

# Town of Bridgewater, MA Operational Review

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## Executive Summary

The Town of Bridgewater engaged the services of the Collins Center for Public Management to conduct an objective review of its staffing levels in all Town departments. Town leadership recognized that with the increased demands for services, dynamic service requests, and ongoing and future projects may impact staffing levels and expectations. Town leadership sought to understand where departments may be over or understaffed, whether there are structural, procedural, technological or other improvements that could reduce the burden on existing staff. The goal of the review was to provide support and recommendations to leadership on how best to allocate human resources to meet the Town's current needs and plan for future needs.

## Methodology

The report was developed through a comprehensive approach. Interviews were conducted with Department Heads to gather insights into operational processes, challenges, and opportunities for improvement. Each Department Head was asked to provide operational data covering 2022, 2023, and 2024. Comparative data, when available, from similar communities was also sought. After receiving, gathering, and coalescing all the information, the Collins Center offers the following report.

## Key Findings and Recommendations

### Town Wide

- Departments face increases in service demands without increased resources.
- Introducing Assistant Department Head positions across various departments is suggested to enhance overall operations, strengthen strategic planning, and maintain consistency when department leaders are unavailable. Staff across departments are dedicated but require increased resources to maintain quality services.
- Across all departments, the report emphasizes the need for proactive investment in staffing, equipment, modernization, and strategic planning to ensure continuity, safety, and effectiveness of public services. Addressing operational strain, resource gaps, and sustainability challenges is critical for maintaining high-quality services and supporting Bridgewater's growth.

### Public Safety Departments

- **Police:** The department experienced a 17% increase in call volume from 2022 to 2024, with motor vehicle stops, medical emergencies, and suspicious activity as top call reasons. April and May are consistently high-call months. Recommendations focus on expanding staffing, improving traffic management, strengthening community engagement, and promoting advanced training and 911 text services.
- **Fire:** Emergency calls rose from 4,628 in 2021 to 5,077 in 2024. Staffing levels are lower than most departments and are not in line with recommended guidelines. especially at the East Side Station. The relocation of Headquarters will likely increase response times. Recommendations

include increasing staffing, conducting cost analyses, and reducing reliance on mutual aid. A study should be conducted to determine the appropriate balance of staff credentials for the department. Resources will always be limited as such a determination as to the appropriate number of EMT credentialed members of the Department should be studied.

- **Dispatch Operations:** Police and Fire currently have individual dispatch operations staffed by uniformed personnel. It is recommended the town create a combined civilian dispatch division. The operations could either be placed under the Police or Fire department for administrative and budgetary practicality. It is common practice to have Dispatch Divisions within a police department. Converting to a civilian division would return sworn police and fire personnel to shifts, where their skills and training can be used more effectively. Additionally, it is recommended the Town explore joining a regional dispatch center, given consideration in recognition of the increasing complexity, training, and operational demands being placed on public safety.

## Human and Community Services, Library, and Recreation Departments

- **Council on Aging:** Bridgewater has a growing elderly population and rising demand for services. Staffing is limited and heavily reliant on grants. Recommendations include expanding transportation resources, hiring additional staff, securing sustainable funding, and enhancing behavioral health services.
- **Veterans:** The department provides essential support but has a lower benefit participation rate and average benefit amounts compared to neighboring communities. Recommendations focus on outreach, benefit application assistance, partnerships, and adding administrative support. It is recommended the Town explore creating or joining with area communities to regionalize or create partnerships.
- **Public Library:** The department has demonstrated growth and innovation, with expanded programs, collections, and facility improvements. Challenges include limited staffing and hours, lower circulation compared to peers, and capacity constraints. Opportunities include expanding staff, hours, programming, and facility investments.
- **Parks and Recreation:** The department operates as a maintenance department with no active programming, which is unusual for a community of Bridgewater's size. Recommendations include establishing community programming, upgrading fields, enhancing amenities, and increasing community engagement.

## Regulatory Departments

- **Health:** The department has had increased inspection capacity due to grant funding but faces resource constraints and operational vulnerabilities. Recommendations include sustaining grant funding, investing in personnel, enhancing operational systems, and expanding community outreach.
- **Inspectional Services:** The department has had an increase in permits issued in recent years, but inspections declined in 2024, suggesting resource constraints. Recommendations include optimizing inspection processes, enhancing revenue, and adding staff.

- **Community and Economic Development:** The scope and volume of the demands on the department have increased in activity and complexity, with a focus on sustainable growth and environmental stewardship. Staff turnover and project complexity are ongoing challenges.

## Public Works Departments

- **General Public Works:** The department has experienced consistent maintenance demands, expanding need for infrastructure upgrades, and high volume of resident requests. Challenges include resource demands, aging infrastructure, and regulatory pressures. Recommendations include cross-training staff, preventive maintenance, upgrading work order systems, and proactive tree management.
- **Water and Sewer:** Addressing infrastructure upgrades, and rising wastewater volume nearing capacity will continue to be areas of focus. Recommendations include capital improvement planning, water quality enhancements, and expanding plant capacity.

## Financial Services Departments

- **Finance, Accounting, Assessors, Treasurer/Collector:** Integrated operations ensure fiscal stewardship, compliance, and efficient service delivery. Challenges include declining property values, manual processing loads, and administrative complexity. Opportunities include digital adoption, automation, and staff development.
- **Human Resources:** High recruitment activity, declining leave cases, and growing volunteer engagement have been experienced by the department. Challenges include workflow inefficiencies and retention concerns. Recommendations include centralizing benefits processing by shifting staff currently providing services in the Financial Services departments.
- **Information Technology:** Rising workloads, greater cybersecurity needs, and limited budgets are constant challenges for the department. Recommendations include increased investment, staff expansion, and proactive planning.

## Town Clerk Department

- **Town Clerk:** The department faces increased workload from population growth, expanded voting options, and rising licensing demands. Staffing constraints and manual processes are critical issues. Recommendations include increasing staff and automating processes.

## Discussion

The Bridgewater Organization has departments that vary in size, workload, staffing and services provided. The following sections are intended to provide the data and framework for the analysis, review, findings, and recommendations.

# Public Safety Departments

## Police

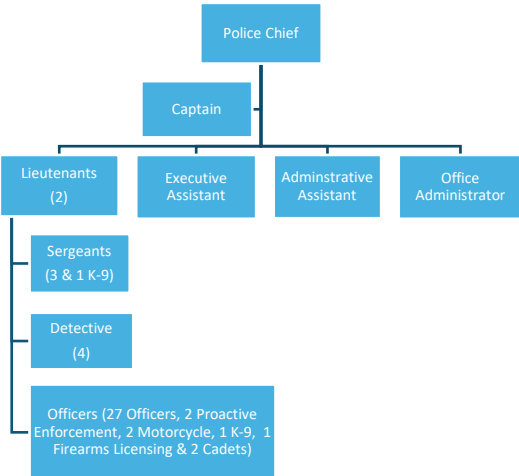
The Bridgewater Police Department has experienced a steady increase in demand for services over the past three years. Total call volume rose from 11,069 in 2022 to 12,950 in 2024, a 17% increase overall. The department’s staffing structure includes a range of specialized roles, but faces operational challenges due to insufficient personnel, particularly when supervisory personnel are not available.

### Key Insights, Observations and Challenges:

- Motor Vehicle Stops consistently accounted for the largest share of calls, rising sharply in 2024. Motor Vehicle Incidents: The high number of motor vehicle-related calls suggests a need for improved traffic management and road safety measures.
- Medical Emergencies and Suspicious Activity remain among the top reasons for calls.
- April and May are consistently high-call months.
- Suspicious Activity: The rise in suspicious activity calls may require enhanced community policing and surveillance measures.
- 911 call volume also increased, though the rate of growth slowed in 2024.
- Resource Allocation: The increasing call volume may strain existing resources, requiring additional personnel and equipment.
- Medical Emergency Response: The consistent demand for medical emergency services highlights the need for better coordination with healthcare providers and training for first responders.

Challenges include resource allocation, high motor vehicle incident rates, rising suspicious activity, and sustained demand for medical emergency response. The report recommends expanding staffing and equipment, improving traffic management, strengthening community engagement, and promoting advanced training and 911 text services.

## Police Department Organizational Chart



The Police Department provided call-log data for the years 2022, 2023 and 2024. Analysis of the logs provide a detailed picture of an active Department experiencing increasing demand for services.

Table: Total Call Volume Comparison

Total Call Volume Comparison (2022-2024)		
Year	Total Calls	Percentage Change from Previous Year
2022	11,069	-
2023	12,352	11.60%
2024	12,950	4.80%

Key Trends:

- 2023: The total call volume increased by 11.6% compared to 2022, indicating a significant rise in police activity.
- 2024: The total call volume continued to grow, but at a slower rate, with a 4.8% increase compared to 2023.
- Over the three years: the total call volume increased by 17% from 2022 to 2024.

Table: Key Statistics

Key Statistics from Bridgewater Police Department Call Data (2022-2024):			
	2022	2023	2024
Total Calls	11,069	12,352	12,950
Call Reason			
Motor Vehicle Stops	2,474 (22.4%)	3,667 (29.7%)	4,954 (38.3%)
Medical Emergencies	564 (5.1%)	620 (5.0%)	629 (4.9%)
Suspicious Activity	620 (5.6%)	627 (5.1%)	548 (4.2%)
Motor Vehicle Accidents	434 (3.9%)	479 (3.9%)	462 (3.6%)
Alarms (Burglar)	680 (6.1%)	565 (4.6%)	568 (4.4%)
1st Highest Month Calls	April: 1,059 (9.6%)	October: 1,234 (10.0%)	May: 1,419 (11.0%)
2nd Highest Month Calls	May: 1,046 (9.4%)	May: 1,116 (9.0%)	April: 1,359 (10.5%)
Year Over Year	2022 to 2023	2023 to 2024	Overall (2022 to 2024)
Total Calls	11.60%	4.80%	17.00%
Motor Vehicle Stops	48.20%	35.10%	100.20%
Medical Emergencies	9.90%	1.50%	11.50%
Suspicious Activity	1.10%	-12.60%	-11.60%
Motor Vehicle Accidents	10.40%	-3.50%	6.50%
Alarms (Burglar)	-16.90%	0.50%	-16.50%

911 Call Volume:

A portion of the call volume consists of 911 emergency calls. 911 call volume and call analysis for the years 2022, 2023, and 2024 indicates increasing call volume and associated level of activity. The data highlights trends in 911 call volumes, types of incidents.

Table: 911 Call Comparison

911 Call Volume Comparison Table 2022-2024				
PSAP	Population	2022	2023	2024
Bridgewater	29,167	6,809	7,207	7,069
Year over Year Change			398 (5.85%)	-138 (-1.91%)
Calls Per Capita		4.28	4.05	4.13
<b>Easton*</b>				
Population	25,568			
<b>Mansfield*</b>				
Population	24,077			
<b>Middleborough</b>				
Population	24,847	8,478	8,428	8,094
Year over Year Change			-50 (-0.59%)	-334 (-3.96%)
Calls Per Capita		3.44	3.46	3.6
<b>North Attleboro</b>				
Population	31,210	7,977	8,227	7,302
Year over Year Change			250 (3.13%)	-925 (-11.24%)
Calls Per Capita		3.66	3.55	3.99

Notes: Population figures from the Comm MA - 2024 Population Estimates Program, US Census Data and 2023 ACS (American Community Survey) where applicable.

\* Easton and Mansfield are part of the Southeastern Massachusetts Regional 911 District - NO INDIVIDUAL TOWN AVAILABLE

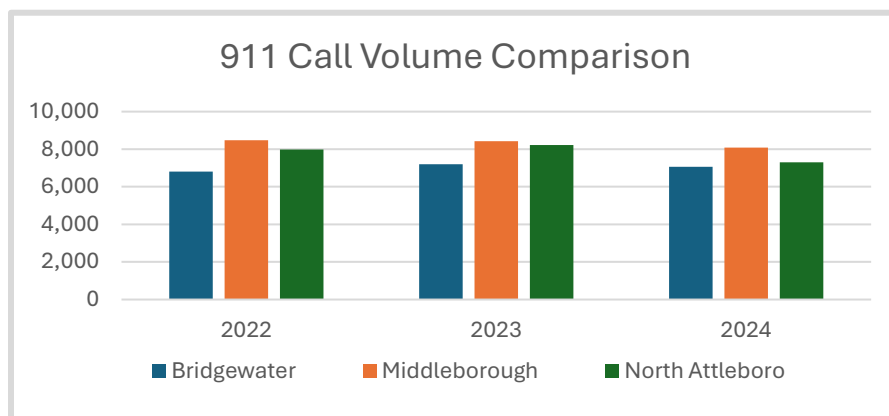


Table: Police Department Comparison

POLICE DEPARTMENT COMPARISON					
Titles	Bridgewater	Easton	Mansfield	Middleborough	North Attleborough
Chief	1	1	1	1	1
Deputy Chief		1	1	1	
Captain					1
Lieutenant	2	1	3	3	3
Sergeant	7	7	6	8	8
Detective - Sergeant		2			
Detective		2	3	4	
Detective SRO			2		
Detective Court Prosecutor			1		
Crime Analyst			0.2		
Patrol Officers	34	22	26	30	40
School Resource Officer		1			
Animal Control		1	1		
Dispatch				4	13
Office Administrator	1			1	
Confidential Executive Assistant	1	1			1
Administrative Assistant	1	1	1	1	2
Finance Administrator			1		
Dept Support Staff			4.3		
Clinician			1		
Supervisor Support			1		
Support Staff Coordinator			1		
Mechanic				1	
Custodian					1
<b>Department Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>53.5</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>70</b>

Departmental Recommendations:

1. Expand Resources: Increase staffing and equipment to handle the growing call volume effectively.
2. Traffic Management: Implement traffic safety campaigns and infrastructure improvements to reduce motor vehicle-related incidents.

3. Community Engagement: Strengthen community policing initiatives to address suspicious activity and improve public safety.
4. Medical Response Training: Continue providing advanced training for first responders to handle medical emergencies more efficiently.
5. Re-organize Dispatch Operations: Examine moving to a unified dispatch system (Police-Fire) or joining a regional center to return uniformed trained officers to shift assignments.
6. Promote 911 Text Services: Increase public awareness about the availability and benefits of 911 text services to improve accessibility for individuals with disabilities or in situations where voice calls are not feasible.

## Fire

The Bridgewater Fire Department is facing critical operational challenges driven by rising emergency call volumes, staffing constraints, and an imminent headquarters relocation. Emergency calls increased from 4,628 in 2021 to 5,077 in 2024, with dual-call incidents becoming more frequent.

Recommendations focus on increasing staffing, conducting detailed cost analyses, addressing safety guidelines, mitigating response delays, staff coverage, and reducing reliance on mutual aid.

Overall, both public safety departments are experiencing rising demand and operational strain, with staffing and resource allocation emerging as critical issues. Proactive investment in personnel, equipment, and strategic planning is strongly recommended to ensure continuity, safety, and effectiveness of public services.

A review of the current emergency dispatch model used by both departments should be undertaken. The operations could be combined into a single civilian dispatch operation. Many communities have migrated to this model. The move would allow for current fully trained fire and police personnel to return to shift responsibilities effectively closing the staffing gap of line employees in each department. It is recommended Bridgewater evaluate joining a regional dispatch center for improved operations, training, capital savings, and maintained service quality.

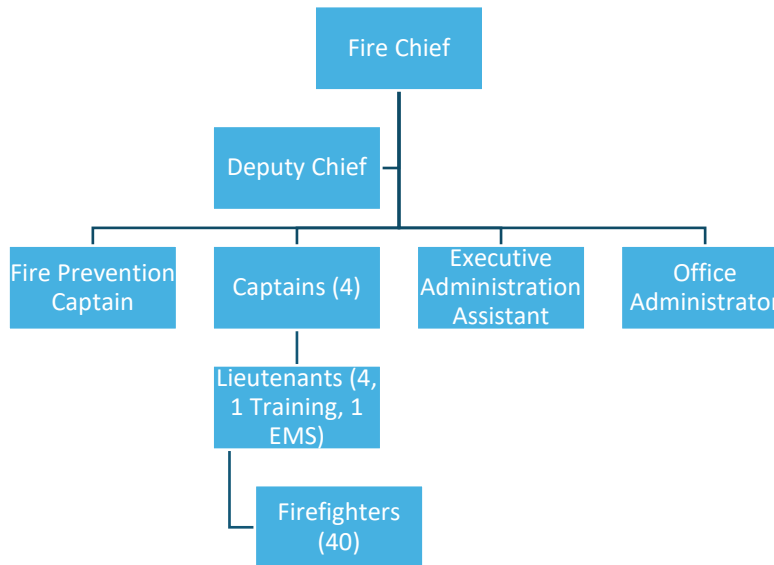
Critical operational challenges are facing the Bridgewater Fire Department due to rising call volumes, staffing constraints, and an upcoming headquarters relocation.

### Key Insights, Observations and Challenges:

- Staffing and Structure: The department operates with four duty groups, each typically staffed with 12 firefighter/paramedics, but often runs with only ten due to planned and earned absences. Recent budget adjustments have reduced one group to eleven. Each shift has a captain, lieutenant, firefighter/paramedics, plus day staff for administration and training.
- Station Configuration: The Town has two stations (Center and East Side). The East Side Station has a two-person engine crew which does not follow industry-recommended guidelines on staffing. (NIST/NFPA).
- Operational Strain: Increased call volume and dual-call incidents often leave stations unstaffed, forcing reliance on mutual aid and risking delayed emergency response.

- Service Area: The department covers 29 square miles and serves about 29,000 residents, plus the populations of Bridgewater State University and the MCI-Bridgewater prison complex.
- Call Volume: Emergency calls have increased annually.
- Dual-call Incidents: (two simultaneous emergencies) are rising sharply, leading to reliance on mutual aid and periods when stations are unstaffed. The department experienced over 1,100 dual call incidents in 2025.
- Reliance on Mutual Aid: Frequent dual-call incidents and unstaffed stations force dependence on outside help, which may not be immediately available.

## Fire Department Organizational Chart



Tables: Key Statistics

Year-to-Year Call Volume Comparison			
Year	Calls	Change from Previous Year	% Change from Previous Year
2021	4,628	—	—
2022	4,713	85	1.84%
2023	4,877	164	3.48%
2024	5,077	200	4.10%

Station	Coverage Area	Engine Crew	Ambulance Crew	Key Risks/Notes
Center Station	2/3 of town	3	2	HQ relocating soon; response times to east rising
East Side	1/3 (soon 1/2)	2	2 (cross manning)	Two-person engine below safety standards

Staffing Level	Duty Groups	Min Personnel Per Group	Actual	Chief Requested Increase
Standard	4	12	10-11	11 per group

Trend Analysis:

- Rising Call Volume: Emergency calls have steadily increased from 4,628 in 2021 to 5,077 in 2024. Dual-call incidents (two emergencies at once) have also steadily increased.
- Staffing Decline: While the department is structured for 12 firefighters/paramedics per duty group, budget cuts and time off have reduced actual staffing to 10-11 per group.
- Coverage and Response Time: The upcoming headquarters relocation will increase response times to the east side, while the East Side Station’s coverage area and call volume will grow substantially.

Table: Department Comparison

FIRE DEPARTMENT COMPARISON					
Titles	Bridgewater	Easton	Mansfield	Middleborough	North Attleborough
Chief	1	1	1	1	1
Deputy Chief	1	1	1		1
Assistant Fire Chief					1
FF Captain	5	6	4.2	5	4
EMS Captain					1
Fire Prevention Captain					1
EMS Trainer LTE	1				
FF Lieutenant	5	4	4.2	5	8
FF Firefighter	39	37.8	28	31	43
Fire Alarm Superintendent					1
Dispatch				4	
Office Administrator	0.6	0.6	1	1	
Executive Assistant	1	1			1
Mechanic		1			
<b>Department Total</b>	<b>53.6</b>	<b>52.4</b>	<b>39.4</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>62</b>

Departmental Recommendations:

1. Increase Staffing: Add four additional firefighter/paramedics (one per duty group) to raise minimum shift staffing from 10 to 11 per group. (note: Civilian Dispatch discussion)
2. Budget Planning: Conduct a detailed cost analysis, including salary, benefits, training, equipment, and compare these costs to the financial impact of preventable tragedies and overtime. Review the need to have all personnel meet paramedic standards. This may not be necessary and adds a

substantial annual cost. By limiting the number of paramedic stipends savings can be generated to fund additional staffing.

3. Mitigate Response Delays: Consider operational adjustments or additional resources for the east side to offset increased response times after headquarters relocation.
4. Reduce Reliance on Mutual Aid: Improved staffing will help keep stations staffed and reduce dependence on outside help.

#### Potential Consequences of inadequate staffing levels per shift:

1. Delayed Emergency Response
  - Reduced staffing and the upcoming headquarters relocation will increase response times, especially to the east side of town.
2. Negative Impact on Fireground Operations and EMS Service
  - Engine crews made up of only two people may not be able to carry out operations without delay, additional staff, or mutual aid. When a paramedic is pulled from the engine to assist EMS, the engine may need to be out of service.
3. Increased Reliance on Mutual Aid
  - Rising call volumes and frequent dual-call incidents mean that stations are often unstaffed, forcing reliance on outside help, which may not be immediately available.
4. Inability to meet recommended standards on staffing.
  - The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) and National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), promulgate recommended guidelines addressing number of staff assigned. While the guidelines are not binding, they are often recommended as best practices.

## Human and Community Services Departments

### Council on Aging

The Council on Aging is under significant strain due to a growing elderly population and rising demand for health, wellness, transportation, and social services. The department operates with limited staff and relies heavily on grant funding, which threatens sustainability. Critical challenges include insufficient staffing, dependence on grants, transportation bottlenecks (only one handicap-accessible van), rising behavioral health needs with only one social worker, facility constraints, and reliance on volunteers for kitchen operations. Recommendations focus on expanding transportation resources, hiring additional staff (nutrition/facilities coordinator, social worker, part-time nurse), securing sustainable funding, and enhancing behavioral health and wellness services.

#### Key Insights, Observations and Challenges:

- Central Community Role: The Senior Center is not only a resource for older adults but also serves as Bridgewater's primary walk-in human services office, supporting residents of all ages with crisis intervention, food insecurity, and case management.

- **Staffing Vulnerabilities:** Heavy dependence on grant funding for essential positions creates operational risk and limits innovation. Sustainable, town-funded staffing is needed for stability and growth.
- **High Participation:** The Center’s programs are well-utilized, with thousands of visits for health, wellness, meals, and recreation, indicating strong community engagement.
- **Staffing and Operational Strain:** The Center operates with a small team of six responsible for a broad and complex set of services. Staff are stretched thin, managing high program volumes, frequent room reconfigurations, and increasing case management needs. This leads to burnout, inefficiency, and limits the department’s ability to meet growing demand.
- **Grant Funding:** Some key positions are funded entirely or partly by the State Formula Grant, not the municipal General Fund. The dependence creates long-term sustainability challenges, operational vulnerability, and restricts the COA’s ability to innovate or expand services and could force a reduction in essential programs and functions would be at risk.
- **Transportation Limitations:** Transportation is the highest area of complaints. The Center has one handicap-accessible van and minimal part-time driver availability, forcing difficult choices about who can be transported. Service interruptions occur if the sole driver is unavailable, creating hardship for residents who rely on transportation for healthcare, food, and social engagement.
- **Behavioral Health Needs:** Mental health and behavioral challenges are increasing across the community, but only one social worker is available to manage a complex, town-wide caseload. This is not sustainable and results in service gaps, especially when that staff member is unavailable.
- **Facility Constraints:** The physical space is limited, requiring frequent reconfiguration and placing additional strain on staff. The Center’s multi-purpose rooms must be manually converted multiple times a day to accommodate concurrent programs, which is labor-intensive and inefficient.
- **Dependence on Volunteers for Key Operations:** Since kitchen operations and certain facility management duties depend completely on volunteers, it is difficult to maintain consistency, expand services, or scale up meal programs that support people facing food insecurity.

## Council on Aging Organizational Chart

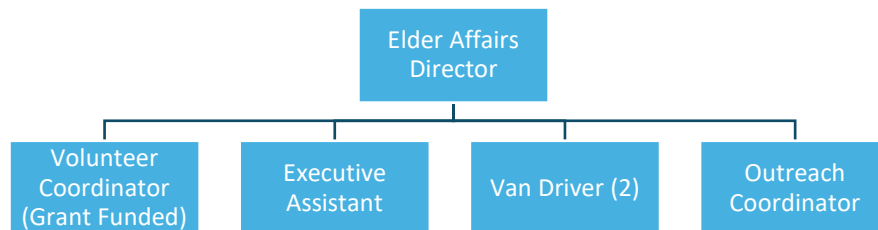


Table: Key Statistics

Metric	Value	Notes/Trend
Facility Age	33 years	Established community resource
Facility Size	5,000 sq. ft.	Limited physical footprint
Total Staff Positions	7	Several part-time, grant-funded
% of Town Budget	0.32%	
Unduplicated Individuals Served	1,400	Includes non-residents
Participants from Outside Bridgewater	362	Regional impact
Health & Wellness Visits (duplicated)	3,600	High engagement
Congregate Meals Served (duplicated)	4,000	Nutrition support
Social/Recreational Visits (duplicated)	3,100	Community engagement
Handicap-Accessible Vans	1	Insufficient for current/future need
Cleaning Contractor Coverage	2 days/week	Staff fill gaps
Volunteers for Kitchen Operations	100%	No paid staff for kitchen
Population Age 60+	18%	Expected to rise to 20% age 65+ by 2030

Key Trends:

- **Rising Demand:** The proportion of older adults in Bridgewater is increasing, with projections that 1 in 5 residents will be age 65 or older by 2030 (UMASS-Donahue Institute). This demographic shift is driving higher demand for health, wellness, transportation, and social services.
- **Service Expansion:** The Center’s role has broadened beyond elder services to function as a town-wide human services resource, serving individuals and families of all ages.
- **Operational Strain:** Staff are stretched thin, managing high program volumes, frequent room reconfigurations, and increasing case management needs. The reliance on grant funding for key positions limits flexibility and long-term planning.
- **Transportation Bottleneck:** Transportation is the most significant area of dissatisfaction, with limited van capacity and part-time driver availability resulting in denied rides and service interruptions.
- **Behavioral Health Needs:** Mental health and behavioral challenges are rising, with only one social worker currently available to manage a complex, town-wide caseload.

Table: Summary of Challenges

Challenge	Description	Impact
Insufficient Staffing	Small team, broad responsibilities, high burnout	Limits service delivery, increases strain
Grant Funding Dependence	Key positions funded by grants, not town budget	Sustainability risk, limits innovation

Challenge	Description	Impact
Transportation Limitations	Only one van, few drivers, frequent service interruptions	Residents denied essential rides
Behavioral Health Gaps	Only one social worker for rising mental health needs	Service gaps, delayed support
Facility Constraints	Limited space, frequent manual room reconfiguration	Staff fatigue, operational inefficiency

Department Recommendations:

1. Increase Administrative Staff: Hire an Assistant Director to help coordinate the growing departmental activities. By having an Assistant Director, the Director can concentrate more on strategic planning, grant writing, and developing programs. Additionally, an Assistant Director would be available during periods the Director is not available.
2. Expand Transportation Resources: Add full-time and part-time drivers and acquire an additional handicap-accessible van to increase capacity and reliability.
3. Create Nutrition and Facilities Coordinator Role: Hire a dedicated staff member to manage kitchen operations, facility setup, and cleanliness, reducing reliance on volunteers and improving program delivery.
4. Increase Behavioral Health Support: Add at least one more full-time Behavioral Health Social Worker to address rising mental health needs and ensure consistent support.
5. Hire Part-Time Nurse: Enhance wellness services and participant safety by providing health screenings, medication education, and chronic disease management.
6. Secure Sustainable Funding: Transition key positions from grant-funded to town-funded to ensure long-term stability and enable program innovation.

Summary:

The Bridgewater Senior Center is a cornerstone of community health and human services, facing significant challenges due to rising demand, limited staffing, and reliance on unstable funding sources. Strategic investments in staffing, transportation, behavioral health, and facility management are essential to sustain and expand services for Bridgewater’s aging and diverse population.

## Veterans

The Veterans' Service Officer (VSO), a state mandated position, assists veterans in applying for federal and state benefits, including MA General Law Chapter 115 benefits, which provide financial and medical assistance. The VSO also offers support for military funerals, resources for educational benefits, employment benefits, and housing services. The VSO helps veterans file applications for service-connected disability compensation and federal pensions for non-service-connected medical issues. Additionally, the VSO provides guidance to veterans seeking access to the VA Healthcare System.

Bridgewater has a higher veteran population density than the state average, but the percentage of veterans receiving benefits and the average benefit amount are lower than in neighboring communities.

Key Insights, Observations and Challenges:

- **Veteran Population Density:** Bridgewater has a higher concentration of veterans compared to the state average.
- **Awareness of State Benefits:** Very few veterans are receiving Chapter 115 state benefits, indicating a lack of awareness.
- **Historical Frustration:** Previous negative experiences with VSO services have led to challenges in building trust and encouraging engagement.
- **Engagement and Support:** The VSO’s proactive approach has led to increased engagement, more events, and higher benefit enablement.
- **Benefit Disparity:** Bridgewater veterans receive fewer and lower benefits compared to those in neighboring towns.
- **Underserved Community:** Historical lack of advocacy has left many veterans frustrated and underserved.
- **Low Benefit Participation:** Only 22% of Bridgewater veterans receive VA monetary benefits, compared to 32.1% in neighboring communities.
- **Lower Average Benefit:** The average monthly benefit is lower than in surrounding towns.

Below are the statistics on the activities of the Bridgewater Veterans’ Services Office (VSO) from May 2024 through December 2025. It highlights the veteran population in Bridgewater, engagement levels, benefits enabled, events coordinated, and comparisons with surrounding communities. The charts also illustrate historical challenges and areas needing improvement in veteran support and benefit awareness.

Table: Key Statistics

Metric	Value/Detail	Source/Period
% of veterans in Bridgewater	6.8% (1,625 veterans)	American Community Survey Federal Census
% of population served (incl. families)	Over 10% (3,000+ individuals)	Bridgewater VSO
Veteran density vs. state avg.	51% higher (State avg: 4.5%)	American Community Survey State Data
Veterans engaged (May 2024 Dec 2025)	313 veterans, 43 surviving spouses	Bridgewater VSO
Benefits enabled (annual)	\$751,874	Bridgewater VSO
Cases logged (closed/open)	451 (341 closed, 110 open)	Bridgewater VSO
VA monetary benefit recipients (Bridgewater)	22%	MA Exec. Office of Veterans Services
Avg. monthly VA benefit (Bridgewater)	\$430.77	MA Exec. Office of Veterans Services
VA benefit recipients (surrounding communities)	32.1% (45% higher than Bridgewater)	MA Exec. Office of Veterans Services

Metric	Value/Detail	Source/Period
Avg. monthly VA benefit (surrounding communities)	\$679.42 (58% higher than Bridgewater)	MA Exec. Office of Veterans Services
Ch115 State benefit recipients (Bridgewater)	6	Bridgewater VSO
Major events (2024 2025)	6 coffee hours, 2 pizza socials, 1 holiday celebration	Bridgewater VSO
Funds raised for holiday event	\$8,000+	Bridgewater VSO
Attendees at holiday event	270+ veterans and families	Bridgewater VSO

Annual Town Metric			
Fiscal Year	Active Ch 115 Cases	New Annuities	Property Tax Exemptions
2024	12	12	149
2023	13	14	132
2022	0	9	125

2024 Comparison			
Municipality	Active Chapter 115 Cases	New Annuities	Property Tax Exemptions
Bridgewater	12	12	149
Easton	35	11	121
Mansfield	11	10	130
Middleborough	40	27	216
North Attleborough	32	10	204

Source: MA Office of Veteran Advocate

Trend Analysis:

- **Increasing Engagement:** The Bridgewater VSO has significantly increased engagement with veterans and their families, as evidenced by the number of events and cases managed.
- **Property Tax Exemptions:** This need-based exemption increase demonstrates engagement is effective and beneficial to the Veterans population.
- **Benefits Enabled:** There is a notable increase in the total benefits enabled for veterans, but Bridgewater lags behind neighboring communities in both the percentage of veterans receiving benefits and the average benefit amount.
- **Event Participation:** Community events have grown in size and impact, with the holiday celebration marking a milestone in collaboration and attendance.
- **Historical Underservice:** The prior VSO’s part-time role and lack of advocacy led to widespread dissatisfaction and underutilization of available benefits.
- **Awareness Gap:** A significant number of eligible veterans and their spouses are not informed about benefits such as Chapter 115, which leads to reduced participation rates.

## Departmental Recommendations:

1. Increase Outreach and Education:
  - Launch targeted campaigns to inform veterans and their families about available benefits, especially Chapter 115.
  - Use events, local media, and partnerships with nonprofits to spread awareness.
2. Benefit Application Assistance:
  - Provide hands-on support for benefit applications to help veterans maximize their entitlements.
  - Offer workshops and one-on-one sessions to guide veterans through the process.
3. Strengthening Community Partnerships:
  - Continue collaborating with local organizations to expand event reach and resource sharing.
  - Engage local businesses and nonprofits to sponsor and promote veteran initiatives.
4. Monitor and Evaluate Progress:
  - Track engagement, benefit uptake, and satisfaction regularly.
  - Use feedback to refine outreach strategies and improve service delivery.
5. Address Historical Trust Issues:
  - Build trust through transparency, consistent communication, and visible advocacy.
  - Highlight improvements and success stories to demonstrate positive change.
6. Staffing:
  - Increase department staffing to include a dedicated administrative staff member to assist the VSO with intake services and benefit monitoring.
  - Consider moving to a regional Veterans Services model to provide more consistent services and to share costs.

## Public Library

The Bridgewater Public Library has demonstrated consistent growth, innovation, and community engagement over the past three years. Each year saw new programs, expanded collections, facility improvements, and strong partnerships, all supported by a dedicated team and stable financial management. Hundreds of programs and events for all ages were held annually, attended by thousands of residents. The library's physical and digital collections grew each year, with increased borrowing and access to a vast regional catalog through the SAILS network. Renovations improved access to local history and provided new venues for exhibits. The library operated with a small but dedicated team, maintaining high service standards and adapting to changing community needs. Financial stewardship and strategic investments in digital platforms and facility upgrades ensured continued relevance and accessibility for all patrons.

The Bridgewater Public Library has demonstrated consistent growth, innovation, and community engagement over the past three years. Each year saw new programs, expanded collections, facility improvements, and strong partnerships, all supported by a dedicated team and stable financial management.

### Key Insights, Observations and Challenges:

- **Program and Community Engagement:** The library's programming reached thousands each year, with a focus on inclusivity and lifelong learning. Events ranged from children's story times to adult lectures and art classes, fostering a vibrant community hub. Partnerships with educational and family organizations ensured that programming met diverse needs, including literacy and STEM education.
- **Staff and Organizational Excellence:** The library operated with a small but dedicated team, maintaining high service standards and adapting to changing community needs. Staff were regularly recognized for their commitment to fostering an open, inviting, and educational environment. Leadership and support from the Board of Library Trustees were also highlighted as key to the library's ongoing success.
- **Collection and Resource Expansion:** The library's collection grew steadily, both in physical items and digital resources. Membership in the SAILS network provides Bridgewater residents with access to an extensive collection of materials and digital resources from numerous libraries. The "Library of Things" collection and technology services, such as 3D printing and digitization, were heavily utilized.
- **Facility Renovations and Historical Preservation:** Renovations funded by grants and community support improved public access to local history and preserved important artifacts. The opening of the museum and exhibit space allowed for successful long-term exhibits, such as the Civil War veterans display, and highlighted lesser-known stories from Bridgewater's past.
- **Financial Stewardship:** The library managed its resources efficiently, maintaining stable budgets while expanding services and collections. Strategic investments in digital platforms and facility upgrades ensured continued relevance and accessibility for all patrons.
- **Limited Staffing and Capacity:** The library operates with a small team (10 employees), which is fewer than comparable towns. Staff hours are at the minimum, and the library has the lowest full-time equivalent (FTE) among peer communities. This limits service capacity and may contribute to lower circulation numbers.
- **Lower Circulation Compared to Peers:** Bridgewater's total circulation is the lowest among the towns listed, suggesting lower usage or borrowing activity. While staff productivity (circulation per FTE) is high, overall circulation remains below average and median for similar communities.
- **Limited Hours:** The minimum total staff hours restrict the library's ability to expand programming, serve more patrons, and increase circulation.

## Public Library Organizational Chart

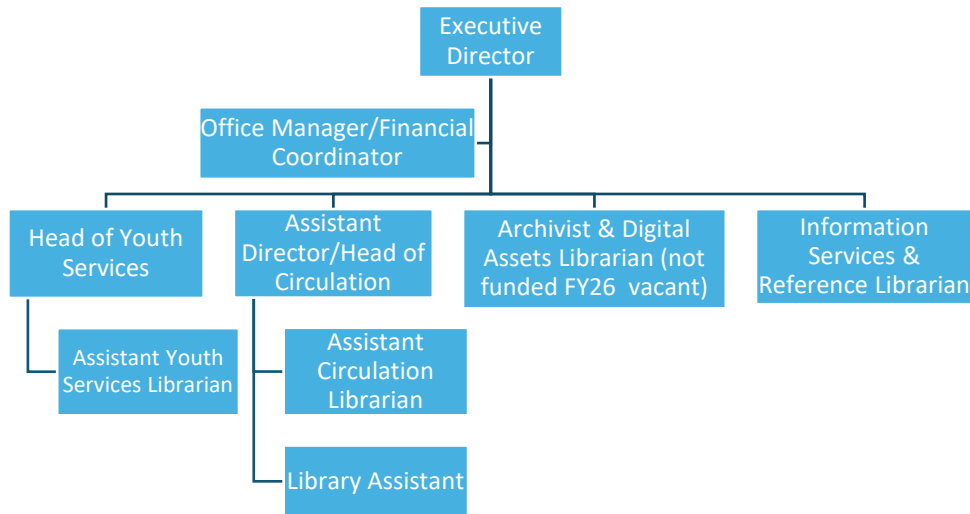


Table: Key Statistics

Year	Employees	Budget	Unique Items	Digital Content	SAILS Network Libraries	Total SAILS Items
2022	10	\$727,799	129,631	1M+	70	3.5M+
2023	10	\$748,597	128,723	1M+	74	3.6M+
2024	10	\$748,597	134,218	1M+	74	3.6M+

Table: Comparative Report

	Municipal Population	Total Circulation	Hr/Week - Director	Total Staff Hr/Week	# of Staff working 35+ hr/week	# of staff working < 35 hr/week	Full-time & Part-time Staff	Full Time Equivalency	Circ per FTE
Bridgewater - Bridgewater Public Library	28,780	109,013	40	311.5	7	3	10	8.9	12,249
Easton - Ames Free Library of Easton, Inc.	25,240	147,426	35	529.9	12	13	25	15.14	9,738
Mansfield - Mansfield Public Library	23,816	196,110	36	379	5	12	17	10.83	18,110
Middleborough Public Library	24,376	145,794	40	419.7	5	9	14	11.99	12,158

	Municipal Population	Total Circulation	Hr/Week - Director	Total Staff Hr/Week	# of Staff working 35+ hr/week	# of staff working < 35 hr/week	Full-time & Part-time Staff	Full Time Equivalency	Circ per FTE
North Attleborough - Richards Memorial Library	30,930	109,800	38	410	7	10	17	11.71	9,373
Total	133,142	708,143	189	2050	36	47	83	59	61,628
Average	26,628	141,629	38	410	7	9	17	12	12,326
Min	23,816	109,013	35	312	5	3	10	9	9,373
Max	30,930	196,110	40	530	12	13	25	15	18,110
Median	25,240	145,794	38	410	7	10	17	12	12,158

Source: Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners

#### Comparative Report Insights:

- Total Circulation: Bridgewater’s circulation is the lowest among the towns listed, well above average and median. This suggests lower usage or borrowing activity compared to peers.
- Director Hours: Bridgewater’s director works the maximum hours (40/week), showing strong leadership presence.
- Total Staff Hours: Bridgewater is at the minimum for total staff hours, which may limit service capacity.
- Staffing: Bridgewater has fewer staff (both full-time and part-time) than average, with the lowest FTE among the towns.
- Efficiency: Bridgewater’s staff is efficient, as circulation per FTE is comparable to other towns, even with fewer staff and hours.
- Capacity: The low total staff hours and FTE suggest limited capacity, which may contribute to lower circulation numbers.

#### Notable Contrasts:

- Mansfield Public Library: has the highest circulation (196,110) and highest circulation per FTE (18,110), with more staff and hours.
- Easton and Middleborough: have higher staff counts and hours, and their circulation is closer to the average.
- North Attleborough: has the lowest circulation per FTE (9,373), despite a high population.

### Opportunities for Improvement:

1. **Expand Staffing and Hours:** Increasing staff numbers and expanding hours would enhance service capacity, allowing the library to serve more patrons and improve circulation. This would also reduce strain on the current team and support more robust programming.
2. **Enhance Programming and Community Engagement:** The library already offers hundreds of programs and events annually, but expanding these further, especially in partnership with local organizations, could boost engagement and usage. Continued innovation in programming (e.g., STEM, literacy, cultural events) is a proven strength.
3. **Invest in Facility Improvements:** Recent renovations (Local History Room, museum/exhibit space) have improved access and engagement. Further investments in facilities could support new programs, collections, and community events.
4. **Grow Collections and Digital Resources:** The library's collection and digital content have expanded each year. Continued investment in both physical and digital resources, as well as technology services (e.g., 3D printing, digitization), will keep the library relevant and accessible.

Table: Summary

Challenge	Opportunity for Improvement
Limited staffing and hours	Expand staff and hours
Lower circulation vs. peers	Enhance programming & engagement
Capacity constraints	Invest in facility improvements
Small team, high productivity	Grow collections & digital resources
Financial/resource limitations	Strengthen financial stewardship

### Summary:

The Bridgewater Public Library is a vibrant community hub with strong programming, partnerships, and innovation. Its main challenges are limited staffing, hours, and lower circulation compared to peers. Addressing these through strategic investments in staff, hours, programming, facilities, and collections will unlock greater opportunities for growth and community impact.

## Parks and Recreation

The Parks and Recreation Department functions as a facility and field maintenance operation, with no active programming for residents, and a notable deviation from standard practice in similar communities. The department maintains parks and complexes, with baseball and softball fields dominating the inventory, but amenities are unevenly distributed. Challenges include the lack of community programming, uneven amenities, maintenance needs for non-irrigated fields, and underutilized parks. Recommendations emphasize establishing programming for residents (potentially funded through user fees), upgrading non-irrigated fields, enhancing amenities in smaller parks, investing in trail development, and increasing community engagement through events and improved

facilities. Although the department fulfills its current responsibilities effectively, it does not offer programming typically found in similar departments within other communities. The lack of a robust programming function is a serious deviation from what is common in most communities and should be examined.

Key Insights, Observations and Challenges:

- Legion Field Complex: is the most developed facility, with multiple fields, buildings, and amenities, making it the central hub for sports and recreation.
- Crescent Softball Field Complex: is well-equipped for softball events, with lighted fields and bleachers for spectators.
- Scotland Field Complex: has limited facilities compared to Legion and Crescent, with fewer fields and amenities.
- Marathon Park: and parks with trails focus on passive recreation, with minimal infrastructure.
- Uneven Distribution of Amenities: Certain parks, such as Scotland Field Complex and Marathon Park, offer limited facilities, which can affect how often they are used.
- Maintenance Needs: Parks with trails require ongoing maintenance and safety measures, which could be resource intensive.
- Non-Irrigated Fields: The six non-irrigated baseball fields at Legion Field Complex may face challenges in maintaining quality during dry seasons.
- Lack of programming: It is highly unusual that a community the size of Bridgewater does not have an actively sponsored series of programs for residents. This should be rigorously examined for change.

Table: Key Statistics

Park/Complex	Fields	Playgrounds	Basketball Courts	Buildings	Fencing (ft)	Backstops
Legion Field Complex	3 irrigated & lighted baseball, 6 non-irrigated & unlit baseball, 1 irrigated & lighted football	1	1 lighted	Gazebo, Snack Shack, Press Box	5,500	9
Scotland Field Complex	1 lighted softball, 1 baseball	0	1	Maintenance /Storage	1,100	2
Crescent Softball Field Complex	4 irrigated & lighted softball	1	0	Snack Shack	4,750	4
Marathon Park	0	1	0	Pavilion Area	853	0
Parks with Trails	0	0	0	None	N/A	N/A

### Trend Analysis:

- **Field Distribution:** Baseball and softball fields dominate the inventory, with a total of 15 fields across all complexes. Most fields are irrigated and lit, allowing for evening and extended play.
- **Playgrounds:** Playgrounds are present in three parks, suggesting a focus on family-friendly recreational spaces.
- **Buildings:** Legion Field Complex and Crescent Softball Field Complex have the most buildings, supporting recreational activities and events.

### Departmental Recommendations:

1. **Explore how to offer programs for the members of the community:** The Department's staff should be expanded to include a Program Director responsible for creating a vibrant series recreational opportunities for residents. This position can be funded through a fee system which is common in many communities thus not adding to tax burden.
2. **Upgrade Non-Irrigated Fields:** Converting non-irrigated fields to irrigated ones could improve field quality and usability.
3. **Enhance Smaller Parks:** Adding more amenities to Scotland Field Complex and Marathon Park could increase their appeal and usage.
4. **Trail Development:** Investing in trail maintenance and safety could attract more visitors to parks with trails.
5. **Community Engagement:** Organizing events at less-utilized parks could increase community involvement and maximize the use of all facilities.

## Regulatory Departments

The Health Department, Inspectional Services, and Community and Economic Development Department each play vital roles in safeguarding and advancing the well-being of Bridgewater's residents.

The Health Department is committed to public health through proactive inspections, operational improvements, and community service, ensuring food safety, housing standards, and efficient permit processing.

Inspectional Services, led by the Building Department, focuses on building safety, permitting, and code enforcement, overseeing construction and development activities to maintain compliance and support growth.

The Community and Economic Development Department collaborate with the Planning Board to manage sustainable growth, update zoning, and engage the public, balancing development with environmental stewardship and community outreach. Together, these departments form the backbone of Bridgewater's regulatory, safety, and development infrastructure, fostering a healthy, safe, and thriving community.

## Health

The Health Department has demonstrated a strong commitment to public health and improvement in operational areas. Key activities include a significant increase in restaurant inspections, steady or growing numbers of swimming pool and mobile truck inspections, and ongoing management of housing complaints. The department benefited from a state grant that expanded inspection capacity, and the adoption of the Permit Eyes system has streamlined permit applications and payments. Personnel changes and reorganization of filing systems have further improved efficiency. The Septic Betterment Loan Program continues to provide financial assistance to residents. The department's proactive approach is evident in its increased inspection and permit activity, customer service focus, and adoption of new systems. Continued grant funding and operational improvements position the department well to address ongoing public health challenges.

The Health Department has continued its commitment to public health and community service over the past three years.

### Key Insights, Observations and Challenges:

- **Growth in Inspections and Services:** Restaurant inspections increased significantly, from 75 in 2023 to 98 in 2024, reflecting a stronger focus on food safety. Swimming pool and mobile truck inspections remained steady or grew slightly, supporting ongoing public health monitoring. Housing complaint inspections were consistently described as “multiple” each year, indicating persistent community concerns.
- **Permit Activity:** There was a notable increase in various permits issued in 2024, including septic, well, trench, and percolation (perc) tests, reflecting expanded departmental activity.
- **Septic Betterment Loan Program:** The department processed substantial loans to help homeowners with failed septic systems, with loan amounts rising from \$100,030.80 in 2023 to \$107,529.75 in 2024.
- **State Grant Impact:** A state grant awarded in 2022 enabled the department to expand inspection capacity, especially for food and housing complaints. This grant was renewed for two more years, providing sustained support.
- **Personnel Changes:** In 2024, the department experienced a key personnel transition: the retirement of a full-time office administrator, replaced by a part-time Administrative Assistant).
- **Operational Improvements:** The adoption of the Permit Eyes system in late 2024 streamlined permit applications and payments, improving efficiency and customer service. Filing systems were reorganized, further enhancing operational effectiveness.
- **Personnel Changes and Operational Vulnerability:** In 2024, the retirement of a full-time office administrator and hiring of a part-time assistant created operational challenges. Personnel changes can disrupt continuity and efficiency, especially in a small department.
- **Housing Complaint Inspections:** The department consistently handled multiple housing complaint inspections each year, reflecting persistent community concerns about housing quality.
- **Reliance on Grant Funding:** The department's increased inspection capacity is largely due to a state grant, which has been renewed for two more years. This reliance on external funding creates uncertainty for long-term planning and operational stability.

- Operational Improvements Needed: The adoption of new systems (like Permit Eyes for permit applications and payments) and reorganizing filing systems improved efficiency, but ongoing operational improvements are necessary to keep pace with growing demands.

## Health Department Organizational Chart

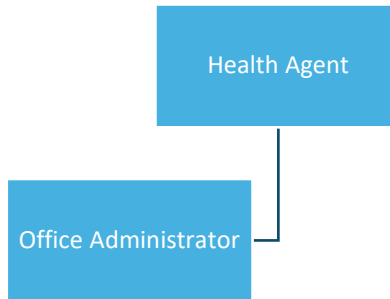


Table: Health Department Activities (2022-2024)

Activity Type	2022*	2023	2024
Restaurant Inspections	Not specified	75	98
Swimming Pool Inspections	Not specified	5	5
Mobile Truck Inspections	Not specified	12	14
Housing Complaint Inspections	Multiple	Multiple	Multiple
Septic Permits Issued	Not specified	62	54
Septic Inspections	Not specified	Not specified	Over 100
Well Permits Issued	Not specified	Not specified	6
Trench Permits Issued	Not specified	Not specified	14
Perc Tests Issued	Not specified	Not specified	15 (over 60 incl. paper)
Septic Betterment Loans	Not specified	\$100,030.80	\$107,529.75
Permit Eyes Payments	Not specified	Not specified	\$36,055.00

\*Source Bridgewater BOH: 2022 data is limited; the main highlight is the awarding of a state grant for inspections.

Table: Summary

Challenge	Opportunity for Improvement
Inspection capacity/resource	Sustain and expand grant funding
Personnel changes	Invest in personnel and training
Housing complaint inspections	Monitor/respond to housing concerns
Reliance on grant funding	Secure sustainable funding
Operational improvements needed	Enhance operational systems

## Departmental Recommendations:

1. **Sustain and Expand Grant Funding:** Continue pursuing and renewing grant funding to support expanded inspection capacity, especially for food and housing complaints. This will help maintain high standards and address community needs.
2. **Invest in Personnel and Training:** Address operational vulnerabilities by hiring and training staff to ensure continuity and efficiency. Consider transitioning part-time roles to full-time or cross-training staff for greater flexibility.
3. **Enhance Operational Systems:** Further streamline permit processing and payments through technological adoption (e.g., Permit Eyes) and continue reorganizing filing systems for improved efficiency and customer service.
4. **Expand Community Outreach:** Increase public awareness and education about health inspections, housing complaints, and available services to foster community engagement and compliance.
5. **Monitor and Respond to Housing Concerns:** Develop targeted strategies to address recurring housing complaints, possibly through proactive inspections, partnerships with other departments, and community education.

The Health Department is growing in capacity and effectiveness, driven by increased grant funding, operational improvements, and a commitment to community service. The main challenges are resource constraints, personnel changes, reliance on grants, and persistent housing complaints. Addressing these through sustained funding, staff investment, operational enhancements, and community outreach will help the department continue to safeguard public health and meet evolving community needs.

## Inspectional Services

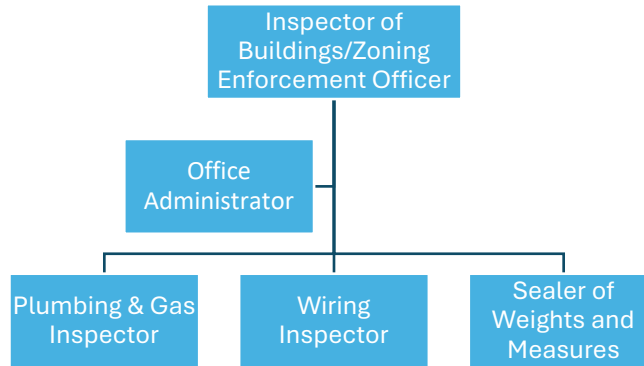
Inspectional Services, led by the Building Department, is responsible for ensuring building safety through permitting, inspections, and code enforcement. Over the past three years, the number of permits issued has steadily increased, indicating growth in construction and development. However, there has been a slight decrease in inspections performed, suggesting potential resource constraints or operational inefficiencies. Construction values have fluctuated, with a notable drop in 2023 and partial recovery in 2024. Fee waivers for town projects have increased, impacting revenue. Key challenges include inspection capacity and revenue decline, while opportunities exist to optimize inspection processes, enhance revenue strategies, and monitor construction trends. Staffing enhancements, such as adding an Assistant Inspector of Buildings or a local inspector, are recommended to meet increasing workload demands and ensure continuity.

### Key Insights, Observations and Challenges:

- **Growth in Permits:** The consistent increase in permits issued reflects a growing demand for construction and development.
- **Fluctuations in Construction Value:** The drop in construction value in 2023 may indicate economic challenges or reduced large-scale projects.
- **Inspection Efficiency:** The decrease in inspections in 2024 despite an increase in permits suggests potential resource constraints or operational inefficiencies.

- Fee Waivers: The significant increase in fees waived in 2024 highlights the department's support for town projects but may impact revenue.
- Inspection Capacity: The decline in inspections in 2024 despite more permits issued suggests a need to address resource allocation or staffing.
- Revenue Decline: The drop-in fees collected in 2023 and 2024 compared to 2022 may require a review of fee structures or strategies to increase revenue.

## Inspectional Services Department Organizational Chart



The following analysis is based on reporting by the Building Department for the years 2022, 2023, and 2024. The department's mission is to ensure building safety through permitting and zoning enforcement, reviewing applications for construction, alteration, and demolition, and ensuring compliance with various codes and regulations.

Table: Key Statistics

Year	Total Permits	Total Inspections	Construction Value	Total Fees Collected	Fees Waived
2022	1,296	1,040	\$103,087,541.89	\$1,013,566.72	\$186,895.80
2023	1,389	1,276	\$73,486,166.07	\$775,723.01	\$22,779.00
2024	1,472	1,183	\$82,944,115.22	\$786,366.64	\$393,313.00

### Trend Analysis:

- Permits Issued: The number of permits issued increased steadily from 2022 (1,296) to 2024 (1,472), indicating growth in construction and development activities.
- Inspections Performed: Inspections increased from 2022 to 2023 but slightly decreased in 2024, suggesting a potential need for more resources or efficiency improvements in inspection processes.
- Construction Value: The construction value peaked in 2022 (\$103M), dropped significantly in 2023 (\$73M), and slightly recovered in 2024 (\$82M).
- Fees Collected: Total fees collected decreased from 2022 (\$1M) to 2023 (\$775K) and slightly increased in 2024 (\$786K). This trend aligns with the construction value fluctuations.

- Fees Waived: Fees waived for town buildings and projects varied significantly, with a notable increase in 2024 (\$393K).

#### Departmental Recommendations:

1. Optimize Inspection Processes: Invest in technology or additional staff to improve inspection efficiency and meet the growing demand for permits.
2. Revenue Enhancement: Evaluate fee structures and explore opportunities to balance fee waivers with revenue generation.
3. Monitor Construction Trends: Analyze the factors behind the fluctuation in construction value to better anticipate and adapt to market changes.
4. Staffing: Continue to acknowledge staff contributions and consider adding an Assistant Inspector of Buildings to meet increasing workload demands, to provide coverage when Inspector of Buildings is not available and to plan an orderly transition in the event the Inspector of Buildings position becomes vacant.

## Community and Economic Development Department

The Community and Economic Development Department, in collaboration with the Planning Board, has focused on managing growth, updating zoning, and engaging the public. Recent years have seen an increase in site plan reviews, special permits, and subdivision activity, reflecting heightened development and more complex land use proposals. The department has proactively addressed zoning amendments, including form-based codes and senior housing, and has prioritized environmental stewardship through initiatives like the establishment of a Tree Board.

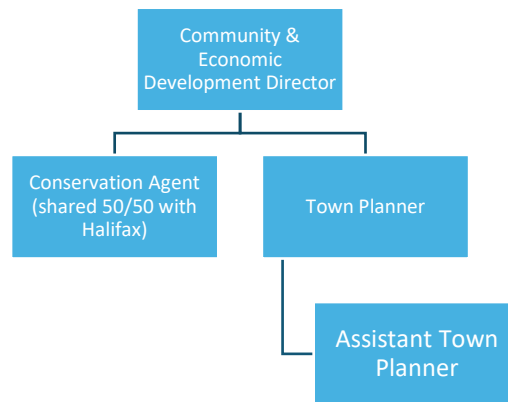
Staff turnover has presented challenges, but the department continues to leverage technology for public engagement and strives for process efficiency, community outreach, and staff development to support sustainable growth.

#### Key Insights, Opportunities and Challenges:

- Integrated Leadership: The Director's coordination of planning, conservation, and zoning functions ensures that growth is managed holistically, balancing economic development with environmental protection.
- Staff and Leadership Changes: The Board experienced turnover and welcomed new members, which can bring fresh perspectives but also requires effective onboarding.
- Rising Activity and Complexity: All boards report increased activity, more complex projects, and greater regulatory demands, highlighting the need for ongoing staff development and process improvements.
- Community Engagement: Expanded outreach and use of technology have improved public participation and transparency.
- Challenges: Staff continuity, project complexity, and the need for consensus on regulatory changes require continued investment in training, technology, and stakeholder engagement.
- Project Complexity: The increase in special permits and site plan reviews suggests more complex projects, which may strain resources and require enhanced expertise.

- Zoning Controversies: Not all zoning amendments were recommended or approved, indicating ongoing debate and the need for consensus-building.
- Development Diversity: Projects ranged from commercial facilities, industrial buildings, mixed-use conversions, and municipal infrastructure (e.g., new fire station), demonstrating a balanced approach to economic and community development.
- Regulatory Adaptation: The Board’s work on zoning amendments and subdivision regulations highlights its proactive stance in managing growth and adapting to state and local requirements.
- Environmental Stewardship: Actions to preserve the natural environment, such as establishing a Tree Commission, show commitment to sustainability.

## Community and Economic Development Organizational Chart



The Community and Economic Development function in Bridgewater is a coordinated effort led by the Community and Economic Development Director, with critical support from the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, and Zoning Board of Appeals. Together, these entities guide the town’s growth, ensure regulatory compliance, and balance development with environmental stewardship and community needs.

The Community and Economic Development Director oversees town planning, zoning updates, and sustainable growth initiatives. This role involves managing staff (including the Town Planner, Assistant Town Planner, and Conservation Agent), collaborating with elected and appointed boards, and ensuring that development aligns with community goals and environmental standards. The Director also facilitates public engagement, implements operational improvements, and addresses staff development and succession planning to maintain effective operations.

The Planning Board is responsible for the Comprehensive Master Plan, subdivision approvals, site plan reviews, special permits, and zoning amendments. Recent years have seen increased activity, with more complex projects and a focus on regulatory adaptation, such as the adoption of a form-based code, MBTA Communities Compliance and 55+ housing. The Board has also prioritized public engagement, held more meetings, and leveraged technology for accessibility. Key challenges include managing project complexity, board turnover, and building consensus on zoning changes.

The Conservation Commission protects Bridgewater’s wetlands and waterways, enforcing state and local environmental regulations. The Commission’s workload has grown, with a sharp increase in regulatory reviews and enforcement actions, reflecting both development pressure and a proactive regulatory stance. The Commission also emphasizes community engagement and volunteerism, encouraging residents to participate in stewardship activities.

The Zoning Board of Appeals acts as the appellant board for zoning bylaws and is the permit authority for Comprehensive Permits under Massachusetts law (Chapter 40B). The ZBA processes a steady volume of applications for variances and special permits, with most being granted. The Board’s work ensures that property owners have a fair process for seeking relief from zoning requirements and that development remains consistent with community standards.

Summary:

Bridgewater’s Community and Economic Development function is a dynamic, multi-faceted operation that plays a central role in shaping the town’s future. Through integrated leadership, regulatory oversight, and community engagement, the department, and the boards that staff support, work together to ensure sustainable growth, environmental stewardship, and a high quality of life for residents.

## Planning Board

The Bridgewater Planning Board is responsible for town planning, including the Master Plan, subdivision approvals, site plan reviews, special permits, zoning amendments, and collaboration with the Community and Economic Development Department. The Board’s activities in 2022 and 2024 reflect ongoing efforts to manage development, update zoning, and engage the public.

Table: Planning Board Actions

Category	2022	2024
Site Plan Review Projects	5	9
Approval-Not-Required Plans	5	7
Special Permit Projects	1	5
Site Plan Review & Special Permit Withdrawn	1	0
Earth Removal Permits Granted	0	0
Subdivisions Granted	1	2 (Definitive), 3 (Preliminary)
Subdivisions Modified	2	1
Street Acceptance Recommendations	2	3
Land Court Matters Resolved	0	1
Bond Release	0	1

Category	2022	2024
Zoning Amendments (Joint Meetings)	3	4
Public Meetings Held	N/A	23
New/Departing Board Members	3 new, 1 departed	2 new, 1 departed

**Trend Analysis:**

- **Growth in Activity:** There was a notable increase in site plan review projects (from 5 to 9) and special permit projects (from 1 to 5) between 2022 and 2024, indicating heightened development activity and more complex land use proposals.
- **Subdivision Activity:** The number of subdivisions (both preliminary and definitive) increased, reflecting ongoing residential and commercial expansion.
- **Zoning Amendments:** The Board continued to address zoning changes, with a focus on form-based codes, senior housing, bonus density, and accessory dwelling units, showing responsiveness to evolving community needs.
- **Public Engagement:** The Board held 23 meetings in 2024 and continued to use technology for public hearings, increasing accessibility and transparency.

**Department recommendations:**

1. **Process Efficiency:** Continued use of technology for meetings and applications can further streamline operations and enhance public participation.
2. **Community Engagement:** Expanding outreach and education about planning processes may improve public input and satisfaction.
3. **Staff Development:** Investing in training and succession planning can mitigate the impact of staff turnover and maintain high standards.
4. **Sustainable Growth:** Incorporating sustainability into every planning decision and continuing environmental efforts will help ensure the well-being of the community for years to come.

## Conservation Commission

The Bridgewater Conservation Commission serves as the guardian of the town’s wetlands and waterways, enforcing the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act, the Rivers Act, and local bylaws. The Commission collaborates with other town boards and committees for strategic planning and operations. Over the years 2022, 2023, and 2024, the Commission reviewed various applications, issued certificates, and managed enforcement orders. Membership changes and staff appointments occurred, including the hiring of a Conservation Agent in the third quarter of 2024. The Commission also encourages community involvement and volunteerism for stewardship activities.

Table: Key Statistics 2022-2024

Action	2022	2023	2024
Notices of Intent (NOI) Reviewed	7	18	28
Abbreviated Notices of Resource Area Delineation (ANRAD) Reviewed	2	2	0
Requests for Determination of Applicability (RDA) Reviewed	5	13	9
Certificates of Compliance Issued	14	10	16
Enforcement Orders Issued	0	2	10
Revenue Receipts from Applications	\$36,266	\$15,190	\$30,674

Key Insights:

- **Increasing Regulatory Activity**
  - **Notices of Intent (NOI) Reviewed:**  
The number of NOIs reviewed rose sharply from 7 in 2022 to 28 in 2024. This suggests significant increase in proposed projects or activities that could impact wetlands and waterways, requiring Commission oversight.
  - **Enforcement Orders Issued:**  
Enforcement actions increased from 0 in 2022 to 10 in 2024, indicating stricter enforcement or more violations detected. This may reflect either increased development pressure or a more proactive approach by the Commission.
- **Application and Fee Revenue Trends**
  - **Revenue Receipts:**  
Revenue from application and filing fees was highest in 2022 (\$36,266.50), dropped in 2023 (\$15,190), and rebounded in 2024 (\$30,674.90). These fluctuations could be due to the volume and type of applications received, fee structure changes, or economic factors influencing development activity.
- **Community Engagement and Education**
  - The Commission consistently encourages residents to contact them before undertaking land use or development activities and invites volunteers for stewardship roles. This outreach aims to foster compliance and community involvement in conservation efforts.
- **Administrative Functions**
  - **Certificates of Compliance:**  
The number of certificates issued fluctuated, with a peak in 2022 (14), a dip in 2023 (10), and a rise again in 2024 (16). This reflects the completion of regulated projects and the Commission’s role in ensuring compliance with environmental regulations.
  - **Requests for Determination of Applicability (RDA):**  
RDAs reviewed increased from 5 in 2022 to 13 in 2023, then decreased to 9 in 2024, showing variability in the types of projects or activities requiring Commission review.

Trends Insight:

- Growth in Oversight: The Commission’s increasing workload and enforcement actions point to greater development activity and/or a more vigilant regulatory stance.
- Financial Variability: Revenue changes may reflect broader economic or policy shifts affecting land use and conservation.
- Organizational Adaptation: Membership and staffing changes impact the Commission’s effectiveness and priorities.
- Ongoing Community Role: The Commission’s outreach and volunteer opportunities highlight its commitment to public engagement and stewardship.

## Zoning Board of Appeals

The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) for the Town of Bridgewater acts as the appellant board for zoning bylaws and fulfills requirements under Massachusetts General Law (MGL) 40A. The board consists of five volunteer members appointed by the Town Manager. The ZBA holds bi-weekly public hearings for property owners seeking variances, special permits, or appealing building official decisions, and serves as the permit authority for Comprehensive Permits under MGL Ch. 40B.

Key Activities: (2022-2024)

- Applications filed: Steady volume each year (9-10).
- Variances & Special Permits: Most applications granted; few withdrawn, none denied.
- Appeals of Building Inspector’s Decision: No appeals upheld, withdrawn, or ongoing.
- Comprehensive Permits (Chapter 40B): No approvals or insubstantial modifications.

Table: Key Statistics

Year	Applications Filed	Variances & Special Permits (Granted/Denied/Withdrawn/Ongoing)	Appeals of Building Inspector's Decision (Upheld/Withdrawn/Ongoing)	Comprehensive Permit Applications (Approved)	Insubstantial Modification (Approved)
2022	10	8 / 0 / 0 / 2	0 / 0 / 0	0	0
2023	9	8 / 0 / 1 / 0	0 / 0 / 0	0	0
2024	10	7 / 0 / 3 / 0	0 / 0 / 0	0	0

Key Trends:

- The ZBA consistently processes around 9-10 applications annually.
- Nearly all variances and special permits are granted, with a small number withdrawn and none denied.
- No appeals of the building inspector’s decisions have been upheld, withdrawn, or are ongoing.
- No Comprehensive Permits or insubstantial modifications have been approved in the past three years.

## Public Works

The Public Works function in Bridgewater, led by the Public Works Director, is central to the town's infrastructure, safety, and operational continuity. The director oversees a diverse portfolio of Engineering, Highway, Water, Sewer, and Town Buildings, ensuring that essential municipal services are delivered efficiently and reliably.

The Public Works Director coordinates the activities of all divisions, aligning operational priorities, managing resources, and setting strategic goals. This integrated leadership is crucial for addressing both routine maintenance and emergent needs, maintaining regulatory compliance, and planning for future growth. The Director is responsible for oversight of the functions listed below.

### Strategic Planning and Community Engagement

The Public Works Director plays a key role in long-term planning, securing funding through grants and partnerships, and engaging with residents to address service needs and concerns. The director's leadership ensures that Bridgewater's public works are responsive, resilient, and positioned for future growth.

Key Insights, Opportunities and Challenges:

- **Operational Consistency:** Steady performance in winter maintenance, infrastructure upgrades, and community responsiveness.
- **Infrastructure Investment:** Proactive use of grants and partnerships for improvements.
- **Environmental Compliance:** Commitment to stormwater management and regulatory standards.
- **Challenges:** Resource demands, aging infrastructure, high volume of resident requests, and regulatory pressures require ongoing investment and modernization.
- **Staffing gaps:** Lack of staffing has led to inefficiencies and inadequate systems management.

Departmental recommendations:

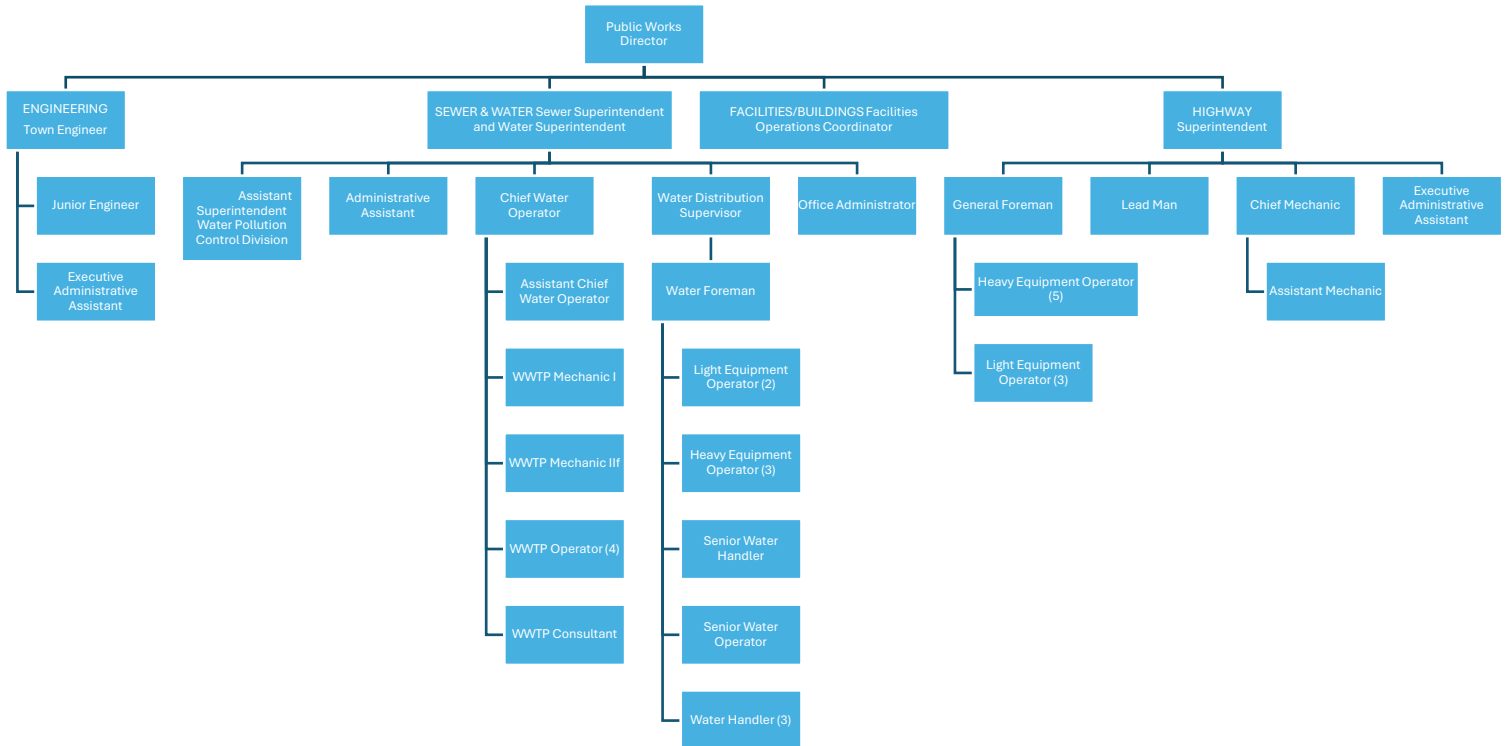
It is recommended the Town considers adding staff such as an Assistant Director/Operations Manager, an Executive Assistant and additional facilities staff.

- **Assistant DPW Director/Operations Manager:** To coordinate daily activities across divisions, improving oversight and streamlining workflows.
- **Senior Executive Assistant:** To support the Director with administrative management and interdepartmental coordination, freeing leadership to focus on strategic priorities.
- **Additional Facilities Staff:** To handle routine in-house maintenance, allowing senior staff to focus on vendor management and complex projects.

Filling these roles will result in greater operational efficiency, improved administrative processes, cost savings through better procurement, and enhanced collaboration both within DPW and with other Town departments. These changes will deliver higher quality public services and better outcomes for the Town of Bridgewater.

Bridgewater’s Public Works functions are a multi-faceted operation ensuring infrastructure remains safe, efficient, and prepared for future challenges. Strategic investments in staffing, equipment, modernization, and process improvements are essential to sustain and enhance the quality of public services.

## Public Works Organizational Chart



## Highway Division

The Highway Division focuses on winter road maintenance, street and sidewalk reconstruction, hazardous tree management, and stormwater compliance. The department completes hundreds of resident work orders annually, reflecting strong community engagement and a substantial workload. Major infrastructure projects are funded through state grants and partnerships, resulting in significant improvements to sidewalks and streets.

The Highway Division, nested within Public Works, major activities and accomplishments over the past three years focused on winter road maintenance, summer street and sidewalk projects, work orders, hazardous tree management, and catch basin cleaning.

### Key Insights, Observations and Challenges:

- **Consistent Winter Road Maintenance:** Every street was plowed three times each winter, with support from all highway staff, water employees, and about 40 subcontracted plows. Salting cycles increased slightly: 17 times in Winter 2023/24 and 18 times in Winter 2024/25.

- Major Street & Sidewalk Projects
- Work Order Completion: High volume of resident requests completed: 418 in 2023, 392 in 2024, and 362 so far in 2025.
- Tree Management: Hazardous tree removals remained steady: 19 in 2023, 17 in both 2024 and 2025. About 12 new trees were planted each year.
- Catch Basin Cleaning: Subcontracted annually to meet stormwater regulations. Notable increase in catch basins cleaned: 2,931 in 2024, and 1,152 so far in 2025.
- Operational Consistency: The DPW maintained steady performance in winter maintenance and tree management, showing reliability in essential services.
- Infrastructure Investment: The use of grants and partnerships for sidewalk and street improvements highlights proactive efforts to enhance public infrastructure.
- Community Responsiveness: The high number of completed work orders reflects strong engagement with resident needs.
- Environmental Compliance: Increased catch basin cleaning demonstrates commitment to stormwater management and regulatory compliance.
- Resource Demands for Winter Maintenance: Plowing and salting required all highway employees, several water employees, and about 40 subcontracted plows each winter. This indicates a significant demand for personnel and equipment, especially during severe weather events. The number of salting cycles increased slightly, suggesting either harsher winters or a need for more frequent treatment.
- Infrastructure Aging and Restoration Needs: Multiple streets and sidewalks required reconstruction or restoration each year, pointing to ongoing challenges with aging infrastructure and the need for continuous investment. The reliance on grants and partnerships (e.g., shared streets grant, university collaboration) highlights the challenge of securing sufficient funding for these projects.
- High Volume of Resident Requests: The DPW completed hundreds of work orders annually (418 in 2023, 392 in 2024, 362 in 2025 to date), reflecting strong community engagement but also a substantial workload that can strain resources.
- Hazardous Tree Management: The need to remove 17-19 hazardous trees each year suggests ongoing issues with tree health and safety, which can be unpredictable and require urgent attention.
- Stormwater Compliance and Catch Basin Cleaning: Catch basin cleaning is subcontracted annually to comply with stormwater regulations, and the number cleaned increased sharply in 2024 (2,931) before dropping to 1,152 in 2025 (to date). This may indicate fluctuating regulatory requirements, resource allocation challenges, or changing environmental conditions.

Table: Key Statistics

Year	Plowing Cycles	Salting Cycles	Streets Reconstructed/Restored	Work Orders Completed	Hazardous Trees Removed	New Trees Planted	Catch Basins Cleaned
2023	3	17	Maple Ave, Springhill Ave, Church St, Park Terrace	418	19	12	Not specified

Year	Plowing Cycles	Salting Cycles	Streets Reconstructed/Restored	Work Orders Completed	Hazardous Trees Removed	New Trees Planted	Catch Basins Cleaned
2024	3	18	Deerfield Dr, Wynwood Cir, Forest St, Sidewalks (BSU area)	392	17	12	2,931
2025	3	Not specified	Sidewalks (University area), Flagg St, South St	362 (to date)	17	12	1,152

\*Note: Some entries (e.g., streets and sidewalks) are summarized for brevity.

Table: Summary

Challenge	Recommendation(s)
Winter Maintenance	Crosstrain staff, review subcontractors, invest in equipment
Infrastructure Restoration	Seek grants, strengthen partnerships, preventive maintenance
Resident Requests	Upgrade work order system, community outreach, analyze trends
Tree Management	Proactive assessments, expand planting, emergency planning
Stormwater Compliance	Optimize schedule, monitor regulations, evaluate subcontract

Department Recommendations:

1. Resource Demands for Winter Maintenance:

- Expand cross-training for water and highway employees so more staff can assist during peak winter events, reducing reliance on subcontractors.
- Review the number and performance of subcontracted plows annually to ensure cost-effectiveness and reliability.
- Seek grants or budget allocations for modern snow removal equipment to improve efficiency and reduce breakdowns. Consider capital investments to update snow/ice equipment.

2. Infrastructure Aging and Restoration Needs:

- Actively pursue additional state and federal funding (such as complete streets grants) to support ongoing street and sidewalk restoration.
- Continue and expand collaborations with local institutions (such as BSU and the University) for joint infrastructure projects.
- Develop a preventive maintenance schedule for streets and sidewalks to reduce the frequency and cost of major reconstructions.

3. High Volume of Resident Requests:

- Upgrade digital work order tracking to prioritize urgent requests and improve response times.
- Increase communication with residents about expected timelines and project updates to manage expectations.

- Regularly review work order data to identify recurring issues and address root causes proactively.
4. Hazardous Tree Management:
- Schedule annual tree health surveys to identify hazards before they become urgent.
  - Partner with local environmental groups to increase tree planting and diversify species for greater resilience.
  - Develop a rapid response protocol for hazardous tree removal after storms or other events.
5. Stormwater Compliance and Catch Basin Cleaning:
- Use data from previous years to forecast catch basin cleaning needs and allocate resources efficiently.
  - Stay updated on stormwater regulations to anticipate changes in cleaning requirements.
6. Regularly assess subcontractors for quality and compliance to ensure standards are met.

## Water and Sewer Operations

The Department of Public Works Water and Sewer Operations are governed by the rules of the Town's Board of Water and Sewer Commissioners.

The Water Division is responsible for enforcing its regulations to protect public health, safety, and welfare. In support of this mission, the department oversees the installation of water mains, repairs water leaks and hydrant damage, responds to water quality concerns, monitors illegal outdoor water use, and performs final water meter readings.

The Water Pollution Control Division is responsible for the operation of the wastewater treatment facility, eight sewer pumping stations throughout the Town and approximately 42 miles of sewer collection system. The Division is responsible for maintaining, repairing and planning for all aspects of the system including issuing permits, inspecting and approving all planned connections, capital projects and engineering reviews. Regulatory compliance ensures protection of public health.

## Water Division

The Water Division manages daily operations at the Carver Pond Treatment Plant and High Street Nitrate Plant, serving the town through 10 wells and 140 miles of pipes. The overriding issue confronting the division has been a chronic underinvestment in capital and operational resources which has adversely impacted water quality. Water quality issues and inability to meet demand for new or expanded service must be resolved. It should be noted that recent momentum to plan and resolve longstanding issues is a good beginning but must be consistently funded and executed for several years to come. Chronic issues regarding non-compliance over the years indicate capacity issues, and the need for more staffing needs to be evaluated.

### 2023 Highlights:

Water accounts decreased to 7,540, but new connections increased to 127.

- Repaired 7 main breaks and 9 service breaks.
- Checked 735 backflow preventers, replaced/repared 13 hydrants.
- High St Water Treatment Facility completed and operational.

- Replaced 23-year-old filter media at Carvers Pond plant, reducing chemical usage.
- Caleb Treacy Schlough promoted to Chief Water Operator.
- Ongoing construction projects: Pratt Town subdivision, Old Field Estates, Duxburrow Estate.

#### 2024 Highlights:

- Water accounts rose to 7,968, with 28 new connections.
- Repaired 9 main breaks and 11 service breaks.
- Checked 737 backflow preventers, replaced/repared 8 hydrants.
- Began replacement of wells 5 and 9 (new wells online in 2025).
- Planning for a raw water line from wells 10A/B to the High St facility to improve water quality.
- Repairs started on Great Hill Water Tower, scheduled for completion in 2025.
- Continued exploration for future water sources.

#### 2025 Highlights:

- 8,003 water accounts, 35 new connections.
- Repaired 6 main breaks and 17 service breaks.
- Checked 650 backflow preventers, replaced/repared 3 hydrants.
- Finished replacement of wells 5 and 9. These wells were replaced due to age and decline in production over the previous year.
- Planning began for the raw water Transmission main from 10a and 10b to the high street treatment plant.
- Water quality pilot study was conducted to better understand how to treat and filter those wells most effectively.
- Wells 2 and 3 were developed to improve production and clean the screen and casing well.
- Emergency interconnection intermunicipal agreement with the Town of Middleborough was executed with the interconnection expected to be completed in January of 2026.
- Carver's replacement/Upgrades to filter valves, bracing, and Hydro pneumatic tank.

#### Key Insights, Observations and Challenges:

##### Infrastructure Renewal:

- The department is actively replacing aging infrastructure (wells, hydrants, filter media), which is crucial for long-term reliability and water quality.
- Water Quality Focus: The move to filter all town wells and reduce chemical usage demonstrates a commitment to public health and environmental stewardship.
- Responsive Maintenance: The fluctuating numbers in repairs and connections reflect the department's ability to respond to both routine and emergent needs.
- Forward Planning: Ongoing exploration for future water sources and major projects (e.g., Great Hill Water Tower repairs) indicate strategic planning for growth and resilience.

##### Aging Infrastructure:

- Evidence: The need to replace wells 5 and 9 due to declining production indicate that parts of the water system are reaching the end of their useful life
- Implication: Continued investment in redevelopment and repairs is necessary to maintain reliability and avoid service disruptions

**Water Quality and Regulatory Compliance:**

- Evidence: The need to replace filter media and plan for filtration of all wells points to ongoing challenges in meeting water quality standards and reducing chemical usage.
- Implication: Regulatory requirements and public health concerns will continue to drive upgrades and operational changes.

**Resource Allocation:**

- Evidence: The department is managing multiple simultaneous projects (facility construction, well replacement, tower repairs), which can strain budgets and staff resources.
- Implication: Prioritizing projects and securing funding will be critical to avoid delays and ensure long-term system sustainability.

**Table: Key Statistics Comparative (2023-2025)**

Metric	2023	2024	2025
Water Produced (million gal.)	581	582	569
Daily Avg Flow (mg/d)	1.6	1.59	1.55
Water Accounts	7,540	7,968	8,003
New Connections	127	28	35
Main Breaks Repaired	7	9	6
Service Breaks Repaired	9	11	17
Backflow Preventers Checked	735	737	790
Hydrants Replaced/Repaired	13	8	3

**Trend Analysis: (2023-2025)**

- Water Production and Demand Output: Water production remained nearly constant: 581 million gallons in 2023, with a slight increase to 582 million gallons in 2024. Production fell in 2025 to 569 million gallons, primarily associated with system repairs. Daily average flow was also steady, only dipping marginally from 1.6 mg/d to 1.55 mg/d in 2025.
- Interpretation: System constraints is restraining the ability to meet demand for new and enhanced water service lines.
- Infrastructure Maintenance:
  - Main and Service Breaks: Main breaks saw small changes from 7 (2023) to 9 (2024) and 6 (2025). Service breaks repaired increased from 9 (2023) to 11 (2024), to 17 (2025).
  - Hydrant Repairs: Hydrant replacements/repairs dropped from (13) 2023 to 8 in 2024, and decreasing further to 3 in 2025.
  - Interpretation: The increase in service breaks is an indication of aging infrastructure and increased stress on the system. Increased hydrant repairs in 2023 are linked to targeted maintenance or upgrades, associated with the completion of the High St Water Treatment Facility.
- System Upgrades and Projects:

- Major Facility Upgrades: The High St Water Treatment Facility was under construction in 2022, completed in 2023, and operational in 2024.
- Well Replacement: Replacement of wells 5 and 9 began in 2024 due to declining production, with new wells scheduled for 2025. Unfortunately, projected production has not been achieved, requiring additional investigation and adjustments to bring these wells to full capacity.
- Water Quality Improvements: Construction of a small water treatment system for wells 10A/B is scheduled to be completed in 2026.
- Interpretation: These upgrades reflect an aggressive investment in infrastructure and water quality improvements, addressing both current needs and future challenges.
- Operational Efficiency:
  - Backflow Preventers: The number checked increased steadily: 709 (2022), 735 (2023), 737 (2024)
  - Annual Flushing: The department has not consistently conducted annual flushing programs. Under new leadership a consistent flushing program will be implemented.
  - Interpretation: These metrics suggest an operation which needs greater focus on regulatory compliance and preventive maintenance.

Opportunities for Improvement:

1. Infrastructure Modernization

- Evidence: Completion of the High St Water Treatment Facility and ongoing replacement of wells and filter media demonstrate a commitment to modernization
- Opportunity: Upgraded facilities and equipment can improve efficiency, reliability, and water quality, positioning the department for future growth.

2. Water Quality Improvements

- Evidence: Improvements at wells 10A/B ensure all town wells are filtered, enhancing water quality for residents.
- Opportunity: These improvements can help meet regulatory standards, reduce chemical usage, and boost public confidence in the water supply.

3. Strategic Growth and Planning

- Evidence: Ongoing exploration for future water sources, PFAS remediation and other major projects (e.g., Great Hill Water Tower) indicate strategic planning for growth and resilience.

4. Operational Efficiency:

- Opportunity: Continued emphasis on maintenance and compliance can reduce emergency repairs, lower costs, and improve service reliability.

5. Infrastructure Modernization:

- Action: Leverage new technologies (e.g., smart meters, automated leak detection) as part of facility upgrades. Document and share best practices from recent successful projects.
- Benefit: Improves operational efficiency and sets a foundation for future innovation.

6. Water Quality Improvements:

- Action: Expand pilot programs for alternative treatment methods and source protection. Publicize water quality improvements to increase customer satisfaction.
- Benefit: Positions the department as a leader in water safety and sustainability.

## 7. Strategic Growth and Planning:

- Action: Regularly update long-term water source and infrastructure plans. Engage stakeholders in scenario planning for droughts, growth, or regulatory changes.
- Benefit: Builds resilience and adaptability for future challenges.

## 8. Operational Efficiency:

- Action: Ensure annual flushing and preventive maintenance programs are implemented and continued. Invest in staff training and succession planning to maintain expertise.
- Benefit: Reduces costs, improves service reliability, and ensures continuity.

### Next Steps:

- Consider forming a cross-functional team to oversee implementation of these recommendations.
- Monitor key metrics annually to assess progress and adjust strategies as needed.
- Communicate successes and challenges transparently with the community and stakeholders.

### Division Recommendations:

#### 1. Aging Infrastructure:

- Action: Develop a multi-year capital improvement plan prioritizing replacement of aging water mains, wells, and hydrants. Use predictive maintenance tools to identify at-risk assets before failure.
- Benefit: Reduces emergency repairs, improves reliability, and helps secure funding by demonstrating proactive management.

#### 2. Water Quality and Regulatory Compliance:

- Action: Continue investing in advanced filtration and monitoring systems. Engage with regulators and the community to communicate improvements and compliance efforts.
- Benefit: Maintains public trust, meets health standards, and reduces chemical usage.

#### 3. Resource Allocation:

- Action: Sequence major projects to avoid overextending staff and budgets. Seek grants and partnerships for large infrastructure upgrades.
- Benefit: Ensures projects are completed on time and within budget, while maintaining service levels.

## Sewer Division

The Sewer Division manages increasing volumes of treated wastewater, with average daily flows approaching operational capacity. The division has maintained effective odor control and responded to maintenance needs, shifting focus to strategic upgrades for regulatory compliance. Planning for future expansion and modernization is underway, with major investments in nutrient removal and plant upgrades

### 2022 Highlights

- Total Wastewater Treated: 366 million gallons
- Average Daily Flow: 1.0 million gallons per day (mg/d), 69.4% of design capacity
- Septage Received: 5.4 million gallons
- Odor Complaints: None reported

- Maintenance: 35 repairs/replacements of sewer equipment
- Collection System: 32 connection applications, 5 plug ups, 0-line cleanings/inspections
- Planning/Studies: Phase 1 \$33M plant upgrades began, completion slated for 2025

### 2023 Highlights

- Total Wastewater Treated: 394 million gallons
- Average Daily Flow: 1.08 mg/d, 75% of design capacity
- Septage Received: 0.66 million gallons
- Odor Complaints: None reported
- Maintenance: 40 repairs/replacements of sewer equipment
- Collection System: 51 connection applications, 4 plug ups, 0-line cleanings/inspections
- Planning/Studies: NPDES permit issued, Phase 1 upgrades continued, completion slated for 2025

### 2024 Highlights

- Total Wastewater Treated: 436 million gallons
- Average Daily Flow: 1.19 mg/d, 82.6% of design capacity
- Septage Received: 0 million gallons
- Odor Complaints: None reported
- Maintenance: Phase 1 upgrades continue (focus on nitrogen removal per EPA/DEP NPDES permit); Phase 2 planning begins for phosphorus removal
- Collection System: 39 connection applications, 5 plug ups, 1 line cleaning/inspection
- Planning/Studies: Ongoing Phase 1 nitrogen removal construction

Table: Key Statistics Comparative (2022-2024)

Year	Total Treated (MG)	Avg Flow (mg/d)	% Capacity	Septage (MG)	Odor Complaints	Repairs	Applications	Plug Ups	Cleanings
2022	366	1	0.694	5.4	0	35	32	5	0
2023	394	1.08	0.75	0.66	0	40	51	4	0
2024	436	1.19	0.826	0	0	N/A*	39	5	1

\*2024 repairs not specified; focus was on upgrades

### Trend Analysis (2022-2024):

- Increasing Wastewater Volume: Steady rise in total gallons treated and average daily flow, indicating growing demand or population.
- Capacity Utilization: Usage increased from 69.4% to 82.6% of design capacity, approaching operational limits.
- Septage Received: Significant drop from 2022 to 2024, possibly due to operational changes or external factors.
- Maintenance Activity: Repairs increased in 2023, but 2024 focused on upgrades rather than routine repairs.
- Collection System: Applications peaked in 2023, then declined in 2024; plug ups remained stable; cleanings/inspections minimal but increased in 2024.

- Upgrades and Compliance: Major investments in plant upgrades, nitrogen removal, and planning for phosphorus removal reflect regulatory compliance and modernization.

Key Insights:

- Growth Pressure: Rising flows and capacity utilization suggest the need for continued infrastructure investment.
- Regulatory Compliance: EPA/DEP NPDES permits drive significant upgrades, especially for nutrient removal.
- Operational Efficiency: No odor complaints for three years indicate effective management.
- Changing Septage Patterns: The drop in septage received may affect revenue or operational planning.
- Maintenance vs. Upgrades: Shift from routine repairs to strategic upgrades in 2024.

Departmental Challenges:

1. Capacity Limits: Approaching design capacity may risk future overflow or require expansion.
2. Aging Infrastructure: Ongoing need for repairs and upgrades.
3. Regulatory Demands: Compliance with evolving EPA/DEP standards requires substantial investment.
4. Septage Revenue Decline: Reduced septage intake could impact financial sustainability.
5. Minimal System Cleanings: Low frequency of line cleanings/inspections may pose long-term risks.

Opportunities for Improvement:

1. Phase 2 Upgrades: Planning for phosphorus removal and further modernization.
2. Efficiency Gains: Continued odor control and effective maintenance.
3. Community Engagement: Increased sewer connection applications signal growth.
4. Technology Adoption: Advanced nutrient removal systems can enhance compliance and sustainability.

Table Summary: Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges	Opportunities
Nearing capacity limits	Phase 2 upgrades planned
Aging infrastructure	Modernization investments
Regulatory pressures	Advanced nutrient removal
Septage revenue decline	Community growth
Low cleaning frequency	Improved maintenance systems

Departmental Recommendations:

1. Expand Capacity: Begin feasibility studies for future plant expansion.
2. Increase Maintenance Frequency: Schedule regular line cleanings and inspections.

3. Diversify Revenue: Explore alternative revenue streams to offset septage decline.
4. Accelerate Upgrades: Ensure timely completion of Phase 1 and initiate Phase 2.
5. Enhance Monitoring: Implement advanced monitoring for flow and nutrient levels.

## Engineering

The Engineering Division is responsible for planning, designing, and overseeing infrastructure projects. This includes collaboration with other departments, managing capital improvement plans, and ensuring that engineering standards are met for roads, utilities, and municipal facilities. The director guides the division in long-term planning and project execution.

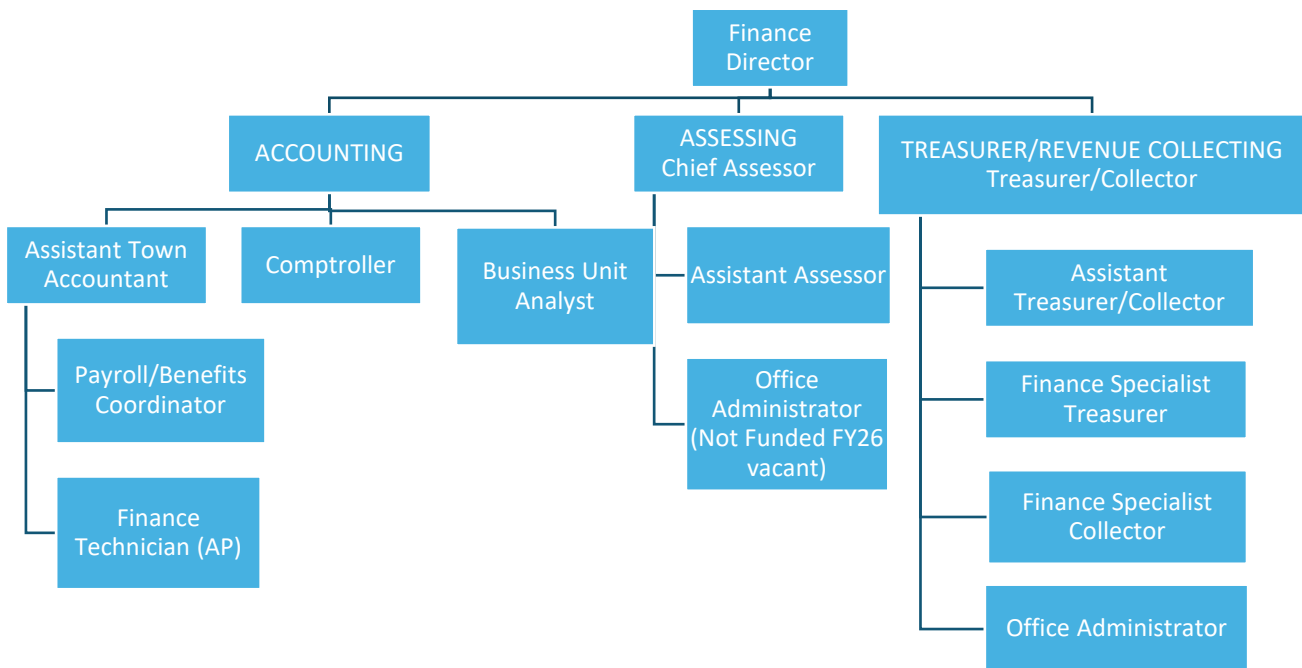
## Town Buildings

Oversight of Town Buildings involves ensuring the maintenance, safety, and functionality of municipal facilities. The director manages repairs, upgrades, and compliance with building codes, working closely with staff and contractors to support town operations.

## Financial Services Departments

The Finance Services Department is the backbone of Bridgewater’s fiscal management, integrating the operations of the Accounting Department, Assessors, and Treasurer/Collector’s Office to ensure financial stewardship, regulatory compliance, and efficient service delivery across the town’s government.

### Financial Service Organizational Chart



#### The Finance Director's Leadership Role:

The Finance Director is the leader of Bridgewater's Finance Services Department, responsible for orchestrating the town's financial operations and ensuring seamless integration across accounting, assessment, and treasury and collections functions.

#### Strategic Oversight and Coordination:

The Finance Director develops and monitors the annual operating and capital budgets, providing financial forecasts and long-term planning that guide departmental priorities and resource allocation. This role requires close coordination with department heads and committees, ensuring that financial policies and procedures are consistently applied and that all departments operate within budgetary constraints.

#### Compliance and Risk Management:

A key responsibility is ensuring compliance with state and federal regulations, overseeing reporting requirements, and maintaining the integrity of financial operations. The Finance Director supervises accounting, treasury, tax collection, assessing, and payroll functions, acting as a liaison to the Finance Committees and Town Manager for budget and policy matters. This oversight is critical for mitigating risks, maintaining transparency, and upholding public trust.

#### Leadership and Innovation:

The Finance Director drives modernization efforts, such as digital transformation in payment processing and adoption of new financial systems. By fostering collaboration among the Accounting, Assessors, and Treasurer/Collector departments, the director ensures that the town's financial management is both efficient and responsive to changing needs. The director's leadership is evident in the department's ability to adapt to challenges such as declining property values, increased administrative complexity, and evolving regulatory demands through strategic investments in staff, technology, and process improvements.

#### Impact and Vision:

The Finance Director sets the vision for fiscal stewardship, balancing operational demands with long-term sustainability. The director's proactive approach to planning, compliance, and innovation positions Bridgewater to meet future challenges and maintain high standards of service for residents and stakeholders.

#### Summary:

The Finance Services Department is central to Bridgewater's fiscal health, providing reliable financial management, accurate property assessments, and efficient collection services. Continued modernization, staff development, and strategic planning will be essential to address emerging challenges and sustain high standards of service for the community.

## Accounting

The Accounting Department is responsible for maintaining the town's financial records, processing payments, preparing annual financial statements, and ensuring compliance with federal, state, and local

regulations. The office closes the books at the end of each fiscal year, coordinates external audits, and manages transfers between budget codes. It also certifies appropriations, reconciles accounts, and provides financial information to stakeholders, including the Town Council and citizens. The department's commitment to accuracy and legal compliance safeguards the town's fiduciary interests and supports transparent financial operations.

The Town Accountant department is responsible for a wide range of financial management duties in Bridgewater. At the end of each fiscal year, the office closes the financial books to ensure all transactions are properly recorded. Throughout the year, the department protects the fiduciary interests of the town by providing independent oversight of finances and ensuring that all financial transactions are executed legally, efficiently, and effectively. The office maintains and administers a financial account and management information system, delivering accurate, complete, and timely information about all financial activities of town departments, boards, and commissions.

#### Key Activities:

- Annual Financial Book Closings: The department closes the books at the end of each fiscal year, ensuring all transactions are properly recorded.
- Payments Processed: Handles payments for all town invoices and prepares warrants.
- Payroll Administration: Manages payroll functions, including distribution of IRS 1099 forms to vendors.
- External Audit Coordination: Coordinates external audits and prepares annual financial statements.
- Transfers and Reconciliation: Processes all transfers of town funds between budget codes and reconciles cash and account receivables with the Treasurer.
- Reporting: Prepares and submits reports to the State Department of Revenue, including Schedule A, quarterly cash reconciliation, all funds balance sheet, and free cash certification.
- Stakeholder Support: Provides financial information to the Town Council, Town Manager, departments, investment community, government agencies, and citizens.

#### Assistant Town Accountant

- Assists the Finance Director and Comptroller in maintaining general ledger.
- Prepares journal entries and reconciliations.
- Supports year-end close, audits, and financial reporting.
- Reviews and approve warrant for accounts payable.
- Prepares financial statements and forms for DOR including Balance Sheet, Schedule A and assist with tax recaps.
- Reconcile monthly Cash with Assistant Treasurer, and Monthly Ambulance receipts and receivable.
- Assist Finance Director and Comptroller with Capital Planning
- Assist Finance Director with annual operating budgets.
- Ensures proper documentation and adherence to Uniform Massachusetts Accounting System (UMAS) standards.

## Comptroller

- Maintains official financial records and ledgers.
- Approves expenditures and ensures budget compliance.
- Oversees and assists with financial statements and forms for DOR including Balance Sheet, Schedule A, and tax recaps.
- Oversees annual audit process.
- Oversees CPA fund monthly reporting to CPC committee.
- Assist Finance Director with Capital Planning
- Assist Finance Director with annual operating budgets.
- Assist Finance Director with ongoing Capital Projects
- Compile and update compensated absences/retirement projections.
- Coordinate and Reconcile with departments for grant and special fund accounting.

## Business Unit Analyst

- Reviews, tracks, and analyzes departmental budgets and expenditures with a focus on the Enterprise funds.
- Prepares internal financial reports and dashboards and allocations.
- Provides support to departments for budgets, procurement, and contracts.
- Reconcile accounts receivable balances monthly with Collector's office.
- May assist in grant tracking and financial modeling.
- Supports the Finance Director in preparation of financial presentations.
- Identifies variances and provides recommendations for cost control.

## Payroll and Benefits Coordinator

- Processes weekly payroll for all Town employees.
- Administers employee benefits, including health insurance, life insurance, retirement, and other deductions.
- Coordinates with HR and Treasurer for benefit enrollments and reconciliations.
- Mass Salary changes and tables, as needed for contractual bargaining agreements.
- Manage Accruals and tables, as needed in compliance with contractual bargaining agreements.
- Ensures payroll tax compliance and reporting (e.g., W-2s, 1095-Cs, ACA, Pension Reporting reconciliations).
- New hire set ups.
- Coordinates with employees, and staff members for payroll related issues and projects.
- Maintains personnel and payroll records.

## Accounts Payable Technician Part-Time at 18 hours per week

- Processes vendor invoices and prepares payment warrants.
- Verifies proper approvals and budget availability.
- Maintains vendor files and W-9s.
- Generate and distribute 1099's
- Reconcile Home Depot, Amazon credit card accounts for departments to process payments.
- Supports audit and compliance documentation.
- Assists departments with invoice tracking and purchase order reconciliation.

### Key Insights, Observations and Challenges:

- **Independent Oversight:** The Town Accountant provides independent oversight, safeguarding the town's fiduciary interests.
- **Comprehensive Financial Management:** The department's responsibilities span accounting, payroll, audit, reporting, and reconciliation, ensuring an integrated approach to municipal finance.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** The office supports a wide range of stakeholders, reinforcing its central role in town governance.
- **Increasing Administrative Complexity:** The department faces growing complexity in financial transactions, reporting, and compliance.
- **Resource Constraints:** As municipal finance evolves, the department must manage increasing workloads and demands with limited staff and resources.
- **Audit and Compliance Pressure:** Coordination of external audits and adherence to state and federal regulations require meticulous attention and ongoing process improvements.

### Departmental Recommendations:

1. **Process Automation:** Investing in technology and automation can streamline payment processing, reconciliation, and reporting.
2. **Staff Development:** Continued training and professional development will help the department adapt to evolving financial regulations and best practices.
3. **Enhanced Communication:** Improving communication with departments and stakeholders can further strengthen transparency and efficiency.
4. **Consideration should be given to moving the responsibility for benefit administration to the Human Resource Department.** This function closely aligns with the management of employee contracts, benefit management, and resolution of disputes.
5. **The Town should consider establishing a Procurement Officer responsible for coordinating the purchases for all general government departments.** Given the size and number of annual and capital purchases this function would ensure applicable federal and state laws are followed.

### Summary:

The Town Accountant department is a cornerstone of Bridgewater's financial stewardship, ensuring accuracy, compliance, and transparency in all municipal financial operations. By embracing opportunities for modernization and staff development, the department can continue to meet the challenges of an increasingly complex financial landscape and maintain high standards of service for the community.

## Assessors

The Assessors Department administers property valuation for taxation, prepares tax rate recaps, manages exemptions and abatements, and maintains property records and GIS mapping. The Board of Assessors, comprised of certified members, meets regularly to review valuations and ensure fair and equitable assessments. The department is responsible to value all real and personal property at its fair cash value as of January 1 each year for tax assessment purposes. Every five years, these valuations must be reviewed by the Department of Revenue(DOR) and certified as meeting legal standards. The

department emphasizes operational efficiency, transparency, and public engagement to maintain trust and compliance.

The Chief assessor is responsible for administering the process to determine property value for taxation purposes. The Board of Assessors is comprised of three elected members, who meet regularly to review exemptions, abatements, and other duties as well to vote on the valuations presented by the Chief Assessor's.

#### Chief Assessor

- Oversees assessment and valuation of all real and personal property.
- Prepares and submits tax rate recap to the Department of Revenue.
- Prepares and submits commitments, overlay, new growth, betterments for Board of Assessors, Collector, Accounting
- Prepares preliminary and actual tax billing for real estate and personal property.
- Coordinates with Board of Assessors and manages abatement and exemption processes.
- Maintains property records and oversees cyclical revaluation.
- Maintains valuation program, as well as town GIS Mapping working closely with vendors.
- Responds to inquiries from property owners and stakeholders.

#### Assistant Assessor

- Assists in field inspections, property data collection, and updates to property record cards.
- Prepares Motor Vehicle/Boat Commitments, exemptions, abatements, billing process.
- Processes abatements, exemptions, and deeds.
- Supports customer service and counter traffic.
- Report of relevant properties, create mailings/tracking's of income forms for residents.
- Enters sales and permit data for valuation updates.
- Prepares reports and documentation for the Chief Assessor.

The Chief Assessor working with Board of Assessors will:

- Determine fair and equitable valuation of all real and personal property (per Massachusetts General Laws).
- Update property values annually; valuation date is January 1.
- Values certified by the Department of Revenue before tax rates are approved.
- Issue quarterly tax bills and commit them to the Town Collector.
- Handle motor vehicle and boat excise taxes.
- Provide property information, certify abutter's lists, and maintain tax maps/GIS data.

#### Real Estate Assessments:

- Based on fair market value using past property sales.
- Annual adjustments prevent large swings in valuation.
- Assessments consider style, location, features (e.g., baths, garages, pools).
- Assessors use past sales, while realtors estimate future values.

Appeal Process:

- Taxpayers can appeal to the Board of Assessors to contest incorrect valuation.
- Appeals are based on the January bill.
- Abatement applications must be filed by the due date of the 3rd quarter bill (typically Feb 1).
- Appeals of the Board of Assessor’s decisions go to the Appellate Tax Board.

Revaluation:

- Required every year and certified every five years by the MA Department of Revenue
- All values must conform with MA State guidelines to ensure values reflect current market conditions.
- Includes inspections, data collection, and market analysis.

Personal Property Tax:

- Assessed separately from real estate on tangible assets (machinery, tools, furniture, inventory).
- Businesses must file a Form of List (State Tax Form 2) by March 1.
- Taxable items vary by ownership type (individuals, partnerships, corporations).
- Abatements possible if overvalued, misclassified, or improperly assessed.

Table: Key Statistics

Category	FY 2024 Value	FY 2023 Value	Change/Trend
Residential	\$4,100,568,294	\$3,792,063,310	\$308,504,984
Commercial	\$328,588,806	\$277,888,320	\$50,700,486
Industrial	\$249,061,400	\$168,194,230	\$80,867,170
Personal Property	\$139,218,170	\$119,899,010	\$19,319,160
Total Taxable Value	\$4,817,436,670	\$4,358,044,870	\$459,391,800
Exempt Parcels Value	\$516,930,800	\$502,319,200	\$14,611,600
Grand Total Value	—	—	—
Taxable Parcels	8,702	8,674	28
Exempt Parcels	592	589	3
Amount to be Raised	\$91,541,177.17	\$93,996,562.91	(\$2,455,385)
Estimated Receipts	\$33,057,496.00	\$38,039,266.78	(\$4,981,771)
Tax Levy	\$58,483,681.17	\$55,957,296.13	\$2,526,385
Tax Rate	\$12.14 per \$1,000	\$12.84 per \$1,000	(\$0.70)
Motor Vehicle Excise	\$4,440,094.10		

Trend Analysis:

- Property Valuation: The total value of all property in Bridgewater increased from \$4.36 billion in FY 2023 to \$4.82 billion in FY 2024, an increase of about \$460 million dollars.

- **Tax Rate and Levy:** The tax rate for FY 2024 was set at \$12.14 per \$1,000 of assessed value, with a total tax levy of \$58.48 million. The Bureau of Accounts certified this rate in December 2023, allowing timely commitment of the tax roll.
- **Motor Vehicle Excise:** As of May 2025, motor vehicle excise taxes committed for levy year 2024 totaled \$4.44 million, indicating continued revenue from this source.
- **The Town funded general fund & enterprise fund capital appropriations and settled collective bargaining contracts with other funding sources in FY 2023.** This resulted in the reduction of FY 2024 in the total amount to be raised and funded.

#### Key Insights, Observations and Challenges:

- **Certification and Compliance:** All Board members are certified by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, ensuring compliance with state requirements.
- **Operational Efficiency:** The Board meets frequently, especially during busy periods, to fulfill its duties, reflecting a commitment to operational efficiency.
- **Staff Dedication:** The report emphasizes the dedication of both the Board and staff, which is crucial for maintaining service quality.
- **Workload Management:** Frequent meetings and the need for ongoing reviews suggest a high workload, which could strain resources during peak periods.

#### Departmental Recommendations:

1. **Data Transparency:** Detailed year-over-year comparisons for all categories enhances transparency and facilitate deeper trend analysis.
2. **Public Engagement:** Continued recognition of staff and Board efforts expanding outreach and education about the revaluation process could improve public understanding and trust.

## Treasurer/Collector

The Treasurer/Collector's department manages billing, collection, investment, borrowing, and disbursement of town funds. Processing over 107,000 payment transactions annually, the office utilizes manual, online, mailed, and electronic methods to oversee tax bills, utility payments, and other receipts. It oversees cash flow, debt service, payroll, and customer service, ensuring robust financial stewardship and risk management. The office has embraced digital transformation, with more than half of payments processed electronically, improving efficiency and accessibility.

#### Key Insights, Observations and Challenges:

- **Integration and Collaboration:** The Finance Services Department's integrated approach ensures seamless coordination between accounting, assessment, and treasury functions, supporting effective budget planning and financial management.

- Modernization and Efficiency: Ongoing adoption of digital tools and process improvements enhances operational efficiency and customer service.
- Transparency and Compliance: Regular audits, certifications, and public reporting reinforce accountability and compliance with regulatory standards.
- Declining property values, manual processing loads, and increasing administrative complexity require strategic investments in staff, technology, and outreach.
- Operational Scale: The office handles a high volume of transactions and diverse financial responsibilities, requiring efficient systems and skilled staff.
- Customer Service Commitment: Emphasis on exceptional service and modern approaches supports resident satisfaction and departmental collaboration.
- Technology Adoption: The use of online portals (Invoice Cloud, UniPay) for payment processing and reconciliation is a strength, streamlining operations and improving accessibility.
- Risk Management: Regular reconciliation, refund processing, and debt oversight mitigate financial risks and ensure accuracy.
- Manual Processing Load: 30,000 transactions are still processed manually, which may strain resources and limit scalability.
- Delinquent Accounts: Demand bills, deputy collector referrals, and liens indicate persistent issues with late or unpaid taxes and utilities.
- Complex Reconciliation: Managing multiple payment portals and bank accounts requires rigorous reconciliation to prevent errors.

#### Treasurer/Collector

- Manages cash flow, banking, and investment of Town funds.
- Oversees tax billing Issuance and collection (real estate, excise, personal property).
- Oversees Utility (W/S) tax billing and collection.
- Administers debt service and bonding.
- Reconcile accounts receivable balances monthly with Accounting.
- Oversees and manages online Invoice Cloud functions.
- Oversees tax title process and delinquent accounts.
- Reconcile and approve Veteran's services certifications with state.

#### Assistant Treasurer/Collector

- Reconciles receipts and cash books monthly with Accounting Office
- Assists with daily cash deposits and reconciliations.
- Liaison to banking representatives, performing daily banking tasks.
- Supports customer service and front-desk operations.
- Processes payments and prepares batch reports.
- Processes and reconciliation of Demands, and deputy collection billing
- Preparation of debt schedules and reports.
- Processes payments of payroll and benefit functions 941, all fed, state taxes, child support, benefit payments

Finance Specialist Treasurer

- Provides clerical and technical support to the Treasurer’s functions.
- Handles payment posting and deposit prep.
- Processes departmental accounts payable billing and weekly batches.
- Responds to residents’ questions about bills or collections.
- Reconcile and upload bank transfers, journals, daily, monthly activity.
- Assists with excise tax and motor vehicle billing processes.

Finance Specialist Collector

- Supports billing and collections for real estate, personal property, and excise taxes.
- Enters and reconciles payments from online, lockbox, and various payment files.
- Processes payments and prepares batch reports.
- Processes local receipts and departmental turnovers, wires.
- Prepares and record Municipal Lien Certificates and assists with tax title takings with Collector.
- Prepares and research customer refunds for processing.
- Process returned mail and delinquent notices.

Office Administrator Treasurer/Collector’s Office

- First point of contact. Answers general inquiries, provides forms and performs data entry
- Receives payments in person, by mail, and online.
- Balance Inquiries for permitting and license renewals and sign offs for departments.

Table: Key Statistics

Category	Annual Volume	Amount Collected	Key Notes
Manual (Town Hall)	30,000	N/A	Processed on-site
Online Payments	33,000	N/A	Processed electronically
Mailed Payments	23,000	N/A	Processed electronically
Tax Service Companies	21,000	N/A	Processed electronically
Refunds Issued	850	N/A	Researched and reviewed
Municipal Lien Certificates	450	N/A	Issued annually
Real Estate Tax Bills	9,000	\$59M	Quarterly: 500 Demand Bills. 250 to Deputy
Personal Property Tax Bills	285	\$1.8M	Quarterly: 70 Demand Bills. 40 to Deputy
Motor Vehicle Excise Tax Bills	30,000	\$5M	75% due Feb/Mar; 4,700 Demand. 3,300 to Deputy
Water & Sewer Utility Bills	8,100	\$8M	Quarterly: 650 Demand; 450 Liens
Boat Excise Tax Bills	200	\$3,000	Annually
Deputy Collector Receipts	3,300	\$750K	Annually

Category	Annual Volume	Amount Collected	Key Notes
Tax Title Collections	N/A	\$2.7M (7 yrs)	\$1.25M interest/fees (7 yrs)
Cash Management	N/A	\$50M /M	Across 33 bank accounts
Accounts Payable & Payroll	N/A	\$120M	Annually disbursed
Departmental Receipts	4,000	N/A	Includes grants, ambulance funds, etc.
Total Payment Transactions	107,000		manual, online, mailed, and electronic

**Trend Analysis:**

- **Digital Transformation:** A significant portion of payments (over 50%) are processed electronically, indicating a strong shift toward digital payment solutions. Online and electronic payments (including those from tax service companies) now outpace manual transactions, reflecting modernization and efficiency.
- **Tax Collection Efficiency:** The majority of tax bills (real estate, personal property, motor vehicle, water/sewer) are collected successfully, but a notable subset requires additional action (demand bills, deputy collector involvement, liens), highlighting areas for improved compliance and follow-up.
- **Cash Flow Management:** The department manages substantial cash flows, with an average monthly balance exceeding \$50 million and annual disbursements over \$120 million, demonstrating robust financial stewardship.
- **Debt Management:** Active coordination with bond counsel and fiscal advisors, along with annual reporting, ensures responsible debt administration and compliance.
- **Expand Digital Adoption:** Further encourage online payments to reduce manual workload and improve efficiency.
- **Enhance Compliance Strategies:** Develop targeted outreach or incentives to reduce delinquent accounts and streamline collections.
- **Automate Reconciliation:** Invest in advanced reconciliation tools to minimize manual effort and errors.
- **Customer Experience:** Continue to refine online payment interfaces and support to boost satisfaction and reduce payment friction.

## Human Resources



The Human Resources Department is responsible for various functions that contribute to the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the town government. This analysis covers key areas of Human Resources

operations: recruitment and onboarding, leave management, employee relations, labor negotiations, volunteer program administration, employee engagement, payroll coordination, and compliance responsibilities.

**Key Activities:**

- **Recruitment and Employment:** The department assists in the hiring process, ensuring that the right talent is brought into the town's workforce.
- **Training and Development:** It provides training and development programs to enhance the skills and knowledge of employees.
- **Equal Employment Opportunity:** The department ensures compliance with equal employment opportunity laws and policies.
- **Compensation and Benefits:** It administers compensation and benefits plans to attract and retain a high-performing workforce.
- **Employee Relations:** The department promotes positive employee relations and addresses employee concerns and issues.
- **HRIS and Employee Records:** It manages Human Information Systems and maintains employee records.
- **Employee Safety:** The department ensures the safety and well-being of employees on the job.
- These functions are essential for creating a motivated, diverse, and high-performing municipal workforce and work environment.

**Key Insights:**

- Recruitment is a major operational focus, with comprehensive support provided for each hire. High activity reflects ongoing staffing needs and turnover.
- Leave management is complex and resource-intensive, requiring coordination and compliance.
- Employee relations and labor support are significant, with active involvement in conflict resolution and contract negotiations. Five collective bargaining agreements were settled successfully.
- Volunteer engagement is rising, with substantial growth in the SAVE program.
- Employee engagement initiatives are enhancing workplace culture and satisfaction.
- Shared responsibilities between HR and Payroll create workflow inefficiencies, delays, and inconsistencies in accrual and benefits processing.
- Critical compliance functions are managed outside HR, increasing risk and potentially impacting reporting accuracy.
- Retention concerns are suggested by increased separations in FY25.

**Tables:**

Recruitment & Separation		
Fiscal Year	New Hires	Separations
FY23	27	23
FY24	34	23
FY25	22	27
FY26 YTD	11	7

Leave Management			
Fiscal Year	FMLA Cases	IOD Cases	Workers' Comp Claims
FY23	23	24	5
FY24	14	9	3
FY25	12	10	1

Volunteer Program	
Year	Volunteers
2023	12
2025	37

**Trend Analysis:**

- Recruitment: Activity remains high, peaking in FY24. FY25 saw fewer hires but more separations, suggesting retention issues. FY26 is on track with previous years.
- Leave Management: There is a downward trend in FMLA, IOD, and workers’ compensation cases, indicating possible improvements in workplace safety or changes in case management.
- Volunteer Engagement: The Town’s Senior Associates Volunteer Experience (SAVE) Program has expanded substantially over the past three years, growing from 12 volunteers in 2023 to 37 volunteers in 2025. HR manages volunteer placement, hour tracking for tax credit eligibility, and ongoing support throughout the year.
- Employee Engagement: New initiatives (holiday events, wellness seminars) have been well received, strengthening organizational culture.

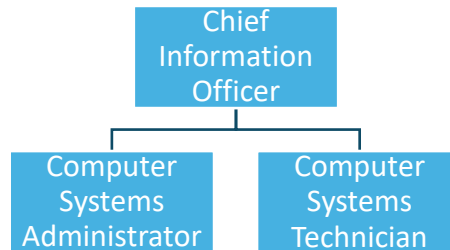
**Departmental Recommendations:**

1. Centralize accrual and benefits processing within HR to streamline workflows, reduce errors, and improve employee experience. This includes transferring current job responsibilities performed in the Accountants’ Office to the HR Office.
2. Re-align compliance responsibilities to HR to strengthen statutory compliance and reduce risk.
3. Continue expanding employee engagement programs to further enhance morale and cohesion.
4. Analyze retention trends and develop targeted strategies to address increased separations.

## Information Technology

The Bridgewater Information Technology (IT) Department is a critical enabler of daily operations across General Government, Police, and Fire departments. It manages user access, maintains secure and reliable systems, supports emergency services, and responds to technology issues affecting both employees and residents. Technology is now considered core municipal infrastructure, not just a back-office function.

## Information Technology Organizational Chart



### Key Insights, Observations and Challenges:

- The IT Department provides 24/7 support for police and fire operations, where system outages or delays can directly impact public safety and service delivery.
- Ensuring system security, compliance, and operational continuity is a top priority. The department also plans for lifecycle replacements, cybersecurity threats, and future growth.
- Bridgewater’s IT budget is about 2.37% of the total municipal budget, within the commonly accepted range for U.S. towns and cities, indicating a fiscally conservative but adequate approach.
- Rapid workload growth strains resources and requires ongoing adaptation.
- Expanded cybersecurity requirements demand continuous investment in security measures and staff training.
- Supporting increasingly sophisticated public safety systems adds operational complexity.
- The budget is at the lower to mid-range of industry benchmarks, which may limit investment in new technologies.

Table: Key Data

Category	Count/Description
Active Users	285
Total User Accounts	317
Computers Managed	199 (via Active Directory)
Virtual Servers	45
Mobile Computers/Radios	30 40 (in police/fire vehicles)
Mobile Devices	93 (cell phones, data units, modems)
Endpoint Devices	Printers, scanners, copiers, multifunction machines (across all departments)

### Workload Growth (Support Tickets):

Workload Growth	
Year	Support Tickets
2023	482
2024	1,045
2025	1,355

### Budget Benchmarking:

Budget Benchmarking	
Metric	Value
IT Budget (% of municipal budget)	2.37%
Industry Benchmark (municipal)	2% 4%
Industry Benchmark (operating expenses)	4% (Gartner studies)

### Trend Analysis:

- Demand for IT services has increased significantly, with support tickets nearly tripling from 2023 to 2025. This growth is driven by expanded cybersecurity requirements, increased reliance on mobile and cloud-based systems, and the rising complexity of public safety technology.

### Departmental Recommendations:

1. Continued and increased investment is necessary to maintain service levels, protect municipal data, and support public safety operations.
2. Consider adding at least one additional staff member to meet increasing demand.
3. Proactive planning for system replacements and upgrades can help avoid disruptions.
4. Investing in advanced security tools and regular staff training will help mitigate risks.
5. Leveraging mobile and cloud-based solutions can improve efficiency and responsiveness.

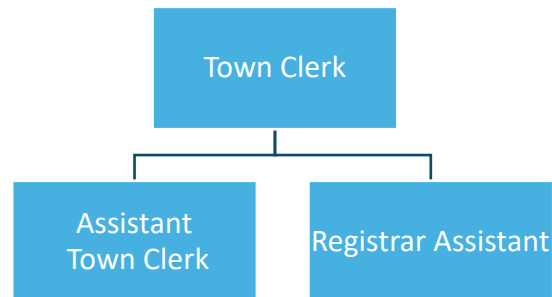
### Summary:

The Bridgewater IT Department is a cornerstone of municipal operations, supporting hundreds of users and devices, managing dozens of critical systems, and responding to a rapidly growing workload. Its strategic importance is underscored by its role in public safety and the need for secure, reliable technology infrastructure. While the department operates within industry benchmarks, ongoing investment and proactive planning are essential to meet future challenges and seize opportunities for improvement.

## Town Clerk

The Town Clerk Department plays a central role in Bridgewater’s civic administration, elections, and public records management. Staffed by three full-time employees, the office supports a growing voter base, which has increased over the past decade. Core responsibilities include administering local, state, and federal elections (including early and vote-by-mail voting), maintaining voter registration for more than 19,000 voters, issuing vital records (birth, marriage, and death certificates), and managing a wide range of licenses and permits such as business certificates, dog licenses, and marriage licenses. The office also serves as the Records Access Officer, maintains historical records dating back to 1656, tracks over 450 elected and appointed officials, and prepares the Annual Town Report.

## Town Clerk Organization Chart



The report highlights operational strain caused by expanded voting requirements, increased election administration complexity, higher licensing demand and census and voter registration workload growth. The Clerk's Office is essential to legal compliance, public trust, and service delivery, but would benefit from added staffing and modernization to sustain service quality.

### Key Activities:

- The office staff consists of three full-time employees, with two working 35 hours per week. Over the past decade, the voter population has grown significantly, leading to an increase in precincts.
- Early in-person voting began in 2016, requiring staff to coordinate volunteers, log ballots, document hours, troubleshoot, and maintain regular clerk duties.
- Every even year, early voting is mandated for presidential and state primaries and elections, with specific durations including weekends. Since 2020, the Secretary of State has promoted vote-by-mail, adding responsibilities for processing requests, mailing ballots, logging returns, organizing by precinct and address, and handling unsigned ballots.
- The number of census mailings has risen due to more households, requiring database updates and follow-up with non-responders.
- Automatic Voter Registration at the RMV, introduced in 2022, has further increased the workload.
- Requests for marriage licenses and Justice of the Peace services have grown annually, as no appointments are required.
- Dog licensing has increased to 2,870.

### Town Clerk Department Responsibilities:

1. **Financial Management:** Verifies and balances daily receipts, prepares departmental payments, maintains records, and manages the Town Clerk's budget and accounts.
2. **Vital Records:** Registers, records, and issues certified copies of vital records.
  - **Birth Records:** Includes home births and certified copies upon request.
  - **Marriage Records:** Processes marriage intentions, licenses, and solemnized records; submits monthly reports to the Bureau of Vital Records.
  - **Death Records:** Maintains records and issues certified copies.
3. **Elections and Voter Registration:** Manages elections and voter registration for over 19,000 voters.
  - Organizes local, state, and federal elections, including early and absentee voting.

- Schedules voter registration deadlines and maintains voter files (active, removed, pre-registrants, and prison voters).
  - Coordinates election workers, police details, and polling locations.
  - Reports election results and troubleshoots voting equipment.
4. Permits and Licenses- Issues and maintains:
    - 600+ business certificates (renewed every 4 years).
    - 3,000+ dog licenses annually, including kennel applications.
    - Raffle and bazaar permits, yard sale permits, hawkers/peddlers permits, and auctioneer licenses.
  5. Town Records and Ordinances:
    - Historical records dating back to 1656 for genealogical research.
    - Town codes, zoning ordinances, and council ordinances, updating them as needed.
    - Town meeting records and certified information on articles voted at meetings.
  6. Public Services:
    - Notary services for town-related documents.
    - Oath administration for elected and appointed officials, tracking over 450 officials, employees, and volunteers.
    - Public notifications via message boards for events, taxes, and elections.
  7. Administrative Duties:
    - Prepares payroll records, orders supplies, and communicates with the public, town departments, and organizations.
  8. Public Records and Reports:
    - Acts as the designated Records Access Officer, handles public records requests, and prepares the Annual Town Report.
  9. Collaboration: Works with other departments on:
    - Planning Board actions and Zoning Board appeals, tracking 20-day appeal periods.
    - Non-criminal disposition violations, tracking 21-day appeal periods.

Table: Key Statistics

Category	Statistics
Households in Town	10,000+
Population	28,633 and growing
Registered Voters	19,000+
Business Certificates	600+ (renewed every 4 years)
Dog Licenses	3,000+ annually
Election Workers	40 100 per election
Elected/Appointed Officials	450+ tracked
Historical Records	Dating back to 1656

## Key Insights. Observations and Challenges:

- **Resource Strain:** The combination of population growth, expanded voting options, and increased administrative tasks is straining a small staff, risking delays, errors, and burnout.
- **Manual Processes:** Many tasks remain manual, increasing the chance of errors
- **Compliance and Accuracy:** Handling ballots, census, and registrations accurately is critical for legal compliance and public trust.
- **Service Quality:** Rising demand for licenses and services could impact the quality and timeliness of service delivery.
- **Rapid Increase in Voter Population and Precincts:** The voter population has grown significantly (from 14,755 to 19,003 in 10 years), and precincts have expanded from 7 to 9. This growth puts pressure on limited staff resources and infrastructure.
- **Staffing Constraints:** Only 3 full-time employees (2 at 35 hours/week) are responsible for a wide range of complex and expanding duties. The workload has increased without a corresponding increase in staff.
- **Expansion of Early Voting and Mail-In Ballot Processing:** Early voting and mail-in ballots require extensive manual processing, including logging, organizing, and troubleshooting. The introduction of postcard mailings and the need to manage ballots in the state database have added layers of complexity.
- **Manual and Time-Intensive Administrative Tasks:** Staff must manually organize ballots by precinct and street, handle unsigned ballots, and ensure all are accounted for before elections. These tasks are labor-intensive and prone to error, especially with limited staff.
- **Increasing Census and Registration Workload:** The number of census mailings has risen with household growth, requiring database updates and follow-up with non-responders. Automatic voter registration at RMV (since 2022) has further increased the workload.
- **Growth in Licensing Demands:** Requests for marriage licenses and Justice of the Peace services are rising annually, as are dog licenses (2,870 licensed, with 500 still unlicensed and needing outreach). These add to the administrative burden.

## Closing

The Collins Center for Public Management would like to thank the Town of Bridgewater for welcoming and supporting the project team. The dedicated staff are a testament to the commitment to moving Bridgewater forward. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.