

## Stoneham Finance and Advisory Board (FAB)

<b>Date:</b>	April 15, 2025
<b>Time:</b>	700p
<b>Location:</b>	Stoneham Town Hall Hearing Room
<b>Present:</b>	Mike Memmelo – Chair Jen Gray – Vice –Chair Jim Wilson - Secretary  Rod Allen, Joe Combs, Adam Jacobs, Joe Joffe, Troy Lau, Lucy Marchese, Jeff Moyer, Wendy Smith
<b>Absent:</b>	None
<b>Guests:</b>	Dennis Sheehan – Town Administrator Kristin Spence – Senior Center Director Amanda Costain – Senior Center Assistant Director

	<p><b><u>AGENDA</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Public Comment Period</li> <li>2. Water and Sewer Public Hearing</li> <li>3. May 5, 2025 Town Meeting Warrant Articles – <b>VOTE Required</b></li> <li>4. Adjournment - Vote required</li> </ol>

<b>1.</b>	<b>The April 15, 2025, started with a 30 minute public comment period.</b>	
<b>2.</b>	<p>Water and Sewer Public Hearing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The town administrator explains the process of setting water and sewer rates, emphasizing the impact of MWRA wholesale rates on the town's budget.</li> <li>• A video is shown to illustrate how MWRA calculates rates, and the town administrator presents slides detailing the town's water and sewer budgets and usage.</li> <li>• The town administrator discusses the impact of retained earnings and the need to maintain a</li> </ul>	

balance between budget constraints and service requirements.

- The board and public members ask questions about the proposed rate increases, the impact of MWRA changes, and the town's financial strategies.
- The water and sewer rates for the next fiscal year were proposed to increase by 4.85% for water and 9.51% for sewer, with a 52% retention rate.
- The public hearing was closed

3.

### **Town Warrant Article Discussion**

#### *Discussion on Senior Center Services*

- The Council on Aging highlighted the critical services they provide, including outreach and wellness programs, urging support to maintain these essential services.
- The board discussed the May 5, 2025, town meeting warrant articles, focusing on the library and senior center budgets.
- Kristen Spence, director of the senior center, provides a detailed presentation on the services offered, including outreach, wellness programs, and community engagement.
- The board and public members express concern about the impact of proposed budget cuts on senior center services and the need to support essential programs.
- Center directors mentioned the possibility of charging seniors to use the senior center in order to maintain certain services.
- The discussion highlighted the importance of maintaining funding for the senior center to ensure continued support for older adults in the community.

#### **Discussion on Updated Proposed Budget – Town Warrant Article 5**

*Mr. Sheehan cited several important items in his revised proposed budget:*

- Traffic directors could not be cut due to the revenue they drive via parking ticket enforcement
- \$179,000 reduction via NE Vocational Tech budget re-adjustment
- \$66,000 reduction via Water/Sewer
- \$111,000 reduction via Council on aging
- \$342,043 reduction via library
- \$200,000 additional revenue from Assessor

**Motion to end the hearing made by Ms. Smith and seconded by Ms. Gray. Approved 11-0.**

<p><i>Stabilization Account:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr Sheehan proposed that the town forgo its planned \$1.2m transfer to the stabilization account from free cash. This would enable the money to be used for school costs.</li> <li>• Mentioned that FAB should consider that next bond rating call would likely be in 12-18 months. Must ensure town financial situation is defensible at that time.</li> <li>• Discussion regarding formula regarding calculation of town growth – pushed to next Monday.</li> <li>• Decision was made to table Article 5 until next Monday.</li> </ul> <p><i>Other Articles:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noted that Article 13 was being pulled by petitioner. Voted to take no action.</li> <li>• Decided to table Article 14 due to further discussion with Police/Fire chiefs re: wording</li> <li>• Wrote comments on Article 12 – Flood Plain which was already given favorable action.</li> <li>• Wrote comments on Article 11 – Re-allocating EoY funds as surplus/deficit dictates</li> <li>• Decided to table Article 10 – Overlay funding for disadvantaged taxpayers. Assessor can give additional feedback on Monday</li> <li>• Wrote comments on Article 9 – Voluntary Fund Donation of Municipal Tax Bill</li> <li>• Decided to table Article 8 – Revolving Funds</li> <li>• Wrote comments on Article 7 – Public Access TV</li> <li>• Discussion on Article 6 – Capital Projects, including 66k for grinder for sewage pump. Unanimously rec'd by Capital committee. Voted for favorable action and wrote comments.</li> <li>• Decided to table Article 5 – Town Budget</li> <li>• Decided to table Article 4 – Town Salaries per re-write by Mr. Sheehan</li> <li>• Confirmed comments on Article 3.</li> <li>• Confirmed comments on Article 2.</li> <li>• Discussed potential to meet at 6pm on Monday 21-April instead of 7pm.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Motion to take no action on Article 13 made by Ms. Gray and seconded by Mr. Joffe. No action taken 11-0.</b></p> <p><b>Motion for favorable action on Article 6 made by Ms. Gray and seconded by Mr. Joffe. Approved 11-0.</b></p>
<p><b>4. Adjournment at 10:03pm- Vote required</b></p>	<p><b>Mr. Combs then introduced a motion to adjourn; Mr. Jacobs seconded; all in favor.</b></p>