

Town of Ridgefield
Board of Selectmen Budget Meeting

Monday, February 3, 2020- 7:00pm

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, B. Manners, M. Kozlark, S. Connelly

Agenda

1. Budget Presentation (Selectman Marconi)
2. Ridgefield Police Department Budget
3. Purchasing & Facilities Department Budget
4. General Budget Discussion
5. Possible Capital/Operating Budget Vote

R. Marconi called the Board of Selectmen's Budget Meeting to order at 7:00pm.

1. Budget Presentation (Selectman Marconi)

At the tri-board meeting the Town was looking at a 4.6/4.7% increase. The first thing found in the Health Insurance line was the ability to decrease based on the actual for this year. By using the current fiscal year moving forward, and not having to pay into the HSA (Health Savings Account), the Town was able to reduce the insurance from 12% to 6%.

In speaking with Pete Hill, Director of Public Services some of the roads to be done are tertiary roads, cul-de-sacs. These roads do not have high traffic volume and could possibly experience a good 15-20 years of life. The estimated cost to bring those roads up to the Town's standards is approximately \$1.1 million. It would help the operating budget, by placing the \$1.1 million into capital. More analysis needs to be done on this before making a recommendation to the Board of Finance.

A large item in capital is the Architectural design for the Police & Fire Department, which is estimated at \$2.4 million. There is a meeting with Kaestle Boos in the next few weeks. The BOS should have the information needed to vote in the first week of March budget work.

Currently the Town is looking at an operating increase of 2.99% on the Town side. Kevin Redmond, Director of Finance touched on revenues, stating that revenues were pretty much flat to last year. There isn't a lot of change in revenues other than ambulances going up a little bit because of some of the initiatives taken on the collection side. Rental income is also up due to Chefs Warehouse's abatement being up.

2. Ridgefield Police Department Budget

Police Chief, Jeff Kreitz, and Police Commission Members Marcie Coffin, Chair & George Kain presented the Police Department Budget. The main driver for the 3% increase is the impact of the cruisers. If not for the \$38,000 increase for the cruisers, the increase would be 1.95% instead of 2.66%.

B. Manners asked about the increase from \$17,359 to \$33,000 under maintenance of vehicles. The reason for the increase is that they have moved to an all season tire which requires more maintenance, as well as the police department keeping the cruisers longer than an automatic three years replacement that they previously had. There was a discussion about the future of electric cruisers. The feeling is that Ridgefield would like to see how other area Police departments react to electric cruisers and not be the initial test case.

The BOS asked about RPS security in light of the BOE request for added security personnel. The PD currently has three SRO's (School Resource Officer), and the RPS have requested a Security Director. The PD assured the BOS that RPS is a safe environment. There is also an additional \$1,000 added to the DARE program. The PD would like to change the name of the line item to be Community Relations/Dare, since the PD does a lot more than just the DARE program in regards to public relations.

On the capital side, the PD has one request, and that is the I-Record System. The system is statutorily required. It is currently in place, but the service contract is running out. This system must be used to record certain class A & B felony interviews, through to conviction, and through the exhaustion of the appeal process. If a person pleads guilty, and waives the right to appeal, at that point the information can be disposed of.

3. Purchasing & Facilities Department Budget

Jake Muller, Director of Purchasing presented the Purchasing & Facilities Budget before the BOS. The Town is still carrying 50% of previous engineer's salary line. Charlie Fisher, the former Town Engineer runs the larger grant projects in Town. The Town outsources smaller engineering projects to TJ Engineering, a local engineer.

In regards to solid waste, transfer station permit sales generate enough revenue to cover the costs.

At the Schlumberger property, the BOS was hoping to see the budget reduced for Facility and Property Maintenance. The big transformer for the campus is an issue. Mr. Redmond stated that Eversource does check and reset the demand rate. That is the issue we are having on the electrical side. There was discussion about which portion was actual usage and which portion was maintenance in terms of the electric numbers, followed by at what point does it make financial sense to replace the transformer.

The Venus Building will have to be ADA compliant. Mr. Muller also mentioned that they are working on the Town Hall, looking at the counter space in the Town Clerk's office, and at the same time they are looking at security for the building, to keep the area safe for employees, and the public, and allowing ADA access to the kiosk and desk.

The Venus Building, roof repairs/replacement in the amount of \$192,500, this has already gone out to bid. Window replacement in Yanity Gym at \$52,800, this will complete the window project. The original estimate was \$80,000. Under Highway, is the metal storage barn, which is above the existing salt barn, in need of repair. The roof is rusted out, and the walls are also in need of repair.

Former Schlumberger property, there are two small concrete entry areas that are in need of repair, costing \$42,000. This will improve some ADA issues as well. At ACT, their rear door will become a fully compliant ADA door. Door replacement at various locations, is a continuation of the program started last year. The program covers both school and municipal buildings.

For school capital projects, a section of Veterans Park School, roof is to be removed and replaced, with some seam repairs and expansion joints at \$372,000. At Veterans Park there is a Portable Classroom that is in need of repairs for \$48,000.

The "Village" Storm Drainage Study to address the water that runs through Casagmo and Cannonfield. This study would be to improve the current system, costing \$121,000.

The BOS briefly discussed the Fox Hill Dam situation, R. Marconi reported it is still under discussion with the State.

The LED conversion project in Town Hall and the Town Hall Annex, as well as portions of the Venus Building would have a rebate from Eversource of approximately \$30,000. This would be a fixture replacement versus a revamp. The traditional 2x4 lights would be replaced with an LED fixture. Recess lights would just have a screw in LED, but the bulk of the project would be a fixture replacement.

B. Hebert inquired about any monies budgeted for Town Hall improvements. Mr. Marconi explained that a certain percentage of the monies the Town Clerk receives from conveyance fees is to go into a Local Capital Improvement Fund. These are funds that can be used to update/renovate Town Hall. The Town Clerk's office, Assessor's Office, and Tax Collector's Office were updated using these funds. The Town is now waiting for this fund to build up again to update the conference rooms. There was discussion about the restrooms on the main level needing to be renovated.

The sidewalk improvements, is a substantial increase from the previous years of \$150,000. The project was just completed at Ridgefield High School costing around \$100,000. The newer concrete is being corroded much quicker with the de-icing materials that are being used. This is the reason for the increase to \$353,750. Mr. Muller has four areas, two schools, and two municipal areas that were hit really hard this year that need to be repaired.

When asked if there was any project that could be re-prioritized, Mr. Muller responded that the windows at Yanity would be the project he would push off if needed.

4. General Budget Discussion

The BOS discussed how the schools are consistently bringing an increasing budget, while the Town tried to keep their budget as flat as possible.

5. Possible Capital/Operating Budget Vote

There was no vote.

M. Kozlark moved and B. Hebert seconded the motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Budget Meeting at 9:24pm. Motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted,
Hollie M. Rapp