



Town of Ridgefield

Board of Finance

Approved Meeting Minutes

Monday March 25, 2019

Call to order

D. Ulmer called to order the public hearing of the Board of Finance at 7:30 PM on March 25th, 2019 at East Ridge School, Ridgefield, CT.

Board Members D. Ulmer, J. Mancini, A. Freidenrich, S. Connelly were in attendance. D. Moccia absent

I.Board of Selectmen

Rudy Marconi-2020 budget proposals. Goal is to make the 2020 budget as lean as possible and the most efficient budget. A proposal is in place of incentive retirement for nonunion and one union employees. 75% of their salary must be taken by August 31. We would be able to reduce head count by 7.34 people. Positions eliminated: foreman, PT assessment clerk, Assistant Director at Parks & Rec. Revenue clerk reduced hours by half, Fire Admin reduced to part time, Engineer reduced to part time. Total salary saved a little over \$500,000.

\$1.84 million allocation to roads infrastructure. \$235,000 increase to health insurance and working on a state plan for future health benefits. Currently in negotiations and discussions are ongoing.

Percentage of town budget: Roads 5%, Library 7%, Others 2%, General Govt. 12%, Public Rec. 16%, Public Safety (police) 14%, Fire 12%, Public Works 13%, Employee benefits 31%.

Debt Service-Fiscal 2019 \$11,036,654, Fiscal 2020 \$11,315,116. Increase 2.52%. Total Vehicles & Equipment \$1,056,728, Town Buildings & Equipment \$1,617,064, Town Infrastructure \$186,700, Board of Educ \$1,665,078. General Government 3%, Public Recreation 17%, Public Safety 10%, Public Works 33%, Public Education 37%.

Debt Service/Debt Outstanding-

Debt Service- FYE 19 \$11,036,54, FYE 20 \$11,315,116, FYE 21 \$11,066,482, FYE 22 \$10,137,120, FYE 23 6,009,436.

Debt Outstanding- FYE 19 \$64,056,879, FYE 20 \$54,476,162, FYE 21 \$53,364,910, FYE 22, \$74,656,891, FYE 23 \$66,419,016.

Summary-Town Operations \$36,478,807 (0.01) %, Roads/Infrastructure \$1,840,000 0%, Sub total \$38,318,807 (0.01) %, School Operations \$98,423,760 3.60%, Public Debt \$11,315,116, 2.52%. Total \$148,057,683, 2.56%.

*Questions

Rich Fasanelli, 26 Cay Road. “Do other schools put maintenance in their budget?” Rudy Marconi- “Unsure but Ridgefield always has.”

Steve Jameson, 153 W. Mountain Road. “Why does healthcare keep increasing?” Rudy Marconi- “Utilization increases are substantial. Anthem would be a 35% increase. We’re getting out of HSA to save costs. We’ve saved over \$500,000 by getting out of HSA and going with a state plan.”

Jan Rifkinson, 169 New Road. “In regards to the usage of insurance, is there a virus in the area?” Rudy Marconi- “No. Heart disease, four cancer cases and 18 cases of costs above \$100,000 at this point in time. Utilization is very high this year. The new state plan has HEP in contract (Health Enhancement Plan). Physicals are based on year of age and are mandatory or patient is assessed a penalty. We need people to take care of themselves.”

Rich Fasanelli, 26 Cay Road. “Is there enough money in the budget for school security?” Rudy Marconi- “From our chief, here are great communication plans in place. Our children’s safety is our first priority with a priority to maintain a high level of safety. Resource officers are constant and present in our schools.”

II. Board of Education

Dr. Collins 2019-2020 Operating Budget goal statement- “To provide for the needs of students in the most fiscally responsible way possible.”

Responsibilities:

1. Ensure that all students ages 3-21 are provided with equal access to education and transportation.
2. Ensure students have adequate books, supplies, materials, equipment, staffing, facilities and technology.
3. Ensure the equitable allocation of resources among schools.
4. Ensure the school facilities are properly maintained.
5. Ensure that resources are allocated and plans and programs are developed to provide a safe school setting for students and staff.
6. Implement Federal and State law ensuring the needs of students who qualify for special education or 504 services being met.
7. Ensure that mandates in the general statutes within the jurisdiction of the State Board of Education be implemented.

Our Mission: Ridgefield Public Schools provides engaging, relevant and personalized learning experiences so all students can pursue their interests and prepare for life, learning, and work as global citizens. To accomplish this mission our community, including educators, students and parents will partner to foster academic, social and emotional growth for all students, promote wellness of body and mind, build an inclusive climate of trust, safety and respect, value diversity by cultivating global competencies, and attract, support and retain talented educators who embrace continuous learning.

Budget Drivers: certified salaries, non-certified salaries, employee benefits, transportation, special education, projects, repairs, maintenance, energy, supplies and materials.

Summary

2018-2019 Budget Appropriation \$95,000, 2.55% increase.

2019-2020 Staff Requests & Proposals \$100,472,220, 5.76% increase.

Superintendent's Recommended Budget \$98,261,254 3.43% increase

Board of Education Adoption \$98,423,760 3.60% increase.

Board of Education Priorities

1. Maintain class size guidelines PreK-12 to support personalized, relevant and engaging teaching and learning opportunities.
2. Narrow the achievement gap between children with disabilities and their non-disabled peers.
3. Strengthen instructional frameworks to better meet the academic, social and emotional learning needs of all students.
4. Foster an organizational culture of professional growth and innovation.
5. Growth for all students.

III. Dave Ulmer

2018 Unemployment rate 3.2% Things are improving. 11 foreclosures in 2018, 0 so far in 2019. The median income in 2017 was \$151,399. The grand list growth rate F 2019 0.82%. F 2020 0.60%. The mill rate increase 2018 1.92%, 2019 1.80%. There is a substantial overage in interest income with pluses and minus' in all revenues with the Rec. Center revenue being up. Cumulative spending change vs. FY09 for FY20-Schools 31.6%, Town 23.7%. FY 19, Schools 27%, Town 23.7%.

Budget Deliberations & Schedule

BOS Budget & Capital Budgets, General Budget Discussion.	March 26
BOS Capital & Revenues, General Budget Discussion, Possible vote.	March 27
BOE Operating & Capital Budgets, General Budget Discussion, Possible vote.	March 28
Open Items, Possible vote on Capital	April 1
Open Items, Possible vote	April 2
Possible vote	April 3

IV. Public Comments

Jan Rickinson, 169 New Road. Question- "If we're anticipating large capital expenditures in 2023 how do we prepare for it? Answer- The bundle was bonded in 2001 and 2003 and debt services are down. Refinancing is due to low interest rates. We will see a \$1 million drop. The policy of the board is to return funds to tax payers in the form of revenue.

Stephanie Sarup, 59 S. Salem Road. -has a 10-year-old son named Jordan with a genetic condition who attends Ridgebury Elementary. She asks for careful consideration to eliminate services for children with special needs. Catastrophic results could occur. The suggested cut is unreasonable and asks the BOF to be thoughtful with the BOE budget.

Rich Fasanelli, 26 Cay Road. He moved to Ridgefield due to the town's charm and low taxes. What will taxes be over the next 10 years? Taxes need to be capped instead of continuing to raise them. He has seen several negative economic impacts on Fairfield County.

Mira Jensen, 59 Marshall Road. Moved to Ridgefield due to schools and has a 1st and 3rd grader. She asked for the attendees of the meeting to stand to show their support for BOE budget.

Deidre Basile, 24 Walnut Hill Road. Co-President of PTA and voted to support the BOE and asks BOF to support the BOE.

Lori Bellagamba, 19 Sprucewood Lane. A 20-year resident, graduate of RHS and current teacher. She supports the BOE. She lives in Ridgefield due to charm and schools. Feels that education and children are changing rapidly and we need to be aligned with the town's mission statement.

Kerry Knop, 1 Stebbing Close. She moved here for the schools and is asking the BOF not to cut the BOE budget. Doing so will send the wrong message to students and home owners.

Keith Velia, 12 Mimosa Place. Has lived in Ridgefield for 10 years and has 2 children. Asked to look at administration instead of classrooms to make cuts.

Steve Jameson, 153 W. Mountain Rd. Feels that a storm is coming to the state in the form of foreclosures causing people to move and the new tax bill is alarming with increases in healthcare and outplacement services being on the rise. State, municipalities and tax payers are in a bad position. He urges we make things right due to an increase in finances.

Sandra Mahoney, 18 Wile Turkey Court. Is in support of the BOE budget. This would negatively impact the town if not supported. She moved to Ridgefield for the schools. Cuts and restrictions will be negative towards students.

Jessica Wilson, 45 Lee Road is in support of the BOE.

Stephanie Anderson, 3 Barrack Hill Road. She asks BOF to support the BOE increase. Every year the budget gets cut. Schools attract new home buyers.

Ed Tyrrell, 17 Pond Road. Tax payers can't afford the increase in the BOE budget.

Suzanne Sherter, 174 Haviland Road. She is a PTA leader and resident. She encourages to let the town speak their voices. She supports the next generation. Children are our future. She represents the entire school community and feels teachers need support

V. Adjournment

A. Freidenrich moved and S. Connelly seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 PM.
Motion carried 4-0

Emails to the BOF Members

1. Beverly Griggs
2. Kerry & Craig Knop
3. Alison Anderson
4. Megan & Mike Seff
5. Jenn Scully
6. Lorraine Catalano
7. Rebecca Staub
8. Emma Cartwright
9. Megan Antonacci
10. Diana Davis
11. Andrea Kaknevicus
12. Christine Llewellyn
13. Wendy Walsh
14. Melissa Parish
15. Shelly A. Terry
16. Kristy Jefferson
17. Kristin Rosengren
18. Stephanie Scler
19. Kristen Rosengren
20. Abigail Bayer
21. Mavis Mai
22. Andrew Crist
23. Pam Banks
24. Alex Hickey
25. Dennis & Jeannine (last name not provided)
26. Amanda Bergen
27. Lauren Miller
28. Gloria & Justin Driscoll
29. Debra Crist
30. Kathleen Tracey
31. Jessica Brown
32. Trista Matte
33. Christine Anderson
34. Sandra Maloney

35. Althea Trinhaus
36. Stephanie Anderson
37. Jennifer Mignano
38. Sandra Griffin
39. Lisa Moore
40. Jean Macaluso
41. Michelle Cochran
42. Debra Franceschini Gatje
43. Jenn Hausen
44. Lisa Shaplan
45. Kim Carone
46. Erica DiGrazia
47. Kerri E. Austin

In Support of cutting the 2019-2020 School Budget

1. Joseph O'Dea
2. Robert Essing
3. Rich Fasanelli

Respectfully Submitted by,
Mia Belanger