

Town of Ridgefield
Board of Selectmen Meeting
Tuesday, February 5, 2019 – 7:00 pm
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. Manners, B. Hebert, M. Kozlark, S. Zemo

Agenda

1. Engineering and Facilities Budget
2. Library Budget
3. General Budget Discussion
4. Possible Capital/Operating Budget Vote

1. Engineering and Facilities Budget

Present: Jake Muller, Director of Facilities, Safety and Purchasing
Kevin Redmond, Town of Ridgefield Controller

Operating Expenses:

-Operating Expenses are over

-10650-Town Engineer- Full-time salaries: Charlie Fisher, now-former Town Engineer, retired recently. C. Fisher's retirement did not decrease the salary line, which stands at \$148,000 plus \$24,000 for insurance. R. Marconi proposed cutting the \$148,000 amount in half for 6 months and doing the same with the \$24,000 insurance amount. The suggestion was widely received by the BOS; however, there was no formal vote or decision to move forward with the idea that night. Jake Muller's salary was increased because he is now responsible for town engineering as well as the facilities in the town. It is for this reason the line seems high. Ken Sandberg took an early retirement as well. J. Muller is the only person on the full-time salary line. R. Marconi said C. Fisher retains on a part-time salary basis for no more than 20 hours per month.

-J. Muller said the Dept. is currently using local Engineers for local projects, which have been placed on the salary line

-Capital:

-Capital is over but J. Muller projects year 2020 might show a level out in capital

- 10682- Town Buildings – the Venus building and parking lot is being constructed for the BOE. Expenses include: An A/C upgrade at the Venus Building and the need for a new and rather costly transformer
- 10670-Solid Waste ended as flat
- 10691-School Buildings ended as flat
- 10690-Town Utilities- R. Marconi mentioned the downgraded volts in Philip Johnson Building. R. Marconi stated that transformers take up a lot of money, but that they need to be switched out.
- Steep incline/ramp near loading dock at Ridgebury is not safe. J. Muller stated it will remain the way it is for now.
- Roofs around town are being fixed. This is generally done during drier seasons.
- Utilities Dept. is responsible for moving BOE when the new location is ready, anticipate 4-6 laborers for approximately 3 days
- J. Muller is working with Eversource on replacements to old compressors and to fix coolant issues. He said the problem can mostly be fixed by changing to a coil that acts as cooling agent, which should then reduce energy costs.
- Tanks are a liability and need to be removed. Natural energy is now used at the Town Hall and other places in town.
- Asking for funds to fix/replace 15 exterior doors at the schools as well as to help with a painting project set to start May 2019 at RHS
- J. Muller mentioned the East Ridge front steps are corroded at the base because of salt and need complete replacing
- East Ridge ramp is part of above replacement
- Tree maintenance is approximately \$300,000, not including Eversource's tree work. The Dept. is currently under for the year.

2. Library Budget

Present: Brenda McKinley, Director; Stephen Dematteo, Treasurer; Andy Forsyth, Assistant Director

Kevin Redmond. Town of Ridgefield Controller

- Handouts including the Library's Annual Report were given to BOS
- K. Redmond gave a Library summary for the budget discussion.
- The library is a 501c3.
- Library saw a 12% increase in performance.
- Library works a lot with the ECDC and over 80 town organizations.
- Programs like Story Time are free, but the library rents rooms for a specific charge.
- Revenue is up by 6.7%

Operating Expenses:

- Library is asking for 3.6% from the Town.

-R. Marconi asked the Library about the amount of money they received from the thrift store. The library received \$10,000, but had originally only asked for \$4,000. R. Marconi suggested the Library ask for \$25,000 from the thrift store. The Library employees were open to the suggestion.

-Expenses for fiscal year 2020 would possibly include a 2.5% salary increase that would be spread over the next few years.

-Library expressed an Income challenge of \$30,000

-The Library expressed an expense challenge for 2019. They stated that most expenses were pretty flat, but there is an uncertainty as to how to keep it all balanced.

-The Library Dept. would like to increase health insurance.

-R. Marconi said the Town increases are substantially over \$1 million, especially for the BOE, which cannot be ignored.

-Capital:

-The Library made a request in regards to inadequate lighting. B. Manners asked the Library Dept. if they had to cut something to solve the lighting situation, what would it be? The Library said it would probably be the DVD section on the main level. R. Marconi asked if the Library has been working with Eversource for grants for this new lighting. The Library Dept. said the lighting problems were helped by some standing lamps, but the shelving areas that are affected in many places still have this problem. The standing lamps only helped with task lighting.

-The Library Dept. requested a fence replacement instead of continuing to spot repair their current fence. M. Kozlark asked if it was necessary to have a fence. B. Hebert said the new owners of an adjacent property might put up their own fence, but this is yet to be seen. All were in agreement not to change the fence at this time.

-The Library put in a request for computer replacements, with a focus on children's department computers. They also mentioned Wi-Fi-related issues. R. Marconi made the suggestion to compare prices of computers with those of the schools.

-The Library Dept. said the old computers are reused by the Friends of the Library.

-The Library Dept. said that they are willing to hold off on all requests to ensure that they can replace the check-out machines, which also spines and codes books, and subsequently have ten more years with a new machine.

3. General Budget Discussion

-M. Kozlark mentioned that the Library Dept. made an agreement with the BOS not to exceed 0%, which is the same percentage as the Town. S. Zemo agreed with the need to keep the goal at 0%.

-R. Marconi proposed looking into possible savings from switching to State insurance. He attended the first meeting on the subject today. The topic of meeting involved discussions about the ups and downs of state insurance with the Unions. R. Marconi mentioned the BOS needs to make a necessary split from the BOE. It was noted that a Public Hearing on the matter has to be held before the last week in March. R. Marconi said that there are 4 Unions to have discussions with. He also said that if the whole Town signed up for State insurance, there

wouldn't be a problem, but that if they were to sign up individually, state insurance could be denied. He emphasized that they cannot sustain health insurance as it stands at this time.

- R. Marconi stated that If the BOS were to separate from the BOE, the BOS is looking at a 35 or 40% increase, which is approximately \$1.6 or 1.8 million. He further said this decision has to be made and adjustments have to be made in the near future.

- No changes made at this time. Decisions will be made in March.

- Any ideas should be sent to R. Marconi for consideration by 2/13/19.

- R. Marconi wants to talk to other departments about possible changes.

- R. Marconi mentioned a Public Hearing on Saturday, 2/9/19.

4. Possible Capital/Operating Budget Vote

- Discussion on Capital: For BOE to try to keep their budget at \$4 million

- 2020 capital for schools are to include vehicle replacements and maintenance equipment.

- The BOE had mentioned a walk-in freezer lighting and energy repair that was needed. R. Marconi said he reached out to Eversource about fixing the lighting, but he has yet to receive an answer.

- S. Zemo feels there is a lot of room in the BOE budget requests.

- Modifications will be discussed, and then decided upon after R. Marconi attends more meetings with relevant parties.

- BOE Operating and Capital–BOS agreed to decide on a new document on 2/20/19.

- BOE voted on the budget details in the document discussed by the BOS that night

- BOE had parking lot requests.

- Current BOE budget is a little over \$4 million. Ideally, the budget should be \$3.5 million. R. Marconi said it is ultimately the decision of the Board of Finance.

- R. Marconi reminded the BOS about last year's high budget expenditures made for the completion of the Venus Building as well as for its parking lot.

No vote

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa M. Ackerly