

Boston Ward 5 Democratic Committee

February 17, 2026

Bob Binney called the meeting to order.

We took a moment to remember Jessie Jackson and Suzanne Comtois. Bob shared that he has heard from Helen Cox's nephew that she is experiencing dementia issues and encouraged folks to reach out as she has been a dynamic and instrumental member of Ward 5. Bob has her address if anyone is interested in sending a card.

Meeting Minutes Review and Approval

Correction to the January minutes: Max Tamer-Mahoney is listed twice, once as Max and once as **Maxwell**.

Rob motions to accept the minutes; minutes approved.

Treasurer's Report

Rob Whitney reported the following:

-The current balance is the same as last month (\$4,369.49). We have \$625 in dues and contributions from non-members that Rob hasn't deposited yet.

-He encourages everyone to start paying their dues for 2026, even though the Ward technically hasn't started them collecting yet. Dues are generally due in your first full year.

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

-Also, in an election year, it's important to start building our war chest. Additional contributions 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.

Membership Matters

Election of new members

- Rob moves to elect Ben Daly as an associate member, Kristen seconds. Ben is elected an associate member of Ward 5.
- Liam is nominated as an associate member of Ward 5. He elects to waive his speech for now and give it next month

Speakers

Aaron Michlewitz, State Representative, 3rd Suffolk District

- Represents Bay Village and Chinatown in Ward 5.
- Elected in 2009; currently House Chair of Ways and Means and entering his eighth budget cycle. Rep. Michlewitz discussed the budget process, the status of growth and spending, the challenges surrounding increased healthcare costs, and uncertainty caused by the federal government. Two challenges the Statehouse are confronting are immigration and energy costs: specifically, ways to make MassSave more efficient. Meanwhile, the federal government is undercutting the Commonwealth at every turn, and we are amidst an affordability crisis. ICE is operating as a rogue agency without any checks and balances. He believes we can determine how to keep ICE in check without shutting down the conversation on crime, and is considering how to rectify this action in keeping with our constitutional and justice system.
- **Kathy:** will the legislature pass laws to negate the ballot referendums this term?. Rep. Michlewitz shared that he is against the ballot initiative to lower the personal income tax.
- **Kathy:** are referendums are definitively binding?
- Shyam: what is Rep. Michlewitz's vision for housing and the economic impact of the outward migration of young people.

Jay Livingstone, State Representative, 8th Suffolk District

- Represents Beacon Hill, Back Bay, and the West Fenway in Ward 5.
- Has been a member of Ward 5 since Obama was first elected.
- Rep. Livingstone elaborated on energy costs and healthcare. He believes the energy bill is going to be much better after it comes out of Ways and Means. He discussed the challenges facing the life science and healthcare industries in Massachusetts, which are encountering headwinds from the federal government, as well as the targeting of Boston's immigration communities. He believes this year's economic development bill will provide a meaningful way to support our economy.
- He has been working to pass bills advancing disability justice in law and for children in the DCF system as Chair of the Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities.
- He shared that his connections at Ward 5 are important to him and contribute to how much he loves this work.
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Committee Activities

Ward 5 Caucus March 14th

- Attendees: Kathy Judge, Kathy Huckle, Sharon Durkan, and Max Tamer-Mahoney (we get to send 10 women and 10 men)
- **Diane Barry:** would like to be listed as an alternate.
- **Bob:** We have confirmed that Senator Ed Markey will be there; we assume that Moulton will be there as well.
- **Kathy:** reiterated the importance of attending the Caucus to be elected as a delegate to the convention.

- **Rob:** spoke to Ward 5's precedent that we elect delegates who are members that attend regularly. We do not ask you allegiance to anyone prior to the convention.
- It's also very important that we bring enough people to the Caucus so we can win.

No Kings Rally March 28th

- Put it on your calendars; you can sign up online. Bob will organize a Ward 5 meeting spot and possibly sign-making session.

Convention May 29/30th

- **Bob:** recommends staying overnight. "It's very fun."

General Elections

- **Bob:** has signature papers for the Governor, Lt. Gov., and the AG.

Speakers

- **Max and Bob:** are working on getting candidates to come before the Ward so we can then consider them for endorsement.
- **Note:** To be eligible to vote, you need to have attended 6 meetings over the last year, or half of the total number of meetings since you were elected if you were recently elected. Bob: sent out a doc with voting members; let him know if there is a mistake.
- **Max and Bob:** had coffee with Angel Rodriguez, Head of External Affairs at the MBTA, but he can't come to our Ward 5 meeting because he must remain nonpartisan.
- We discussed collaborating with Ward 4 to host a "forum."

General Discussion

What Ward 5 can do amidst challenging times:

- **Rob:** We should focus on what we can affect: for example, the Senate race in Maine via letter writing or canvassing. In an election year, we can impact the ballot box.
- **Diane:** The NH Senate race, Pappas vs. Sununu is the closest contested race that will move the needle in DC.
- **John:** The national Democratic Party has a leadership vacuum. We should stimulate conversations about what the party's policy priorities should be, and identify affirmative policies that have the potential to present an attractive platform.
- **Jason:** ICE observation has been a meaningful example in Minneapolis; it's worth training some of our members on that.
- **Liam:** We should pay attention to areas that are at-risk of going red in MA (Fall River); there is also an opportunity to pressure the Statehouse to actually implement the Democratic state party platform.
- **Nancy/John:** History shows us that simple messaging in politics works. Why aren't national Democratic leaders discussing what our immigration policy should be?

- **Ben:** Progressive Mass (run by Jonathan Cohn) is soliciting people to write op-eds about Massachusetts being signed into a 287(g) agreement. MA is the only democratic state that isn't in one of these agreements; but Healey could change this with the stroke of a pen.
- **Kathy:** Our biggest divide right now is gender; men need to bring other men into the conversation.
- **Kristen:** We should strengthen the ties in our committees by creating space (before, after, etc.) in a social setting to deepen connections and further our conversations.
- **Several members:** Suggested more informal gatherings; maybe start with the MBTA speaker meeting or come before or head somewhere after.
- **Bob:** What do you want me to do now?
 - Find ways to participate in Maine (Rob to take lead) and New Hampshire.
 - Host a roundtable on national policy platform.
 - Research a gathering place for continued discussions.
- **Mike:** Consider more public "tabling."
- That is, finding opportunities and events where we can put up a table and give out literature about Ward 5, voter registration and other important issues, such as knowing our rights in this environment.

Rob motioned to adjourn the meeting; Max seconded. Meeting was adjourned.

Attendance

Members

Bob Binney
 Katherine Judge
 Kristen Mobilia
 Rob Whitney
 Holly Margulius
 Michael Holmes
 Max Tamer-Mahoney
 Ben Daly
 Nancy Street
 Shyam Gopaldesikan
 Liam Morehead (nominated for Assoc. Member)

Guests

Representative Aaron Michlewitz
 Mary Garippo
 John Achatz
 Ross Krantz
 Faaiz Masood
 Jason Walker
 Julia Barber
 Piper Ward

Zoom:

Diane Barry
 Abigail Gabrieli
 Sharon Hucul
 Kate Gallivan
 Noah Walsh
 Lucy Rivera
 Representative Jay Livingstone
 City Councilor Sharon Durkan