

# **Boston Ward 5 Democratic Committee**

**January 20, 2026**

Bob Binney called the meeting to order.

We took a moment to remember Suzanne Comtois, a long-time member who passed away. She will be missed.

## **Meeting Minutes Review & Approval**

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

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

## **Membership Matters**

### *Election of New Members*

- Shyam moves, and Rob seconds, to open the floor to voting for Noah Walsh for membership.

Noah is voted in as a member.

- 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) \$4,369.49

#### *-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 the first full year.

## **Speakers - None this week**

- Markey's campaign wanted to send a staffer to talk to us, but we delayed them for later.

- Our goal is to have candidates speak at the next few meetings. We will invite Jay Livingstone to speak soon.

- Endorsement votes for candidates may follow, and 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 it. Their PR rep is excited to talk to us.
- Interest was expressed in having a speaker who will address effective protesting techniques.

### **Committee Activities**

- There will be a forum between Rep. Lynch and candidate Patrick Lynch Roath sponsored by Boston Indivisible, at our meeting place, Community Church, on January 29th.
- Forums from WardWorks are upcoming for democratic candidates, but dates have been set.
- Primary Election September 1
- General Election November 3rd
- Mass Democratic Convention May 29th-30<sup>th</sup>. It's a big year, as we will nominate candidates. It will be fun. Everyone who wants to attend is encouraged to run for a convention delegate slot.
- The Ward 5 Caucus for selection of delegates will take place March 14<sup>th</sup>, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Old South Church. You must be a registered, or pre-registered, Democrat and a resident of Ward 5 to become a delegate. There are 22 delegate slots, (11 male 11 female) with the opportunity for youth and other specialized delegates.

### **General Discussion**

#### **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. For example, I spoke to a social justice advocate about non-violent protesting.

#### **The biggest problems facing our country today:**

**John:** We have a huge vacuum at the top of the Democratic Party nationally. How to fill it? Trump is a problem, but getting rid of him isn't the complete 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 only 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. You get a different view on the world.

**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 when 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 a conservative court. Even when he's gone, all of this will still be broken.

**Kristen:** Liz Warren gave a speech about getting back to the basics. People know that their wallets are empty, and we must 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 a bad speaker. He isn't the leader for these times.

**Shyam:** I 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? The governance of places that we say that we are proud of as Democrats often do not work for everyone. This 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 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 who 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 will restrict lower income people from getting access to credit in general. We need to be careful of poorly thought-out populist policies.

**Shyam:** 70% of the economy is consumer-driven. It will tank the economy if you remove access to credit for half of the country. We as Democrats must 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've advised policy makers, and Boston has done a bad job on housing policy. In office, Mamdani 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 actionable policy.

**Michael:** It seems like whomever 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. You have to actually run on those ideas to even get into office.

**Shyam:** The current state of things is the end of a slow drip of power toward the Executive branch over the years. 2028 can't be a continuation of the ceding of power to the Executive branch. Congress needs to pull that power back for the good of the country. The Democrats we support need to be voices of democratic power. We can't just parrot 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 have two. Another problem is that the working and middle class has been quashed. We need leadership in the Democratic party that 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 must be adjusted to bring this under control over time.

**Kristen:** Both great points. On communication, we saw people going with Bernie in 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 are also communication issues. They're titanic problems that grow every day, but no one is 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 who want to run on the fiscal side 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 peer big blue cities in job recovery. 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 it 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. 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.

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

**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 for a plan to fight on the issues.

### **Subcommittee Heads**

-Brendan (and Molly) for social media.

- Max for speakers.

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

*If events happen in your neighborhood where we can put out a table, and inform people about our committee, let us know!*

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 Hocol  
Sharon Durkan  
Holly Margulius  
Bendan Dunn  
Katherine Judge  
Noah Walsh  
Michael Holmes  
Ross Krantz  
Liam Marchand  
Max Tamer-Mahoney  
Kate Sullivan  
Shyam Gopaladesikan  
John Achetz

*Guests*

Mary Garippo  
Ben Daly