



**Town of Ridgefield**  
**Board of Selectpersons Meeting Minutes**  
**UNAPPROVED**

**January 17, 2024 at 6:30pm**

Please note – these minutes are not verbatim.

**Present:** Rudy Marconi, Maureen Kozlark, Sean Connelly, Chris Murray

**Absent:** Barbara Manners

Rudy Marconi called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

**1. Public Comment**

John Tartaglia, 638 Danbury Road, had a question about the Leaf Blower Ordinance Task Force and the Committee to Study Change Form of Government. Rudy Marconi clarified it's a discussion about whether to move forward or not. Mr. Tartaglia expressed concern about establishing a Fair Rent Commission, and the research about leaf blower-related noise.

Vincent Giordano, 28 Fairview Avenue, stated his support for the Leaf Blower Ordinance Task Force. Mr. Giordano shared Ridgefield CALM applied for a \$250,000 grant to conduct a gas-powered leaf blower buy-back program for in-town landscapers. He shared Greenwich, CT has passed gas-powered leaf blower legislation, and shared a document with the BoS.

John Wagner, 28 Marshall Road, commented on the Leaf Blower Ordinance Task Force, specifically questioning why specific properties would be exempt, and the power, cost, and efficiency of gas-powered vs. electric-powered leaf blowers.

Carol Moore, 25 Donnelly Drive, commented on the increased number of leaf blowers in town, voiced concerns about gas-powered leaf blowers, and support for forming a Task Force.

William Lance, 27 Fairview Ave, commented on the research that went into the Ridgefield CALM leaf blower petition, and concerns about disruptive noise from gas-powered leaf blowers.

Frederick Rueck, 19 Lawson Lane, commented on the efficacy of electric- vs. gas-powered leaf blowers and on the short- vs. long-term costs of both.

Bob Hebert, 58 Prospect Street, asked whether the Board of Selectpersons would invite State Representatives and Senators to a BOS to share the community's views and understand passed legislation and suggested adding an annual meeting with them into the Town Charter. Mr. Hebert also commented on the Right to Read program and its cost to Ridgefield taxpayers.

## 2. Appointments

- a. Constable Re-Appointments: Richard Aarons, Peter Killie, William Peatt III, & Wayne Floegel
  - i. Wayne Floegel was in attendance.
  - ii. Rudy Marconi shared Richard Aarons is the Director of Emergency Management, Peter Killie served in the Marine Corps, William Peatt III is a retired Ridgefield Firefighter, and Wayne Floegel is the Republican Registrar of Voters.

***Maureen Kozlark motioned to re-appoint Richard Aarons, Peter Killie, William Peatt III and Wayne Floegel as Town Constables. Chris Murray seconded. Motion carried 4-0.***

## 3. Commission on Aging – 2024 Plans

Joseph Ternullo, Chair of the Commission on Aging, Andrea Beebe, Vice Chair of the Commission on Aging, Clemencia Saleeby, and Patricia Yaffa were in attendance. Topics discussed included:

- Maureen Kozlark asked about the results from the Senior Survey. Rudy Marconi shared the data will be available in a few weeks. Sean Connelly confirmed the CoA's initial proposals are based on their initial survey findings. Mr. Ternullo discussed using this data to support future grant writing opportunities.
- Mr. Marconi asked about mental healthcare for seniors and including it in the CoA's plans. Mr. Ternullo offered to prepare a report to share with the BoS. Mr. Connelly suggested reaching out to Senator Murphy's office.
- Mr. Ternullo discussed the possibility of establishing a weekly email communication plan by leveraging the email addresses provided by Senior Gold Card Members. Mr. Connelly voiced support for prioritizing this initiative.
- Mr. Marconi stated the BoS would consider raising the senior tax deferment income limit from \$65,000 to \$75,000. Mr. Connelly asked how people find out about the program. Ms. Kozlark shared Bob Hebert previously conducted a successful mailing campaign, which prompted new participants.
- Andrea Beebe shared Senior Voices meetings are hosted the second Tuesday of every month at the Ridgefield Public Library, all welcome to attend.
- Mr. Ternullo voiced concerns about traffic and the speed limit in town. Mr. Marconi shared the Police Commission is the local Traffic Authority and is responsible for posting all signage in town, except for the State Roads.

## 4. Economic & Community Development

Glori Norwitt, Chair of the Economic & Community Development Commission, Mark Riser, and Sean Dowd were in attendance. Topics discussed included:

- Ms. Norwitt walked through the ECDC Annual Report, highlighting the success of the Tiger Tank, providing support for and information about opening small businesses in Ridgefield, developing a marketing plan and brand/style guidelines for the Town of Ridgefield, and collaborating with the Chamber of Commerce.
- Rudy Marconi asked about the ECDC's requested budget increase from \$25,000 to \$97,000. Ms. Norwitt confirmed the increase would fund a full-time consultant role. Ms. Norwitt shared Danbury, Brookfield, Bethel, Norwalk, and New Milford have had full-time economic development personnel for 5+ years, with a variety of successful programs to support local businesses. Maureen Kozlark asked whether the consultant could work with several different commissions. Ms. Norwitt agreed.

- Ms. Norwitt reviewed some of the recommendations from the Connecticut Main Street Center “Main Street Management Assessment,” specifically maintaining an active record of available real estate and a plan for business needs in town.

## **5. Library Agreement**

Brenda McKinley, Library Director, Carrie Wells, Library Board of Directors President, and Art Leaderman, Library Board Member, were in attendance. Topics discussed included:

- The revisions made to the Ridgefield Library Agreement, as previously discussed with the BoS. Sean Connelly suggested an additional modification to indicate the proportion of board seats appointed by the Library.
- Rudy Marconi asked about the impact telecommuting has had on the Library. Ms. McKinley indicated a significant increase, at least 30-40%, with 5200 uses of the seven study rooms during the fiscal year.
- Chris Murray asked whether the Ridgefield Public School’s transitions program could use the space at the Library. Ms. McKinley indicated the Library partners with that program and their space is generally available for community use.

***Sean Connelly motioned to proceed with a Public Hearing and Town Meeting to review the revised Library Agreement, contingent upon the agreed upon changes being made, on February 21, 2024. Maureen Kozlark seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.***

## **6. Cyber Security Policy**

Andrew Neblett, Director of Information Technology, was in attendance. Topics discussed included:

- Establishing Ridgefield email addresses for commissions, committees, and boards. Fees associated are approximately \$256 per email address, per year. The State hasn’t established a specific expiration date for email records, Mr. Neblett advised to maintain them indefinitely.
- Rudy Marconi shared budgetary concerns, with this Cyber Security Policy resulting in a \$62,000 for additional email addresses, not currently included in the budget. Mr. Neblett shared if email addresses were position-specific instead of name-specific, this would become more of a fixed cost.
- Chris Murray asked about current email addresses. Mr. Neblett shared there are 292 active accounts and would need to confirm how many are archived.
- Vincent Giordano, 28 Fairview Avenue, questioned whether position-specific email accounts could be re-designated to older accounts. Mr. Neblett expressed concerns with doing that and abiding by the Freedom of Information Act.
- William Lance, 27 Fairview Ave, questioned the driving force behind the policy. Mr. Neblett confirmed its both cyber security and the Freedom of Information Act.

***Maureen Kozlark motioned to approve the Cyber Security Policy, as modified, effective February 1, 2024. Chris Murray seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.***

## **7. Fair Rent Commission**

Rudy Marconi stated most rent-related complaints in Ridgefield are with the Housing Authority, as they have the most units in town. Mr. Marconi suggested the Board of Selectpersons act as the Fair Rent Commission and would discuss with legal counsel.

## **8. Tax Collector Refunds**

A total of \$16,596.68 in car tax refunds issued to residents. These refunds are for residents who paid car taxes and since sold their cars or their lease term ended.

***Maureen Kozlark motioned to approve \$16,596.68 in resident car tax refunds. Chris Murray seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.***

## **9. Discussion – Leaf Blower Ordinance Task Force**

Sean Connelly stated the task force should start with research and provide recommendations to the BoS with how to proceed, in an advisory capacity. Mr. Connelly suggested nine (9) people be on the Leaf Blower Ordinance Task Force, with a balanced set of perspectives, three (3) each for, against, and neutral.

Chris Murray expressed concern with forming a task force. Mr. Murray shared research into enforcement of noise ordinances in other communities. Maureen Kozlark shared the BoS previously had a positive meeting with members of the community, where the BoS expressed support to put together a task force. Ms. Kozlark also discussed exploring the Town's noise ordinance. Task Force members would apply and be interviewed by the BoS.

Andrea Beebe, 378 Main Street, voiced support for Ms. Kozlark's idea about examining the noise ordinance.

Bob Joel, Bob Hill Road, expressed support for the task force, as it was agreed upon between Ridgefield CALM and the BoS.

Carol Moore, 25 Donnelly Drive, commented on the Task Force looking on the cleanliness of gas-powered vs. electric-powered leaf blowers.

William Lance, 27 Fairview Ave, remarked on previous cultural shifts (i.e. banning DDT) and gas-vs. electric-powered leaf blowers may be another such transition.

***Sean Connelly motioned to form a Leaf Blower Ordinance Task Force. Maureen Kozlark seconded the motion. Motion carried 3-1.***

## **10. Discussion – Committee to Study Change Form of Government**

Chris Murray asked the background of this committee. Rudy Marconi shared this was a recommendation from the Charter Revision Commission, and other local communities have hired Town Managers or Administrators. It could also explore changing how the Town manages Town Meetings. Maureen Kozlark shared it could present an opportunity to hire someone with domain-specific knowledge. And suggested a nine (9) person committee.

Mr. Marconi shared how he's prioritized his time as the First Selectperson, engaging with regional politics, and planning for the future as best as possible. Mr. Marconi suggested the committee may want to have requirements, reports, a job description for the Selectperson role.

Andrea Beebe, 378 Main Street, had a question about calling a Charter Revision Committee meeting. Mr. Marconi confirmed Ridgefield is statutorily able to call a Charter Revision Committee any time, but Ridgefield does so every three years. This committee would be fulfilling a recommendation of the most recent Charter Revision Committee.

***Maureen Kozlark motioned to form a Committee to Study Ridgefield's Form of Government, comprised of nine (9) people. Sean Connelly seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.***

## **11. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

### **a. Minutes from October 11, 2023:**

Sean Connelly suggested clarifying the Selectman's Report, to indicate an angel investor is also supporting the project through a public-private partnership.

***Maureen Kozlark motioned to approve the minutes from October 11, 2023, as modified. Sean Connelly seconded. Chris Murray abstained. Motion carried 3-1-0.***

### **b. Minutes from November 29, 2023:**

Maureen Kozlark indicated one of the motions incorrectly indicated the BoS members participating in the motion itself and asked it be removed.

***Maureen Kozlark motioned to approve the minutes from November 29, 2023, as modified. Sean Connelly seconded. Motion carried 4-0.***

### **c. Minutes from December 13, 2023:**

Sean Connelly indicated the formal start of the Board of Selectperson's Meeting should be added after the close of the Public Hearing. Mr. Connelly also indicated "Autobahn" should be changed to "Audubon" in the Mr. Markert interview.

***Sean Connelly motioned to approve the minutes from December 13, 2023, as modified. Maureen Kozlark seconded. Motion carried 4-0.***

### **d. Minutes from January 3, 2024:**

Sean Connelly indicated a missing "from" in the third paragraph in the Selectperson's Report.

***Sean Connelly motioned to approve the minutes from January 3, 2024, as modified. Maureen Kozlark seconded. Motion carried 4-0.***

## **12. Selectperson's Report**

Rudy Marconi shared an update on the public-private partnership to repair the Fountain, and it would require a \$6,000 assessment to provide a quote on the project. Mr. Marconi indicated there's \$26,000 in the contingency fund, which could be used to fund the assessment.

***Chris Murray motioned to hire Francis Miller, Conservator PA AIC of Conserve ART LLC in Hamden, CT to assess the Fountain, using existing contingency funds. Maureen Kozlark seconded. Motion carried 4-0.***

Mr. Marconi shared additional six (6) pickleball courts will be considered during the budgetary process, presented by Parks & Rec, due to increased demand.

Mr. Marconi shared Ridgefield Fire Department volunteers monitor traffic at accidents and the RFD provides them with gasoline for their cars, since they need to leave the engine running and the lights on, especially in the winter. In total, this represented 395.6 gallons for 2023, as compared to 467 in 2022, 300 in 2021, 367 in 2020, and 347 in 2019.

Chris Murray discussed the Right to Read Act, and the Board of Education submitted a waiver.

***Sean Connelly motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:05pm. Chris Murray seconded the motion. Motion carries 4-0.***

***Maureen Kozlark motioned to enter into an executive session at 10:05pm. Chris Murray seconded the motion. Motion carries 4-0.***

***Return to the public at 10:20pm. There was no Vote***