

Stoneham Finance and Advisory Board
Monday, October 2, 2017—7:30pm
Stoneham Town Hall Hearing Room

ATTENDEES:

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

Heidi Bilbo Robert Fitzsimmons
Ben Caggiano Domejnic Martignetti
George Drugas Tim Waitkevitch

Absent: Julianne DeSimone, Stephanie Hayes

GUESTS:

Tom Younger, *Town Administrator*

MINUTES:

The Chair called the meeting to order. Mr. Dalton moved to consider the approval of past meeting minutes first in the order of the meeting, per the standards of Robert's Rules, and the Chair assented. Mr. Drugas moved that the board approve the September 25 meeting minutes, Mr. Waitkevitch seconded the motion, and the members assented unanimously.

The Chair directed members to consider Article 6, which calls for the appropriation of \$25,000 to fund a government wage and classification study. The Chair asked Mr. Younger to explain the rationale for this study, and Mr. Younger explained that the Town currently does not have role descriptions or wage classifications in place for department heads. He further asserted that wage and classification studies are important best practices in public administration, comparing the pay levels of Stoneham officials to their counterparts in other towns and determining their unique workloads and responsibilities in order to judge what level of compensation is fair and appropriate for Stoneham's department heads.

The Chair asked whether the study would automatically result in changes to the compensation of department heads. Mr. Younger responded that although the results may encourage the Town to reevaluate salaries for some employees, any salary changes would need to be funded by the Town; therefore, no salaries would change automatically. Mr. Younger elaborated that outside of salary and compensation concerns, it is important for the Town to have role descriptions in place for public officials in case of vacancies or personnel changes. Mr. Younger also addressed Stoneham's unique need to maintain competitiveness in department head retention, since unlike many comparable towns, Stoneham does not have extensive utilization of assistant or deputy department heads, enhancing the need for department head retention and salary competitiveness. Ms. Bilbo inquired whether the study would assess all town departments, and Mr. Younger responded that all departments except the schools would be included.

Mr. Caggiano expressed his view that having role descriptions in place for all major positions is very important, but asked Mr. Younger why the heads cannot simply write the descriptions themselves. Mr. Younger asserted that an objective study would derive more accurate and fair descriptions, and the Vice-Chair added that an outside professional would likely be needed to address OSHA and ADA compliance for each role. The Chair asked whether department heads are currently responsible for writing operational procedures for their roles, and Mr. Younger agreed that such a practice would be valuable. Mr. Drugas moved that the Board recommend favorable action on Article 6, Mr. Caggiano seconded the motion, and the members assented unanimously.

The Chair moved the discussion to Article 7, regarding the appropriation of \$50,000 for the purpose of conducting a pavement management study. Mr. Younger explained that pavement management studies are another municipal best practice, and that objectively defining the Town's need for pavement repairs and improvements will help to prioritize road work. The review will be conducted by an outside engineer and the results will provide a priority "ranking" and the estimated cost of necessary repairs or maintenance. Mr. Younger expressed that the Capital Committee favors this article and this practice because there is never sufficient cash in the budget for all road repairs, and so objective prioritization is valuable. When faced with questions regarding the usefulness of the study, Mr. Younger explained that the value of the study is threefold: first, the study is objective, removing local political concerns from the prioritization of pavement management; second, the expense is one-time, so it will not cost the Town a great deal of money in the long-term; third, it will allow for long-term capital planning and project planning to align pavement management with budgetary priorities and other utility projects. Mr. Drugas moved that the Board recommend favorable action on Article 7 and Mr. Dalton seconded the motion.

With the motion on the floor, the Vice-Chair asked the members to consider how the study could lead to a better priority system than the current DPW road repair list. Mr. Younger acknowledged that while the DPW plan sets out priorities in concert with the Water & Sewer plan, no comprehensive 20-year road plan currently exists. The Chair called the vote and the members assented unanimously.

The Chair addressed Article 14, regarding the appropriation of \$40,000 for the purpose of purchasing two DPW utility vehicles. Mr. Younger explained that major appropriations for vehicle purchases would typically be addressed in the spring at May Town Meeting, and that although he would normally recommend waiting to make the appropriation, the vehicles in question are a part of the Town's snow fleet. The Chair asked whether leasing the vehicles is possible in order to save money, and Mr. Younger said that leasing may be possible, although "wear and tear" on the vehicles may preempt that possibility. Mr. Caggiano asserted that these vehicles are crucial because DPW staff use them to oversee snow contractors during winter storms. Mr. Caggiano moved that the Board recommend favorable action and Mr. Martignetti seconded the motion. All members except the Chair assented, and the Chair abstained from voting.

Mr. Younger asked if any members had further questions for him. Mr. Dalton asked Mr. Younger to provide the members of the Board with the presentation given by Attorney Galvin

regarding the state Open Meeting and Ethics laws and Mr. Younger agreed to procure that presentation for distribution. The Chair asked when new wording will be provided for Article 20, and Mr. Younger reported that the Fire Chief is due to update the Board of Selectmen with new language on October 3.

Under miscellaneous business, the Chair reported that the Town Accountant has tendered his resignation and that a search process for his replacement will begin after Town Meeting. Mr. Dalton reported on Town Counsel's Open Meeting and Ethics Law training, citing its usefulness for all town officials. Mr. Dalton repeated his intent to distribute Town Counsel's presentation to all the members of the Board. Mr. Waitkevitch recommended that the Finance and Advisory Board web page on the Town website be updated to reflect current Board membership and the Chair said he would seek to address that.

The Chair asked which members of the Board planned to attend upcoming training from the Massachusetts Association of Town Finance Committees, and the Vice-Chair, Mr. Drugas, Mr. Waitkevitch, Mr. Fitzsimmons, and Mr. Dalton expressed their intent to attend. Mr. Drugas acknowledged that with the departure of the Town Accountant, the Finance and Advisory Board might be asked to contribute a member to a search committee, and he volunteered to serve in that capacity if called upon.

The Vice-Chair asked the Board to divide the warrant articles among the members for presentation at Town Meeting, and the members divided the articles among themselves. The Chair informed the members that he would draft a greeting to Town Meeting. Mr. Waitkevitch expressed his view that the Board should sit in session during Town Meeting in case the members need to deliberate, and the members generally assented.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Dalton
Secretary