

# **Boston Ward 5 Democratic Committee**

**March 17, 2025**

Bob Binney called the meeting to order.

## **Meeting Minutes Review & Approval**

Bob motioned to accept the November minutes. Minutes approved.

## **Membership Matters**

### *Election of New Members*

- Liam Morehead is eligible for membership. Ward 5 resident since May, now working on the Moulton campaign. Hilary motions to elect Liam as a Member, Noah seconds. Liam is elected a member!
- Julia Barber is eligible to be nominated for membership. Very enthusiastic and excited to be here! Rob motions to nominate Julia for membership, Max seconds. Julia is nominated.

## **Treasurer's Report**

### Rob Whitney reported the following:

#### *-General Financial Status*

Current Balance: (in Citizen's bank account) \$3,291.85.

#### *-Member Financial Activity*

Only 10 people have paid their 2026 dues! They are due in March, so they 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.* Dues are generally due in your first full year. These funds are used for things like rent for the meeting space; website fees; printing signs and banners; and candidate forums.

## **Speaker: State Senator Lydia Edwards**

- Here for a deeper conversation about what's going on, as there wasn't time to have a Q&A at the Caucus.
- Was chair of housing when she first joined the Senate. Passed a large housing bill that made a sizable investment, sealed eviction records, and removed the burden of broker's fees from renters.
- Money was put towards commercial to residential conversions, \$200M of bond money. Much of that has gone to downtown Boston, towards both student dorms and traditional apartments/condos. Using already built structures helps to make use of fallow properties.
- Was a Boston City Councilor before her election to the State Senate; headed city housing.

- Now she is the Joint Chair of the Judiciary Committee in the State House, which puts her in the driver's seat of many hot topics, such as dealing with a lot of crises from the feds. Need to make sure the National Guard isn't deployed here, and that immigration law is carried out in a dignified way in Mass. Helped to write the bill that prevents ICE from raiding courthouses.

- Upcoming animal rights bill: Helps prevent discrimination based on dog breed, and caps pet insurance.

- Sits on Ways and Means Committee. Will have a hearing in Mattapan as part of HHS. Officials from several important social government organizations will be present and taking questions. Please come if you can, or tune in, and submit questions!

- She is also a JAG (Judge Advocate General) attorney in the National Guard. Just promoted to Captain. Helped to pass an eviction moratorium on those who are furloughed due to government shutdowns.

- **Michael:** Brewing crisis in the U.S. Supreme Court for Haitian TPS (temporary protected status). What can we do to help our neighbors? Also, do you have a piece of dream legislation?

- Haitian TPS: She represents the largest TPS constituency from El Salvador. TPS is renewed every 18 months, and you must meet several benchmarks to keep that status. Must be employed, crime-free, and pay your taxes. Some Americans that can't meet those three things. It's a failure of the Federal Government that you can't make a path to citizenship when you can be on this list for 30 years. Mass has the third highest population of Haitians on TPS, after NY and FL.

- Things we need to teach people: Revoking this status is not immediate. Do not fire workers! There are things we can do at the state level to get status for folks, but it's never going to be a real replacement for what a job provides.

- Dream legislation: Immigration reform! I can't do that, but I would love to.

- **Max:** There has been a proliferation of license plate cameras (flock cameras). Many states/munis have banned them, as they feed data to the feds and law enforcement. Anything brewing about banning these?

- The legislature passed a data protection bill recently, but it's more on checking with folks about selling their info. She will check to see if we're moving towards restricting this kind of data sharing.

- **Rob:** I have followed this closely and pushed Jay on civil forfeiture reform bills. There are different forms of it; Jay's is a big omnibus bill.

- She has supported Jamie Eldrich's version of this bill. Police say that they need these materials that they take for their operations, but her bill is still advancing. It's different from Jay's. Will see where it goes.

- **Michael:** I work at the Mayor's Office of Housing, and we need a lot of home rule petitions, which makes the State House a bit of a boogeyman. Is there anything that we can do to stop things from dying in the State House?

- She shares this frustration. Put up the first transfer fee home rule back in the day, and now it's spread to other towns. The state won't let you have unrestricted funds, but then expects you to get money from a stone. Wants Boston to have more autonomy, but the best bet may be a ballot question to get a specific policy passed.

### **Speaker: Alex Bok**

- Lifetime resident of Ward 5; has lived in Bay Village for 40 years.

- Back from spending two years as an advisor at ARPA-E in DC. Just returned in February. Spent five weeks in Minneapolis. One of his children had her first child in December and was there as things transpired.

- Did not confront ICE; was with grandchild. But spent lots of time talking to residents.
  - Met someone who spends his days driving kids to and from school to fill in for parents who were too afraid of being picked up getting their children.
  - Minneapolis in January was having record cold; the wind chill never went above 0. This did not slow down the community, but it did slow down ICE.
  - 3,000 ICE agents. Minneapolis only has 600 police officers. Same neighborhood where George Floyd was murdered. The administration assumed that there would be violence, but the people didn't give them an excuse for martial law. Not resistance per se, but rather neighbor-focused.
  - Food banks stepped up. One increased its reach 12-fold to support the people in danger. No political talk; they were just there to feed people.
  - The community came together in a way that was impressive. Heartening that they were doing so of their own volition. There was no single leader. Things were not organized by elected officials.
  - Everything culminated in a giant 50,000-person march that much of his family participated in.
  - Key lesson: Video makes a huge difference. Being able to videotape the murders from multiple angles changed the entire conversation. They revealed immediately that the words of the administration were a lie, and the courage to post them made a huge difference.
  - 30,000 people in greater Minneapolis have taken a two-hour webinar on how to observe ICE. A cautionary to not get involved, but how to help.
  - There was a great culture of non-violence. A federal building—the Whipple building—held detainees before shipping them out of state. Agitators tried to start riling people up with a literal dumpster fire, but the protestors put it out and refused to escalate.
  - Businesses were supported by the people, even when they couldn't operate due to the raids.
  - ICE was incredibly poorly trained and equipped.
  - The Minneapolis big business world stayed silent and only called for deescalation at the end of the operation. You can't wait for corporate America to help you.
  - This is his view of things from the ground; everyone's view will be different.
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- About the training. Is there a way we can access that?
  - This was run by the Minneapolis ACLU, but there must be an equivalent.
  - **Kenzie:** LUCE is a good organization: we can have a link sent out.
  - One important observation: Food delivery services and other supportive actions were separate from the ICE observers or official actors. By being separate, it protected the volunteers.
  - **Rob:** I was in Minneapolis-Saint Paul in November, and it was the quietest city I've ever been in. What was it like to be in that space during a more active time?
  - The backdrop of this and the Somalian scandal did not affect the community as much. This was a very neighborly community, and they all knew one another. Our day to day was not affected by ICE. We volunteered with the food delivery and packing, and marched, but everything was done very quietly.
  - **Kenzie:** I was out there for a week to meet the new niece. It was heartwarming to see the community solidarity. It was what everyone was talking about. Every bar was raising money to help the families; every club was talking about the next protest.
  - People felt that their neighbors were insulted and that the government was blatantly lying to them. It's a natural affront, and it galvanized people.
  - **Shyam:** Given what you saw, how would you advise national Democrats to talk about ICE?

- Not my area of expertise. The government needs to set real rules around how ICE can operate. Some systems to track and legitimize the process. With what's happening with the war, the moderate Dems might wimp out and start funding DHS. They are supporting things like Noem getting fired, but they aren't doing much more. Bondi may also be on the way out! Saying defund the police didn't help in the election, and I don't think that saying abolish ICE will help either.

### **Committee Activities**

#### **- Caucus Review**

- 75 attendees, and more than 15 electeds or elected-hopefuls attended and spoke!  
- 10 women and 10 men delegates, as well as 4 alternates were elected. Our group swung young, which is great to see!

#### **- Upcoming**

- No Kings rally, Saturday March 28th at Parkman Bandstand on the Common from 1-4 pm. You can sign up on [Mobilize.us](https://mobilize.us) or [Mass50501.org](https://mass50501.org).  
- Forums from WardWorks are planned for democratic candidates, but no set dates yet.  
- Discussion with MBTA representative will be held at the Fenway Community center. Date TBA.  
- Primary Election September 1<sup>st</sup>. General Election November 3<sup>rd</sup>.  
- Mass Democratic Convention May 29th-30<sup>th</sup>. Big year, as we will nominate candidates. This will fun. Everyone who wants to is encouraged to attend!

### **General Discussion: The War in Iran**

- **Max:** I am personally affected by this. I was in Lebanon two months ago. Mother's family is still there, and I went to university for a time. I was there for Christmas and woke up to an Israeli drone outside. I have no love for the Iranian regime, and I have been personally detained by Hezbollah. That said, I'm not a fan of this whole war. I don't think it will end well for anyone. I think the Iranian regime is stronger than they think, and it doesn't seem like the U.S. or Israel have thought this through. I'm frustrated that in Boston the protests have been organized by some crazy folks. They openly support Hezbollah and Hamas. I'm frustrated that every protest seems to be organized by one of these groups—as someone who wants to publicly oppose the war to be surrounded by folks holding pictures of the Ayatollah.

- **Noah:** It has revealed the U.S. and Israel as bad actors. It's absurd that some Democrats in Congress won't vote to limit the executive war powers. We all have some responsibility in our government, and we'll have to reflect on why we only care that this raises gas prices.

**Julia:** This and many issues are quite heavy, so it's great to see us putting some action items into it rather than wallowing. Need to focus on making the Midterms as successful as possible to combat this. If we didn't have actions to take, I would just be enraged all the time. Being here gives me some hope!

**Shyam:** One tangible thing that people would agree on is, for the Midterms: We have someone running for Congress who did not vote for the Iraq War 20 years ago. We have the power to make this a statement election by supporting Patrick Roath, to show that we are done with politicians who support these kinds of assaults on a foreign nation.

**Hilary:** America has a poor history of caring about what we do in the foreign sphere, but we always care about our wallets. Trump is calling affordability a hoax, but people really do feel these things. And when Americans start coming home in body bags, people will start to pay some real attention.

**Julia:** Are we tracking open seats for special elections in other states?

**Michael:** There is a special in Georgia to replace Marjorie Taylor Greene that went to a run-off, which was supposed to be a landslide for the Republican.

**Bob:** I am organizing 500 post cards for that election.

**Kenzie:** We have done phone banks in the past.

**Skylar:** Back to the war, spaces like this are important. It gives people a place to discuss issues like these with the comfort of like-minded individuals. People have gotten numb to the violence we're experiencing, and it's extremely disheartening how we've all gotten used to death and killing. The conversation about death in the media has shown a lack of respect for life.

**Michael:** It's crazy how desensitized we've become. The media cycle has gotten far too fast and moves past these stories. The bombing of the schoolchildren is barely in the conversation anymore, and it should be world-stopping. To also touch on anti-war candidates, at least there was a vote in the past! There wasn't a vote for Iran like there was for Iraq and Afghanistan. It's crazy how uninvolved Congress is, it's like they have no control over anything anymore. We need to be support Congresspeople who want to take their power back.

**Skylar:** It feels like we've become a very unserious group of people. I'd like to see an injection of seriousness in all walks of life.

**Nancy:** I have never seen a time with a less functional government. No one envisioned that we would hit this level of dysfunction in the three branches of government, but I believe that with young folks getting involved, we may have a future. It may be time for some real structural changes, and it's wonderful to hear from such articulate people.

**John:** We have seen some crises, but they have been festering for a long time. Congress has become incredibly dysfunctional, and Trump is using this vacuum to assume more power. Trump is writing a platform for the world that will be terrible, and getting control of Congress is very important. I don't have a lot of faith in the direction of the national Democrats right now.

**Hilary:** Trump is saying that he isn't bound by the Supreme Court anymore, and it's really disturbing to see what he's doing with the Justice Department. If no one prosecutes him when he doesn't abide by a Supreme Court decision, then what do we do? What comes next?

**Noah:** We must remember that we're citizens and not rely only on our representatives. We will show up for No Kings, but it's on a Saturday. What would it take to get people out on a weekday? We need to spread ideas and get to the point where protests can show our power in real time.

### **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.

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

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

## **Attendance**

### *Members*

Sharon Hocol  
David Crossman  
Kate Gallivan  
Lucy Rivera  
Liam Morehead  
Ben Daly  
Julia Barber  
Noah Walsh  
John Achatz  
Kenzie Bok  
Shyam Gopaladesikan  
Nancy Street  
Rob Whitney  
Mark Mantell  
Abigail Gabrieli  
Skylar Nush  
Max Tamer-Mahoney  
Kristen Mobilia  
Holly Margulius  
Katherine Judge  
Alex Bok  
Hilary Bacon Gabrieli  
Michael Holmes  
Bob Binney

### *Guests*

Mary Garippo  
Lydia Edwards