

TOWN of RIDGEFIELD BOARD of SELECTMEN MEETING
JANUARY 5, 2011

TOWN HALL/LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM – 7:30 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, A. Bodner, M. Kozlark, D. Masters

Absent: B. Manners

BOS Meeting Agenda (*immediately following Special Town Meeting*)

1. Recognition of the 2010 AYC Level 12 National Cheerleading Champions
2. Kevin Redmond, Controller
 - a) Funding of Special Election
 - b) Northern Fairfield County Probate Court
 - c) Resolution Agreement
3. Planning & Zoning Commission Interviews: Carson Fincham, George Hanlon
4. Economic Development Commission Interview: Joy Strand
5. Ridgefield Arts Council Interview: Elisabeth Carboni
6. Parking Authority Presentation
7. Fairfield County Deer Management Alliance Appointment Request: Ray Sementini
8. January 11, 2011 Alice Paul Day Proclamation
9. Selectman's Report
10. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 11/29/10 Tri-Board Mtg, 12/1/10, 12/6/10, 12/17/10
11. Executive Session: Paramedic/Firefighter Interview; Possible Appointment

R. Marconi called the Special Town Meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. for consideration of the proposed lease of Town of Ridgefield-owned property on Halpin Lane to the Ridgefield Volunteer Fire Department. Minutes of the Special Town Meeting are under separate cover.

R. Marconi adjourned the Special Town Meeting and called the Board of Selectmen Meeting to order at 7:47 p.m.

- 1) Recognition of the 2010 AYC Level 12 National Cheerleading Champions
Coach Deborah Sfondrini came forward to present the 2010 Ridgefield Cheerleaders – winners of the 2010 AYC Level 12 National Cheerleading award. She thanked the cheerleaders, the team captains, and coaching staff and shared a video of their winning routine from the competition on Saturday, 12/11 at the Silver Spurs Arena in Orlando, FL. This was the 4th National Championship in the past five years in which Ridgefield participated with Deborah Sfondrini as their coach. R. Marconi read the Citation of Recognition presented to Deborah Sfondrini and the Cheerleading Champions.
- 2) Kevin Redmond, Controller came forward to discuss several issues:
 - a) Funding of Special Election – A Special Election to fill the Municipal Office position of Selectman is scheduled for April 27, 2011, with Primary Election on March 2, 2011, if needed. K. Redmond and R. Marconi have discussed the funding of this Special Election and have agreed not to transfer funds from Contingency at this time as the amount needed is not yet determined. They have agreed to do two separate transfers if needed, one for a Primary, if one is scheduled, and the second transfer to cover the costs for the Special Election on April 27th. There is no need

for a vote at this time, but this discussion is to keep the BOS and public informed as to the proposed course of action.

b) Northern Fairfield County Probate Court

Judge Egan's Probate Court has been transferred to Bethel. Current Probate Court expenses are budgeted at \$5,300. Ridgefield's portion of the consolidated court costs will exceed our budget by \$1,900. This variance is due to fit-out costs in the new location. Ridgefield's share is 30.8%, or \$2,099. Department of Finance Memorandum #201101 is requested so that the Probate Court Expense line item does not close the year over budget.

A. Bodner moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to approve Department of Finance Memorandum #201101 which provides for an increase in Account #10160-53001 in the amount of \$1,900, Probate – Office Supplier, and a corresponding decrease in Account #10890-59101, in the amount of \$1,900, Contingency, so that the Probate Court Expense line item does not close the year over budget necessitated by Ridgefield's portion of the consolidated court costs to fit out the Probate Court's new location. Motion passed 4-0.

c) Resolution Agreement

R. Marconi read the proposed resolution as requested by Charlie Fischer for additional funds as part of the Stimulus Funding, which includes reimbursement for Ridgefield's funds used for the redo, inspection and maintenance of Farmingville Road and Old Stagecoach Road. A. Bodner commented on the quality of the work and the beauty of these two roads.

D. Masters moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to authorize Rudy Marconi as First Selectman to sign the agreement entitled:

“First Supplemental Agreement to the Original Agreement Dated December 3, 2009 between the State of Connecticut and the Town of Ridgefield for the Construction, Inspection, and Maintenance of Farmingville Road and Old Stagecoach Road Improvements utilizing Federal Funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 Public Law 111-5.”

Motion passed 4-0.

Jan Rifkinson, New Rd., asked about the guardrails on Farmingville Road? The guardrails are very shiny and not attractive, “Looks like I95”. Our request was for rust-colored guardrails, which were not picked up in the specs. The residents are not happy with the “shiny look”. R. Marconi indicated that we are going back to the State for a review of the original specs to see if a replacement is at all possible. If needed, the residents will file a petition.

3) Planning & Zoning Commission Interviews: Carson Fincham, George Hanlon

R. Marconi read the December 1, 2010 letter received from Rebecca Mucchetti, Chair of Planning & Zoning Commission indicating that P&Z interviewed both Carson Fincham and George Hanlon and each received 4 votes on 2 separate motions. Thus, per the Charter, the matter is now referred to the Board of Selectmen for their review and vote on the two candidates for the vacant P&Z position.

Carson Fincham came forward first to express his interest in serving on the Planning & Zoning Commission. Mr. Fincham indicated how he has attended several P&Z meetings during his time in Ridgefield and was involved with P&Z when he built his home here. He commented on how P&Z is a very hard-working Commission. He is very interested in land uses in Ridgefield. A. Bodner asked Mr. Fincham about his philosophy regarding open space, the Town policy and economic development. Mr. Fincham responded that he is very much in support of open space and feels the Town has done much to promote their open space policy. Open space is not a money-maker for the Town, but there needs to be a balance. In spite of the downturn in the economy, economic

development continues to be an important goal, but we still need to preserve the character of the Town.

M. Kozlark asked Mr. Fincham to comment on his “best asset”. He responded that he has a mix of assets. He has a strong background both in education and experience in environmental issues. He has a strong business background and has been actively involved with start-up companies. There needs to be a balance between preservation and economic growth.

D. Masters asked if he feels that it is a fair statement to say that P&Z makes economic growth difficult? Mr. Fincham responded that he has heard that comment, but has not experienced that himself. He has been very impressed with the P&Z Commission at the meetings he has attended.

R. Marconi asked Mr. Fincham if he is well aware of the time commitment needed to be active on P&Z, including Sunday morning walks. P&Z is responsible for what our town looks like today. What is Mr. Fincham’s vision for the Town Village District? Should we have more open space? Mr. Fincham responded that his family moved here because they like the town the way it is. They want to see the character of Ridgefield preserved. Branchville and Route 7 are areas that could be developed further, but these areas also have a character that needs to be preserved, but are areas for possible economic development.

M. Kozlark asked if there is anything in particular he would want to accomplish as a member of P&Z? Mr. Fincham responded that he would like to lend a hand, and provide his advice and experience working with the members of the Commission.

George Hanlon came forward to express his interest in serving on Planning & Zoning. He indicated how he has done a lot of volunteer work in Town with the EDC, the Arts Council, and coaching. He was instrumental in the smoke detectors for seniors program, which was started in 2002. He is very proud of this program. He moved to Ridgefield in 1957 and has built 21 houses in town and several subdivisions. His candidacy for P&Z was endorsed by the Republican Town Committee.

M. Kozlark asked Mr. Hanlon to comment on his biggest asset and why he is interested in serving on Planning & Zoning. He responded that he feels his maturity and experience in town working on the subdivisions he has built is valuable experience for serving on P&Z. He commented on his “common sense” approach to issues.

Andy Bodner stated how Planning & Zoning is active in economic development in the town. Does Mr. Hanlon have a philosophy about this? Mr. Hanlon responded that he thinks P&Z should work closely with the EDC. He would like to see more retail come into town along Route 7 from the north. Downtown business won’t be hurt by development along Route 7. He also believes strongly in conservation. He allotted more open land than required in the subdivisions that he developed.

D. Masters stated how she remembers working with Mr. Hanlon on the subdivisions he developed and recalls his awareness of the need for open space. Why is he coming forward at this time? Mr. Hanlon responded that there is no longer a conflict of interest because he is not working on any new developments at this time and now has the time to commit to P&Z. He always enjoyed attending their meetings.

R. Marconi indicated that P&Z requires a considerable time commitment at their Tuesday evening meetings and Sunday morning walks. Mr. Hanlon has stated how he now has the time to commit and does have the knowledge and background to contribute. R. Marconi asked Mr. Hanlon to comment on his vision for the Town. Please comment on how to preserve the vitality of the Town.

Should the amount of open space be higher than the current 30%? Mr. Hanlon responded that there are only about 200 more building lots in town. The Town will benefit tax-wise with more subdivisions. The downtown first floor rentals are high, which is a problem for retail. We get a lot of visitors from New York State, and parking is getting easier. Mr. Hanlon feels the town is going in the right direction.

Andy Bodner commented that we have two fine candidates for P&Z. He stated how Mr. Hanlon has been a resident for a long time, is very familiar with how Planning & Zoning functions and how Mr. Hanlon has a real understanding of the work of the Commission.

Andy Bodner moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to appoint George Hanlon to fill the vacancy on the Planning & Zoning Commission. Motion passed 4-0.

R. Marconi commented on Mr. Hanlon's longevity in the community and how there is only one P&Z opening at this time. He hopes that Mr. Fincham will continue in his desire to be involved in the community, perhaps in conservation or some other area of interest. Bob Knight, Still Rd., is Chairman of EDC, and commented on how there are many young people in the community who want to be involved. We need to be as inclusive as possible in getting these young people involved.

4) Economic Development Commission Interview: Joy Strand

Bob Knight, Chairman of the EDC, expressed support for Joy Strand as a possible member of the EDC. He commented on how the Commission is impressed by her credentials and background. Ms. Strand came forward to express her interest in serving on the EDC. She is ready to re-enter the work force and feels that the Economic Development Commission fits perfectly with her background.

Andy Bodner asked Ms. Strand to discuss her professional background and comment on what she thinks about economic development in Ridgefield. What is a measure of success in economic development in Ridgefield? Ms. Strand responded that she feels there is a good base for economic development in town.

M. Kozlark asked Ms. Strand if she had attended any EDC meetings? The response was yes – she has attended recently. She feels it is a well-rounded Commission with the members not promoting their own agendas. The Commission members are very dedicated to Ridgefield.

D. Masters asked Ms. Strand to comment on what she feels she could do for Ridgefield. Ms. Strand responded that she feels she would add an additional perspective “around the table”. Her background is in planning. The EDC is a “think tank”. She would like to help develop something concrete, something tangible with the EDC. She would like to see the development of the Route 7 & 35 corridor. Her property abuts Route 7 so she is very familiar with that area of town.

Andy Bodner asked if there is a pool of applicants for the EDC? R. Marconi said no, and we have not contacted previously-interviewed candidates. Mr. Knight stated how this vacancy has been open since October and Ms. Strand has been endorsed by the EDC.

R. Marconi moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to appoint Joy Strand to fill the vacancy on the Economic Development Commission. Motion passed 4-0.

5) Ridgefield Arts Council Interview: Elisabeth Carboni

Ms. Carboni came forward to express her interest in serving on the Ridgefield Arts Council. She has lived in Ridgefield since 1994, has been active in the Ridgefield Guild of Artists, has worked with the Girl Scouts, and feels she currently has the time to devote to the Arts Council. Her husband

Randy is also a member of the Arts Council. Ann Markus, the former Treasurer, has just stepped down. Ms. Carboni is qualified to fill the Treasurer slot as well. Chairman Alison Greeley was present to support Ms. Carboni's candidacy.

Andy Bodner moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to appoint Elisabeth Carboni to fill the vacancy on the Ridgefield Arts Council for a four-year term. Motion passed 4-0.

6) Parking Authority Presentation

Laurie Scholl, Director of Human Resources, and Mike Zap, Parking Authority member, came forward to present an estimated budget for the Branchville Train Station with revenue at approximately \$45,000 and operating expenses at approximately \$29,982 (plowing is currently being done by Parks & Rec). The snow cannot be dumped into the river but has to be hauled away to open up the most parking spaces possible if there is too much snow to just plow. Estimated capital expenses to reclaim, repave, and curb the Branchville parking area would be about \$80,000. The Parking Authority is requesting an increase to full time for the parking officer, Fred Fields. He would then be available to provide parking enforcement at the Branchville station five days/week instead of on only Monday thru Thursday. Parking revenue will increase from tickets in town as well if Mr. Fields works full time.

Andy Bodner commented on how the revenue component now offsets the expenses, but he would like to review the numbers and look at the "real cost" of running Branchville. If the revenue is there, the cost of the permits could be lowered. R. Marconi stated how he is agreement, but we do not yet have a real handle on the costs to lower permit costs at this time. There are some vacant spots at the station and perhaps we can now sell additional permits. R. Marconi stated that he feels it is worthwhile to have Mr. Fields work full time. We could have Mr. Fields work full-time for six months and then review the revenue and expense numbers again at that time.

Andy Bodner suggested that a decision be put off until the January 19th BOS Meeting. He wants to study the numbers. What will be the incremental income from increasing Mr. Fields to five days? R. Marconi stated that the revenue and expenses for the Branchville Station can be audited at any time by the State. We can only charge to Branchville's expenses, Mr. Fields percentage of time at Branchville. We have to be sure what we charge to the Branchville account is fair. L. Scholl indicated that the total increase for Mr. Fields including benefits would be \$22,000 with \$11,678 charged to the Town and the balance charged to Branchville.

7) Fairfield County Deer Management Alliance Appointment Request: Ray Sementini

R. Marconi read the letter received from Mr. Sementini because he was unable to attend this evening's meeting. He served as a member of Ridgefield's original Deer Study & Management Committee and would like to serve as the Town's representative to the Fairfield County Deer Management Alliance.

Andy Bodner moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to appoint Ray Sementini to serve on the Fairfield County Deer Management Association Committee as a representative from the Town of Ridgefield. Motion passed 4-0.

8) January 11, 2011 Alice Paul Day Proclamation

R. Marconi read the Proclamation for Dr. Alice Paul honoring her on the anniversary of her birthday January 11, 1885 for her significant contributions to women's equality and as a past Ridgefield resident. There will be a film on January 9th, 4-6 p.m., at the Ridgefield Library, called "The Iron-Jawed Angel", honoring Dr. Paul, and a special activity in May 2011 with an suffrage exhibit at the Library sponsored by the League of Women's Voters.

9) Selectman's Report

- January 17, 3:00 p.m. – Ceremony honoring Martin Luther King
- Jean Smith resigned from the Architectural Advisory Committee, which reports to the Planning & Zoning Commission. She also served on the Village District Commission
- R. Marconi received a request from a Ridgefield homeowner to revisit our tax deferment program. This woman owns a home here but spends less time in Ridgefield than elsewhere. R. Marconi stated that he wanted the BOS to know about this request, but he does not feel this is the time economically to be expanding our deferment program.
- Booklet distributed to each BOS member – *“Town of Ridgefield, Connecticut, Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the Year Ended June 30, 2010.”*
- Board of Education meeting is scheduled for January 24. The BOE is funding Barlow boiler replacement out of operations currently, but will be tight to also pay MIRMA. \$217,000 is due now, out of which \$130,000 is the Town's portion. The Town paid \$174,000 in June. There is a balance of about \$600,000 due over the next three years with a one time payment each year in July. This obligation is included in our five-year projections.

10) Approval of Meeting Minutes: 11/29/10 Tri-Board Mtg., 12/1/10, 12/6/10, 12/17/10

D. Masters moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to approve as written the minutes of the November 29, 2010, Town of Ridgefield Tri-Boards Meeting (Board of Education, Finance, Selectmen Special Meeting). Motion passed 3-0-1. M. Kozlark abstained as she was not a member of the Board of Selectmen at that time.

D. Masters moved and R. Marconi seconded a motion to approve as amended pending review of the tape regarding the wording of Paragraph 2, Page 3, minutes of the December 1, 2010 Public Hearing & Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 3-0-1. M. Kozlark abstained as she was not a member of the Board of Selectmen at that time.

D. Masters moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of December 6, 2010 Board of Selectmen Special Meeting. Motion passed 4-0.

Andy Bodner moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to approve as written the minutes of the December 17, 2010 Board of Selectmen Special Meeting. Motion passed 3-0-1. D. Masters abstained as she participated in the meeting via telephone.

11) Executive Session: Paramedic/Firefighter Interview; Possible Appointment

R. Marconi moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to recess the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 10:10 p.m. and go into Executive Session to discuss Paramedic/Firefighter Interview; Possible Appointment with Fire Chief Heather Burford, Director of Human Resources Laurie Scholl, and Zachary Deutscher invited to participate. Motion passed 4-0.

The Board of Selectmen exited Executive Session at 10:32 p.m.

D. Masters moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to approve appointment of Zachary Deutscher as Paramedic/Firefighter. Motion passed 4-0.

B. Manners moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 10:33 p.m. Motion passed 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Janet L. Johnson