



**Town of Ridgefield**  
**Board of Selectmen Meeting & Public Hearing Minutes**  
**UNAPPROVED**  
**July 12, 2023 at 7:30pm**

Please note – these minutes are not verbatim.

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

**Absent:** Maureen Kozlark

The Public Hearing for items pertaining to Proposed MS4 Ordinance for the Town of Ridgefield was called to order at 7:30pm. There were no public comments. The Public Hearing was closed.

**1. Public Comment**

Chris Christiansen shared his concerns regarding the section in the charter requiring all meetings to be recorded. He commented that BCC members might be reluctant to be recorded, that it may deter volunteers and inhibit open discussions.

**2. Vote on Charter Revision Draft Report**

The Board of Selectmen reviewed and discussed the proposed charter revisions submitted by the Charter Revision Commission. Tonight, the Board of Selectman will vote to send their recommendations to the Charter Revision Commission. Attorney Jason Buchsbaum was also present to provide legal recommendations.

Rudy Marconi reviewed the Board's suggested changes for each reference number in the Summary of Accepted Proposals.

- References 1-8: these were all okayed as is by the Board.
- Reference 9: Mr. Buchsbaum recommended adding the language "when the Town Clerk notifies the Board of Selectmen" to sections 4-5 and 4-7 to clarify when the clock starts for the allotted time that the Board of Selectmen has to fill the vacancy. The Board of Selectmen all agreed to the Mr. Buchsbaum's suggestion.
- Reference 10: okayed by the Board as is.
- Reference 11: Mr. Buchsbaum suggested deleting the word also from Section 10-2b. The Board agreed to his suggestion.
- Reference 12: The Board recommends keeping this as a policy, which already exists, but not adding it to the charter. Mr. Buchsbaum suggested deleting "as defined in Section 1-210(b) of the General Statutes" from section 11-2d. Mr. Buchsbaum commented that they should keep the broader definition of confidentiality that is in the previous charter. In Section 11-11, Mr. Buchsbaum suggested keeping the words "probable clause" in all areas where the CRC recommended deleting it. The Board agreed to all of Mr. Buchsbaum's recommendations.
- References 13-15: At their previous meeting, the Board discussed changing the language from "appointed" to "hired" and from "by the first selectman" to "by the Board of

Selectmen”. Sean Connelly pointed out that it should read “hired as a Town employee”. The Board agreed to this change. Mike Rettger asked if using the word hired would create any issues in regards to sections 9-2 and 9-3. The Board decided it does not and agreed to move forward with their recommendation.

- Reference 16: okayed by the Board as is.
- Reference 17: The Board recommends removing this change from the charter and instead creating a committee appointed by the Board of Selectmen.
- Reference 18: The Board recommends using Board of Selectmen/women and First Selectman/woman throughout the charter.
- Reference 19: Mr. Buchsbaum suggested adding the sentence “except as provided elsewhere in the charter, the Town and Budget Meeting shall have no authority to make changes to the annual capital and operating budgets of the Board of Selectmen and Board of Education”. The Board agreed to Mr. Buchsbaum’s recommendation.
- Reference 20: There was a discussion about why this change was recommended by the CRC and what the differences are between a committee and commission. For purposes of the charter, the CRC recommends using the word boards to encompass Boards, Committees, Commissions and Agencies to make it easier to read. The Board decided that they will discuss this further at the joint CRC-BOS meeting.
- References 21-23: okayed by Board as is.
- Reference 24: The Board recommends changing the language from “opinions and advice” to “timely recommendations”.
- References 25–30: all okayed as is by the Board.

*Sean Connelly moved to send the Board of Selectmen recommendations agreed upon at this meeting on the proposed draft of the charter to the Charter Revision Commission.*

*Bob Hebert second the motion. Motion carries 4-0.*

### **3. Teen Talk Presentation**

Teen Talk Director Ellen Brezovsky, Assistant Director Corina Restrepo, and Director of Quality Assurance Michael Ferguson gave a presentation to the Board about Teen Talk. The presentation included information about the current and potential locations, counselors, the demographics and reasons that students seek help, and various statistics. There was a discussion about the high number of students who need help and if there needs to be more programs within the schools. Mr. Ferguson talked about the Ohio Scales which is an assessment to measure outcomes in youth who receive mental health services.

### **4. Commission on Aging Intern Presentation**

Kavya Podilla, the intern who was hired by the Commission on Aging for temporary part-time work gave a presentation about her research on grants and corporations in the area for funding opportunities. Kavya talked about her experience working with Meals on Wheels, Founders Hall, RNVA, the Ridgefield Library, the Housing Authority, Social Services and the First Selectman. Kavya also shared her gratitude for being given the opportunity to work with the Commission on Aging.

### **5. Affordable Housing Committee Candidate – Jennifer Brakenwagen**

Mrs. Brakenwagen talked about her recent move to Ridgefield, her professional experiences,

and her involvement with organizations in New Fairfield. The Board asked what Mrs. Brakenwagen would bring to the table, what her goal for the Affordable Housing Committee is, and why she'd like to join. There is another candidate who will be interviewed for this position. No vote was taken.

## **6. Pension Commission**

### **a. Termination of Money Purchase Plan**

Rudy Marconi recused himself at 9:37pm for the discussion and vote on the termination of the money purchase plan. Mr. Christiansen presented a resolution drafted by Cohen & Wolf to formally terminate the money purchase plan.

*Sean Connelly moved to accept the resolution to terminate the money purchase plan as provided. Bob Hebert second the motion. Rudy Marconi abstained.*

*Motion carries 3-0.*

Mr. Marconi returned to the table after the vote was taken.

### **b. Ridgefield's Pension & OPED Plan Peer Analysis.**

Chris Christiansen, Tom Leonard, and Andrew Okrongly gave a presentation comparing Ridgefield's Pension and OPED plan to the following surrounding towns: Wilton, Westport, New Canaan, Greenwich and Darien. The presentation included information about funding levels, statistics, interest rate of return assumption, investment performances, and investment portfolio allocations.

## **7. Historic Preservation Enhancement Grant Resolution**

The Historical Society's new Executive Director Steven Bartkus and President Tracy Seem appeared before the Board to ask the town to submit a Historic Preservation Enhancement Grant. The Historical Society would like to continue to pursue the scientific analysis of the skeletons found on Main Street in 2019. To do so, they need \$30,000. The grant will provide \$20,000 and the rest will come from fundraising by the Historical Society with the help of other organizations. There is no financial commitment to the Town; however, the grant must be applied for through the Town.

*Sean Connelly moved to approve the resolution for the Historic Preservation Enhancement Grant. Barbara Manners second the motion. Motion carries 4-0.*

## **8. Highland Conservation Act Resolution**

*Sean Connelly moved to approve the resolution for the Highland Conservation Act. Bob Hebert second the motion. Motion carries 4-0.*

## **9. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

*Sean Connelly moved to approve the June 28, 2023 Board of Selectmen meeting minutes as modified. Bob Hebert second the motion. Barbara Manners abstained. Motion carries 3-0.*

*Bob Hebert moved to approve the June 28, 2023 Public Hearing minutes. Sean Connelly second the motion. Barbara Manners abstained. Motion carries 3-0.*

## **10. Selectman's Report**

Mr. Marconi passed around an amendment to the Theater Barn lease for the Board to review before the August 16<sup>th</sup> Board of Selectmen meeting when they will need to schedule a Public Hearing and Town Meeting.

There is a State Statute requiring all municipalities with a population over 25,000 to create a Fair Rent Commission. Bob Hebert expressed his objection to this. Barbara Manners agreed with Mr. Hebert. Sean Connelly commented that if it is State Statute, we need to follow through with it.

The Golf Course had a record high for revenues in June.

The Town has been receiving letters in objection to the proposed development on 27 Abbott Avenue. Rudy Marconi talked about the previous issues from water and flooding in that area due to storms and presented the question, "Does the Town open themselves up to potential liabilities if they knowingly permit something that could aggravate an existing situation?" The Board will continue to discuss this and do more research.

There was a roof leak at ACT which caused about \$16,000 in damage. Because this is a Town building, the Town is liable for the damage. Insurance only covered \$1250 because the Town has a \$10,000 deductible. Mr. Marconi will speak with Kevin Redmond about how much money is in the Town's self-insurance fund.

The fireworks have been canceled for 2023. The Town is looking at Denez field as a possible location for next year and may combine them with the RVFD's fireworks.

The Homeland agreement is almost finished. There was a hold up due to a provision relative to assignments.

*Bob Hebert moved to adjourn the Board of Selectmen meeting at 10:45pm. Sean Connelly second the motion. Motion carries 4-0.*