

**Stoneham Select Board
Open Meeting
Tuesday, October 14, 2025
7:00 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: Report by Override Study Committee dated 9/30/25; List of Ballot Questions; Override presentation submitted by Sheehan

Agenda Item 1: Call to Order: Waitkevitch called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Foreman moved to open the meeting. 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 2: Pledge of Allegiance

Agenda Item 3: Citizens' Comments No comments were made.

Agenda Item 4: Override Discussion Parker stated that she is in favor of a tiered approach to the override question. She stated that she would like to have the amount determined by the Override Study Committee as well as the amount that is needed. She stated that she would like to be able to drill down on what is on the chopping block if the override does not pass.

Foreman stated that he is sensitive to comments that the tiered approach present certain risks and he acknowledges that he has received numerous emails requesting the one number approach. He stated that the \$14.6 million request failed and the town moved money and made cuts because we has to make it work. He stated that he went line by line through the budget with Sheehan and found that every department was sharing tasks and the employees were trying to make it work. He stated that we are on the precipice of a catastrophe and the shortfall continues

to grow. The only cuts that remain will be unconscionable – we will not have a functioning DPW, library, senior center, and the cuts to the schools will be devastating. He stated that the town needs \$12.5 million, but that he is scared of what will happen if that number does not pass. Foreman stated that he is in favor of a tiered approach that will allow us to take care of the basics and move forward even if the lower number is selected. He stated that if the \$12.5 does not pass, the Board will be back with another override request.

Bilbo stated that the Override Study Committee mapped out the impact of a failed override and the Select Board needs to fill in the blanks and let residents know what will be lost without an override.

Pignone stated that the Town needs the \$12.5 million override, but he is concerned about what will be lost if it does not pass. Waitkevitch stated that he is concerned with affordability. He stated that he cannot put the town in the position of an “all or nothing” override. Waitkevitch stated that the Select Board needs to be sensitive to both the needs of the town and the residents who have to shoulder the burden – we have to set an amount for the floor and he supports two tiers; one that asks for the \$12.5 and one that keeps the town off of the ground.

Bilbo stated that the baseline to restore what was lost is \$11.79 million and \$12.5 million is what is needed to support the departments properly. Waitkevitch stated that one year without extras is \$8 or \$9 million, but then we will need to request another override.

Foreman stated according to his calculations, preparing for the future is \$12.5 million, restoring what was lost is \$10.6 million, and maintaining what we have with minor restoration is \$8.6 million. Bilbo stated that her exercise yielded a similar tier request: \$12.5, \$11.79, and \$9.8 million.

Pignone stated that a tiered request would handcuff the school department during negotiations and pit departments against each other. Waitkevitch stated that a tiered approach will not get every department what they need/want. Every tier will be divided and there will be shared pain.

Foreman stated that the tiers result in approximately \$980-1445/year/household. He stated that he is strongly in favor of breaking each tier out to what each department will get and what is necessary to exist. Parker stated that she is in favor of general language stating that the money will go to schools, safety, library, etc. Waitkevitch stated that the tiers need to be simple and easy to understand. He stated that with inflation the difference between \$980 and \$1400/year may be difficult for some residents to find.

Parker stated that every department will be effected, town services will be cut and jobs will be lost if this override fails. She stated that we need to find a balance and select a lower number that will work.

Sheehan stated that our department heads advocated for additional resources not ideal resources. He stated that everyone works together. Parker stated that she would like to decide single question or tiered approach tonight. Bilbo stated that she disagrees because the tiers may

be so close that it is not worth separating them. Waitkevitch stated that the tiers need to be meaningfully different and he likes the simplicity of two tiers.

Abby Shaw, 41 Gould Street, stated that the tiers should be \$14, 12 and 11 million dollars. She stated that there needs to be enough to keep teachers, the library and the senior center.

Bill Gerke, 5 Brooks Street, stated that two tiers seems to be the simplest format and easiest to understand.

Allison Burke, stated that if there are tiers, the Board is essentially asking for the lowest number to be passed.

Catherine Becker, 7 Windsor Road, stated that there are towns in which the highest amount in the tiers passed.

Foreman stated that it sounds like the tiered approach is the way to go. Parker stated that it sounds like \$12.5 million will be the high amount. Waitkevitch stated that \$12.5 is definitely one of the tiers. Pignone stated that he would like to wait until after the public engagement on 10/20 to decide the numbers. Waitkevitch asked the Board members to send their proposals to Sheehan.

Agenda Item 5: Town Administrator's No report was offered.

Agenda Item 6: Non-Deliberative Announcements and Scheduling Parker announced that there is a community forum on 10/22/25, to discuss the bylaw recodification.

Agenda Item 7: Adjourn Parker moved to adjourn. 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)

Respectfully submitted,

Dava Kilbride – Office Manager