

Stoneham Finance and Advisory Board  
Monday, March 27, 2017—7:30pm  
Stoneham Town Hall Meeting Room

ATTENDEES:

Patricia Walsh, *Chair*  
Hilde McCormack, *Vice-Chair*  
Thomas Dalton, *Secretary*

Ben Caggiano	Devon Manchester
Stephen Dapkiewicz	Angelo Mangino
Julianne DeSimone	Robert Verner
Stephanie Hayes	

GUESTS:

Dr. Les Olson, *Superintendent of Schools*  
David Maurer, Marie Christie, & Shawn McCarthy, *School Committee*  
Tom Cicatelli, *Chief Information Officer*  
James McIntyre, *Stoneham Police Chief*

MINUTES:

The Chair called the meeting to order and introduced the guests. She reported that the school budget request for the next fiscal year had been updated and that Dr. Olson and the members of the School Committee were in attendance to review the changes made from the initial budget proposal.

Dr. Olson was recognized, and explained that the school budget typically follows a routine annual process. The first set of budget requests tends to be a statement of goals focused on programming needs, and student enrollment and staffing goals; in other words, it represents a statement of the school system's overall needs. In mid-January, the Superintendent met with the Town Administrator and the Town Accountant to determine the system's minimum financial needs in order to maintain progress. The three agreed upon various reductions, and awaited the School Committee's adoption of the budget in early April.

The first reduction made from the initial budget request related to staffing. Over the winter break in December, three staff members retired, allowing the school budget request to be reduced by \$129,000. Other reductions were made by changing new goal priorities. The budget calls for slightly cutting back the hours of several positions at the Central Middle School and Stoneham High School, eliminating the proposed second elementary school bus, and adding one full-time English Language Learner teacher to the system. These changes resulted in a net decrease to the budget request of about \$106,000. Finally, other adjustments were made to the budget request based on several recalculations of projected revenues and expense reductions. The new budget proposal anticipates a fully-funded state "circuit breaker" reimbursement, reduces general expenses by approximately 1%, and increases revenue estimates for school lunch and after school accounts. Dr. Olson also reported that the system was considering the purchases of a new comprehensive math curriculum and a new K-4 science curriculum, as well as increasing the school psychologist at Robin Hood School to full-time and increasing the part-time adjustment counselor at Stoneham High School. Finally, Dr. Olson asserted his expectation

that cutbacks to Title I federal funding for remedial math and reading would likely lead to the layoff of one full-time employee during the coming fiscal year.

Mr. Maurer began to discuss the status of the Stoneham High School renovation plans and feasibility study. The latest application for state assistance for a reconstruction has been submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority, and the Capital budget includes \$120,000 for an independent feasibility study. Mr. Maurer emphasized the need to avoid maintenance delay at the high school, a pitfall which he said often impacted conditions at the Middle School before its reconstruction because of the expectation that total renovations will be made somewhere down the line.

Mr. Manchester asked what makes the current application to the MSBA, Stoneham's fifth, different from previous applications. Mr. Maurer replied that because enrollment projections are up (Dr. Olson projects between 250 and 350 new students from the Fallon Road, William Street, Weiss Farm, and hospital site projects), this application will be different from past applications. Almost all approved projects involve either accreditation problems, structural damage, or rising enrollment. The Chair asked what the glaring or immediate problems at the school are. Mr. Maurer cited the poorly-insulated windows and the badly-weathered driveway.

In the course of discussing the potential for Stoneham to launch an independent renovation, Mr. Verner asked how much longer the debt for the elementary schools needed to be serviced. Dr. Olson reported that the debt from those projects will be paid off in four to five years, right around the time that potential debt from a high school renovation would need to be addressed, citing this coincidence as a boon for the taxpayers (lessening the ticket shock of the renovation). Mr. Dapkiewicz asked how an independent feasibility study is helpful to the Town, and Dr. Olson explained that the study's results will compare the cost, time, and scope of different project options. Mr. Maurer added that if the Town doesn't even know what needs to be fixed at the High School, nothing can be done at all.

Mr. Mangino asked Dr. Olson why the district HVAC services line item in the school budget increased from \$50,000 to \$305,000. Dr. Olson explained that the school maintenance budget is being restructured: in the past, most maintenance has been funded against the rent from the SEEM Collaborative through the School Department revolving account. This year, many maintenance costs are being shifted into budget line items to improve the level of detail in accounting records, while simultaneously, utility costs are being shifted to the revolving account.

Next, the Chair invited Mr. Cicatelli and Chief McIntyre to speak with the Board regarding an emergency funding request. Mr. Cicatelli reported a critical failure in the Police Department's Uninterruptible Power Source (UPS) which acts as a battery backup for crucial police systems during power outages prior to the engagement of generator power. Mr. Cicatelli reported his inability to repair the old system due to the obsolescence of replacement parts for the device. Mr. Cicatelli requested \$30,000 to \$40,000 from the FAB reserve fund in order to replace the system with a 20 kVA capacity to cover the power requirements of the essential police department systems. The replacement has been quoted by two vendors and Mr. Cicatelli and Chief McIntyre are eager to replace the system with all urgency.

Mr. Manchester moved to allocate \$40,000 from the FAB Reserves for the purpose of purchasing a new UPS for the Police Department. The Vice-Chair seconded the motion and the motion was passed unanimously.

The Chair asked the Board to consider the meeting minutes prepared from the February 27, 2017 meeting. The Vice-Chair moved to accept the minutes, Mr. Dapkiewicz seconded the motion, and the Board accepted the minutes unanimously.

The Vice-Chair suggested that the FAB table any discussion of the Town Meeting Warrant until the final draft was circulated, and also recommended bi-weekly meetings until May Town Meeting. Both suggestions were met with general agreement.

Mr. Manchester moved to adjourn the meeting, the Vice-Chair seconded, and the Board assented unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Dalton  
*Secretary*