

**Stoneham Select Board  
Open Meeting  
Tuesday, May 6, 2025  
5:00 p.m.**

**Open Session**

**Members Present:** Timothy Waitkevitch – Chair, David Pignone – Vice Chair, Ryan Foreman – Clerk, Heidi Bilbo; Raymie Parker

**Also Present:** Town Administrator Dennis Sheehan

**Document List :** Licensing packet from Aaronap Cellars, LLC; Email from Ryan Foreman dated 5/6/25; Override survey results from 5/5/25 and 5/6/25; Warrant for Special Town Meeting; Contingency budget warrant article; DLS ballot packet; FY26/FY27 adopted and estimated budget sheet; Liaison list 2025; Email from Ryan Tofelson dated 4/2/25

**Agenda Item 1: Call to Order:** Waitkevitch called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Agenda Item 2: Pledge of Allegiance**

**Agenda Item 3: Citizens' Comments** Bobby Cafazzo, 47 Colincote Street, stated that he was disappointed in the delay of warrant article 10, a tax exemption article, and would like to see that back on the Town Meeting Warrant.

Lisa Mashburn, 43 West Street, requested a discussion about liaison assignments and to create a way to donate on the automatic payment system.

Parker moved to enter into liquor licensing authority to return to the Select Board. Bilbo seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

Voting in favor:

Timothy Waitkevitch  
David Pignone  
Ryan Foreman  
Heidi Bilbo  
Raymie Parker

Motion Passes (5-0)

**Agenda Item 4: Farmers Winery License** Noel Powell appeared for Aaronap Cellars, LLC. He stated that this will be his seventh year participating in the farmers market and that they sell wine

for take-away consumption. Parker moved to approve the Farmers Winery License for Aaronap Cellars. Foreman seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

Voting in favor:

Timothy Waitkevitch  
David Pignone  
Ryan Foreman  
Heidi Bilbo  
Raymie Parker

Motion Passes (5-0)

Parker moved to exit liquor licensing authority and return to the Select Board. Pignone seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

Voting in favor:

Timothy Waitkevitch  
David Pignone  
Ryan Foreman  
Heidi Bilbo  
Raymie Parker

Motion Passes (5-0)

**Agenda Item 5: Committee Appointments** Bilbo moved to appoint Ryan Tofelson to the Open Space and Recreation Committee. Pignone seconded that motion. A roll call vote was taken.

Voting in favor:

Timothy Waitkevitch  
David Pignone  
Ryan Foreman  
Heidi Bilbo  
Raymie Parker

Motion Passes (5-0)

**Agenda Item 6: Liaison Assignments** Bilbo read the Select Board policy of the role of liaisons. Parker stated that informally, the role of liaison is to act as the pass through to the Select Board and to attend meetings to understand what the committee is doing. The Board discussed assignments and agreed to the following:

Waitkevitch: Town Administrator; Town Accountant; Town Counsel; Town Moderator; Board of Registrars; Bylaw Review Committee; Finance and Advisory Board; Treasurer

Bilbo: Capital Committee; Tree Committee; Farmers Market; Library

Foreman: Cultural Council; Disability Commission; Conservation Commission; Board of Appeals

Parker: Historical Commission; Stoneham Veterans Committee; School Committee; Council of Aging

Pignone: Human Rights Commission; Open Space and Recreation; 300<sup>th</sup> Committee

**Agenda Item 7: Town Meeting 5/5/25** Parker stated that Town Meeting went well and a balanced budget was passed with minor changes. Waitkevitch stated that article 10 will come back on the next town meeting warrant. Foreman clarified that article 10 was presented in conjunction with the override, but there is no revenue to support article 10 without the override. He stated that it will be added back onto the warrant at the appropriate time. Sheehan stated that he appreciated the resident turn out and the work leading up to the meeting.

Parker stated that it makes sense to move 10 up and discuss the override before the Town Meeting. Parker moved to discuss agenda item 10 out of order. Bilbo seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

Voting in favor:

Timothy Waitkevitch  
David Pignone  
Ryan Foreman  
Heidi Bilbo  
Raymie Parker

Motion Passes (5-0)

**Agenda Item 10: Override Ballot 6/14/25** Parker stated that given that the budget passed Town Meeting the question becomes do we want or need to pursue the override now. She stated that she want to schedule a summit, get the override committee appointed, and get the engagement efforts underway, but a small override now is just a band aid. She stated that the survey questions are against moving swiftly. She stated that she has concerns about contract negotiations on the school side and cuts on the Town side and all of those concerns require discussions and the consideration of real dollar amounts. She stated that the override must be a long-term solution and not a quick fix.

Foreman stated that the budget was passed at Town Meeting stole money from the Town's future. He stated that the Town needs an override and without one we set ourselves up for failure. Foreman stated that he is committed to doing the hard work to secure the Town's future. Foreman noted that 77.5% of survey respondents stated that they were willing or may be willing to pay more taxes and 61% of respondents stated that they would be willing to make higher

payments as soon as possible. He stated that a \$5.1 million override restores what was cut from the budget and gets us to FY27 and that he cannot understand the downside of trying again.

Parker stated that \$14.6 million was to get the Town through several years and what Foreman is suggesting is to get us through the current year, but we just passed a balanced budget. She stated that we need to take a step back and set the Town up for long-term success.

Foreman stated that the overarching message from the residents is that we should ask for what we need and \$5.1 million fixes all the problems with the FY26 budget.

Pignone stated that he voted to put the 6/14 election date out there, but it feels like we are rushing and residents are angry that there was a no decision made at the 4/1 election.

Bilbo stated that the feedback that resounded with her is that the residents need to understand the override number and she would not want to pick a number without input.

Foreman stated that the residents have the budget information and that the pain of some of the cuts was alleviated by taking money from stabilization. He stated that now residents have the opportunity to tell us if they support a smaller override.

Jamie Wallace, Chair of the School Committee, stated that the schools are very appreciative, but this is a one year fix and we need a long-term plan. She stated that in June we will be in exactly the same position and she would like to get through June and have conversations over the summer and come back with a number. She stated that an override now would hurt bargaining and put the schools in a worse position for FY27.

Waitkevitch stated that we have to respect the no voters. He stated that the Town spent the last 30 days solving problems and adjusting budgets and coming up with solutions. He stated that a small override now does not give us a strong foundation to get an override that will work as a long-term solution.

Parker stated that the \$5.1 million is a one year deal and we will have to start looking at this again on July 1<sup>st</sup>. She stated that it is her opinion that an override will only pass once.

Foreman stated that our residents have told us that we need an override. The override will assist departments that have lost funding.

Wallace stated that the \$5.1 million gives the schools nothing to negotiate with and a rushed override won't help us moving forward.

Ellen McBride stated that more than 50% of the voters said no to an override in April and it is disrespectful to go back now. She stated that 38% of the registered voters came to vote in the election and there will be blow back if you move forward too quickly.

Scott McCarthy, 50 Pleasant Street, stated that all 7 districts voted no and it is a slap in the face to go back now. He would like to see an independent audit and then come up with a new number. He stated that the residents spoke and the Board is not listening.

Cafazzo stated that the number for the override is never going to get smaller and that it may be time to try for a small override every year.

Jess Killilea, 34 Lee Street, Chair of the Library Trustees, thanked the Town for the extra funding at Town Meeting. She stated that she is frustrated with the residents stating that they did not have the information since every bit of it is on the website.

Amanda Sapersaris stated that she feels lied to because she voted for the balanced budget at Town Meeting and thought the Town was going to try for another override. She stated that the Town is not saved because the budget passes. Alison Burke stated that she has been at every meeting and feels deceived. Kayla Malotti stated that she is extremely disappointed that the Town is not going for an override.

Jean Grieve stated that she supported the override even though she felt it was too high. She stated that we need an immediate override to meet the Town's needs. She stated that there need to options for those who cannot afford to pay for the override.

Martha Pantha Buckley, 6 Garland Street, stated that she was under the impression that there would be an override vote following the vote at Town Meeting. She stated that for \$49/month we could keep the library and senior center.

Ryan Robinson, 28 Winship Drive, stated that this would never fly in private business. He stated that the Town is audited every year and there is nothing to be uncovered. He asked the Town to do what they said they would do and go for an override.

Bob Verner stated that if the ballot went the other way and the override passed, would the residents be ok with the no people asking for another vote? He stated that just because you can go for another override does not mean you should.

Foreman reviewed options for override numbers and stated that the average homeowner will pay \$589/year or \$49/month for a \$5.1 million override.

Waitkevitch stated that the Board's standard operating model is to work with the Town Administrator and other department heads to create number models and review accounting sheets. It is really important that everyone is working from the same sheets for the validity and consistency of the override number. Staff should be providing spreadsheets and numbers for the Board to review. Foreman stated that he did not generate the information, it was created by the Town Administrator, the School Committee, and the Finance and Advisory Board.

Parker moved to not hold the override vote on June 14, 2025, and to set a date to be determined for a complete override vote. This motion was not seconded.

**b. Ballot Question** Sheehan stated that at this juncture it is very important that we all be working from the same documents and to start to discuss priorities. He stated that with added growth factors, restoring positions lost prior to Town Meeting, and restoring funds to the stabilization account the total override request for one year would be \$5,036,085. He stated that this model adds one dispatcher to the police department.

Foreman asked Sheehan to describe the distinction between the Vocational and School budgets. Sheehan stated that the change in estimate for NE Vocational does not need to be restored or paid out because the estimate decreased. Foreman asked about restoring the \$2 million taken from stabilization. Sheehan stated that the restoration decisions will be made on the school side, but that increasing the special education stabilization account would allow trickle down in other lines – if special education costs are managed it will create flexibility in the operating account.

Wallace stated that increasing the budget by \$2 million may not be the best way to play out this budget season and that the School Committee has not discussed the numbers yet. Bilbo stated that there is an elected School Committee in charge of creating a budget for the school side and she is not comfortable not voting on a number that has not been approved or discussed by the School Committee. She stated that she does not want to give the School Committee a number that is not helpful. Foreman stated that he does not understand why giving the school money would not get them closer to the number that they requested.

The School Committee moved into the hallway to have a public discussion. Foreman moved for a recess. Pignone seconded the motion. Voted unanimously.

Bilbo stated that she would like to clarify that the main reason for the confusion is that the School Committee meeting was at the exact same time as the Select Board meeting and that they approved a budget number that did not include an override. Wallace stated that the School Committee just posted a meeting for 7:30 p.m. on Thursday to discuss a possible override on 6/14 and how that effects the appropriation to the schools.

Waitkevitch stated that the Board needs to have the School Committee's input and now will need to have a meeting on Friday to discuss the new numbers. He stated that there is a lot of flux and that it is an active discussion.

Foreman stated that given how much is in flux it may be prudent to reschedule public engagement sessions. He stated that he would like to add a patrol officer and a dispatcher to the town side. Parker stated that Conservation has been requesting a positions or expanded hours. Bilbo stated that it makes sense to see what is needed for this fiscal year and then work out future numbers.

Foreman stated that the Board should take Sheehan's expertise with a growth factor plus 2 patrol officers, 2 fire fighters, and a multiyear ballot.

Bilbo stated that Foreman needs to stop saying that the Board needs to be transparent. It is very disrespectful to this Board and previous Boards. She stated that she wanted to note that 60% of the survey responders were yes voters.

Parker stated that if the override is an emergency for FY26 only then she would like to go with the lowest possible number. Waitkevitch stated that he want to see the schools number before finalizing the override number.

Bilbo stated that in her opinion the form of the question has not changed and it is still a single question ballot with broken out numbers. Sheehan stated he would draft questions for Friday's meeting. The Board discussed meeting on 5/9/25 at 8:30 a.m.

Foreman moved to hold the election on 6/14 at Town Hall from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Parker amended the vote to 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m, Bilbo seconded the amendment. A roll call vote was taken.

Voting in favor:

Timothy Waitkevitch  
David Pignone  
Ryan Foreman  
Heidi Bilbo  
Raymie Parker

Motion Passes (5-0)

Waitkevitch stated that the motion now is to hold the election on 6/14/25 at Town Hall from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.. Pignone seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

Voting in favor:

Timothy Waitkevitch  
David Pignone  
Ryan Foreman  
Heidi Bilbo  
Raymie Parker

Motion Passes (5-0)

**Agenda Item 8: Special Town Meeting – Set Dates** This agenda item was tabled.

**Agenda Item 9: Special Town Meeting – Warrant Article Discussion** This agenda item was tabled.

**Agenda Item 11: Override/Budget Survey Update** This agenda item was discussed within the context of agenda item 10.

**Agenda Item 12: Preparation and Planning for Public Engagement** Parker moved to cancel the 5/7/25 public engagement meeting as well as the Saturday public engagement meeting. Pignone seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

Voting in favor:

Timothy Waitkevitch  
David Pignone  
Ryan Foreman  
Heidi Bilbo  
Raymie Parker

Motion Passes (5-0)

Foreman invited the public to give feedback by email and that public engagement would be scheduled.

**b. Override Study Committee** Bilbo stated that she still believes there is value in this committee. Waitkevitch stated that it is not emergent and we can make some changes to the charge. Foreman stated that the Board remove FY26. Waitkevitch suggested kicking the committee off on July 1 for FY27.

Foreman moved to establish the Override Study Committee and establish it for FY27 and 28. Parker stated that she would like the report before the budget cycle. Bilbo suggested October 2025. Bilbo moved to approve the Override Study Committee with updated language to reflect FY27/28 and report to the Select Board in October 25. Foreman seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken.

Voting in favor:

Timothy Waitkevitch  
David Pignone  
Ryan Foreman  
Heidi Bilbo  
Raymie Parker

Motion Passes (5-0)

**Agenda Item 13: Tax Resources for Seniors and Low Income Residents** Sheehan stated that he will work with the team to get all resources and exemptions on the site and the donation check off on the tax bills. He stated that we will begin to look at criteria for receiving assistance.

**Agenda Item 14: Calendar Updates for May/June 2025** The Board set the next regularly scheduled meeting for May 27, 2025. Waitkevitch reminded the Board that it needed to have a new photo taken for the website.

**Agenda Item 15: High School Building Project Update** Sheehan stated that he is working with the construction team on punch list items and coordinating the wetland study/clean up.

**Agenda Item 16: Town Administrator's Report** No report was offered.

**Agenda Item 17: Non-Deliberative Announcements** Bilbo reminded residents that it is mental health awareness month. Parker stated that Sapphire Award nominations end on 5/15/25.

**Agenda Item 18: Adjourn** The Board adjourned with a unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Dava Feltch Kilbride, Office Manager