

Boston Ward 5 Democratic Committee

January 20, 2026

Bob Binney called the meeting to order.

Meeting Minutes Review & Approval

We take a moment to remember Suzanne Comtois. She will be missed.

Meeting Minutes Review & Approval

Correction to the minutes - Max **Tamer**-Mahoney

Rob motioned to accept the November minutes. Pat seconded; minutes approved.

Membership Matters

Election of New Members

- Shyam moves, Rob seconds to open the floor to voting for Noah Walsh for membership
- Noah is voted into membership
- Ben Daly is open for nomination
- Max moves to nominate Ben for membership, Rob seconds
- Ben is nominated

Treasurer's Report

Rob Whitney reported the following:

-General Financial Status

Current Balance: (in Citizen's bank account) \$4369.49

-Member Financial Activity

No one has paid 2026 dues yet! Dues are due in March, but you can always pay early!

Dues for 2026 are payable now. Members can pay via links on the website, or by check, and additional donations are always welcome. If you can't pay the full amount, contact Bob and/or Rob or Hilary.

-THE WARD 5 WEBSITE LINK FOR PAYING DUES SECURELY ONLINE:

-Visit the Home Page at <http://bostonward5dems.org>.

-Click on "How to Pay Your Dues if You're a Member" to connect with ActBlue.

-You'll see "Donate to Boston Ward 5 Democratic Committee."

General Membership Dues: \$60 First Year Membership: \$25; Student: \$25.

- Expenses are used for things like: Rent for the meeting space, website fees, printing signs and banners, and candidate forums.

Dues are generally due in your first full year.

Speaker - No Speaker this week

- We heard from Markey's campaign who wanted to send a staffer to talk to us, but we delayed them for later as they were uninvited.
- We will shoot to have candidates come by for the next few meetings. Jay Livingstone will be invited soon to speak.
- Endorsement votes may follow for candidates, but they are not required. Any associate member can vote on endorsements, but we are not required to endorse anyone.
- We have begun reaching out to a speaker from the MBTA following some negative discussions on the current state of the MBTA. It would be good to hear from them, and their PR rep is excited to talk to us.
- Interest was expressed in having a speaker in to discuss effective protesting techniques.

Committee Activities

- There will be a forum between Rep. Lynch and Patrick Lynch sponsored by Boston Indivisible in the community church on January 29th.
- Forums from WardWorks are upcoming for democratic candidates, but no set dates yet.
- Primary Election September 1
- General Election November 3rd
- Mass Democratic Convention May 29th-30th

Big year for the convention, as we will nominate candidates. This will be a fun year, everyone who wants to attend is encouraged to attend!

- Our caucus for selection of delegates will take place March 14th 9am-12pm at the Old South Church.

You must be a resident of ward 5 to become a delegate. The caucus serves to select who we send as delegates to the convention. 22 total delegates are selected (11 male 11 female) with the opportunity for youth and other specialty delegates.

General Discussion

Discussion on Minnesota

- **Bob:** I sent out a video from a Vermont congresswoman who was on the ground in Minnesota. She warns that this mess is coming to all of us. She sent out a handbook, and I encourage folks to go through it.
- **Pat:** I went to the last anti-ICE protest, and found that it can be surprisingly good for networking. I spoke to a city councilwoman from Somerville who was knowledgeable on non-violent protesting. This is someone we can discuss having in for a speaker.

What's the biggest problem facing our country today?

John: We have a huge vacuum at the top of the Dem party nationally. What should fill that vacuum?

Trump is a problem, but getting rid of Trump isn't the whole answer. David Plouff had an op-ed saying that we need to actually stand for something. What do you all think?

Mark: Things have gotten too far away from regular political debate to have it just be a unified message, we need to stand for basic values in a way that appeals.

Max: The biggest problem facing us is media literacy. I take the time to watch Newsmax, and find that you're getting a different view on what the world actually looks like.

Michael: To go back to the vacuum, we can't treat this like it's 2004 anymore, but this is something that comes every cycle where we have a lack of leadership after each loss. This just feels like a magnified version of the same issue because of how stark things are. To build on the media literacy discussion, this is a symptom of special interests and corruption getting just so blatant. The checks are gone for the executive branch with an anemic congress and conservative court. Even when he's gone, this will all still be broken.

Kristen: Liz Warren gave a speech about getting back to the basics. People know that their wallets are empty, and we will have to remind them about why.

Kate: That (Kristen) is the clearest answer, and the Democratic leaders are failing at getting the message out. Chuck Schumer is half asleep, and is a bad speaker, he isn't the leader for the times.

Shyam: I want to agree with Kristen, it was a great speech from Warren. A week after 2024, Pete Buttigieg came to speak, and he talked about how the future of the leadership will be found at the state and local level. How are we making sure that our governance is reflective and responsive to the needs of the people who live here or want to live here. Governance of places that we say that we are proud of as Democrats often does not work for everyone, and that is poisonous for our brand. How do we improve the areas that we do control so that we can show and not just tell?

Brennan: I like the idea of bringing it back to basics. When you get down to what people actually want, it comes down to affordability both here and the rest of the country. There are a lot of great candidates that won in 2025 like Mamdani in New York. Getting behind people who are truly making waves rather than getting in their way is the key. We need to make it a point to get money out of politics, and we should consider not giving our votes to people who aren't going to change that part of the system. We can't fix the country until we fix the system.

Ben: We're all circling around wealth inequality, and Kristen was right to call attention to it. It's how we won not just an election but a generation with the New Deal. You can tell by who Trump had in his front row that it's not his priority. We are an incredibly unequal country, and that inequality drives unrest as the promise of the American dream slips away.

Max: I am very wary of populism, and I know that Trump gave Warren a call about capping credit card interest rates, but I think this is bad policy. It becomes something where it will restrict lower income people from getting access to credit in general - we need to be careful of poorly thought out populist policies.

Shyam: When 70% of the economy is consumer driven, it would tank the economy if you remove access to credit for half of the country. We as democrats have to keep a watch on populism as an electoral tool and not give in to it as a governing tool. Mamdani is a good example of running on a populist message. I advised policy makers, and Boston has done a bad job on housing policy. Mamdani when actually in office has been very anti-populist in practice, favoring technocratic measures to start bending the cost curve on governance.

Liam: What Mamdani has done is go around the process to get things done - same as Donald Trump. Say what you will but both have done the things that they want. Democrats have done a bad job of translating our statements into actioned policy.

Michael: It seems like whoever has the weaker populist message loses. You see this in 2008, 2016, 2024 as a pattern. Trump and Mamdani both ran on full populism and a focus on affordability - everyone is just talking about lowering prices. The new deal has a good history of pragmatism and worked for people, but you have to actually run on those ideas to even get the office.

Shyam: The current state of things is the end of a slow drip of power to the executive branch over the years. 2028 can't be a continuation of the ceding of power to the executive, congress needs to pull that power back for the good of the country. The Democrats we support need to be voices of power in the democratic power, and can't just parrot out what the democratic leadership wants.

Ben: I've noticed that we deliver our message in a way that is less effective and more formal, where Trump has done a better job of taking on modern communication styles.

John: I had a hard time with this question and couldn't come up with a single response, so I had two. Another problem is that the working and middle class has been quashed. We need leadership in the Democratic party who has an actual vision for the working class and the middle class. Also, I think that the national debt is a huge problem that both parties are ignoring for short term gain. This is something that will affect my grandchildren, our tax system has to be adjusted to bring this under control over time.

Kristen: Both great points - on communication, we saw people going with Bernie into deeply red areas, and finding that the conservatives agreed with us more than they thought. And on debt, we're the fiscally conservative party, and need to get that message out there.

Kate: The deficit and the debt is also a communication problem. It's a titanic problem that grows every day, but no one is actually talking about it.

Shyam: It's nuts that we are now the party of fiscal responsibility, and it's nuts that Republicans are still successfully running on this. To circle back to focusing on the middle class - the Democrats that want to run on the fiscal side, they will have to run on bad records in their own states. Mass is doing terribly in terms of job growth, and Boston no longer compares to other big blue cities in job recovery compared to their peers. We failed on recovering after covid comparatively, and it's hard to run on these messages when we're failing on the home front.

Max: We are also the party of small government! We want to be less in your business than Republicans do at this point. I would also be curious about the job numbers in Boston - we have had a particularly hard run after over-investing in biotech, and this just isn't paying off.

Noah: Even in Boston, we have our own problems with enormous rents as we see our commercial streets half empty. The landlords are destroying our ability to have successful businesses and the state of things is decaying our ability to have a functioning society..

Michael: The race to fight the building of data centers has been a beacon of hope. Groundswell opposition will start to fix things over time - it's interesting to see these pockets of resistance form.

Bob: I'm a believer that Biden did a lot of right things as president, especially fighting for the middle class. I think we can make a blueprint to build a plan to fight on the issues.

Max: We may actually need data centers, but we need to find a greener way to power them.

If events happen in your neighborhood where we can have a table, reach out to the committee!

Sub Committee Heads

-Brendan (and Molly) for social media.

- Max for speakers.

- Pat for the website, for W5 business cards, endorsement palm cards, and other publications.

Kristen motioned to adjourn; Max seconded. Meeting was adjourned.

Attendance

Members

Bob Binney

Creelea Pangaro

Susan Smith

Jay Livingstone

Pat Amend

Mark Mantell

Kristen Mobilia

Max Tamer-Mahoney

Rob Whitney

Lucy Rivera

Sharon Hucul

Sharon Durkan

Holly Margulius

Bendan Dunn

Katherine Judge

Noah Walsh

Michael Holmes

Maxwell Tamer-Mahoney

Kate Gallivan

Shyam Gopaldesikan

Ben Daly (nominated)

Guests

John Achatz

Liam Morehead

Mary Garippo
Ross Krantz
Faaiz Masood