

**Stoneham Select Board
Open Meeting
Tuesday, January 21, 2025
7:00 p.m.**

Open Session

Members Present: Raymie Parker – Chair, Timothy Waitkevitch – Vice Chair, Heidi Bilbo – Clerk, George Seibold

Also Present: Town Administrator Dennis Sheehan

Document List: FY25 Tax Exemptions; Minutes dated 1/7/25; Email from KIIN Management dated 1/10/25; Email to Cheryl Noble dated 1/10/25; Town Code Section 16-95; ABCC licensing materials submitted by Pignone’s Café of Stoneham.

Agenda Item 1: Call to Order: Parker called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with a unanimous vote.

Agenda Item 2: Pledge of Allegiance

Agenda Item 3: Swearing in of Police Officer Police Chief James O’Connor spoke briefly about Police Officer Emily Dello Russo promotion to sergeant and thanked her for her dedication and service. Town Clerk Maria Sagarino swore in Officer Dello Russo as sergeant.

Bilbo moved to take a 5 minute recess. Seibold seconded the motion. Voted unanimously.

Agenda Item 4: Citizens’ Comments No comments were offered.

Seibold moved to hear agenda items 8 and 9 out of order and move into the liquor licensing authority. Waitkevitch seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

Voting in favor:

Raymie Parker
Timothy Waitkevitch
Heidi Bilbo
George Seibold

Motion Passes (4-0)

Agenda Item 8: Request to Waive Seating Regulation Kanitta from KIIN Management, 418 Main Street, requested a waiver of Town Code Section 16-95 that required 35 seats to file an application for a liquor license. KIIN is expanding and will have 6 bar seats and 14 seats in the

restaurant. Bilbo stated that this type of expansion is exactly what the Town needs. Seibold moved to waive Town Code Section 16-95. Bilbo seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

Voting in favor:

Raymie Parker
Timothy Waitkevitch
Heidi Bilbo
George Seibold

Motion Passes (4-0)

Agenda Item 9: Pignone's Café – Application for New Liquor License Bilbo read the notice of hearing. Kilbride stated that all paperwork was in order and would be submitted to the ABCC. Waitkevitch moved to approve the application for an all liquor on premises license. Bilbo seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

Voting in favor:

Raymie Parker
Timothy Waitkevitch
Heidi Bilbo
George Seibold

Motion Passes (4-0)

Seibold moved to exit Liquor Licensing Authority and return to the Select Board, Bilbo seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

Voting in favor:

Raymie Parker
Timothy Waitkevitch
Heidi Bilbo
George Seibold

Motion Passes (4-0)

Agenda Item 5: Tax Exemption Discussion Cheryl Kozlowski, Assessor, reviewed the real estate exemptions that are currently in place and discussed additional exemptions that could go to town meeting if desired by the Select Board. She stated that \$130,000 would be required from the overlay account for additional exemptions. She stated that there are currently 215 residents that take advantage of real estate exemptions. Sheehan stated that there would need to be a discussion regarding the merits of increasing exemptions and the effect on the overlay account and other residents.

Agenda Item 6: Debt Exclusion Discussion Paulette Gerry, Treasurer, stated that there are 2 schools listed on the tax bill, the Middle School and the High School. She stated that the \$135 million listed on the tax bill will be on there until 2052. She stated that in FY26 an additional \$140 per single family home will be added to the tax bill. Gerry stated that the 4 elementary schools have been paid off and the debt retired. Waitkevitch stated that how the Town pays for new buildings should be reviewed and a long term plan should be in place.

Agenda Item 10: Override Discussion Parker announced the public engagement sessions. Sheehan stated that the finance director and superintendent are preparing slides for the public engagement sessions. Seibold stated that he would like to have some hard numbers for the public engagement sessions. Sheehan stated that he can choose the assumed growth factors and define level service, but would hesitate to give override numbers to the public until we receive feedback on services. Parker stated that she would like to see something more than a level funded budget, but that we will not have all the figures we need by Tuesday.

Waitkevitch stated that he would like to see a three year solution and that the range of \$12 to \$14 million starts to solve problems and restore services. Bilbo stated that she does not want to put a number out until we hear priorities from the residents and that can only be determined after the public engagement sessions. Parker stated that it is important to hear both sides of the issue and that she has received no feedback from the “no” side of the override.

Sheehan stated that he would like to present 2 options based on services: a level funding option for 3-5 years and an increase in services with limited variability.

Ryan Foreman, 12 Winsdor Road, stated that the Town needs to present a bullet point list of what will be done with the additional tax revenue. He stated that the list should outline the highest priority so that it can easily be seen where the money is going.

Agenda Item 7: Approve Minutes Waitkevitch moved to approve the minutes of 1/7/25. Bilbo seconded the motion.

Agenda Item 11: High School Building Project Update Sheehan showed updated photographs of the high school building project including excavation of the old Stoneham High School site and the completed lighting under the solar arrays. Parker announced that additional blasting may occur at the site and there will be a robo call.

Agenda Item 12: Town Administrator’s Report Sheehan reported that a \$19,000 fire safety grant was awarded to the Town and he thanked the delegation for their efforts.

Agenda Item 13: Non-Deliberative Announcements and Scheduling Seibold reminded residents to check on their senior neighbors and relatives in the cold weather. Parker stated that the free Stoneham Shuttle has changed expanded pick up locations and residents should check the home page for more information.

Agenda Item 14: Adjourn Bilbo moved to adjourn. Waitkevitch seconded the motion. Voted unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Dava Feltch Kilbride, Office Manager