

Town of Ridgefield
Board of Selectmen Meeting
Wednesday, January 22, 2020 - 6:30pm
Town Hall, (Large Conference Room)
400 Main Street, Ridgefield, Connecticut
UNREVISED/UNAPPROVED Minutes

These minutes are a general summary of the meeting and are not intended to be a verbatim transcription.

In attendance: R. Marconi, B. Hebert, M. Kozlark, S. Connelly

Absent: B. Manners

Agenda

1. Public Comment
2. Appointments
 - a. John Devine - Reappointment for Economic & Community Development Commission
 - b. Andrew Okrongly - Candidate for Pension Commission (no vote)
3. Pension Commission OPEB Review
4. Article XI - Standards of Conduct - Discussion
5. Approval of Minutes - January 8, 2020
6. Selectman's Report

R. Marconi called the Board of Selectmen's Meeting to order at 6:30pm.

1. Public Comment

Coco Baron - 51 Prospect Ridge, Bldg. A., Apt. 6 - Ms. Baron submitted a letter to the BOS requesting the Ridgefield Housing Authority's Management Company, Konover Real Estate Corporation, install a laundry card machine for Building A of 51 Prospect Ridge. Currently the only laundry card machine is located in the Congregate Building laundry room. The machine is used to reload your card with money to do laundry. Ms. Baron feels it's a hardship for residents to have to go to the Congregate Building to reload their cards. Ms. Baron has attempted to have her request fulfilled to no avail, and is asking for the BOS's help at this time.

2. Appointments

- a. John Devine - Reappointment for Economic & Community Development Commission

John Devine was interviewed by the BOS for reappointment on the Economic & Community Development Commission. Mr. Devine gave the BOS an update on the ECDC. With regards to the Cultural District, and the necessity to form a committee, the State has not yet figured out the application process, and has put everything on pause.

The ECDC for the first time is organizing and running Ridgefield Restaurant Week, previously run by the Chamber of Commerce. They are going to run this the first week of March. They have almost all the restaurants in Town participating. The restaurants will run a special limited menu for the week, along with their full menu.

One of the big projects the ECDC is working on is the EV charging stations.

With the advent of additional electric vehicles, there's the potential of significant cost savings for the municipal vehicles. The ECDC roughly estimates perhaps a 50% operational savings on the electricity vs. gasoline.

M. Kozlark asked Mr. Devine about revenue generated through the EV stations for the Town. Mr. Devine responded yes. The BOS briefly discussed how to capture any revenue stream generated from new EV stations. There is work needed to be done on rates, placement of stations, and whether to lease the stations or not.

Another project the ECDC is starting to commit to is the 2020 POCD on Sustainability and working on the connectivity project. They are looking to see what it would take to install Wi-Fi in the Village perhaps in Ballard Park. The installation of Town Wi-Fi would be a Town expense. There is still a lot of research that needs to be done.

The ECDC purchased the domain www.ridgefieldct.com, through this years budget. Geoffrey Morris negotiated the cost down from \$16,000 to \$3,000. There is a 60 day waiting day period until it can be used as per federal regulations.

M. Kozlark moved and B. Hebert seconded the motion to reappoint John Devine to the Economic & Community Development Commission. Motion carried 4-0.

b. Andrew Okrongly - Candidate for Pension Commission (no vote)

Andrew Okrongly was interviewed by the BOS for the open position on the Pension Commission. Mr. Okrongly is a RHS graduate who recently moved back to Ridgefield from NYC with his wife who also grew up in town. Mr. Okrongly graduated from the University of Michigan in 2010, he now has nine years of experience in the financial service industry, most of that with Black Rock as an Investment Manager. He is now working as an Asset Manager for Commonfund, in Wilton, CT.

Mr. Okrongly loves Ridgefield, and believes that that his passion for Ridgefield along with his extensive experience in pension investment and risk investment would make him a valuable addition to the Pension Commission.

The BOS has one more interview before voting on a candidate to full the vacancy.

3. Pension Commission OPEB Review

Laurie Fernandez, Director of Human Resources & Chris Christiansen, Chairman of the Pension Commission were present to go over the OPEB Trust Review. There are two trust documents, the first is OPEB, meaning Other Post Employment Benefits (primarily retired medical), and the other is the Pension.

Mr. Christiansen explained the Pension Commission has been working on this for over a year. They started working with the Charter Revision Committee to revise Charter language. Then they revised the Ordinances, and now they are working on the Trust documents, and the Plan documents. Both Mrs. Fernandez & R. Marconi have reviewed both of these documents, with Joy Maini from Cohen & Wolf who gave legal feedback.

These documents are replacing the OPEB document, put in place in 2009, when the Town began an OPEB fund. They are only about 15-20% funded, whereas the Pension is 100% funded. To get the OPEB to 100%, it is a long term plan that shall take about 25 years.

The Town has the liability of maybe \$25 million out there that isn't funded. It's like having a mortgage payment, we are not paying principal, we are paying interest. The Town's funding went down, due to plan design changes and elimination of future benefits, which reduces their annual requirement.

The OPEB document that that was reviewed was 10 years old, and the Pension one was about 35 years old. Mr. Christiansen stated that they first went through the OPEB document, and made all the necessary changes with Attorney Maini. Once the OPEB document was updated they replace the word OPEB with Pension, and made whatever minor necessary changes needed. Both documents are now ready for approval by the BOS.

B. Hebert moved and S. Connelly seconded the motion to approve the changes to the OPEB as recommended by the Pension Commission. Motion carried 4-0.

4. Article XI - Standards of Conduct - Discussion

Laurie Fernandez, Director of Human Resources was present for the discussion of the Standards of Conduct with the BOS. The BOS discussed the language with respect to an Attorney for example serving on a Board and their ability to represent clients before that board in the future. The word employee was removed from the draft due to conflict with union contracts.

The BOS discussed that Boards & Commissions should be reviewing their officers every January, R. Marconi mentioned having Amy send out reminders to everyone. The BOS discussed Sec. 11-8 Gifts, gratuities, and favors, they didn't put a dollar figure in here because the Town has not had issues with abuse of this, but they are going to do a survey within CCM to see what other municipalities are doing.

If you serve on the board of any outside non-profit, you would have to abstain from voting on Town business if there was a conflict. There was discussion as to how this affect the role of the First Selectman as the First Selectman is not a volunteer. B. Hebert and S. Connelly both thought this section should remain in the draft. B. Hebert suggested sending working document to L. Steunman, an attorney who had crafted Ethics redo, for comments.

5. Approval of Minutes - January 8, 2020

The BOS discussed and made some modifications to the minutes from the January 8, 2020 BOS Meeting before approving them.

B. Hebert moved and S. Connelly seconded the motion to approve the January 8, 2020 Minutes from the Board of Selectmen Meeting as modified. Motion carried 4-0.

6. Selectman's Report

Demolition Delay - Historic District Commission

R. Marconi has been working with Dan O'Brien, Chairman, of the Historic District Commission on a demolition delay permit. They met with the State of Connecticut Preservation who suggested the Town moves forward with a delay permit. This will be on the agenda for the February 5th BOS Meeting, R. Marconi will distribute the draft of the ordinance. Mr. O'Brien was the main architect of the ordinance. He had Jason Celestino, Building Official go through it to make sure everything is in compliance with building codes, etc.

Quail Ridge II/Prospect Woods

The Conservation Commission is putting in a trail to connect to the rail trail. It would come out to the sidewalk that is part of Quail Ridge II from their mailboxes group to the top of the cul-de-sac at Sunset La. When they researched they found that Qual Ridge II actually built the sidewalk, and the mailboxes, on Town property.

Quail Ridge II, now named Prospect Woods is okay with the trail coming out to the sidewalk if the Town is willing to accept the liability since it is Town property.

Cable TV Advisory Commission

There is a vacancy on the commission for Ridgefield, but there are vacancies for Danbury & Redding as well. AnneMarie Surfaro-Boehme would like the BOS to advertise, to try to get more people. They only meet twice a year, so it isn't a big commitment.

Depot Road Bridge

R. Marconi reported that they did get an estimate to do the GPR (ground penetrating radar), to see if there is in rebar. The bid came in high at \$25,000. It's a minimum of \$15,000. If rebar is found, then the engineers would proceed with a structural analysis to give it a rating. That would be the additional \$10,000. If there is no rebar found it would only be the \$15,000.

Building Department ISO Rating

The State of Connecticut comes did a review of the municipal building and their compliance with building codes. The State's initial rating of the Town on a scale of 0-10, was a 3 or a 4. After the State sat down with Jason

Celestino, Building Official, he was able to get the rating up to 6's, 7's, 8. The BOS discussed the State's schedule of reviewing the codes and how they really make the municipalities earn their scores.

Police & Fire Study

B. Hebert asked for an update on the Public Safety Project. R. Marconi reported should be ready to meet soon to look at recommendations from the firm Kaestle Boos on addressing Police/Fire facility needs.

Budget Books

R. Marconi is trying to get copies to the BOS as soon as possible.

The budget book currently reflects about a 3% increase in our budget. On the capital side there are substantial increases, of the two major increases in capital, one is BOE at \$3.2 million, the second is a \$2-5 million dollar number in regards to the PD/FD build. R. Marconi stated that in regards to the PD/FD build it may be something the BOS wants to discuss with the BOF in regards to architectural design. The BOS will have to discuss this during the budget meetings.

M. Kozlark moved and B. Hebert seconded the motion to enter into Executive Session at 8:35pm. Motion carried 4-0.

The BOS returned to the public at 9:05pm, there was no vote taken during Executive Session.

M. Kozlark moved and S. Connelly seconded the motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 9:06pm. Motion carried 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted,
Hollie M. Rapp