



**Town of Ridgefield**  
**Board of Selectman Regular & Budget Meeting Minutes**  
**UNAPPROVED**  
**Feb 2, 2022 at 7.00pm**

Please note – these minutes are not verbatim.

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

**1. Public Comment**

Russ Porter, 14 Pilgrim Hill Rd, asked if there has been a meeting yet with the commission regarding ARPA funding and how to use it structurally instead of on an ad hoc basis. R. Marconi commented that it was not a commission, but a small committee with members from the Board of Selectman, Board of Finance and Board of Education that met once with the purpose of breaking down the needs into tranches. There has not been a second meeting, but there will be. Kevin Redmond, Director of Finance, gave a brief summary of the monies that have been spent to date and the remaining balance.

**2. Information Technology Department Budget**

K. Redmond provided an overview of the proposed budget for the IT Department. There was an increase of 16% mainly driven by cyber security, audio and zoom costs, and professional services.

B. Manners asked if it would make sense to have a second full time IT person in the department. Andrew Neblett, director of IT, commented that the vendors he uses are working out very well, and provided a report that shows that continuing with the use of vendors is more cost and time efficient than adding a second full time employee. There was a discussion about the future of Zoom meetings, the specifics of how it works, and what the cost would be to have additional accounts to allow for multiple simultaneous webinars.

**The Board broke for the Town Meeting at 7:29 pm.**

**The Budget Meeting resumed at 7:40pm.**

Andrew Neblett concluded his presentation with details on the time and resources he spends on security.

### **3. Fire Department Budget**

K. Redmond provided an overview of the Fire Department Budget. The main increases are for overtime, fire inspection, vehicles, and the mechanic. There was a discussion about the difficulty the Town is seeing with filling the mechanic position and different possibilities to draw in candidates. Fire Chief Myers talked about the possibility of outsourcing or negotiating a mechanic share with the Danbury Fire Department. Another idea is to follow the Town of Wilton model, which hired a firefighter who is also trained as a mechanic.

B. Hebert asked why the fuel costs did not increase. K. Redmond commented that they are locked in at a specific rate.

R. Marconi talked about the overtime budget, which has increased because of the expansion from a 6 person to 8 person minimum per shift. Instead of hiring more firefighters, the additional 2 spots on each shift are offered as overtime. In the budget, the overtime associated with the 8-person requirement is not separated out from other overtime reasons, such as sick and vacation time, family medical leave, etc. It was decided that it makes sense to budget the overtime as two separate budget codes, so that the Town can see exactly how much money is going toward the overtime for the 8-person requirement.

Chief Myers provided details on the process for using old PPE for training purposes and the request for new PPE. In order to be able to clean their gear of contaminants after a fire and still be ready for the next call, each firefighter needs to have two sets of PPE.

R. Marconi asked if the department could start applying for grant money for the replacement of Engine 1. Chief Myers explained the difficulties they have run into with applying for grant money.

There was a discussion about what it costs to add a cistern to areas with houses that are too far from a fire hydrant and if it makes sense to pass an ordinance that requires a cistern if needed for future developments. Chief Myers talked about the benefits of having a monitoring system vs a regular fire alarm that alarms but does not connect directly to the fire department.

The Board asked for more details on a number of more items including the iPads, the life pack 15, the respirator fit tester and cardiac monitors. There was also a discussion about the anticipated calls from assisted living facilities.

Chief Myers commented that his biggest concern is the need for another mini pumper.

### **4. Possible Capital/Operating Budget Vote**

No vote was taken.

### **5. Selectman's Report**

The Town Clerk has sent out a press release to alert the community of a sales gimmick

using the Town Clerk's name.

Eversource held a meeting about a new plan for potential rolling outages if a plant goes down.

The Conservation Commission would like the Board to discuss implementing a policy on invasive species.

The Assessor, Al Garzi, has sent out a press list on the grand list increase.

R. Marconi provided a report on the year to date breakdown of the costs associated with storms.

Joe Lane has been working with Chief Myers on a documentary on the Ridgefield Fire Department. J. Lane talked briefly about his production.

#### **6. Minutes Approved**

S. Connelly pointed out that what was said at the January 19, 2022 BOS Meeting regarding the book reading from the Youth Commission was incorrect. The book reading already occurred in February of 2021. Because the minutes reflect what happened in the meeting they should not be changed.

**M. Kozlark moved to approve the 1.19.2022 BOS Meeting Minutes as modified. S. Connelly second the motion. Motion carries 5-0.**

**B. Hebert moved to adjourn the BOS Meeting at 9:09pm. S. Connelly second the motion. Motion carries 5-0.**