

Stoneham Finance & Advisory Board Meeting
Thursday, March 16, 2023 - 7:00 pm
Town Hall Hearing Room

Attendees:

Tim Waitkevitch, Chair
Cory Mashburn, Vice Chair
Andrew Harmon, Secretary

Julieanne Bovat	Jen Gray
Ed Hurley	Sachin Joshi
Mike Memmolo	Jeffrey Moyer
Wendy Smith	

Absent: Dave Tammaro

Guests:

None

Agenda:

1. May Town Meeting Warrant Review
2. Other Business - Non Deliberative
3. Adjournment - Vote Required

Minutes:

The Finance & Advisory Board Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Board Chair began the meeting with Agenda Item #1. The Board had no questions on Articles #1-3. Mr. Mashburn made a comment on Article #4. He suggested that the Town should consider providing salaries to the School Committee members. The Board then discussed the merits and drawbacks of offering health insurance to elected officials. Mr. Hurley suggested that the topic would be good for a separate discussion for the Board beyond an evaluation of the current warrant articles. Mr. Moyer suggested a goal for the upcoming year to evaluate how compensation for elected officials is handled in surrounding towns similar to Stoneham. No follow up questions were noted on Article #4.

On Article #5, Mr. Memmolo was curious as to why the Planning Board is asking for an Associate, appointed member rather than an expansion of elected members. It was decided to ask the Planning Board for its reasoning. For Article #6, Mr. Waitkevitch asked whether the proposed change was a correction to a scrivener's error, or whether there are actual errors on

the map itself. This was another question for the Planning Board. There were similar questions on Article #7. The Article references a change in zoning to property owned by the Boys & Girls Club. Mr. Harmon expressed interest in viewing the parcels in question on a map. It was decided to ask Charles Houghton and a representative from the Boys & Girls Club to discuss this item.

For Article #8, there was a desire to bring in Charles Houghton to explain exactly why this zoning change is needed. Article #9 is the Town Budget Article; there were no questions on this item. Article #10 is the Capital Article; also no questions on this item. Article #11 is for Stoneham TV. Ms. Gray wondered whether the dollar amount had changed from last year. Ms. Smith confirmed that the number was the same. Mr. Waitkevitch did mention that there would be concerns in coming years as cable television subscribers decline. Since this is the way public access television is funded, a new structure will need to be developed.

Ms. Bovat then suggested that the Board track requested funds versus received funds for each year to determine if anything is consistently being left behind.

Articles #12 and #13 relate to Water and Sewer Enterprise fund movements. The Board acknowledged that the numbers are fluctuating and will continue to do so up until Town Meeting. Even so, the Board was curious as to how the funds within the Enterprise funds are allocated. And also Ms. Gray noted that Stoneham's rates appear to be increasing faster than our population growth would suggest. She continued to wonder whether other Towns are engaged in more proactive conservation efforts.

Article #14 relates to existing revolving funds. Mr. Mashburn had a question why Recreation increased 100% (to a limit of \$200K) year over year. Mr. Waitkevitch added that he was curious as to the upcoming programs or revenue Recreation is expecting that would cause this to be elevated.

The Board had no questions on Article #15 which relates to year end fund transfers. Ms. Smith wanted to ask the Town Clerk why the Town is seeking to confirm the Town offices will be closed on Saturdays. Mr. Harmon agreed to ask the Clerk about Article #16.

On Article #17, Ms. Bovat was curious as to what the projected tax impact would be on veterans and their families taking advantage of the abatement. Mr. Mashburn offered to check with the head of Veterans Affairs and Mr. Harmon would send a question to the Assessor.

For Article #18, Mr. Harmon wondered if this was meant to put the Moderator elections on the same cycle as the Select Board. Mr. Mashburn affirmed that was the case but had a suggestion. Since the current Moderator will be elected before Town Meeting, this creates a situation where the Town elects a Moderator to a two-year term that will be extended if this Article passes. He suggested that this Article appear at a Town Meeting closer to (but prior to) the next election.

Article #19 revolves around banning commercial use of leaf blowers within the Town. The Board was inclined to not make a recommendation, but did think it was wise to offer the petitioner time to come before the Board.

Article #20 would ban dogs from public cemeteries. The Board had a similar position to Article #19 but again decided it would be best to let the petitioner speak before the Board. The Board then discussed scheduling around meetings with interested parties and writing recommendations.

Board Chair then moved discussion to Agenda Item #2. Mr. Mashburn noted that there is discussion about removing virtual meeting options for Boards and Committees. He voiced strong opposition to the idea and believes Boards should continue to have a virtual option. Mr. Moyer then introduced a motion to adjourn. Mr. Harmon seconded; all in favor.