

Stoneham Finance and Advisory Board
Monday, January 8 —7:30pm
Stoneham Town Hall Hearing Room

ATTENDEES:

Angelo Mangino, *Chair*
Susan Lippman, *Vice-Chair*
Thomas Dalton, *Secretary*

Ben Caggiano Andrew Harmon
George Drugas Tim Waitkevitch

Absent: Heidi Bilbo, Julianne DeSimone, Stephanie Hayes, Domenic Martignetti

GUESTS:

Robert Grover, *Director of the Department of Public Works*

AGENDA:

1. Approve prior meeting minutes
2. DPW budget review with Robert Grover
3. Special Town Meeting articles
4. Miscellaneous

DOCUMENTS:

- 1) *2017 Audit Recommendations* pages 3-4
- 2) *FY18 Capital Committee Annual Report and Five-Year Capital Investment Plan*
- 3) *Public Works Department FY 19 Budget Packet*
 - a. “Department of Public Works Organizational Chart”
 - b. “DPW Services”
 - c. “The Public Works Department is responsible for...”
 - d. “Red Sheet” (On-going Stoneham construction projects in 2018)
 - e. “Blue Sheet” (Stoneham Water and Sewer Rates; MWRA Local Pipeline and Water System Assistance Programs)
 - f. “Gold Sheet” (Trash/Recycle tipping fees, Trash fee, and Refuse Collection/Disposal Budget Breakdown”
 - g. “Green Sheet” (DPW Capital Equipment 2018)
 - h. “Yellow Sheet” (FY 19 Operational Budget Increases)

MINUTES:

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm and directed the members to agenda item #1. The Chair noted that he had not yet completed minutes for the December 18, 2017 meeting, but that he would furnish them during the Board’s next meeting.

The Chair invited Mr. Robert Grover to address the Board regarding the Department of Public Works budget for FY 19. Mr. Grover distributed Document (3), *Public Works Department FY 19 Budget Packet*, and began to review the document. Mr. Grover began his review by noting the

relatively small number of full-time employees in Stoneham's DPW, compared to surrounding towns, but he added that the Stoneham DPW effectively conducts the variety of roles and responsibilities outlined in the section detailing the responsibilities of the DPW. Mr. Caggiano asked if the Town's pump stations are actively manned, and Mr. Grover replied that they are not, although they are all inspected at least once daily, every day of the year.

Mr. Grover proceeded to review the ongoing and upcoming construction projects in the town. Mr. Caggiano asked whether the DPW has a large role to play in the construction on the old hospital site, and Mr. Grover responded that the DPW mostly has a role in approving engineering plans and overseeing utility installation. The Chair asked if the Eversource project is approved and going ahead in 2018, and Mr. Grover replied that it will likely be approved, with mitigation plans including flood drainage on Montvale Avenue. The Chair asked whether plans are in place yet for 2018 gas main replacement in the town, and Mr. Grover said that no plans are in place, adding that planning for gas main replacement will correspond with the pavement study's conclusion and recommendations. Mr. Grover remarked that the town currently conducts pavement updates solely with Chapter 90 funding, not allocating town funds for a pavement budget.

Mr. Grover went on to discuss Stoneham's water and sewer rates and trash fees, specifically noting his calculations, noted in the enclosed documents, that show that the current fees will not cover the cost of trash and recycling removal with the downturn in recycling prices.

Mr. Grover reviewed the capital plans for FY 19 and the requested budget increases for the FY 19 budget, highlighting his request for an increase in the snow and ice budget and requests for increased personnel, including a dedicated construction inspector, a part-time trash and recycling coordinator, and three additional laborers. Mr. Caggiano acknowledged that the DPW is doing great work with a limited staff, and thanked Mr. Grover. The Chair asked whether the new hires will save money in the overtime budget, and Mr. Grover acknowledged the possibility, but said that most overtime costs come during specific emergency scenarios that will always produce overtime for specialists, like water and sewer emergencies or fallen trees.

The Chair raised discussion of the 2017 Audit Recommendations, distributing Document (1) to the members, asking Mr. Grover to explain the DPW's response to the duplication of effort in data collection described in the audit recommendations. Mr. Grover replied that he met with the auditors and the Town Administrator, and that after further discussion and analysis, they found that no duplication of effort was occurring, since the manual data collected by DPW staff covers more data than the Town's computerized records system Munis can record. The Chair asked if the DPW had made moves to address the audit recommendation regarding employee time allocation between the DPW staff budget and the Water & Sewer staff budget. Mr. Grover explained that the division is approximate but accurate, and that all employee hours are recorded precisely. The Vice-Chair remarked that timekeeping as Mr. Grover outlined is very acceptable practice in accounting and auditing contexts, adding that she is highly impressed by the work of the DPW.

Mr. Waitkevitch asked Mr. Grover what his ultimate aspirations are for DPW staffing, and MR. Grover said that he feels that ideal staffing for the department is approximately 35 full-time employees, including dedicated sidewalk and pothole crews.

The Chair asked Mr. Grover if the DPW yard could eventually be repurposed as a dual-use fire and public works facility. Mr. Grover replied that he feels that would not work, since the DPW yard is an essential coordinating center for snow removal, and that expansion is likely not possible because of abutting wetlands.

The Chair directed the Board to Agenda Item #3, the January 29 Special Town Meeting. On the topic of retail sales of non-medical marijuana, the Chair recommended that the board make no official recommendation, since it seems to be a matter of public policy rather than financial policy. Mr. Drugas asked whether any revenue projections were available for hypothetical retail sales.

The Chair asked members to discuss several miscellaneous matters. He informed the Board that nearly \$3.4 million in free cash has been certified for the next fiscal year; he stated his view that such an unprecedented level of free cash could fundamentally change the Town's reserve funding levels.

The Chair reminded members to complete the bi-annual state ethics training, and after members pointed out that they had not received directions for the ethics training, the Chair said that he would forward the training to all members.

The Chair remarked that he was disturbed by the outcome of a discussion of the new financial guidelines committee in a December Board of Selectmen meeting. He said that he felt it was inappropriate for Selectman Anthony Wilson to nominate himself as the BOS representative to that committee because it created a perception for the Chair that the Capital Committee has outsized influence on the new financial guidelines committee. Mr. Dalton opined that he is comfortable with Capital Committee members serving on the committee and that he feels Mr. Wilson is well-qualified, and the Vice-Chair agreed, adding that the Finance and Advisory Board does not need to be concerned about the BOS appointee to the committee. The Chair added that he hopes to appoint an FAB representative to the financial guidelines committee in the next FAB meeting, when a larger number of members are in attendance. Mr. Waitkevitch commented that he understands the Chair's concern about the number of Capital Committee members of the financial guidelines committee, but added that he believes that members will "wear multiple hats" and still bring different viewpoints and perspectives to the discussion of financial guidelines.

Mr. Dalton moved to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Drugas seconded the motion, and the Board assented unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Dalton
Secretary