

Town of Ridgefield
Board of Selectmen Budget Meeting
Tuesday, March 6, 2018 - 7:00 pm
Town Hall (Large Conference Room)
400 Main Street, Ridgefield, Connecticut
APPROVED MINUTES

These minutes are a general summary of the meeting and are not intended to be a verbatim transcription.

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

Agenda

- Planning & Zoning Budget
- ECDC
- Possible Capital/Operating Budget Vote
- Possible Non-Binding Recommendation on Board of Education Budget to Board of Finance

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

1. Planning and Zoning Budget

Director Richard Baldelli and Becky Mucchetti came forward to discuss Planning and Zoning Budget. R. Baldelli requested the Board to reconsider their reduction of the P&Z department 2018-2019 salary budget. Making the Office Administrator from part-time to full-time will save the department money. P&Z Department will result in 16% permanent salary savings by 2018-2019. The workload in the P&Z Department has increased. The Commission Meetings increased from 2 meetings to 3 meetings a month. P&Z Department is handling the mechanics of Stormwater Subcommittee as well. M. Kozlark asked how long the subcommittee is going to be intact. R. Baldelli stated is it unknown. The Plan of Conservation and Development will increase the workload as well. Based on the Department's recent reorganization, the number of full-time employees (4) with benefits, will remain the same in fiscal year 2018-2019, as it was in 2017-2018. There won't be an increase in the benefits package and no overall increase in the number of employees.

2. ECDC

Arnold Light and John Devine came forward to discuss ECDC budget. J. Devine stated that the \$6,000 funds that ECDC received for the First Floor Incentive have been exhausted. B. Hebert asked: what would the \$6,000 equate to in revenue back to the town? J. Devine stated he has no answer at this time. S. Zemo stated that the program needs to be revisited and recrafted. There need to be qualifications, not first come first serve. The total funds requested by the ECDC totals \$13,500.

3. Possible Capital/Operating Budget Vote

Capital:

By the end of this year Outstanding Debt Balance will be \$63, 216,963. Debt service will go from \$11,552,591 in 2017-2018, to \$11,036,654 in 2018-2019. A total of half a million dollars in savings.

Original Requests: \$5,283,420, Amended Requests as of January, 24, 2018 was \$2,987,713 and Amended changes as of March 2, 2018 totals 3,053,315.

BOE requested \$949,000; it was cut by \$237,500 for this year. The BOS discussed Board of Education Budget. R. Marconi stated that there is \$97,000 for roof repairs in Scotland Elementary School that can be pushed a year. \$53,000 for painting, exterior in Branchville & Scotland. The High School has \$50,000 left that could be used towards the painting, exterior in Branchville and Scotland with the Board of Finance Approval. The Engineering Department budget will be reduced by \$150,000. Money that BOE can use towards their security technology. There are other needs in town that need to be addressed as well.

Library Budget - \$22,000 for security and \$20,000 for computers.

The Board discussed if \$570,000 should be added to this year's budget for the extension on Governor Street Parking. B. Manners stated parking is an issue in town and needs to be addressed. M. Kozlark stated that before doing anything, we should take a look at the parking permits that are issued in town. The Board agrees that Parking Policies needs to be modified and that \$570,000 needs to be added to the capital budget.

S. Zemo moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve the recommendations to the Board of Finance a capital of 3,711,165 for the fiscal year of 2018-2019. Motion Carried 5-0.

Operating:

With the Planning and Zoning added to the budget, the Town's percentage goes up 2.57%, which is high. The Board will take \$30,000 out of the insurance line so that the percentage can remain at 2.49%.

B. Hebert moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to approve a BOS Operating budget increase of 2.49% for the fiscal year of 2019. Motion Carried 5-0.

4. Possible Non-Binding Recommendation on Board of Education Budget to Board of Finance

Board of Education Budget is 4.23%. Special Education is a big driver. We don't have enough information to help us make the recommendations. The BOE budget lacks details and it doesn't tell us anything. If BOE does not have confidence in their own budget, how are we to have confidence? –BOS job is to look at the whole town and figure out what the town can support. In the past years, BOE budget has increased by \$10,800,000. There is a decline in the enrollment yet there is an increase in staff?! At the BOE public hearing there were no comments that suggested the budget needs to pass or let the voters decide. Comments suggested that BOE should spend less on technology and less on consultants. BOE needs to look at efficiencies and how to save money in the future. We can't keep spending money.

B. Manners moved and S. Zemo seconded a motion to approve a non-binding recommendation to the Board of Finance not to exceed 2.5% for the Board of Education. Motion Carried 5-0.

Ed Tyrrell, Pond Road, stated that it is a very good motion and there is a parity between the two Boards. This is a great way to move forward.

Rebecca Mucchetti, 197 Farmingville Road, stated that BOE is being advised by the superintendent that they can keep up to 1% of the contingency funds instead of returning it to the town and asked if that is part of the budget.

R. Marconi stated that there is legislation being proposed to have a non-lapsing account established for BOE across the state of Connecticut, but he is not aware of anything that exists at the current year.
K. Redmond stated that it was approved but it requires Board of Education gets the approval of Board of Selectman and Board of Finance.

John Devine, 86 Governor Street, stated that regarding Special Ed, Ridgefield is creating a destination for families with special needs members.

R. Marconi stated that every year we advertise the budget twice in the paper. This year we are thinking to do it once and then do a full page notice. This will save us a lot of money.

Chief of Police was present in the public – asked if BOS can modify the decision to hire the current position before May 1st, and change it to June 1st.

**B. Hebert moved and M. Kozlark seconded the motion to adjourn BOS budget meeting at 9:50pm.
Motion Carried 5-0.**

Respectfully Submitted,
Nita Asani