



Town of Ridgefield Board of Finance

Approved Meeting Minutes Board of Finance Budget Deliberations Monday March 22, 2021

I. Call to order

Dave Ulmer called to order the Board of Finance Budget Deliberations meeting at 7:00 pm March 22, 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, Robert Hebert & Maureen Kozark-BOS members, Luke McCoy-Kaestle Boos, Jill Bornstein-Tiger Hollow President, Dane Street-Tiger Hollow member.

II. Tiger Hollow & Scotts Ridge fields project update-Assessment of fields began November, 2019. The facilities are nearing 20 years of usage and need replacing. In May 2020, the town of Ridgefield approved \$550,000 for the track replacement project. Kaestle Boos has been contracted for the work. The existing concerns and conditions have been noted. November 2020 began the first phase. Objective is to do the project in one shot with the turf and track. Photos of the track and field conditions were displayed during the meeting. It would be economical and practical to do both projects at the same time. Doing so could provide a potential savings of approximately \$50,000. The maintenance of the track is to be worked into a 10-year plan. Concerns of fracking in the asphalt materials was discussed. All requirements and proper precautions are being taken for safety and health concerns. Tiger Hollow Inc. to fund construction document phase (\$35,000) to keep projects on schedule. The sinking funds not adequately covering the 10-year life of turf fields which need to be adjusted going forward. Timeline: March 2021-construction documents, April 2021-public bidding, May 2021-referendum and contract award, May-August 2021-construction, September 2021 completion.

III. Revenues Discussion-

Collection rate-discussion was held prior to tonight's meeting between Kevin Redmond and Jane B. Hill about going to 98.5% or 98.7% for the assumed collections rate. Current model is 98.7%. Amy Freidenrich motioned to set the collection rate at 98.7%, seconded by Greg Kabasakalian. All in favor.

Inter-governmental-numbers are driven by the state. Not much variability. Flat to fiscal 21.

Licenses/permits-building line has increased. The activity is increasing and driven by real estate. Numbers have been discussed with Rudy Marconi and the revenue committee.

Town clerk recording/conveyance-recording has increased. This is interest rate and real estate driven. People are refinancing. Conveyance is at \$950,000, an increase of \$300,000. Transactions have occurred that didn't hit the MLS. \$950,000 is a good but also conservative number. Homes that don't hit the MLS still get recorded.

Special Services-\$200,000 represents net profit, number can vary. Keeping an eye on this. Tree work will start soon.

Ambulance-At \$800,000. The figure has been impacted by Covid but are hopeful things are getting back to normal. Ambulance runs are happening but not runs to the hospital. The state allows a 3-4% increase range. The patterns show this is an appropriate number.

Golf-Increase of \$50,000, weather driven. Had a strong first half of the year. New carts with new functionality were introduced for a better golfing experience. There was a small rate increase to the golf cart line.

Parking-Soon to start up the parking enforcement and are hiring for this position. Currently selling permits for parking and they are being purchased. \$28,000 line item for tickets, \$6,000 line item for permits.

Tuition-kept at \$100,000. Historically this is a decent number. Proposal to bring to \$80,000.

Summary of changes made:

- Reduction of BOE tuition \$100,000 to \$80,000 (\$20,000 decrease)

- Increase of pistol permits \$5,000 to \$10,000 (\$5,000 increase)

- Increase of interest income \$100,000 to \$115,000 (\$15,000 increase)

- Resulting in total other revenues: \$12,679,966.

Motion to approve changes by Dave Ulmer, seconded by Mike Rettger. All in favor

IV. General Budget Discussion- would prefer the Tiger Hollow and Scott Ridge projects to be done at the same time to take advantage of savings. It's important to keep them together and improve the asset to the community. The athletic fund bank account balance is \$177,000; a suggestion to give the inactive funds back to the tax payers. The money in this account is not coming from donations. The estimated Eversource rebate increased from \$26,000 to \$41,000. In a discussion of the fund balance and ARP it was questioned what is covered and what isn't? The tax collection rate and Parkes & Rec discussed at this time. For current tax payer relief, about \$500,000 can be claimed. The Parks & Rec fiscal 20 shows a revenue deficit of \$550,000 which is \$50,000 net of expenses. Fiscal 21 shows revenue of \$1,159,671 below budget; expenses decreased by \$340,000 for a net of \$819,671. Rentals from Cadence: April, May and June not paid. July, August and September ½ paid. Uncollected through March about \$65,000. \$1.45 million to be able to put in as revenue from BOE, possibly more due to school lunch program. The general fund currently holds \$13.2 million. The surplus the town gets this year can carry over as revenue for next year. A potential surplus of \$600,000 in revenues and \$50,000 in expenses as a place holder. The BOE is not using carryover account of \$650,000. A return of bank account balances from the BOE of about \$60,000 from building rental and \$150,000 from athletic fund.

Summary:

Increase \$1.4 million town budget.

Increase \$2.4 million BOE budget.

These assume 1 ½ million from ARP and 1 ½ million from balance surplus.

Tax mill rate 0.47% after ARP and town and BOE savings.

In addition, a brief discussion was had regarding school re-districting and consolidations. To be discussed further at a later date.

V. Adjournment-motion to adjourn at 9:30 pm by Karen Ogden, seconded by Amy Freidenrich. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Mia Belanger

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