

Massachusetts House of Representatives
Bill Summary

Bill #: H.2268

Title: An Act Bridgewater town charter article II, legislative branch section 2-13(a) annual stipend

Sponsor: Rep. Dennis Gallagher

Committee: Municipalities and Regional Government

Hearing Date: 5/13/25

Current Law: Article 89, Section 8 of the Mass. Constitution (Home Rule Amendment) authorizes cities and towns to petition the General Court to enact special laws that apply to that community. This includes the adoption or revision of town charters.

MGL Chapter 39, Section 6A authorizes municipal salaries to be set by ordinance for members of a city or town council, and to increase or decrease such salaries. It limits when such changes may occur, and states that a member who is also a municipal employee may choose to receive their municipal salary in lieu of compensation as a member.

Article II, Section 2-13(a) of the Bridgewater Town Charter currently states that members of the town council serve without compensation. Section 2-13(b) does provide for members to be reimbursed for actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

Summary: This bill would amend the town charter to authorize each member of the town council to receive, payable in arrears, an annual stipend in the amount of \$5,000. The town council president would receive an annual stipend in the amount of \$7,500, also payable in arrears and also to be received as of each annual town election day.

The legislation states that a town councilor who vacates their office would receive a pro-rated stipend as of the last date of their service.

No town councilor will be eligible for any other town benefits.

The town council may adopt ordinances modifying the stipend, however such changes would not take effect during the same year when the increase or reduction is voted. Also, in accordance with similar language in MGL Chapter 39, Section 6A, no such change could be made between the election of a new council and the date when the new council is qualified.

Members elected in a special town election or otherwise appointed would be paid a pro-rated amount of the \$5,000 annual stipend based upon the number of days they had served since the special election or appointment.

Notes: The language in this legislation (proposed ordinance D-FY22-008) was approved by the Bridgewater Town Council at the April 23, 2024 meeting by a vote of 8-0.