

Minutes Stoneham Finance and Advisory Board October 16, 2013

Present: George Georgountzos – Chairman, William Previdi - Vice Chairman, Stephen Dapkiewicz, Julianne DeSimone, Ben Caggiano, Dava Felch Kilbride

The meeting opened at 7:35 – the primary goal of the meeting was to discuss the warrant articles for the upcoming Town Meeting that were not voted on at the previous Finance Board meeting.

The minutes of the September 30, 2013 meeting were reviewed. Dava Kilbride moved that the minutes be accepted, Ben Caggiano seconded the motion. The minutes were unanimously accepted.

The minutes of the October 7, 2013 meeting were reviewed. Dava Kilbride moved that they be accepted, Julianne DeSimone seconded the motion. Julianne opened a discussion around changes to the minutes, others also had changes and it was decided to put off discussing them further until the next meeting when George McCormack – Secretary is present – Dava withdrew her motion to accept.

Discussion of Article 1 – Town Administrator, Dave Ragucci appeared before the board to explain the purpose of the article. Dave explained that the intent of the article is to set the maximum square footage that a store sign can be on the front of the building based on based on frontage of the building and distance from street, with a maximum size of 100 sq feet. The main reason for the article is for Red Stone Plaza but applies to all stores in the business district. Bill Previdi made a motion to defer this decision to the planning board, Ben Caggiano seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously accepted.

Discussion of Article 5 - Marcia Wengen - Co-Chairman of the Historical Commission appeared before he board to discuss the article. The article is asking for the transfer of funds from the Cemetery Perpetual Care Trust Fund a sum of \$10,000 to begin the process of repairing 39 headstones that are in a hazardous and unstable condition. This project is part of the Old Burial Ground Master Plan which is a total of 11 projects. Marcia explained the money is to come from the Perpetual Care Fund income (interest) account. Ben Caggiano questioned whether the account is to be used only for Lindenwood Cemetery. Marcia mentioned that in the past funds were used for the Williams St. cemetery, which no longer exists. Marcia mentioned that she was hoping to get money from the CPA but since it did not pass in the spring and after discussions with Dave Ragucci that she was asking for \$10,000 to start repairing the dangerous headstones. Ron Florino – Town Accountant mentioned that the town withdraws about \$35,000 a year from the Trust Fund Income account to help fund the maintenance of Lindenwood cemetery. George Georgountzos made a favorable motion Dava Kilbride seconded the motion. Motion passed with five in favor and one abstention.

Discussion of Article 20 – The motion asks that \$25,000 be transferred from the Cemetery Perpetual Care Trust Income Fund to help cover the costs of maintenance and repair of the cemetery. Ron Florino confirmed that the funds do come for the Perpetual Care Income Fund and that it is an annual recurring withdrawal from the account to help hire workers to maintain the cemetery. Ben Caggiano made motion to accept the article, Bill Previdi seconded the motion. The Article passed by unanimous vote.

Discussion of Article 4 – Bill Previdi explained that the abutter to the middle granted an easement to allow for middle school parking. The abutter needs to take back 200 sq feet that is on his side of his fence that overlaps his boundary line in his parking lot. The abutter needs to do this to clear his title and this is space that the middle school does not use and never will. Bill made a motion for favorable action, Julianne DeSimone seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion of Article 6 – Ron Florino explained that the article is use money from the tax overlay account which is used to fund abatements or exemptions to property taxes. There is a surplus in the account and this article asks to use \$20,000 of the surplus (which was released by the board of assessors) to cover the cost the tri-annual tax recertification review. Bill Previdi made a motion for favorable action, Dava Kilbride seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion of Article 10 – Bill Previdi was concerned about what seemed to be a large adjustment to the Town Administrator's personnel budget. Ron Florino explained that it was mostly to cover the 1 ½ % cost of living adjustments that were settled in contract negotiations, Police overtime. George Georgountzos asked about the funding for the library and Ron said the \$20,000 that was in the article will cover the minimum that the library needs to maintain its certification and receive \$17,000 in grants. Ron went on to explain other changes to the budget. George asked how the money is applied and Ron mentioned that the money comes from new tax income that the town collected. Ron mentioned that it is a balanced budget and that the town did not have to use free cash to balance the budget. Ben Caggiano made a motion for favorable action, Bill Previdi seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Discussion of Article 12 - George asked about how much is left in free cash after all capital increases are covered, \$250,000 for Weiss farm litigation and providing the \$180,000 for reducing the trash fee passes. Ron said that it will leave \$48,800 in free cash that will go into capital stabilization. Bill Previdi made a motion for favorable action, Julianne DeSimone seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Bill Previdi had a question about article 9 because the Finance Board had requested that the word Maintenance be added to the article, George said that we will review the article in Finance Board meeting prior to the town meeting and make a motion on the floor if it has not been added.

Discussion of Article 14 – Capital expenses, \$201,350 appropriated, to come for free cash. Ron Florino mentioned that the language for the park and recreation was changed to reflect that the funds are for lights. Bill Previdi agreed that that is what the funds were for. Ben Caggiano made a motion for favorable action, Bill Previdi seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion of Article 22 – George asked to clarify what the Finance Board had discussed at the last meeting in regards to the setting up of a trash fund. Julianne reiterated that she wanted to specify that the money can only be used for trash related expenses and any expenditure out of the fund had to be approved by the Selectmen along with the Town Administrator. Also, any funds left in the account at the end of the year must go towards reducing the trash fee. Dave Ragucci expressed concern about zeroing out the account each year with the concern that the tipping fees could go up and the current reduced trash fee may not be enough to cover that. Dave was concerned that if our trash fee goes low enough, some condos may decide to opt in and our tonnage will go up. George made the point that if the condos opt in then the town collects more money and it should be a wash. George also mentioned that the purpose of this article is for transparency in the

collecting and spending of fees. Dave agreed and supports the article. George mentioned that the Finance Board voted in favor at their last meeting.

Discussion of Article 23 – The towns request to apply for five additional liquor licenses for the town. Dave Ragucci explained that the town is at its limit of restaurant liquor licenses and there are no more available if a restaurant were to open in town and wanted to serve liquor in their restaurant. The town is asking for permission to apply to the state to for five additional licenses for the purpose of having them available. Bill Previdi made a Motion for favorable action, Dava Kilbride seconded the motion. The motioned passed unanimously.

George Georgountzos said that he will write the remaining recommendations for the town meeting book. It will be the motion with the Finance Board recommendations in the book. George assigned people to present articles at the town meeting.

Bill Previdi made a motion to adjourn, George Georgountzos seconded the motion.

Meeting adjourned at 9:00

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Dapkiewicz