

TOWN of RIDGEFIELD - BUDGET MEETING - MARCH 7, 2017

TOWN HALL/LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM - 7:00 P.M.

REVISED/APPROVED MINUTES

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

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

Agenda

1. General Budget Discussion
2. Possible Capital/Operating Budget Vote
3. Possible Non-binding Recommendation on Board of Education Budget to Board of Finance

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

1. Capital Budget

Paul Roche and Parks & Recreation Commissioner Barbara Dobbin were in attendance representing Parks and Recreation. Bidding for Parks & Recreation building repairs has been all over the place. The whole Wellness Center is being moved. We do not know the scope. We cannot have repairs be a patched job. This whole area will be fifteen years old. Now is the time to redo it. We should do the improvements in this area while we are at it. M. Kozlark stated how a walk-through needs to be done. She is saying no to the expenditure of \$1,200. S. Zemo thinks that the project needs to be done, but he is not comfortable doing so as all the numbers are not in. We need to do a lot of documentation. We need to put in a new phone system. How about \$550,000 for a middle-line phone system. Suggestion to support the project for 1 million.

Page 1 and 2 General Government looks good. Request is for \$50,800. Page 2 (Golf Course) is up \$25,000. We are bringing the Golf Course up to \$85,000. We gave everything the OK. Parks & Rec. total \$295,211. Floor repair for the garage - \$12,075 hard bid. Parks & Rec. includes a new rooftop and Scotts Ridge field replacement (just moved into Capital). Field has been there since 2004. Anything above \$5,000 requires a bid.

Police — a traffic study was taken out. It was for a State Highway. People are using back roads to avoid Route 35 and thus we can delete \$20,000.

Fire — Doing a trade-in of \$15,000. Studies show that they may have to increase that. Last night the Police & Fire talked about how they can approach EMT's together. The Police want to stay where they are at. The Fire Department wants to hire a consultant that will talk to the Police Department as well. The study is to include all emergency services in Ridgefield.

Library – Total \$12,000 for shrubs to replace fence. Cost for website improvements moved to operating budget.

M. Kozlark moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve \$3,918,365 for capital projects budget FY17-18. Motion passed 5-0.

2. Non-Binding Board of Education Budget

Regarding the Board of Education Budget, it comes out at \$93,517,544 with an increase of 3.48%. Special Ed. was pulled out at .98%. The goal is an increase of 2.5%. We don't cut the BOE Budget — we just make a Non-Binding Recommendation. The Board of Education makes the

recommendation to the Board of Finance. They meet and discuss a potential decrease in Special Ed. 60% communities said would budget as normal. These special assessments are very costly to small towns. They meet this coming Thursday morning to discuss the legality of the teachers' pension. There is a \$10 billion deficit. Should we bond more? The big question is what should we do? We are looking at an increase of 3.48% for Ridgefield. We received four emails and three suggested supporting the budget. Do we want to leave it alone or bring it down? M. Kozlark stated that many of the taxpayers in Ridgefield thought the increase was too high. We are lucky it passed last year. B. Manners stated how it is always very difficult but we need to do what the people think they want. R. Hebert stated how we all want good schools and want to keep along that path. Last year there was an increase of 4.99%. There are a lot of disparate things in the budget. We don't like to see this from the Board of Education. Once approved, the Budget cannot be cut. We are at \$19,190 per student. Special Ed. brings it down a little. We cannot keep going at that rate. We want to maintain the schools here. Next year we will be over \$20,000/year. R. Hebert stated that 2% would bring in a mandate from the State. He feels we need to take on greater fiscal components. B. Manners stated that is our job to look at the whole town. A 2% increase doesn't even cover contractual requirements. Quality isn't determined by how much you spend. Ed Tyrrell stated how we need to be 2% or lower. People move here because of the schools. K. Baldwin stated how we can quibble all night about our taxes. She is sorry to hear that we do not support the Budget. Meredith Hess suggests that we implement a start of school at a later time. R. Marconi stated how we can't implement what the school does.

M. Kozlark moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve a recommendation for a 2.5% budget increase for the Board of Education which would be a reduction of \$884,000 from their initial requested increase. Motion passed 3-2. R. Marconi and S. Zemo voted no.

3. Operating Budget for the Town

Town budget - Our current budget is difficult to achieve - \$914,463. Mr. Redmond recommended Scotts Ridge field be taken out and put in Capital budget, 2) Also golf cart paths and 3) pension fund can fluctuate in one day of \$25,000.

This brings us to \$255,900 in order to find what we were looking at last month. We are asking staff to go through each of their Budgets for \$20,000 and see what every Department offers. Parks & Rec. came up with \$69,231. We can reduce health insurance down 10% which will result in \$95,000 in reduction. The Police Department asked for a reduction in mobile radio training. The RVNA is out at \$7500. If they currently hire one individual, they save \$107,000. The Assistant Chief continues to be Assistant Chief and the saving is about \$50,000. His duties are spread out among the Captains. We do have a couple of possible retirements. Also possible scenarios for personnel realignment. Scenario 1 – eliminate 1 full time position and 2 part-time positions. Scenario 2 - Scenario 1 plus reduction to an 8-man minimum only for daytime. Scenario 3 – includes 2 part-time. Scenario 4 is scenario 3 plus reduction to 6-man minimum at night. Scenario 5 is eliminating 3 full time and 2 part-time. Scenario 6 is scenario 5 plus department recommendations.

B. Manners stated how she does not have a problem with Scenario 2.

R. Hebert asked if there are any complications to all these — the predominance of calls when people are up — operational assumption. We have a lower number of calls in the evening. 24-7 might be better. We may see a disapproval of grant dollars from the State of Connecticut. B.

Manners stated how she would not go to an eight-man minimum. She prefers Scenario #3 — and suggests one full-time person and two part-time.

S. Zemo goes with Scenario #1. B. Manners changed her support from Scenario 2 to Scenario 1. M. Kozlark goes with #1. The eight men minimum can be a problem with eight men during the day and six out at night. Leaves would not go into effect until July. R. Marconi said how we could enact on it for six months. It is flexible and we could get out of something. The decision is to leave eight men. with one full-time and two part-time. This would save us \$10,000. We can also look at normal attrition.

B. Manners moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to accept Scenario #1, with reductions of \$366,700 from Operating and therefore achieving a 2.5% maximum increase - \$34,703,538 + \$1,875,000 for roads totaling a current budget of \$36,578,538 plus the 2.5% increase (\$914,463) so the total budget is \$37,493,000. Motion passed 5-0.

R. Marconi moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to adjourn the Budget Meeting at 9:55 p.m. Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet L. Johnson

TOWN of RIDGEFIELD

2017-2018 BUDGET SUMMARY

Walkdown from January 27, 2017 to March 8, 2017

Capital January 27, 2017
 - TownWide ADA
 - Golf Cart Paths
 - P&R Maint Build Floor
 - Scotts Ridge Turf Field Replacement
 - PD Traffic Study
 - FD Combined Facility Study
 - BOE, Included their Top Two Requests
 - Library
 - P&R Special
 - Other
 Town Capital March 8, 2017

3,953,276
 75,000
 25,000
 12,075
 55,000
 (20,000)
 20,000
 178,770
 (37,000)
 (268,756)
 -
 3,993,365
 (0)

TOWN of RIDGEFIELD

2017-2018 BUDGET SUMMARY

	ACTUAL 2014-15	ACTUAL 2015-16	BUDGET 2016-17	BOS APPROVED 2017-18	% CHANGE
EXPENDITURES:					
Town	25,657,954	25,570,614	26,736,231	27,094,712	1.34%
Town Insurance & Benefits	7,618,591	7,792,285	7,906,107	8,456,383	6.96%
Town Contingency - General	60,942	44,708	61,200	61,200	FLAT
SUB TOTAL	33,337,487	33,407,607	34,703,538	35,612,295	2.62%
Roads / Drainage / ADA Infrastructure	1,830,701	2,733,033	1,875,000	1,840,000	-1.87%
Subtotal - Town and Infrastructure	35,168,188	36,140,640	36,578,538	37,452,295	2.39%
School Operations	84,902,657	85,795,774	90,374,229	92,633,585	2.50%
Subtotal - Town and School	120,070,845	121,936,414	126,952,767	130,085,880	2.47%
Debt Service	12,982,713	12,115,663	12,060,320	11,522,591	-4.46%
TOTAL	133,053,558	134,052,077	139,013,087	141,608,471	1.87%

Walkdown from January 27, 2017 to March 8, 2017

Town Operating January 27, 2017	35,984,758
Move Items from Capital to Operating	(25,000)
- Golf Cart Paths	(55,000)
- Scotts Ridge Turf Replacement	(5,606)
Dept Head Generated Savings	(26,000)
- Assessor	(1,000)
- Fire	(17,000)
- Golf	
- Highway	

TOWN of RIDGEFIELD

2017-2018 BUDGET SUMMARY

	ACTUAL 2014-15	ACTUAL 2015-16	BUDGET 2016-17	BOS APPROVED 2017-18	% CHANGE
- IT				(5,000)	
- P&R				(20,900)	
- P&Z				(225)	
- PD				(5,000)	
- Social Services				(300)	
Additional BOS Reductions					
- PD				(5,000)	
- Headcount				(83,925)	
- Volunteer Fire				(5,000)	
- RVNA				(7,500)	
- Mobile Radio				(32,850)	
- Pension - Keep Flat				(30,842)	
- Health Insurance				(56,694)	
- SS/Medi				(8,669)	
- Increase Unemployment Insurance				19,048	
- Other				-	
Town Operating March 8, 2017				35,612,295	(0)