



**Town of Ridgefield**  
**Board of Finance**  
**Approved Meeting Minutes**  
Monday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018

**I. Call to order**

D. Ulmer called to order the regular meeting of the Board of Finance at 7:30 PM on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018 at Ridgefield Town Hall, 400 Main Street, Ridgefield, CT (Large Conference Room). All Board Members (D. Ulmer, S. Connelly, J. Mancini, A. Freidenrich, and D. Moccia) were in attendance.

Additional Officials in attendance include: R. Marconi (First Selectman), M. Kozlark (Selectman), K. Redmond (Controller), F. Walton (BOE Chairperson), and D. Silver (BOE Vice Chairman), Jonathan Steckler (BOE), Tracey O'Connor (BOE), Sharon D'Orso (BOE), Margaret Stimatis (BOE), Carina Borgia-Drake (BOE), and Robert Miller (Acting RPS Superintendent).

**II. Comments from the Public**

No comments.

**III. Review of Capital Budget**

R. Marconi presented a review of the proposed town budget's capital fund and discussed the expansion plans involving the Ridgefield Playhouse, Chef's Warehouse, and the Board of Education. When asked about the towns storage which is currently located in the building, R. Marconi stated that the storage will be moved to the dome. K. Redmond discussed the rent abatement (Ridgefield Playhouse) as they will not be fully operational for approximately a year and a half. Kumon which will be relocating to the garden level will result in a decrease in rent. When asked about the market rate for tenants, K. Redmond stated that there will be standard escalations in rent and the total project is expected to cost approximately \$1.5M. This amount includes two projects that have been rolled into one larger scale project. The project is expected to go out to bid in May and work is likely to begin during the summer months, with an expected duration of 8-months. There are two potential issues that require remediation (asbestos and oil tank removal).

#### **IV. Follow-up Questions: Board of Education**

- D. Ulmer asked about the cost increases for salaries and if they include recent new hires. R. Miller stated that the number does in fact reflect new employees and that math specialists are a part of the ERMS staffing for FY-2018. D. Silver explained that there are three levels of math teachers; however, he's concerned that they don't have enough math teachers to support the needs of the students.
- D. Moccia asked why so many psychologists and therapists are needed. R. Miller stated that these professionals do more than treat the student one-on-one. These roles are essential secondary to an uptick in students requiring support services.
- D. Moccia questioned the \$89k expense line item. R. Miller stated that the expense includes utility and functional-based technology and general supplies.
- A. Freidenrich questioned the elementary school line item for six Principals, in the amount of \$1,038,370, averaging a salary of \$173,000 per year. R. Miller states that these salaries are comparable to neighboring districts.
- J. Mancini questions the need in having four Assistant Principals on the high school level. R. Miller states that each is assigned a different grade level in addition to overseeing 1-2 departments, usually consisting of 20 individuals per department. Eliminating one or more of these positions will result in a heavier workload for the remaining Assistant Principals. A. Freidenrich asks about the Deans within RHS, to which S. D'Orso replied that the Deans are responsible for teaching classes, handling disciplines, and assisting with student safety in the building.

#### **V. Vote on Revenue and Capital**

- R. Marconi began the discussion by stating there was a reduction in contingency from 15% to 10%, which is intended to accommodate the Ridgefield Playhouse and the Board of Education. The goal is to make it revenue-neutral for taxpayers, by also accounting for the Chef's Warehouse expansion. R. Marconi also states that parking revisions will not be done, and parking is solely dependent on the tenants and employees of Chef's Warehouse.  
**D. Moccia moved and D. Ulmer seconded the motion to proceed with the Venus Building renovations. Motion carried 5-0.**
- **D. Ulmer moved and J. Mancini seconded the motion to accept revenues as they are with the exception of interest income and the school bus fuel. Motion carried 5-0.**
- **D. Ulmer moved and S. Connelly seconded the motion to approve the AAA bond ratings by maintaining a 98.7% collections rating. Motion carried 5-0.**

#### **VI. Board of Education Discussion**

- J. Mancini feels that redistricting must be looked at and there are things the BOE can do to find efficiencies. J. Mancini states that a policy should be put in place. A. Freidenrich states that we should not be increasing staff if our student population is decreasing.
- D. Ulmer stated that there has been a great deal of angst regarding the Superintendents performance and the selection of the current one. The requested increases are less than \$1M on the BOS side and \$3.5M on the BOE side. The Board of Selectmen's recommendation for the BOE's increase was 2.5%, which equates to \$94k.

## **VII. Adjournment**

**D. Moccia moved and J. Mancini seconded the motion to adjourn at 9:48 PM.**

**Motion carried**

**5-0.**

Respectfully Submitted by,  
Shannon Freda