

TOWN of RIDGEFIELD BOARD of SELECTMEN MEETING & BUDGET MEETING –
MARCH 9, 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, B. Manners, D. Masters

Agenda

1. Sunset Lane
2. Ridgefield Arts Council Vacancy Interview: Dara C. Polenghi Quinn
3. Architectural Advisory Committee Vacancy: Jerry Hupy
4. Girl Scout Week Proclamation
5. Lyme Disease Seminar Resolution and Study Resolution for Contract (WCSU in May)
6. Discussion and Possible Vote on:
 - Police Union Side Letter
 - Police Officer Rizzo Letter
7. Tax Collector Refunds
8. Selectman's Report
9. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 2/7/11, 2/8/11, 2/9/11, 2/10/11

Board of Selectmen Budget Meeting (immediately following BOS Meeting)

1. Highway Department Budget
2. Fire Department Budget
3. General Budget Discussion
4. Possible Capital/Operating Budget Vote
5. Possible Non-binding Recommendation on Board of Education Budget to Board of Finance

R. Marconi called the Board of Selectmen Meeting to order at 7:40 p.m. following Executive Session.

1. Sunset Lane

Al Garzi, Assessor, and Chester Zawacki, Sunset Lane property owner, came forward to discuss further the strip of Town of Ridgefield-owned land on Sunset Lane under consideration. A map of the Sunset Lane area was available for review. The Sunset Lane properties have been reviewed by Betty Brosius, Ridgefield's Director of Planning, and her report has been given to the BOS for their review. She reviewed what expansion of their housing, if any, the additional property will provide to each individual homeowner should they so desire to expand at a future date.

Mr. Zawacki, owner of property at the end of Sunset Lane, has plans for a small subdivision on his Sunset Lane property and is interested in purchasing approximately an additional 3,000 sq. feet from the Town. This extra land would provide greater separation between his planned housing. The BOS would want Mr. Zawacki to agree to not go forward sometime in the future to seek a variance on the vacant lot that is part of the 3,000 sq. feet. There would still be enough room for sidewalks running the length of the property. There are 9 properties on Sunset Lane, and Mr. Zawacki has contacted these owners to see if they would each like to purchase the extra property adjoining their individual sites. All but one of these homeowners

is interested. Mr. Zawacki and the other owners are offering \$2.50 sq/ft. Mr. Garzi indicated that after reviewing other past sales, his estimate is a price of \$4.55 sq/ft. The Board of Selectmen feels there is value to the homeowners to add on to their individual properties and they want to remain with the \$4.55 sq/ft. price. The total parcel equals approximately 15,000 sq. feet. The sale would provide funding for sidewalks. The strip of land is about 700 feet long and each property owner would purchase the land in front of their own property. The property owners have been taking care of this strip of land as if it is already part of their own property. There would need to be a utility easement for water and power lines.

Betty Brosius, Director of Planning, has also reviewed the area of Sunset Lane under consideration and feels the additional footage would be of value to each homeowner should they wish to add on to their homes. A review of Sunset Lane was done in 1982 and the left-over land was to be given to the individual property owners, but that was never done. Schlumberger paid for installation of the Town road. The objective is to have all the property owners sign on to each individual purchase. Mr. Garzi will contact individually each owner. The BOS feels the price per sq. foot should be the same for all at \$4.55/sq. ft. If all are interested, a Public Hearing and a Town Meeting need to be scheduled. Mr. Zawacki indicated that he would like to think about the Town's offer and will report back.

2. Ridgefield Arts Council Vacancy Interview: Dara C. Polenighi Quinn

Dara Quinn came forward to express her interest in serving on the Ridgefield Arts Council. She has attended a couple of meetings of the Arts Council and owned and operated Galleria d'Arte, a gallery on Bailey Avenue for eight years. Ms. Quinn attended Syracuse University and earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. She indicated that she grew up in Milan, Italy in a family of artists. She served as a curator at UST in Greenwich for ten years. Ms. Quinn has been involved with Ridgefield's Art Walk and the Cultural Festival in the Park and also sponsored events in her gallery. BOS members commented on Ms. Quinn's excellent background.

B. Manners moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to appoint Dara Polenighi Quinn to fill one of the vacancies on the Ridgefield Arts Council for a four-year term. Motion passed 5-0.

3. Architectural Advisory Committee Vacancy Interview: Jerry Hupy

Jerry Hupy came forward to express his interest in serving on the Architectural Advisory Committee. R. Marconi indicated that there is 1 full-member vacancy and 3 alternate vacancies. He read Mr. Hupy's letter indicating residency at three different homes in Ridgefield since 2000. Mr. Hupy has twenty-plus years of experience in architectural design and project management, and has a BS in Design and a Master of Architecture, including studies at The Charles E. Daniel Center for Building Research and Urban Studies in Genoa, Italy. Mr. Hupy now works in South Norwalk instead of Greenwich and feels he has the time to donate his experience to the Town of Ridgefield.

B. Manners asked if he is into "green building"? Mr. Hupy responded that his firm has been using green building techniques for the past fifteen years. They are now receiving requests for these techniques. He has attended a meeting of the Architectural Advisory Committee and a discussion as to how to deal with the proposed Library building. He feels the Library can be approached from some different angles. He likes the idea of the Village District and wants to help Ridgefield preserve and move forward. A. Bodner asked Mr. Hupy what he would like to "not see"? Mr. Hupy responded that Ridgefield is a "walking town". We need to promote this all the more. M. Kozlark asked Mr. Hupy to comment on what style does he really like? He

responded that Ridgefield really has a lot of different styles currently. Having these styles blend into a whole is what needs to be preserved.

D. Masters moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to appoint Jerry Hupy to fill the full-time vacancy position on the Architectural Advisory Committee for a four-year term. Motion passed 5-0.

4. Girl Scout Week Proclamation

R. Marconi commented on the 2011 Girl Scout Week Proclamation and read the final paragraph on the Proclamation, *“Now, Therefore, the Ridgefield Board of Selectmen, on behalf of the citizens of Ridgefield, do hereby applaud the commitment Girl Scouting has made to support the leadership development of American’s girls and proudly proclaim the week of March 6, 2011, as Girl Scout Week.”*

5. Lyme Disease Seminar Resolution and Lyme Tick Study Resolution

Jennifer Reid came forward to discuss Ridgefield’s focus on Lyme Disease and to share how Ridgefield has been selected with eight other CT towns to participate in a spraying program financed thru a grant. Eighty-five homeowners will be selected to allow Spring spraying of their property. One-half will receive a placebo and one-half will receive a new spray designed to reduce ticks and the resultant Lyme Disease. Data will be collected from these homeowners to see if this one-time spray is helpful in reducing the number of ticks. A 500 ft. set-back is designated for spraying near ponds and other bodies of water. The plan is to recruit the homeowners in March and April and spray in June.

A. Bodner moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to authorize First Selectman, Rudy Marconi, to execute and approve on behalf of the Town of Ridgefield, any and all contracts or amendments with the State of Connecticut Department of Health, and in particular relative to Contract Log: #2011-0223 for \$33,339.00, EIP Program from 2/15/11 thru 12/29/11. Motion passed 5-0.

The Board of Selectmen also agreed to support Ridgefield’s participation in the Lyme Disease Conference to be held on May 3, 2011 at Western CT State University.

A. Bodner moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve the Resolution for the Board of Selectman to support Ridgefield’s participation in the Lyme Disease Task Force Lecture on May 3, 2011, at Western Connecticut State University. Motion passed 5-0.

6. Discussion and Possible Vote on:

- Police Union Side Letter

Laurie Scholl, Director of Human Resources, came forward to discuss the proposed agreement between the Town of Ridgefield and Ridgefield Police Union Local #1235, Council #15, AFSCME, AFL-CIO, relative to accommodation for an officer who was injured and is unable to return to full police duty at this time. The officer will continue to participate in the Town of Ridgefield Police Union Pension while he is employed in the civilian position of Communications Supervisor.

B. Manners moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to approve the Police Union request between the Town of Ridgefield and the Police Commission to accommodate an officer who was injured and is unable to return to full police duty at this time and that he be appointed

to the position of Communications Supervisor contingent upon agreement with the Police Commission that this action will not trigger an overtime situation. Motion passed 5-0.

Jan Rifkinson, New Rd., inquired why this issue was not part of the negotiations with the Police Department in January of this year. R. Marconi responded that we are reducing our costs, and A. Bodner indicated that we are accommodating someone who has given a lot of time to the town.

- Police Officer Rizzo Letter

Andy Bodner moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve the request by the Police Commission that Police Officer Maxine Rizzo be allowed to remain employed with the Ridgefield Police Department for an additional year. Motion passed 5-0.

7. Tax Collector Refunds

D. Masters moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve the tax refunds as requested by Tax Collector, Jane Berendsen-Hill, in her memo dated 3/1/2011 for a total of \$5,422.47. Motion passed 5-0.

8. Selectman's Report

R. Marconi indicated that he is nothing additional to report – He has been working with the various departments on budget issues.

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 2/7/11, 2/8/11, 2/9/11, 2/10/11

B. Manners moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the February 7, 2011, Board of Selectmen Budget Meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

A. Bodner moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve as written the minutes of the February 8, 2011 Board of Selectmen Budget Meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

A. Bodner moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve as written the minutes of the February 9, 2011 Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

A. Bodner moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve as written the minutes of the February 10, Board of Selectmen Budget Meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

The agenda from the Board of Selectmen Meeting was completed at 8:35 p.m. and the BOS immediately continued into the Board of Selectmen Budget Meeting.

1. Highway Department Budget

Peter Hill, Director of Public Works, came forward to discuss the proposed Highway budget. \$1 million is spent on road repairs each year. The question is whether this amount should be raised to \$1.5 million? R. Marconi asked Mr. Hill if he would find it helpful to work with an outside engineer to review all town roads and work up a long-term plan? Peter replied that he can assess the roads and does not need to spend money on a consultant. He has a list of roads that need to be repaired and that list is continually being updated and changed if necessary. Would it be helpful to go outside for repair of a road(s) that take a lot of time and need an inordinate amount of work? This could be added to the Highway Department's budget. Mr. Hill responded that this approach would be helpful. The current price for asphalt is \$78/ton.

Several roads are listed as Federal-aid roads, such as Haviland Rd. from Route 7 to Route 35 (about one mile). This road needs a lot of drainage work, overlay and then repaving. It was on “the list” for drainage and resurfacing, but it is now a lot worse and the proposed work on Haviland Rd. needs to be increased. Reclaiming of a road and even replacement of some of the sub-base takes a lot of time. It would be helpful to sub-contract this project out. A re-surfaced road if done correctly should last 8-12 years.

Andy Bodner stated how we have not kept up with our previous road repair plan and each year we are not able to do as much as originally planned. What would be the cost to outsource Haviland Rd.? Mr. Hill estimated \$100,000 for the whole road, with reclaiming some of it. He will check on the cost for reclaiming and milling. He has a list of nine roads which need doing. Once the weather clears, there may be additional roads that need help. We have not received Federal aid money. Last year it was the Stimulus money which provided dollars for road projects. Most of the drainage issues on Florida Rd. have been addressed and thus just overlay remains and minor drainage work. All the drainage has been done on Florida Hill. A. Bodner stressed the need for an overall assessment of the roads and how the roads need to be redone “right”. We should contract out Haviland Rd. and a few other roads as well. Mr. Hill will try to get definite numbers by tomorrow night’s meeting.

Re – Operating Budget – Decrease in patching by \$13,000 if purchase the asphalt recycler. Will have to put the \$13,000 back if do not get the equipment. It was agreed to take the \$13,000 out of contingency if the recycler is turned down.

Regarding environment recycling – we don’t pay now for e-waste. There is no change from the State regarding this. Ridgefield had been the biggest pick-up in the State for recycling. We are selling products out of the recycling center but have never forecast the revenues. We also pay for Hazardous Waste Day. The charges come out of this account. R. Marconi stated that this account has been “up and down”.

The Venus Building conversion to natural gas is really paying off!

2. Fire Department Budget

Chief Heather Buford and Assistant Chief Kevin Tappe came forward to discuss the proposed Fire Department budget. The Capital budget has previously been reviewed and no changes. #51001 Salaries have gone up by \$126,401. Overtime is up by \$10,000 and this has been reviewed. Other operating expenses are mostly flat. Commercial renovations dollars are coming in and are ahead of target.

3. Library

Chris Nolan, Director, and Carroll Brewster and Liz Kelly representing the Library Board, came forward to discuss the proposed Library budget. B. Manners indicated that she is not happy opposing the Library’s budget. She realizes they are “at the bones” and do an amazing job. If they were to not open on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, this would take about 8 hours out and they could save about \$100,000/year in salaries and benefits. They could be open those two days from 2:00 to 9:00 p.m. Their response was to close instead on Tuesday and Thursday at 6:00 p.m. and the savings would be about \$30,000, mostly part-time salaries. Ms. Manners responded that she hates to see the Library closed in the evening for people who work all day. Perhaps the morning wouldn’t hurt as much now that Ridgefield has all-day kindergarten. Liz Kelly replied that the Library is very busy in the morning hours. It costs about \$400/hour to keep the Library open. C. Nolan replied that the Library is the busiest during the day. It would be better to close in the evening, but at night there are also special programs going on. The Town of Ridgefield pays

75% of the Library's expenses and the BOS is suggesting that they find some way to cut \$100,000 from their budget request. Programs would not be eliminated, just rescheduled. If the Library were to expand with their proposed new addition, what would their new operating budget look like? C. Nolan responded that they will be able to have fewer employees with the Library space more open. They are forecasting flat operating costs.

The BOS asked the Library to see what they can do to cut costs further and come back to the budget meeting again tomorrow evening. What will be their plan and what will be the impact?

4. General Budget Discussion – Kevin Redmond, Director of Finance, came forward to present a list of possible reductions as a result of his discussion with R. Marconi during the day, with a total of - \$167,967. The suggested reductions are as follows:

Police – Lower cost for future backfill	(20,117)
Police – Accounting clerk reduce hours	(4,420)
Police – Net impact of Browning	(14,054)
Police – Uniforms	(3,000)
P&R – Branchville chargeback	(10,000)
Insurance – MIRMA	(28,817)
Medical	(62,558)
Highway – Parts	(5,000)
Transfers – Barn	(1,000)
Transfers – Holiday Trust	(1,000)
Transfers – Welcome to Ridgefield	(5,000)
Community Grants – Dream Homes	(1,000)
Community Grants – Meals on Wheels	(500)
Community Grants – Chamber	(1,000)
Community Grants – Amos House	(350)
Community Grants – Regional Health	(250)
Community Grants – Danbury Regional	(200)
Community Grants – Ridgefield Symphony	(500)
Commissions/Committee – Memoria	(500)
Commissions/Committees – EDC	(4,350)
Commissions/Committees – Arts Council	(700)
Social Security/Medicare	(3,201)
All Other	(500)
TOTAL	(167,967)

The BOE is requesting an increase of 2.9%. If the Town budget were to go down to a 2% increase, another \$180,145 would need to be cut. Possible cuts could be:

- Police, Fire & Highway - \$5,000 each for a total of \$15,000
- Cut down pension and self-insurance
- Library – down \$10,000
- Legal – down by \$25,000 (do not know what our needs will be – all lawsuits now are covered by insurance; retainer is \$65,000/year
- Founder's Hall – down \$20,000 (D. Masters disagrees – we have a contract w/ Founder's Hall)
- Overtime – Fire Dept. – less \$5,000
- Library – less \$30,000

B. Manners pointed out that we have cut Police, Fire, and Highway year after year. Residents expect safety and highways covered. This budget is getting very, very tight! Parks & Rec is

losing revenue from the services they are providing and they have already cut programs. Where can one cut that will cause the least harm?

Andy Bodner expressed his desire to present the leanest budget possible and would strive for a 2% increase. Nothing good is going to be happening at the State level for a couple of years.

K. Redmond indicated that the budget would be at a 2.17% increase if we were to cut \$125,000 and 2.24% if we cut \$105,000. Another suggestion is to adjust Library insurance down from 15 to 9.8 on LTD. This would save \$8,000. R. Marconi polled the BOS as to where they stand: M. Kozlark is comfortable with 2.17% as she feels we have already cut as much as we can; D. Masters is for 2%; A. Bodner is also for 2%, and B. Manners supports 2.17% with a cut of \$125,000. She feels the budget doesn't allow for crises. K. Redmond pointed out that an additional \$55,000 in cuts is needed to get down to a 2% increase.

B. Manners pointed out how the pension of elected officials needs to be corrected. R. Marconi recused himself from this discussion. A. Bodner stated how pension decisions need to be made in the context of overall compensation. He has no problem with increasing the pension numbers, but it has to be looked at in the overall picture. A lower percent has been given to elected officials and a lower salary increase than for others. A. Bodner indicated that Ridgefield will be going into compensation discussions with four unions. They should expect little if any increases and be glad they have jobs. B. Manners responded that elected officials just need to be on a level training field rather than being treated worse than other employees. Jane Berendsen-Hill stated that a reconciliation was attempted years ago and nothing happened. They need to be put on a comparable field for comparable work. If nothing is brought up, then nothing will happen and the issue will be forgotten again. The residents need to understand that elected officials have been treated differently. Their pension contribution continues to be lower than other town employees. We just need to "get to a place where it is fair going forward". This will result in about \$15,000 added to the Operations budget which will go into the pension contribution. They need to get the numbers from Dave Campbell. Kevin Redmond will call him.

Capital Budget Discussion – R. Marconi indicated that with the Energy Study, there are certain projects which we need to do now, such as the lighting replacement project. We are required to go thru the bid process even if we want to do the work ourselves. We should also do some of the weatherization; let's spend \$1 million on lighting and \$500,000 on weatherization. D. Masters asked if all the Town buildings have been looked at for the energy study? She feels the numbers could be tighter as she has already had the lighting replaced at the Community Center and no one has been checking on it. She is in agreement that it is worthwhile to do so.

What about Spray Bay? This is Parks & Rec's #1 priority. They want to do the handicapped access project and repair the cracks in the tennis courts, but are willing to give up the truck replacements and the field conditioner for Spray Bay. R. Marconi indicated that he received a call from D. Low today regarding the BOE's increase in insurance costs; the rates did go down but about 20 more people are coming onto the program with single to family status, etc. This comes to about \$400,000 which is really an inflated number. Regarding debt service, K. Redmond indicated that we pay down about \$10 million in principal/year. Our debt service continues to come down.

Andy Bodner moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen and subsequent Budget Meeting at 11:10 p.m. Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted, Janet L. Johnson