

**TOWN of RIDGEFIELD – BOARD of SELECTMEN**  
**BUDGET MEETING – FEBRUARY 8, 2011**

TOWN HALL/LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM – 7:30 P.M.

REVISED/APPROVED MINUTES

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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, B. Manners, D. Masters  
K. Redmond, Director of Finance

**Agenda**

7:30 P.M. Police Department Budget  
8:45 P.M. Library Budget  
Followed by General Budget Discussion

R. Marconi called the Budget Meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

Police Department Budget Discussion – Capital Requests

Present at the table representing the Police Department:

Chief John Roche, and Commissioners Charles Knoche, Chairman of the Ridgefield Police  
Commission, Susan Craig, and Carl Lecher, Secretary

The Ridgefield Police Department has submitted their proposed Fiscal Year 2011-2012 budgets. The Board of Police Commissioners directed the Chief of Police to seek a near zero budget increase. Capital requests are under review at this evening's meeting.

Vehicles –

Police Cruisers are in a 3-year to 4-year replacement cycle. This year's budget request includes replacement of three 3-year vehicles totaling \$75,000. The replaced vehicles will be transferred to other departments. Operating budgets for each of these vehicles will be transferred to the respective departments. The only variable is a switch to purchase more fuel-saving vehicles – instead of a Crown Victoria, now considering an all-wheel drive Taurus and the Explorer now called the Interceptor with its heavy-duty suspension system. The Interceptor is still in development. This is a six cylinder vehicle with a larger trunk area and a back door which opens wider. Representatives from the Police Department will be viewing these vehicles at a private showing on March 16. These vehicles should be available first quarter of 2012. The price estimate is \$25,000 each with trade-in. Charlie Fischer and Al Garzi both need replacement vehicles – They could use the replaced Crown Victoria's. The plan is to hang on to the Expedition; getting 7 to 8 years use out of this model.

Also requesting one unmarked car on a lease - \$21,000. The current vehicle is a Dodge Charger, all-wheel drive with low mileage. Chief Roche will check on a possible buy-out and will let K. Redmond know if that is possible and what would be the cost.

Animal Control van needs replacement as a tree fell on it. The mileage is low – 36,000. A new vehicle would cost \$35,000 with a use estimate of ten years. A. Bodner stated how we should not be purchasing a new car to have it sit. The existing van needs a new heater switch, shocks, and fuel line replacement. It was suggested that the current van be repaired and “nursed” for awhile. R. Marconi indicated that the van could be kept at Headquarters.

Radio System Console – costs \$225,000. The current console is old and no longer able to purchase replacement parts. There is a major upgrade in radio systems worldwide. This proposal is for a digital system which will serve the Police Department well into the future. It can integrate into our fire and cell channels as well.

Cruiser Light Bar Replacement - \$16,000. This is the cruiser electronic control system for overhead lights and PA system. Our current equipment is 11 years old.

Motorola Portable Radios - \$33,600 This is a two-year replacement program for budget years 2012 and 2014.

Police Operating Budget requests show a 4.56% increase for contractual obligations and utility costs. In 2012, the hope is to begin recovery of frozen positions. Have seen an increase in overtime; still frozen two traffic agent positions.

Vehicle Maintenance – 3.3% increase requested. Have to find a balance in maintenance costs as the longer vehicles are kept in service, the higher the maintenance costs.

Vehicle fuel – looking at fuel, oil and gas expenses; Food for Prisoners – not changed. Have experienced an increase in electronics maintenance, especially on portable radios. The boiler has been shutting down. Charlie Fisher looking into this – obtaining an estimate on gas usage.

Chief Roche commented on the impact on overtime with the two open positions in the department. This the resulting cost of less personnel. The goal has been to have 47/48 officers. Looking to hire for more policemen on the street; would like to maintain this goal. The School Resource Officer used to be out of the BOE budget. An agreement was made with the BOE and the Police Department took over Tiger Hollow as well. 100% of the cost is about \$85,000. This covers salary, benefits, longevity, insurance, etc. The officer is full-time at the high school; conducts inspections before school; available for all the schools; does program in school safety

Animal Control Operation is not a general fund account; experienced a deficit a couple of years ago. This deficit will be gone in July. A. Bodner asked why telephone costs are so high? The numbers will all be reviewed in early March.

The BOS expressed a thank you to the Police Department.

#### Snow Removal Update

R. Marconi commented on the concern about the snow build-up on the school roofs – East Ridge Middle School in particular. The reason for the wall cracks was researched and they turned out to be cosmetic cracks. Structurally, the roof is strong. A complete assessment was done at each school. The annex at ERMS was completely cleared off. The snow/roof status was reviewed at the municipal buildings as well. Everything is perfectly safe. The reason for the early dismissal was to bring in as many people as possible to remove the snow on the roofs and so the engineers could get in everywhere without interrupting classes.

#### Library Budget Discussion

Present at the table representing the Library:

Director Chris Nolan; Chairman of the Finance Committee, Carroll Brewster; and Treasurer of the Finance Committee, Liz Kelly

The proposed library budget for the fiscal year 2011-2012 was submitted to R. Marconi on January 31, 2011. The Library is most appreciative of the continued municipal support. Usage statistics of the Library from the year that ended June 30, 2010 were the highest ever. Major accomplishments during the past year included:

- Launch of a new website which is more user-friendly and interactive

- Launch of the Capital Campaign for a new Ridgefield Library
- Collaborative effort with the Ridgefield Playhouse by offering the Big Read – major grant awarded by National Endowment of the Arts for all ages to explore *Grapes of Wrath*
- Scholarly exploration over several months of James Joyce
- Switched from a DB pension plan to a 401(k) Retirement Plan
- Re-emphasized focus on early childhood literacy with Every Child Ready to Read parenting workshops, a new Baby and Me infant program, and served as a resource to United Way's Smart Start

The proposed budget assumes that all Library operations will continue in the current building for Fiscal Year 2011-2012.

Income:        Development – The increase of \$15.3K represents anticipated efforts in development over this year's forecast  
Base trust income – is based on a 3-year rolling average of investments

Expenses:     Salaries – 2.5% salary increase reflected  
Health Insurance – The \$21.9K increase reflects a 15% rate increase over prior year actual results based on estimates from Town Human Resources, L. Scholl  
Life Insurance – The \$500 increase is based on current year projections  
Staff Training – The \$1K increase is due to the National Conference, an every-other-year program, to be held in Philadelphia

R. Marconi inquired as to how Ridgefield's library salaries compare to other municipalities? Ms. Nolan responded that Danbury has a union and they are requesting a 2.5% increase. Salaries at other nearby libraries are even with Ridgefield's or a little below. A part-time development person was hired this past February/March but did not start until the end of July. D. Masters responded that the development person was not to be an employee hire as there were to be no additional hires last year, even if this individual generates enough income to cover the cost. This individual was not to be part of the budget. Ms. Nolan responded that she thought it was OK to fund this development position thru incoming development dollars. A. Bodner asked if development activities are becoming profitable? Ms. Nolan responded, "Yes, starting to be." D. Masters indicated that no new hires were to be endorsed. Ms. Nolan commented on the increase in benefits due to the estimated increase in health insurance costs. R. Marconi responded that health insurance has gone out to bid and hopefully won't be as high an increase as anticipated.

The BOS expressed a thank you to the Library for their service to the community.

K. Redmond reminded the BOS that an Executive Session will be held tomorrow evening at 6:30 p.m. prior to the BOS Meeting.

Andy Bodner moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to adjourn the Budget Meeting at 9:05 p.m. Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet L. Johnson