

**Town of Ridgefield
Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes
APPROVED
February 4th, 2021 at 7:30pm via Zoom**

Present: Rudy Marconi (RM), Bob Hebert (BH), Sean Connelly (SC), Maureen Kozlark (MK), Barbara Manners (BM)

1) Public Comment

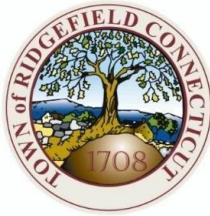
- No Public Comment

2) Library Budget

- Brenda McKinley, Director for the Ridgefield Library provided an overview of the budget.

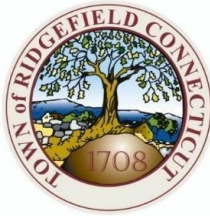
3) Police Department Budget

- Chief Kreitz spoke to two areas of budget increases. The New Body Cam System and the consolidation of Central dispatch with the Fire Department. Chief Meyer joined in on the discussion and outlined the Fire Departments Capital requests.
 - Body Cam System: The police department representative stated that the body cam system would be replaced every two years in this system. Then dash cams would be every fifth year. The equipment price would come in at \$164,000. Kevin Redmond stated that this is a smart investment due to the item being a better product overall. Maureen Kozlark asked about potential security concerns. The Chief Kreitz stated that there was no security concern and that the company they are working with is one of the best. S.Connelly asked about combining with other towns in a group purchase. Chief Kreitz noted that a group purchase would not be possible due surrounding towns having different needs than Ridgefield. Along with this, some towns do not have the required technology in place to take on the system. S. Connelly followed up by asking about the staff of the PD and how



they feel about the body cams. The Chief Kreitz stated there has been no dissent, but in fact a excitement to get these fresh body cams in and use them. Bob Hebert asked Chief Kreitz if the PD might need further administration staff to process the data. Chief Kreitz stated that there would be no need to increase administrative staff. Chief Kreitz stated that there would be a learning curve with new equipment. Rudy Marconi asked about the redaction software. Chief Kreitz stated that the software would save time overall.

- The next topic is the consolidation of the dispatch. Chief Kreitz stated that the consolidation of dispatch is to help serve the community better. Chief Kreitz stated that a primary issue right now is that the dispatch currently runs through the Police department and then is transferred to the Fire Department if a medical or fire emergency occurs. When the state upgraded the system the PD no longer was able to transfer calls over to the FD via fax. Chief Kreitz stated that vital information like location and condition are received by the PD, but this no longer works after the upgrade. This means after they are transferred they must repeat information which creates a delay in response time. This delays being able to assist people who are in distress. During a call a dispatcher cannot talk on the radio or send out the proper emergency service without cutting off the call to the person in distress. This would be fixed if a central dispatch system was in place. Chief Meyers stated that there are not currently enough dispatchers and currently PD officers are filling in order to fill out the holes in the dispatch schedule. Maureen Kozlark asked why additional dispatchers were needed. Chief Meyers stated the PD Officer would need to get proper EMT medical training. This overall would cost more money and training than it is worth in the long run. Currently, there will be six dispatchers per day. Rudy Marconi stated that the responsibility of having dispatchers on the desk will no longer fall on the PD.



4) Fire Department Budget

- Chief Meyers stated that the budget is flat except for contractual obligations that the FD does not control. This obligation would be buying a used vehicle when it becomes available. Chief Meyers stated this vehicle would be for the FD Deputies to get around in.
- Chief Meyers stated the FD has a vehicle that has rusted through. The FD would trade this vehicle in and buy out a leased vehicle from the PD. Chief Meyers noted the vehicle would be available for the next 7 years as it only has 3 years of use.
- Chief Meyers stated that protective gear needs to be replaced every ten years. Currently six gear sets are being swapped out in order to meet NFDA Guidelines.
- Chief Meyers stated that 10 SCBA Bottles need to be replaced. They have a ten year legal certification on the bottles.
- Chief Meyers stated that a firehose needs to be replaced. The current inventory is low and will eventually need to be replaced.

5) General Budget Discussion

- Kevin Redmond stated the idea of trying to move the Conservation Commission to a more reasonable area of cuts. Rudy Marconi stated that



Workers Comp, Liability, and Property. R. Marconi stated these three expenses have greatly increased.

- Rudy Marconi stated one of the ideas to help control the expense of workers comp is to increase the deductible on workers compensation. This could not reduce the number in 2022 due to it being too late. Kevin Redmond stated if they did they would be doing so somewhat blind.
- Rudy Marconi stated that with the unpredictability of events going on that insurance cost are difficult to pin down and, the increases have been enormous. R. Marconi stated at this point he is unsure what is driving the increases.

6) Possible Capital/Operating Budget Vote

- Rudy Marconi stated that the total capital request is at \$4.8M.

7) Adjournment

Bob Hebert moved to adjourn at 10:00pm. Barbara Manners seconded the motion. (Motion carries 5-0)