

BOARD of SELECTMEN MEETING – APRIL 6, 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. Architectural Advisory Committee Interviews: Tmothy Dunphy, Beth Corso
2. Lyme Study Discussion – Ed Briggs, Health Director
3. Vendor Permit Application: Cones 4 College
4. Discuss Grouping of 2012 Capital Budget Questions for Ballot
5. Cell Tower Land Purchase and Sunset Lane Land Sale public Hearing Date Change from April 27 to May 4
6. Selectman’s Report
7. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 2/7/11 budget, 2/9/11 special, 2/22/11 special, 3/7/11 budget, 3/8/11 budget

R. Marconi called the Board of Selectmen Meeting to order at 7:30 p.m., following an Executive Session for an update on the Schlumberger property. No vote was taken.

B. Manners moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to add to the evening’s agenda prior to #6, Selectman’s Report, “Budget Discussion - Follow-Up to BOF’s Decision on 4/4/11”. Motion passed 5-0.

1. Architectural Advisory Committee Interviews: Timothy Dunphy, Beth Corso

R. Marconi stated that there are currently 3 vacancies for Alternates on the Architectural Advisory Committee. William Goromby has already interviewed for one of these positions. The AA Committee had requested an increase to 5 full-time members and 5 alternates in order to more easily have a quorum present at meetings. The entire 10 positions can be “unaffiliated”.

Beth Corso came forward to introduce herself to the BOS and express her interest in serving on the Architectural Advisory Committee. R. Marconi read her bio listing her positions in design, marketing and merchandising. Her education includes NYU, College of Business and Administration and the Fashion Institute of Technology, Advertising and Communications. She has been a Ridgefield resident for about 17 years. Ms. Corso commented on her love of Main St. and her appreciation of Ridgefield’s architecture. She is trained in design and not architecture but continues to enjoy what has been done to the homes in Ridgefield in keeping with their historic nature. She has a son in high school and a daughter who will be leaving for college this year, and thus she feels she now has the time to pursue her interest in Ridgefield’s architecture.

D. Masters asked Ms. Corso if she had attended any of the Committee’s meetings, and if so, did she feel she could make a contribution to the discussion? Yes, she recently attended a meeting and feels it is a conscientious, easy-going group of people to work with. Ms. Corso lives close to the village. D. Masters asked about her vision of where Ridgefield is going? Ms. Corso responded that she is concerned about the empty store fronts. She loves the small town flavor of Ridgefield and would want to maintain that feeling.

M. Kozlark asked Ms. Corso what was her impetus to select this committee versus other board/committees? She responded that her interest and background in design is why this committee sparked her interest the most.

B. Manners asked Ms. Corso if she could make one change in Ridgefield, what would it be? Ms. Corso responded that she does not like to see so many homes go up behind others. She would like to have more to do for Ridgefield's youth than just "hang out".

Tim Dunphy came forward to introduce himself to the BOS and express his interest in serving on the Architectural Advisory Committee. He did attend a recent meeting of the Committee and wrote a letter to Betty Brosius, Director of Planning, expressing his interest in the Alternate position. He has worked as an architect for the past 23 years. For the past 4 years, Mr. Dunphy has maintained a home office in Ridgefield. He loves the village and would like to be involved in preserving the character of Ridgefield. The meeting he attended discussed the Library redo and the commercial space where the Farmer's Market has been located in the past. He liked the way the Committee worked and the way different voices were heard. He realizes it is an advisory board from which their recommendations are to be taken into consideration. He has often been on the "municipal side of the table" and appreciates the collaborative process. He feels that decisions of such a committee usually are fair.

D. Masters inquired if the previous applicant, Mr. Goromby had attended an AA Committee meeting and if we had heard back from him. R. Marconi indicated that he had not heard back from Mr. Goromby to date.

B. Manners moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to appoint Beth A. Corso and Timothy Dunphy as Alternates for a four-year term on the Architectural Advisory Committee. Motion passed 5-0.

2. Lyme Study Discussion – Ed Briggs, Health Director

Ed Briggs, Ridgefield's Health Director, and Becky Mucchetti, Chairman of the Planning & Zoning Commission, came forward to discuss the upcoming Lyme and Other Tickborne Diseases Prevention Study (LTDPS). The Ridgefield Health Department has been asked to participate by the State Health Department, the CDC and the Yale Emerging Infections Department to participate in a study involving approximately 85+ properties in town. One-half of the properties would receive a limited treatment of ascaricide and the other half would receive a placebo (water). The purpose of this study is to determine if a single application of acaricide is effective in reducing the incidence of tick-borne disease.

Ed Briggs attended the previous evening's P&Z meeting and answered their questions about the goals and objectives of the study and clarified the inconsistencies in the designated setbacks which were of concern to the Wetlands Board. Jennifer Reid, when discussing the proposed study, stated that the setbacks would be 500 feet, where as Ed Briggs had said that the setbacks would be 100 feet. E. Briggs indicated that the 100 foot set back was chosen as a safety measure. He feels very comfortable with that number. The pesticide being used is not a fog and is not mobile in the soil. They will be spraying 20 feet into the woodlands and 10 feet on the outside. Ms. Mucchetti indicated that P&Z is satisfied with the Health Department's screening of this study. P&Z would like to receive a list of the properties being selected for the study and assurance that the proper setbacks are in place. This study is part of Connecticut's and Ridgefield's Health Department's multi-faceted approach to Lyme Disease. It is a serious issue that continues to need to be addressed. M. Kozlark expressed the Board of Selectmen's concern about assurance that they are not recommending a study that would have a negative impact on the wetlands.

3. Vendor Permit Application: Cones 4 College

Zachary Cohen and Will Yolen came forward to express their interest in seeking renewal for an additional year of their vendor permit for “Cones 4 College” to sell ice cream, ice cream novelties, drinks and candy. R. Marconi asked if they had experienced any problems with their business last summer? They responded that they had no big problems at all. They feel they learned the basics of running a small business. Their hours of operation are from noon to 4:00 p.m. with a break and then again in the evening. They have one vehicle and commented on how they figured out how to best include Ballard Park in their schedule.

D. Masters moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve the renewal for an additional year the vendor application for Cones 4 College for Zachary Cohen and Will Yolen to sell ice cream, ice cream novelties, candy, and drinks. Motion passed 5-0.

4. Discuss Group of 2012 Capital Budget Questions for Ballot

Kevin Redmond, Director of Finance, came forward to discuss the proposed capital budget questions for the referendum ballot. Any items under \$100,000 can go before the Town Meeting for approval if the BOS so approves. M. Kozlark inquired as to what would happen if these capital items were divided into two groups and only one of the groups is approved. R. Marconi responded that we need to review carefully what items are on the ballot and what items come before the Town Meeting. A. Bodner asked if there will be any advisory questions on the ballot this year? R. Marconi responded that we hope to have room on the ballot for advisory questions as we have in the past. We need to get feedback from Bond Counsel regarding the wording on the ballots. Is it OK for the police vehicles to be part of the operating budget? Is \$720,000 too much to go before the Town Meeting for approval? The answer is no.

It is important that the residents understand how the total for the 2011-12 fiscal year adds up to \$44 million - \$31.5 for the BOS budget and \$13.7 for debt service. K. Redmond indicated that we are paying down about \$9 million in debt service principal every two years. All debt service continues to come down each year. We have refunded twice which has resulted in savings of \$4 million in bonding costs. If the police cars are included for approval at the Town Meeting, the total would add up to about \$900,000. B. Manners stated that this total doesn't concern her. At Public Hearings, the voters can ask questions, which is more helpful than reading a referendum ballot. Last year's total reviewed for approval at the Town Meeting was \$715,000. R. Marconi indicated that the BOS will need to schedule a Special Meeting sometime next week to approve the referendum and Town Meeting questions when they come back from Bond Counsel. One suggested time is on April 13 as there is already a Fire Commission meeting scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on that date. The BOS Special Meeting could be scheduled for before or after the Fire Dept. meeting.

5. Cell Tower Land Purchase and Sunset Lane Land Sale Public Hearing Date Change from April 27 to May 4

A change in date has been requested because there is already a special election scheduled for the evening of April 27. **B. Manners moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to move the Public Hearing from April 27 to May 4, 2011 – 7:30 p.m., for discussion of the Cell Tower Land Purchase and Sunset Lane Land Sale. Motion passed 5-0.**

5A. Follow-up to BOF's Decision on 4/4/11

R. Marconi announced that an Information Meeting has been scheduled for 7:00 p.m., April 7 at Barlow Mountain School and another such meeting at 7:00 p.m., April 14 at Ridgebury School. Residents can come to these meetings and ask questions.

Laurie Scholl, Director of Human Resources, and Kevin Redmond, Director of Finance, came forward to discuss with the BOS how to reduce the Town's proposed budget down to a 1.76% increase as requested by the Board of Finance at their meeting on April 4, 2011. This means that the BOS has to somehow reduce by \$75,000 their proposed operating budget, and the IT hardware and software has to be brought down to below \$100,000 from the \$100,200 requested.

D. Masters asked if all the requested replacement computers are in dire need of replacement? R. Marconi indicated that certain departments need to have their computers upgraded. All need to be switched to Windows 7 to be compatible. In the future the goal would be to move to an open platform so the Town would not be faced with frequent upgrades as is the case with Microsoft. Can any of this computer replacement be delayed? There is maybe a little room for delays in PC's. The plan is to rotate through all computers in five years. If we were to lease computers, the cost could be cut down to about \$10,000, but this is delaying purchases and pushing out higher costs to the next year. The Board of Finance did not leave the BOS a lot of options.

R. Marconi stated that he is currently in negotiations with the union. Health insurance costs have been refigured for all non-union employees resulting in about \$67,000 savings in terms of premiums. Employees are given different choices, including doubled co-pays and a point-of-service plan. Employees understand that the Town cannot keep absorbing these increases each year. Of the \$1.5 million proposed for the Joint BOE/Town Energy projects (Lighting and weatherization), the Town portion is about \$400,000 which will result in about a \$15,000 immediate savings. The \$75,000 reduction can be obtained thru a reduction in utility costs and insurance premiums. The proposed increase in the mill rate is 1.3%. R. Marconi read the worksheet prepared by K. Redmond listing the Town of Ridgefield proposed for Fiscal Year 2012 Bonded Capital expenditures and Proposed Budget Referendum Questions.

A. Bodner asked about the payments to MIRMA. R. Marconi responded that the BOE recently requested MIRMA contact information. The deadline for payment was supposed to be March 4th. The next payment then is due July 1st and that is provided for in the proposed budget. K. Redmond indicated that each respective budget has MIRMA allocations provided for. A. Bodner indicated that Ridgefield has contracted liability to MIRMA and we need to pay.

A. Bodner moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve the following proposed changes in the Town of Ridgefield's operating budget for Fiscal Year 2011-2012 to meet the \$75,000 reduction requested by the Board of Finance at their meeting on April 4, 2011:

**\$60,000 less in medical/health insurance costs
\$10,000 less in utilities
\$20,000 from contingency**

**And an increase of \$15,000 in the IT budget
equals a total reduction of \$75,000.**

Motion passed 5-0.

6. Selectman's Report

- Marty Heiser, member of the Board of Finance, sent an email with proposed advisory questions for the upcoming referendum:
 - 1) Would you like to see more tax dollars spent on education in Ridgefield?
 - 2) Do you think we are spending the right amount of tax dollars on education in Ridgefield?
 - 3) Would you like to see less tax dollars spent on education in Ridgefield?The directions are for the voter to circle one of the above.

M. Kozlark stated that it is good to receive information from a survey – but once we get the information, what is going to be done with it? The wording in such a survey needs to be carefully written. How much is more?

Dom d’Addario, Taunton Hill Rd., stated that he feels these are “loaded questions”. We should wait until the numbers are out.

Seniors are requesting a freeze in property taxes for those with income below a certain amount. R. Marconi stated how seniors with income under \$20,000 would qualify for this. B. Manners stated that we should be looking to see if there are homeowners with income that low. R. Marconi commented on a note he had received from Al Garzi regarding this issue and that 40 to 50 residents could possibly qualify for this program: The age limit is 70 years plus, or spouse is 70 years plus an surviving partner is 62 years plus, either partner a Ridgefield resident 1 years before the claim, and income level of \$16,200 if unmarried and \$20,000 if married, with adjustment annually. B. Manners stated how we should look at this and put cost numbers to this program. R. Marconi stated that we currently have two programs in place for seniors – tax credit for anyone over 65, and a tax deferment program. He will research the costs of these senior programs and will bring the numbers back to the BOS for their consideration.

- Request received to change name of Bypass Rd. to be named after deceased Police Chief Ligi. He served Ridgefield for 40 years and lived in Ridgefield all his life.
- Proposed gas conversion to Police Department and Fire Department – C. Fisher has some dollars left over from the gas connection to Old High School. He is checking with Yankee Gas to see what the cost would be. The Venus Building conversion to gas resulted in a 40%+ savings.
- M. Kozlark reminded the BOS of a Tiger Hollow presentation – need to schedule, and also put on a BOS agenda discussion of reappointment policy for volunteers on Town boards and commissions. Do we want a designated number of terms of office? B. Manners stated how she brought this issue up a few years ago. R. Marconi will check on policies regarding this issue with other nearby municipalities and report back to the BOS.
- Segur replacement – B. Jaeger asked to delay decision on this issue until the end of the month. All three companies under consideration could do a good job for the town. RJKnox – loss control program was a plus. Litchfield Hills also has an aggressive program for loss control. Fairfield County Bank Insurance Services doesn’t have an in-house loss control program, but they are the only that has access to Trident.
- Another question is should we sue Segur over the MIRMA issue? A. Bodner responded that he understands B. Jaeger’s switch to MIRMA. We saved \$1 million and now have a loss cost of \$1 million. What would our claim be? Our cost nets out to be 0. That is something the court will want to know. B. Manners said we should only do a lawsuit with a contingency fee. There are people who will say there is a liability issue here. This is something that should be discussed with B. Jaeger.

7. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 2/7/11 budget, 2/9/11 special, 2/22/11 special, 3/7/11 budget, 3/8/11 budget

The minutes of the 2/7/11 budget meeting have already been approved.

M. Kozlark moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve as written the minutes of the February 9, 2011, Board of Selectmen Special Meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

A. Bodner moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to approve as written the minutes of the February 22, 2011, Board of Selectmen Special Meeting. Motion passed 4-0. B. Manners abstained as she was not present at this meeting.

M. Kozlark moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to approve as written the minutes of the March 7, 2011, Board of Selectmen Budget Meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

D. Masters moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the March 8, 2011, Board of Selectmen Budget Meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

B. Manners moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 9:30 p.m. Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet L. Johnson