



Town of Ridgefield
Board of Selectman Meeting Minutes
UNAPPROVED
September 22, 2021 at 6.30pm
Special Town Meeting at 7.30pm
Please note – these minutes are not verbatim.

Present: Rudy Marconi, Maureen Kozlark. Sean Connelly, Barbara Manners, Bob Hebert

1) Public comment

Mr. Davidson, First Selectman of Brookfield, who lives at 77 Sunset Lane, talked about the need for permanent bathroom facilities at Ballard Park. In a letter written to the Board in July, he detailed the reasons behind his request. Mr. Davidson appeared at the meeting to urge the Board to consider using ARPA funds to make this project happen.

2) Representative Aimee Berger-Girvalo

Ms. Berger-Girvalo gave a brief update to the Board on the recent meeting in Hartford. The recap included an overview of the different budget increases and various policies that were approved. Ms. Berger-Girvalo also talked about ARPA funds and her hope to pull more funding to support the WPCA project currently underway in Ridgefield.

There was a discussion about Cannabis Retail. Ms. Berger-Girvalo talked about the research that is behind the development of the policies that will be implemented. She also touched upon some of the conversation topics taking place among the representatives, which included allocating money to help with addiction services, state vs local control over zoning, desegregating communities and the challenges towns face with affordable housing.

3) Appointments & Re-appointments

a. Julia Knispel and Skylar Kleinman –Youth Commission

Both Ms. Knispel and Ms. Kleinman spoke about their involvement in different clubs and committees and why they are interested in the Youth Commission. The Board asked them several questions including what they plan to advocate for if appointed to the Commission. There was a discussion about mental health and different ways to help teens who are suffering.

Ms. Kozlark moved to appoint Julia Knispel and Skylar Kleinman for a two-year

term on the Youth Commission. Mr. Connelly second the motion. Motion carries 5-0.

b. Mary Morrisroe – Commission on Aging

Mary Morrisroe could not attend the meeting.

Mr. Hebert moved to re-appoint Mary Morrisroe for a three-year term on the Commission on Aging. Ms. Manners second the motion. Motion carries 5-0.

c. Joseph Adams – Cable Advisory Council

Mr. Adams talked about his accomplishments on the Cable Advisory Council 35 years ago and what he plans to accomplish now if he is appointed. There was a discussion about the terrible service and outrageous prices customers in Ridgefield are currently dealing with.

Mr. Hebert moved to appoint Joseph Adams for a four-year term on the Cable Advisory Council. Ms. Manners second the motion. Motion carries 5-0.

4) Vendor Permit – Waffle Cabin

Corey Londoner talked about her experience as the owner of Joyride in Ridgefield and the reason she decided to move her Waffle Cabin franchise from a store front location in New Canaan to a mobile food truck geared toward catering private events. In addition to private events, Ms. Londoner has been asked to serve at Nod Hill Brewery and the Giant Pumpkin Weigh-Off in Ballard Park.

Ms. Kozlark moved to approve the Waffle Cabin Vendor Permit for special events. Mr. Hebert second the motion. Motion carries 5-0.

5) Cannabis Retail Discussion

The Board talked about holding several Public Hearings so that anyone who wants to is given an opportunity to voice their opinion about Cannabis Retail in Ridgefield. The Board also discussed the idea of asking an expert to speak at the meetings so that the public is educated on the topic. Mr. Marconi briefly reviewed several documents and read an excerpt from one report regarding Economic Development in states that currently allow cannabis retail. The Board discussed holding forums and talking with experts from all different fields such as medical, police and fire, and prevention in order to educate themselves on all aspects of cannabis retail.

No motions were made.

6) Boards, Committees and Commission Guidelines

Mr. Hebert moved to approve the Boards, Committees and Commission Guidelines book. Mr. Connelly second the motion. Motion carries 5-0.

7) Tax Collector Refunds

Mr. Hebert moved to approve the automobile tax refund. Ms. Manners second the motion. Motion carries 5-0.

8) Refunding Bond Resolution

Mr. Marconi read a memo from Director of Finance, Kevin Redmond, that gave details about the refunding bond resolution and also gave an overview of the resolution from the Bond Council.

Mr. Hebert moved to approve the Refunding Bond Resolution as presented. Ms. Manners second the motion. Motion carries 5-0.

9) Adoption of the WestCOG Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan Resolution

Mr. Marconi talked about the importance of hazard mitigation and touched upon some of the damage to private residences that previously occurred from a system that was backed up. The COG is in charge of the work on this project for the municipalities and the Board must vote to either approve or not approve the plan.

Ms. Manners moved to approve the adoption of the WestCOG Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan. Mr. Connelly second the motion. Motion carries 5-0.

10) COVID update

Mr. Marconi discussed the recent Covid report which showed an increase in cases and positivity rate. There was a discussion about vaccination rates in Ridgefield compared to the number of cases and what to expect in terms of case numbers moving forward. The Board talked about the struggles and lack of consistency in enforcement of the mask mandate and the pros and cons of continuing with it.

11) Selectman's report

The Town is under contract with the owner of the parking lot in front of the Thrift Shop, which says that the Town's Parking Authority should monitor the lot and ticket violators. The owner of the lot has the authority to decide how many permits are given out. The Board has received several letters from the Thrift Shop employees who do not have passes, asking

the Town to forgive their parking violations. The Board discussed the possibility of having the Thrift Shop hold the allotted passes to hand out to employees during their shift. Employees would return the pass the the Thrift Store at the end of their shift for use by another employee. There will be a meeting to find a solution to the issue.

Ridgefield's Emergency Management Team is considering putting in place a system to alert event coordinators of imminent weather that might occur during scheduled public events. The Board will review the proposal and discuss at a later date.

Eversource is replacing poles on Florida Road per a request from PURA for safety reasons.

There were no updates on the Norwalk River Dam project.

There is the possibility of a development taking place at 34 Bailey Ave. Mr. Marconi met with the builder, Historic District Chair Dan O'Brien and the Historical Society to discuss how to preserve components of the original building and incorporate the history of the building into the new design.

The Town is still under Emergency Order for the pandemic. The Board will vote to lift the order at the next Board of Selectman meeting.

The Ridgefield Father's Club asked for permission to lease the Old School House on Old Branchville Rd from the Town for \$1 in exchange for the use & to make repairs. The neighborhood is concerned about using the space as a social club and would like some parameters put in place. Mr. Hebert suggests giving the Father's Club a one year lease. There will be a meeting at Town Hall to discuss it on September 25th.

The re-enactment of the Battle of Ridgefield will be taking place in April 2022. There will also be a burial on the following day for the remains of soldiers that were recently discovered in Town. The Board discussed the cost of both these events and how to find the funding. It is estimated to be at least Fifty Thousand dollars to put on this event.

There was a request submitted to the Town asking that two roads, which are off Great Hill Road near the lake, be designated as scenic. The reason behind the request is because the residents would like the road to be paved by the Town. The Board agreed that a road should not be deemed scenic for the sole purpose of having it paved. There is an ordinance that details the qualifications for a road to be designated as scenic.

Ms. Kozlark gave an update on the WPCA Route 7 pipe station project. The new rate model was received and reviewed by Finance Director, Kevin Redmond. There is some available money in the WPCA funds that can be put toward the cost overage for the project. This will

reduce the amount of money that the WPCA will need to request from the ARPA funding. The Board discussed if a referendum or Town meeting is required. Mr. Marconi read an email he wrote to Dave Ulmer, Chairman of the Board of Finance, which detailed the reduction in the request for ARPA funding, which eliminates the immediate need for a referendum. Instead, the WPCA will first vote to allocate the funds to the project and then a Public Hearing and Town Meeting will be held. The Board discussed the importance of having this bid approved in order to avoid a rebidding, which could result in an increase in cost for the project. The WPCA is working to find additional dollars to mitigate the use of ARPA funds.

The Board discussed the pros and cons of holding in person meetings vs zoom meetings.

13) Approval of Meeting Minutes

Ms. Kozlark moved to approve the September 1, 2021 meeting minutes as modified. Mr. Hebert second the motion. Ms. Manners abstained. Motion carries 4-0-1.

Mr. Hebert moved to approve the September 1, 2021 public hearing minutes as modified. Ms. Kozlark second the motion. Ms. Manners abstained. Motion carries 4-0-1.

Mr. Hebert moved to approve the August 11, 2021 meeting minutes. Ms. Kozlark second the motion. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. Hebert moved to approve the August 24, 2021 meeting minutes. Ms. Kozlark second the motion. Ms. Manners abstained. Motion carries 4-0-1.

Ms. Kozlark moved to approve the June 23, 2021 meeting minutes. Ms. Manners second. Mr. Connelly abstained. Motion carries 4-0-1.

Mr. Hebert moved to adjourn the BOS meeting. Ms. Manners second the motion. Motion carries 5-0. Meeting adjourned at 10:17pm.

