

TOWN of RIDGEFIELD
BOARD of SELECTMEN MEETING/PUBLIC HEARING
JUNE 22, 2016

TOWN HALL/LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM – 6:30 P.M.

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. Public Comment
2. Parking Authority Vacancy: Robert Murphy
3. ADA Compliance in Town Meeting Rooms: Ryan Carey
4. Request to Include “Believe in Brook” Under Friends of Ridgefield Umbrella
5. Gun Violence Awareness Day
6. Establishment of Negotiating Team for Leasing of PJB and Auditorium on Former Schlumberger Property
7. Selectman’s Report
8. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 2/23/16 Special, 4/8/16 Special, 6/8/16
9. Possible Executive Session: Pension Commission Litigation Settlement

Public Hearing – 7:30 p.m.

Notice is hereby given that the Town of Ridgefield Board of Selectmen will hold a **Public Hearing at 7:30 p.m., on June 22, 2016**, at the **Ridgefield Town Hall, 400 Main Street, Ridgefield, Connecticut, in the Large Conference Room**, pursuant to Section 3-9 of the Ridgefield Town Charter and Section 7-163e of the Connecticut General Statutes to consider the Lease Agreement for the Teen Barn at Six Governor Street, Ridgefield, CT, between the Town of Ridgefield, as Lessor, and the Ridgefield Boys & Girls Club of Ridgefield as Lessee.

1. Public Comment – There were no comments from the public.
2. Parking Authority Vacancy: Robert Murphy

Mr. Murphy interviewed with the BOS in April 2016 to fill the vacancy on The Parking Authority. The BOS suggested that he attend a Parking Authority meeting and then report back if he is still interested in joining The Parking Authority.

Mr. Murphy attended a meeting on June 9, 2016. On June 17, 2016, a letter was sent to the BOS from Christopher Fusaro, Chairperson of The Parking Authority, indicating that Mr. Murphy had recently attended a meeting and expressed his continued interest in joining The Parking Authority. The Parking Authority would like to recommend Mr. Murphy for appointment to their committee.

R. Hebert moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to appoint Robert J. Murphy, Jr. to fill the vacancy on the Parking Authority for a one-year term. Motion passed 5-0.

3. ADA Compliance in Town Meeting Rooms: Ryan Casey

Ryan Carey, a student at the University of Maryland, reported back on his meeting with Kevin Redmond, Director of Finance, regarding the proposed expenditures that would bring the Town of Ridgefield's Meeting rooms ADA-compliant. This proposal has been signed off by a member of ADA New England Regional. Mr. Redmond indicated that there is \$6,922.50 in the contingency fund, which is more than the proposed expenditure of \$3,923.96.

R. Carey has spoken with The Prospector Theater and the Ridgefield Library about their sound systems and any problems they may have had. Both locations indicated that they have not had any problems at all with their sound systems and these speaker choices are good ones for the Town's meeting rooms. R. Carey did submit a letter to the Board of Education and they are willing to also invest in these sound systems. The Parks & Rec Commission needs to put microphones on their meeting room table which they have not yet purchased. The auditory perception in their meeting room has not been a problem.

R. Marconi reported that there was a hearing complaint about the Planning & Zoning meeting room and the Town Hall meeting room. He reported how we are glad to have received these complaints and have followed up accordingly.

S. Zemo moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to allocate the funds necessary (estimated at \$3,923.96) from the contingency fund to make Ridgefield's Town Meeting Rooms ADA-compliant per the report prepared by Ryan Carey. Motion passed 5-0.

R. Marconi thanked Ryan Carey for his research and work on this ADA-compliance issue.

4. Request to Include "Believe in Brook" Under Friends of Ridgefield Umbrella

R. Marconi recused himself from this discussion but indicated how he was available for any questions from the audience.

B. Manners stated how most groups come under the umbrella of the Friends of Ridgefield and are involved with presentations or products available to the whole community. Friends of Ridgefield is available to charitable organizations and that is their purpose. R. Hebert inquired as to the upside of the sponsorship of this organization. We are helping is the response. What is the downside for the Town? Some seem reluctant to have more organizations under their umbrella. Any organization under this umbrella must file a report. An accounting system is set up for each organization. For example, the recent film festival participated in Friends of Ridgefield. Hopefully, they will become a 501c3.

S. Zemo asked if we are helping someone in Ridgefield through Friends of Ridgefield. They come to us case by case. The organization has to be a Ridgefield-based cause and the organizer comes from Ridgefield. They have to have a company account and cannot use their own personal checking account. What if they hand us a whole pile of checks? B. Manners stated how Friends of Ridgefield goes through the pile of checks and makes a deposit. The organization can make a deposit themselves but it has to be with a Town deposit slip. R. Marconi stated how all the monies are counted when they are given to the Director of Finance and then counted again and then deposited.

S. Zemo moved and R. Hebert seconded a motion to include "Believe in Brook" under Friends of Ridgefield Umbrella, with the stipulation that they follow the guidelines set by

Town Hall staff. Motion passed 4-0-1. R. Marconi recused himself as his wife is one of the organizers.

5. Gun Violence Awareness Day

R. Marconi stated how he was asked to put this topic on the BOS's agenda. R. Hebert would like to be present for the discussion of this topic, but left the BOS meeting at 6:55 p.m. to attend the Housing Authority meeting. He will return following the meeting.

6. Establishment of Negotiating Team for Leasing of PJB and Auditorium on Former Schlumberger Property

Richard Larson came forward for this discussion. B. Manners proposed that there be two members of this negotiating team who are in real estate. A committee can be formed of four or five people. She feels that the fewer people involved, the better.

M. Kozlark stated how a lease will involve lots of legal language and ground work through an attorney. There are two buildings so there will need to be two separate leases. One group may lease one building and another group rent the other building. S. Zemo stated how getting five people together can be difficult. There will be terms and options involved and there will be negotiations involved. We are jumping ahead as we haven't yet had the preliminary discussions. The two buildings are connected. There are many variables involved, each of which will need to be negotiated.

R. Larson stated how both parties involved are agreeing to fix up the interior of the buildings. What about the outside of the buildings? The exterior has some impact on the building plus the connection of the two buildings. These firms are two separate entities with separate demands. How are we going to structure this? What about three negotiators for each lease. B. Manners emphasized how each lease is a separate negotiation with definite perimeters. Each management team needs to be separate.

S. Zemo expressed support for a three-person team but he does not feel it is necessary to have two different negotiation groups. R. Larson stated how the Town needs the same team to talk to both parties – what about the parking lot and both groups want to use the basement. R. Marconi stated how we do not want to get into the details at this time. We need a committee to work everything out. Both Andy Behymer and Tim O'Connor are willing to help out however they can. If we add Bob Hebert and Steve Zemo, who are realtors and from the BOS, and R. Larson, we have a committee of five. Arnold Light would like a representative from the EDC. Bob DeFalco representing the EDC was present in the audience. B. Manners can also be very helpful. S. Zemo stated how he is pleased that the EDC is thinking about this opportunity.

R. Larson suggested meeting this Friday, June 24, to get started. Suggest S. Zemo and R. Hebert attend to discuss who are the two interested parties, where they are coming from and why their interest in the buildings. This management team can then meet with these two parties.

M. Kozlark moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to appoint R. Hebert and S. Zemo as the representatives from the Board of Selectmen to serve on the Negotiating Team for Leasing of Philip Johnson Building and Auditorium on former Schlumberger property. Motion passed 4-0. (R. Hebert left the BOS Meeting at 6:55 p.m. to attend the Housing Authority meeting.)

M. Kozlark moved and R. Marconi seconded a motion to go into Executive Session at 7:15 p.m., to discuss the proposed Pension Commission Litigation Settlement, and invite Laurie Fernandez, Human Resources Director, to attend. Motion passed 4-0.

M. Kozlark moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to bring the Board of Selectmen Meeting back to order at 7:28 p.m., following the Executive Session. Motion passed 4-0.

M. Kozlark moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to accept the Pension Commission Litigation Settlement as presented in Executive Session. Motion passed 4-0.

7. Selectman's Report

- Kirsten Salvo has submitted a letter of resignation from the Ridgefield Prevention Council due to a time conflict. R. Marconi read her letter.
- Ridgefield's Lyme Committee has changed their name to "Lyme Connection". They serve as advisors to those struggling with Lyme Disease. This committee has done a lot of work and received an additional grant for \$15,000.
- The Town Meeting regarding the lease agreement for the Teen Barn at 6 Governor St., Ridgefield, CT, between the Town of Ridgefield, as Lessor, and the Ridgefield Boys & Girls Club of Ridgefield as Lessee, will be scheduled for July 6, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Large Conference Room. If not on July 6, then the Town Meeting will be held on July 20.

At 7:30 p.m., R. Marconi called the **Public Hearing** to order and read the notice for the Public Hearing: *"Notice is hereby given that the Town of Ridgefield Board of Selectmen will hold a Public Hearing at 7:30 p.m., on June 22, 2016 at the Ridgefield Town Hall, 400 Main Street, Ridgefield, Connecticut, in the large conference room, pursuant to Section 3-9 of the Ridgefield Town Charter and Section 7-163e of the Connecticut General Statutes to consider the Lease Agreement for the Teen Barn at Six Governor Street, Ridgefield, CT, between the Town of Ridgefield, as Lessor, and the Ridgefield Boys & Girls Club of Ridgefield as Lessee."*

Copies of the lease were distributed to the public. Many of those in attendance are members of The Barn. Also present were Mike Flynn, Executive Director of the Boys & Girls Club, Don Romoser, President of the Board of Directors, and Chris Leonard, a member of the Board of Directors. R. Marconi stated how the lease is for the hours when The Barn is not currently being used. The Barn is currently used four hours each morning and eight hours on Friday by the Board of Education. The Town wants to continue this schedule as it is. Also present were John Katz, representing the Youth Commission, and Ruth Liebowitz.

Many neighboring towns have closed their teen centers. The Barn has been in operation since 1994. It provides a free, open and safe environment for teens to gather. The Town wants this to continue. The Boys & Girls Club has offered to manage The Barn and extend their hours. The current program will remain in effect. The Boys & Girls Club wants to protect what is happening at The Barn today

S. Zemo indicated concern for The Barn to be able to continue to go forward for generations to come. R. Marconi stated that the Public Hearing is open for comments from the public. If there is the desire to do so, the lease can be changed prior to the Town Meeting, which is scheduled for July 6th.

Nicholas Smart – Poplar Rd., talked about the program, “Inside Out”, which used to be held on Sunday’s from 2:00 to 4:00. He hopes The Barn can get “Inside Out” up and running again. R. Marconi responded how for many years there was a grant program which provided for “Inside Out”. This grant helped to start The Barn as a teen center.

Mike Flynn, Executive Director of the Boys & Girls Club, expressed agreement. He would also like to see “Inside Out” start up again.

John Katz, Old Ridgebury Rd., stated how the tenants would be the ones responsible for the personal property taxes and there is no tax on this property.

Chris Leonard stated how The Barn has been able to maintain its essence and culture over the years and that will continue. There have been some renovations to The Barn over the past few years. The building is in good shape. The goal is to reduce what is owed. R. Marconi responded by indicating that there is currently a deficit of about \$30,000. Progress has been made in getting this number down. The current fiscal year will come to a close shortly (July 1st).

Don Romoser, President of the Board of Directors of the Boys & Girls Club, stated how it will be up to the continuing staff as to what else needs to be done – HVAC repair, bathroom update, a new roof – “structural stuff”. Mike Flynn wants to make sure that the current members of The Barn continue their membership and they will have a voice in determining any upcoming changes. There is an upstairs – it is important to make sure that the stairs are ADA-compliant. He feels everything is in pretty good shape. The BOE has had a long relationship with the Boys & Girls Club and the Barn. This is an important opportunity for everyone and especially those with disabilities.

B. Manners stated how the BOS hears what everyone is saying and they understand how there are some concerns.

R. Marconi stated how there is a culture that exists at The Barn. We want to preserve what we have today. We are one of only a few towns in Fairfield County to still have an active teen center. We want this teen center to expand. We want to guarantee its sustainability. This is possible when the Board of Education, the Boys & Girls Club and the Town of Ridgefield all work together.

John Katz stated how someone used the word “upgrade”. We need to be careful how we use that word. The Wifi in the building isn’t working now. What about flat-screen TV’s? We need to bring technology to where it needs to be. We are making an investment in our youth.

Has the Town asked the kids what suits them? No, the kids were not asked to vote on whether The Barn should be managed by the Boys & Girls Club. Some thought it was a good idea for the building to provide some income to the Town and at the same time be used more. Brianna ?????? stated how many of the youth are open to ideas and want the changes to suit everyone and not just a certain group. S. Zemo stated how he is thinking of a transitional vehicle – how does ones segway from the current use of The Barn into where we want to go? One of the representatives of the Boys & Girls Club stated how a lot of topics have been discussed this evening. The public here tonight is a diverse group. The Barn’s climate, culture, age group will remain the same. S. Zemo stated how the youth do have “a say”. Let us assure the youth that they are going to be able to participate in all decisions.

Don Romoser stated how the Directors had hoped to have some discussion before the end of the school year, but that did not yet happen. They do have summer programs. The summer staff is now in place for the summer program for the next eight weeks plus a summer camp. The Barn will be kept open and they

will start some of the discussions, but it is a very busy time right now with the start of the summer. They will start focusing on what type of discussions they want to initiate.

Marty Heiser, Spectacle Lane, commented on how his oldest daughter almost lived at The Barn. He serves on the Boys & Girls Club Board. There is strength in our diversity. We understand the culture of The Barn and we do not want to erase that.

Don Romoser indicated how there are about 250 Ridgefield High School students as members of the Boys & Girls Club. They will continue to ascertain as to the best fit for both the staff and the youth.

????? Conceri expressed concern about the general confusion over this issue. He has been a member of The Barn for several years now. There is a strange feeling that something is happening. No one feels like they are being involved in the takeover process. Communication is important. We do not want to write articles for the paper. Why is there a \$65,000 commitment to programs and other costs?

M. Kozlark stated how a lot of time was spent at our last BOS meeting. All your concerns have been aired out before and addressed by the Boys & Girls Club.

One student commented on how The Barn is special to us. The Boys & Girls Club is one environment. We know “the deal” is done. The Barn was a big part of my high school career.

Jeff Bonistalli, Settler’s Lane, is a Director at The Barn. He states how the essence of The Barn is lost. He hopes the lease will keep it the same. R. Marconi stated how it takes dollars to run The Barn. The essence and culture is something that the youth can add with unstructured programs.

B. Manners stated how the BOS understands the importance of protecting the essence of The Barn. It is important for the youth to know what it is like to have a safe haven. The Barn is very important to many of the youth in town. We want to maintain it for our children and grandchildren.

R. Marconi stated how we all need to look at this change as a positive stop. The extended hours may well turn out to be very important. We have done everything legally possible to protect what we have in place today. We have heard all your concerns and have taken them into consideration. Let’s give this change a chance. Let’s not look at change as a negative.

One of the girls in the audience stated how “change is scary”. We understand how the goal is to keep everything as it is. We will try to deal with that. R. Marconi responded how the BOS hopes to alleviate the concerns of the youth with this lease.

Don Ciota, serves as Secretary of the Board of Directors of the Boys & Girls Club. He pointed out how this Club has won several national awards over the past few years. Let’s give these changes a chance. The youth will not be disappointed. He encourages the youth to continue to provide their feedback.

Matthew Burgess asked if there is any way to write in the lease how The Barn is being used by the BOE two days/week and on Friday’s. R. Marconi stated how we want to keep the BOE program going – it is a great match for all concerned to continue this program.

Sara Santisi indicated that The Barn does not want to be a satellite of the Boys & Girls Club. The Barn wants to be their own unique self.

Denise Qualey stated how The Barn has worked very hard to expand their hours. Our numbers have gone up. More people are using The Barn. They hope that the expansion in the hours will enable today’s

youth to have the same experience that has been the culture of the past. A girl on the staff of The Barn stated how she used The Barn when in high school. She does not want the youth to not go to The Barn because the Boys & Girls Club takes it over. Another student stated how this group at The Barn is very special. Many people have only The Barn as their place to go. They feel very comfortable in the atmosphere of The Barn.

R. Marconi stated how we continue to hear stories from different members of The Boys & Girls Club how the Club becomes their home. It is place where they can come and feel comfortable. We are fortunate to have these two great programs in town – the Boys & Girls Club and The Barn. Hope this turns out to be a come together situation and not a take-over. The hope is for both groups to work together for the best for all. Both these institutions are saying the same thing. After this year, the \$65,000 for The Barn will be listed for a community grant program.

Mallory Morehead inquired as to why this change? We have tried fund raising, which has not been successful. We want to be sure this doesn't happen with the change. We want to create an even better organization.

Nicholas Smart expressed agreement with the Boys & Girls Club. He feels it is a great combo.

Joey Santisi indicated how he is an alumnus of The Barn. How are the dynamics of this merger going to work? Will we need to go to different programs at different places? R. Marconi stated how Governor Street is a two-way street. Members of The Barn and members of the Boys & Girls Club can go to either place. One student stated how he has been coming to The Club for eleven years (since he was nine years old. This merger should not be about money; it is about relationships.

R. Hebert returned from The Housing Authority Meeting at 8:30 p.m. R. Marconi adjourned the Public Hearing at 8:55 p.m.

8. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 2/23/16 Special, 4/8/16 Special, 6/8/16

M. Kozlark moved and S. Zemo seconded a motion to approve as written the minutes of the February 23, 2016, Board of Selectmen Special Meeting. Motion passed 4-0. B. Manners was not present at the meeting.

M. Kozlark moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the April 8, 2016, Board of Selectmen Special Meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

B. Manners moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the June 8, 2016, Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

B. Manners moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 9:10 p.m. Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Janet L. Johnson