celebration

WHS Graduation May 29th

**No further business in front of the Town Council, President
Letterie considers this meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM**

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES MAY 19, 2026 PAGE

