



Town of Ridgefield Board of Finance

Approved Meeting Minutes Board of Finance Budget Deliberations Board of Selectman Operating and Capital

Tuesday March 16, 2021

I. Call to order

Dave Ulmer called to order the Board of Finance Budget Deliberations meeting at 7:00 pm March 16, 2021 via Zoom due to Coronavirus. Board Members Dave Ulmer, Greg Kabasakalian, Mike Rettger, Karen Ogden, Amy Freidenrich present.

Others Present:

Town Officials: Rudy Marconi-First Selectman, Kevin Redmond-Controller, Maureen Kozlark, Barbara Manners, Sean Connelly-BOS members, Chief Kreitz, Chief Myers-FD, Jake Muller, Dave Buccitti, town staff.

II. Rudy Marconi-Board of Selectman-Operating Budget-First Selectman Marconi gave an overview of the major items of the Operating Budget. One new person has been added to Highway Dept. The budget includes a proposal to combine PD and Fire dispatch, and provide full 24/7 coverage using civilian staff. A proposal of adding 32 part time hours to eliminate police officers covering civilian dispatches. The cost increase is the officer sitting in dispatch to be replaced so the officer can be on the roads. This effectively increases police on the street and working more efficiently.

Worker's Comp-currently projecting up 8%. Renegotiating for fiscal 2022. This can save substantial money for BOS and BOE. Joint policy savings could be \$500,000. Nothing has been signed at this point, however, comfortable that this is where the town will end up at a minimum. Also confident in reducing medical insurance by \$100,000. The increase in the Liability line item is due to the town being under budget in 2021. Adjustments would like to be seen on both sides, not just the town.

Community Grants-working with Mamasasco to keep the lake in good shape.

Golf Carts-a change has been made to golf carts. Options have been added to not allow carts to go in certain areas; need to stay on golf path due to weather conditions. There is a GPS feature that keeps the cart on track. This results in a \$1.00 per rental increase.

Parks & Rec-The personnel number is level, activity is down. Discussions have been had. Activity is expected to increase over the next few months. Not reducing personnel currently.

Scotts Ridge-turf field to be replaced soon. The sinking fund to go back in for next year.

Schlumberger-Maintenance is for property, responsible for the lawn, walkway, driveway etc. The electrical services are being looked at. A full analysis to be done next year. This is a leading property for combination of the Fire/Police departments. The site is 12-13 acres.

Reassessment & Hypertension-before July 4, 1996 police and fire officers qualify for hypertension testing assessment of their heart ratings. 15-20 people may qualify for this. There have been no settlements for hypertension recently. There is \$280,000 in the fund now. The highest settlement was \$165,000.

Legal-3 cases have triggered the amount in this line item. The legal line amount is higher than usual.

COVID-The town did well with estimating for COVID relief; filed with FEMA and state of CT. The actual forecast was very close to estimates. The town estimated on the higher end. Going forward, money coming from ARP of about \$2.4 million. Funds are going to the state to be sent out. An additional \$4.9 million to be used to make the town whole in COVID related expenses.

Reimbursements- received \$400,000 from CARES Act and \$120,000 from FEMA based on submissions. Continually filing through 12-31-2021.

Registrar-Increase for municipal election coming up.

Conservation Commission-professional services increased for managing down trees.

Personnel Services-overall increase driven by replacing of health vehicle-used police vehicle.

Vehicles-Question asked if fire truck was repaired. Yes, the engine has been repaired and is back in service.

Fire OT-driven by vacancies. Filling positions helps the OT line. Two new people hired last month and are currently in training program. They'll be on the road by end of May.

Vehicle gas-gas, oil and diesel locked in trough end of 2022.

III. Capital Budget

General Government-office update of 250 Microsoft licenses.

Golf-old maintenance building needs new garage door.

Parks & Rec-change made is the new equipment in Rec center, replaced with vehicles (swapped out). Money to be used in Spring to get mowers ready.

Truck-Mileage of 66,000 is not too high. The engine is in good condition. Transmissions due to plowing are the biggest issues.

Turf fields-funds are available in the Special Revenue accounts for Scotts Ridge and Tiger Hollow. Figure also includes the track.

Police/Fire-Required body dash cams are expensive. The town went with a cloud-based system. The products are durable. New body cams are replaced every two years, dash cams every five years. For new handguns, the old ones are turned in and the town gets money back. Radio replacements are very expensive. Currently five years of age with no issues. Technology can bring prices down in the future. Three vendors being looked at for one combined or two separate buildings for Police and Fire departments. The fire department needs a new location. There's not

enough room for addition/extension. The fire department limitations restrict the height of ladder trucks. The ladder was recently repaired after being hit.

Highway/Public Works-the town has been lucky with trade in values. The demand is because older trucks don't have accessories that newer trucks have. The demand is for newer trucks with more accessories.

Engineering-a low year for engineering. Developing a plan for what's needed for projects and for the design of Fire/Police departments. The Mountain Road bridge design was requested for the bridge replacement. The lighting program is being looked into. Re-lamped facilities and parking lots are coming to end of their life for LED bulbs. The program is to replace lamping at major parking lots. There is a small rebate for LED. The door replacement project was very successful and HVA for Town Hall allows to bring new technology and energy efficiency.

Tertiary roads-a late start was had due to COVID. Work to begin in about 4 weeks to get the roads ready. (Audible not very clear).

Per First Selectman, the BOE proposal 3.45% was very clear, and an understandable proposal made by Dr. Susie DaSilva on March 15, 2021. There is a light at the end of the tunnel regarding COVID. The town wants to make sure that they're mindful of tax increases. Funds needs to be used in the best way to benefit teachers and students. Budget cuts shouldn't affect students.

IV. Adjournment-motion to adjourn at 8:45 pm by Mike Rettger, seconded by Karen Ogden. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Mia Belanger

*Thank you to Mike Rettger for facilitating the Zoom process.