



**Town of Ridgefield
Board of Selectman Meeting Minutes
UNAPPROVED
March 16, 2022 at 6.30pm**

Please note – these minutes are not verbatim.

Present: Rudy Marconi, Sean Connelly (zoom), Bob Hebert, Barbara Manners (zoom)

Absent: Maureen Kozlark

M. Marconi gave an overview of the purpose of the Town Meeting, which is to vote on the proposed bond resolution described in the Special Town Meeting Notice.

The Director of Finance, Kevin Redmond, has asked if the Board can schedule a Special BOS Meeting for April 7, 2002 for the approval of the ballot questions for the May 2, 2022 referendum.

B. Hebert moved to approve scheduling a Special BOS Meeting on April 7, 2022 at 5:30pm for the purpose of discussing the grouping of questions that the Director of Finance, Kevin Redmond, sent to Robinson & Cole to be structured for the referendum on May 2, 2022. B. Manners second the motion. Motion carries 4-0.

1. Public Comment

No public comments were made.

2. Appointments & Reappointments

a. Bhargarvi Ramamurthy – Ridgefield Prevention Council

B. Ramamurthy talked about why she is interested in joining the Prevention Council and provided details on her qualifications. Currently, B. Ramamurthy is a data scientist for the Department for Social Services, which handles many programs to benefit the most vulnerable sections of CT. The job has made B. Ramamurthy personally and professionally aware of substance abuse disorders and addictive behaviors, and the toll they take both economically and socially. B. Ramamurthy feels that her data scientist skills along with her personal interest would be beneficial to the Prevention Council.

The Board asked B. Ramamurthy about the fentanyl presence in Ridgefield, what methods would be used to assess a substance abuse problem, and what action

would be taken after collecting the correct data.

B. Ramamurthy gave a description of what the U.S. Agency of International Development does and provided details on her role as a consultant with the Agency.

R. Marconi commented that there was a settlement recently with the pharmaceutical distributors which resulted in a three million dollar payment to Connecticut. Of that money, 15% will go to the municipalities, 15% will go to state agencies, and the balance will go to a fund that will be delegated over 18 years by a State appointed committee. Purdue Pharmaceuticals was also involved in a settlement from which CT will receive additional money. R. Marconi is hoping some of the money from both settlements will get down to the local levels. R. Marconi asked if there could be a program established to request and then digest the collection of information that is held by the state so that the municipalities can get a more realistic picture of the issues going on locally.

S. Connelly moved to approve the appointment of Bhargarvi Ramamurthy for a four-year term on the Ridgefield Prevention Council. B. Manners second the public. Motion carries 4-0.

b. Rudy Marconi (representative) & Maureen Kozlark (alternate) – HRRRA

R. Marconi read an email from HRRRA asking for proof of reappointment for M. Kozlark and himself.

B. Hebert moved to approve Rudy Marconi as a representative member and Maureen Kozlark as an alternate for a three-year term on the HRRRA. S. Connelly second the motion. Motion carries 4-0.

3. Vendor Permit Renewal

Bridge Street Premium Ice Cream Company's Vendor Permit is up for renewal. Michael Cunningham provided details about his business, which he started in 2017, and the key to his success.

M. Cunningham also talked briefly about the medical issues that limited his hours last summer and his plan to return full time this year.

B. Hebert moved to approve the one-year Vendor Permit Renewal for Bridge Street Premium Ice Cream Company. B. Manners second the motion. Motion carries 4-0.

4. Friends of Ridgefield Request: Partners "A Ridgefield Fire Department Film"

Joe Lane is working on a documentary about the Ridgefield Fire Department and is requesting to join the Friends of Ridgefield as a 501(c)(3).

J. Lane talked about his documentary and explained how there is so much more that goes on behind the scenes of a Fire Department than people are aware of. The goal of the documentary is to generate appreciation for the Firefighters' hard work and give insight

into the intricacies of the Fire Department.

So far, the Career Firefighters have told their stories and now J. Lane is working on hearing from the Volunteer Firefighters. The citizens of Ridgefield are invited to reach out and share their experiences with the Fire Department.

The hope from joining the Friends of Ridgefield is to encourage businesses and individuals to support the project financially. The donations will primarily be used to hire camera talent. A budget has not yet been prepared, however J. Lane estimates it to be about \$30,000 out of pocket.

S. Connelly asked if that money accounts for J. Lane's time to which he answered no and added that he has not been paying himself.

R. Marconi commented that he would like to see a budget with a specified amount of money and a system for cutting checks set in place. There was a discussion about how contractors will be paid and how time worked will be managed.

There were questions about the plan for distribution of the film after it is created, who owns the rights to the film, and how will the funds be distributed if it is sold. There will be a further discussion to finalize a plan.

J. Lane will prepare a budget and work with the Board on legal documents to present at the next BOS meeting.

The Board broke at 7.30pm for the Special Town Meeting. The Special Town Meeting was adjourned at 7.40pm.

5. Lease Agreement Renewal: Boys & Girls Club – Teen Center (Barn)

R. Marconi gave an overview of the program and commented that it has been nothing but a success.

B. Hebert moved to approve the renewal of the lease between the Boys & Girls Club and the Town of Ridgefield for the use of the Teen Center (Barn). S. Connelly second the motion. Motion carries 4-0.

6. Tax Collector Refunds

B. Manners moved to approve the Tax Collector Refunds of \$5,062.18. S. Connelly second the motion. Motion carries 4-0.

7. Approval of BOS Budget Meeting Minutes

The BOS Budget meeting minutes from February 28, 2022, March 1, 2022 and March 2, 2022 will be reviewed and approved at the next BOS meeting.

8. Selectman's Report

R. Marconi read a letter from Glori Norwitt, Chair of the ECDC, requesting an increase in the number of Commissioners from seven to nine. In her letter, G. Norwitt explains

that there are many ideas that the ECDC cannot implement due to time restrictions with Commissioners who have fulltime jobs and the lack of a consultant or Town Employee to assist. The addition of more Commissioners will allow the ECDC to tackle more projects in a more efficient manner. R. Marconi will ask Town Council to draft the language for the modification to bring to the next BOS meeting where the Board will decide if they will move forward with the change.

The Gala for the reenactment of the battle of Ridgefield has been in the works. Right now about \$57,000 is needed for the event. There are a few possibilities for funding. The first is to pull money from the health care budget, which will have no impact on the year-end numbers. Option two is to use money from the reimbursement from FEMA.

B. Manners commented that she will not support using funds from either of the suggested budgets and that she feels the money should have been raised through fundraising.

R. Marconi talked about the importance of this event and asked for support from the Board.

S. Connelly and B. Hebert both expressed support of the event and use of funds.

B. Hebert moved to approve funding the Battle of Ridgefield event with funds from either the Health Insurance or the FEMA budget totaling \$75,000. S. Connelly second the motion. B. Manners opposed. Motion carries 3-1.

R. Marconi talked about the ARPA analysis. The Board of Finance (BOF) is not happy about the approval of using money from the ARPA budget to fund the Mini Pumper for the Fire Department and the Mac Dump/Plow truck for the Highway Department. The BOF would prefer to have the two line items in the Capital Budget instead. The Board will have to approve the transfer of funds back to ARPA. S. Connelly pointed out that this move will cost the taxpayers more money for the trucks and asked if there can be a broader discussion before making the adjustment.

S. Connelly moved to adjourn the BOS Meeting at 8:06 pm. B. Hebert second motion. Motion carries 4-0.