

**TOWN of RIDGEFIELD**  
**BOARD of SELECTMEN BUDGET MEETING**  
**FEBRUARY 7, 2017 – 7:00 P.M.**  
TOWN HALL/LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM  
400 MAIN STREET- RIDGEFIELD, CT

APPROVED MINUTES

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These minutes are a general transcription and are not intended to be a verbatim trans

In attendance: R. Marconi, R. Hebert, M. Kozlark, B. Manners, S. Zemo

**Agenda**

- ADA Budget
- Police Department Budget
- Highway Department Budget
- General Budget Discussion

R. Marconi called the Budget Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

- 1) ADA Budget – Tony Phillips, Director of Social Services and responsible for the implementation of the ADA initiative in Ridgefield, came forward to discuss the ADA program in Ridgefield. Also present was Don Ciota, Chairman of the Commission for the Disabled.

A town in Massachusetts has done an ADA self-evaluation. Stamford has also done one – these are quite intensive. We can hire someone of professional stature to do our survey. The Commission thinks we should hire someone from the outside. All the town buildings and school buildings would be evaluated for ADA compliancy. Every employee has to be ADA trained. The self-assessment will reveal deficiencies; there is no consideration for budget dollars. We need to be able to show that a self-assessment will lead to a program to address the deficiencies. S. Zemo stated there needs to be a plan - we need to be able to show that we are on the offensive. A professional plan will give us a better defense. We need to have an RFP put together. R. Hebert stated this is not only something we want to do but it is also a directive. How are we going to pay for it?

D. Ciota stated the BOS needs to include the schools. The Town owns the school buildings. Tony stated our assessment should include what we have already addressed. R. Hebert stated we are in the Town and we know better what needs to be done and what we have already done. We can dedicate \$30,000 to \$35,000 and be able to show our focus on that number. We are required to submit background quotations. We can put out to bid without a number.

T. Phillips stated we need to know where we are in this process. What can we get for \$50,000? R. Hebert stated we do not have to spend the entire \$50,000. We are a small town and we have already done a lot. We don't need to go as high as \$50,000. We could put in \$65,000 or \$70,000 and negotiate down.

We do not have to make a decision tonight. What are other towns our size doing. We can take two to three weeks to review the scope of what we need to do. S. Zemo suggested that we should take the time to know what we can do for \$25,000 to \$50,000. D. Ciota shared an assessment and suggested that the BOS read it and they will begin to see the scope of what they need to do.

T. Philips passed out a report that he went through with the BOS in 2014. It shows how many people came to Social Services and asked for help. They keep coming back and asking for more help. It shows what we needed to do to staff in 2015. We do lag behind other towns in dollars and staffing. We can't compare apples to apples as we staff differently from other towns. T. Phillips is asking for an additional person to help – 21 hours or more. He does not yet have a job description for this person. He has over 1,000 people/year coming into his office and asking for help. He needs at least a ½ person. It doesn't really solve the problem but every little bit helps. He has people waiting for things to be done. B. Manners asked if a ½ person will really make a difference. Can a ½ person really help?

## 2) Police Department Budget

The following individuals came forward to discuss the proposed Police Department budget – Kevin Redmond, Director of Finance; Chief John Roche, Major Stephen Brown of the Police Department; and George F. Kain, Marcie Coffin and Joseph Savino from the Police Commission.

Chief Roche stated the Police Department has their normal contractual expenses. They are forecasting an increase in human resources and an increase in training. They want to start up an initiative in their department and are putting an extra \$10,000 in their budget for this program. M. Kozlark asked if there is an expense they can eliminate and can use the \$10,000 for this expense. Chief Roche responded that to trade someone from basic training won't work. He explained their training procedure. Their goal is 10-12 officers in training at one time. They can't dedicate an entire department to this at one time.

Their \$10,000 insurance policy is a one-time cost. Do they need more staff? Chief Roche answered that they most certainly do.

R. Marconi asked if there was another level of cuts he can foresee. The Police Department is rotating out two cars and transferring them into Town departments. He feels they have kept the budget as flat as they can. They went out to bid on fuel and they got the price of \$2.90/gallon. They have one animal control car. They are budgeting \$94,000 for this individual. They have handled 575 total dogs and rescued 50 to 81 dogs/year. Ridgefield keeps \$1 for each dog licensed and the balance goes to the State. Smaller communities share one canine officer but we can't do that. M. Kozlark stated people are complaining that clean-up of lawns is not being adequately enforced.

What about \$10,000 for 7-10 ballistic vests. A lot of people do not like to wear them but this will be a requirement in the future. The budget includes \$20,000 for a traffic study. They would get someone from the outside to do it. Someone might want to eliminate this.

It is impacting side streets as drivers try to get around congested traffic spots. The Route 35 bridge project which creates traffic back-ups is expected to be done by the end of this year.

They need to get together with the Board of Finance to discuss a possible new building. This will be a long discussion. We need to dedicate time to this project.

## 3) Highway Department Budget

The following individuals came forward at 8:40 p.m. to discuss this topic – Kevin Redmond, Director of Finance; Peter Hill, Highway Department Director; and Burt Motta and Ellen Rossini from the Highway Department.

Peter Hill wished to first start with Operations. He reported Administration of the Highway Department is up .1%, Personnel Service is up .81%, Maintenance is up .59% and Highway Support Services are up 2.83%.

We have sufficient salt to last through the winter--200,000 tons was ordered just the other day. We are in pretty good shape. K. Redmond commented on the moderately mild winter but Peter Hill stated they have been out on the roads a lot of times. They have been out in small equipment.

We have moved rock and stone crushing out of Operations. We recycle and that saves a lot of money on the cost of fill. His department would like to hire the road analysis company again to do a full analysis of the quality of our roads. Previously they spent \$1.3 million. We do not have the dollars right now. We tend to do only the roads that are on our budget and even then we sometimes do not get to what we have proposed. He suggests that we talk about all the roads in town. We have a small percentage of our roads that are in bad shape. We repaved 10 miles this year. The software gives us numbers for all roads and then we go out and evaluate. This is what we did for all the roads in town the first time—this number was our baseline.

4) General Budget Discussion

Ridgefield is getting our debt down pretty well. We are down to \$21 million. The mill rate is dependent upon the Board of Finance. Personnel issues are being discussed in Executive Session—discussions are about staffing. What retirements do we have coming up? Do we need to look at consolidating? Laurie Fernandez, Human Resources Director is getting her information together. May the Board of Selectmen look at what she suggests in advance?

**B. Manners moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Budget Meeting at 9:45 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Janet L. Johnson