

Annual Town Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. at the Ridgefield Playhouse by the First Selectman, Rudy Marconi.

Mr. Marconi announced that the first order of business was to elect a Moderator. Barbara Manners moved, Peter Gomez seconded to nominate Sharon Dornfeld as Moderator.

Vote: "Aye" votes unanimous, and Mrs. Dornfeld was appointed Moderator.

The Moderator asked the Town Clerk to read the legal notice of the meeting and stated that said Notice signed by the Board of Selectmen had been posted in the Town Clerk's office, and that a copy thereof had been published in The Ridgefield Press, in its issue of April 21, 2011.

Mrs. Dornfeld announced that complete copies of the budget and bond resolutions were available in the front hallway to members of the public attending this meeting.

The Moderator explained that in accordance with Section 10-3 of the Town Charter, Items 1 through 8 on the call of the Annual Town Meeting would be voted upon at a referendum to be held on May 10, 2011 and they would be discussed at this meeting. Item #9 would be voted on tonight.

The Moderator then explained that people eligible to vote are electors of the Town, meaning registered voters, or anyone over the age of eighteen and a citizen of the United States owning property in Ridgefield assessed at least \$1,000.

The Moderator then presented Rudy Marconi, who gave the Town Budget presentation. See "Board of Selectmen 2012 Budget" on page 319.

After Mr. Marconi's presentation, the Moderator presented Austin Drukker, Chairman of the Board of Education, who gave the Education Budget presentation. See "Board of Education Proposed 2011-2012 Budget" on page 326.

John Palermo, a member of the Board of Education, gave an energy savings report. "See Analysis of Energy Audit CIP Energy Conservation Measures" on page 329.

Peter Gomez, Chairman of the Board of Finance, recapped items in the budgets. He stated that the Board of Finance recommended a 1.81% increase in the school budget and 1.76% in the selectmen's budget, yielding a 1.03% mill rate increase. He added that the Board of Finance voted to use a fund balance amount of \$400,000. The purpose of using this is to keep the mill rate lower than it would if we didn't use it. If not used, it would bring the increase in the mill rate up to 1.4%.

Mr. Gomez also reviewed a Federal Reserve press release, and asked that it be put in the minutes. See page 332. He also discussed the affordability of public sector pension plans, which he feels is an area that needs discussion and close inspection.

The Moderator asked the Clerk to incorporate into the minutes letters from the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance stating the resolutions adopted at their respective meetings.

The Moderator then proceeded to present for discussion the Capital Items under \$100,000 to be voted on at the meeting, and asked each of the following to present their requests to the audience:

Highway Dept.-Peter Hill, Director of Public Works

\$55,000 Asphalt Recycler

Mr. Hill explained that the recycler takes the old asphalt and regenerates it for a more permanent patch. It reduces \$13,000 in the budget used for the old cold patch previously used.

\$28,500 Plows

Mr. Hill explained that this is for the purchase of three new plows, replacing old ones. Mr. Marconi stated that they will be high discharge plows.

\$40,000 Grader Re-Build

Mr. Hill explained that the grader is an old one, dated 1977; however, instead of buying a new one for about \$200,000, he has found parts to rebuilt it for the \$40,000.

\$60,000 Dump Truck With Plow

Mr. Hill explained that it will replace a lowboy truck with a blown motor. Instead of putting money into repairing it, his maintenance dept. feels it would be better to buy a new one.

\$48,000 Service Truck Utility Body

Mr. Hill explained that it would be a utility body, including a crane. The body would carry equipment, welder, wrenches, and air compressor. Mr. Marconi added that the crane would help decrease Workmen's Compensation complaints.

\$35,000 Mamasco Lake Assn.

Mr. Hill explained that these funds would be used for improvements to the lake, such as drainage. Mr. Marconi read a letter from Kitty Fischer explaining the improvements to be done.

Public Discussion:

Jan Rifkinson, 169 New Rd., asked what the cost would be to replace an engine. Peter Hill replied that he was not sure, because his maintenance supervisor did not have a figure. However, there were other issues with the truck, such as the front end, engine, and transmission.

Parks & Recreation Department-Paul Roche, Director

\$10,100 ADA Accessible Entrance

Mr. Roche explained this was for adding a sliding door in the front of the building for people with disabilities.

\$21,500 Field Conditioner Tractor

Mr. Roche explained this would be used to purchase a tractor that would replace a six year old unit.

\$30,000 Yanity Courts Safety Improvements

Mr. Roche explained that the basketball and tennis courts at the old high school have developed cracks, and they will use a new process to repair them.

Education-Paul Roche, Parks & Recreation Director

\$20,450 Ground Safety Improvements

Mr. Roche explained that the old high school needs a new backstop at the old high school for \$9,000. Another item will be a 20' high chain link fence, instead of an 8' high fence, at the Branchville Civic Center to keep balls from going into the neighbors' yards.

Public Discussion: None

Town Engineer - Charlie Fisher

\$40,000 Building Repair-Venus Building

Mr. Fisher explained repairs need to be done on the second floor of ht VNA to present a more professional appearance, since they generate a good rent. The work would consist of replacing carpet, painting walls, electrical work, replacing ceiling tiles, and also converting one large bathroom to two separate bathrooms.

\$20,000 Building Repair-Fire Station

Mr. Fisher explained that the Ridgebury Fire Station needs a new roof. The Catoonah St. station has a crack in its first bay, and he wishes to investigate why its there and propose a repair strategy. A door needs to be replaced, and a preliminary study needs to be done to install air conditioning on the second floor.

\$20,000 Building Repair Teen Barn

Mr. Fisher proposes to do exterior painting at the Barn, replace the oil burner, and do foundation work to solve some drainage problems.

Education-Charles Fisher

\$55,000 School Buildings/Grounds

Mr. Fisher explained that this would be used to replace the concrete curbing around the Children's Corner at Barlow Mtn. School and paint the fascia boards at Scotland School.

Public Discussion:

Jan Rifkinson, 169 New Rd., asked why building repairs were under the capital budget versus the operating budget.

Mr. Marconi responded that most of the repairs cost more than \$20,000 and will last over twenty years. He invited Mr. Rifkinson to visit the old high school and see what is needed. In addition, the Board of Finance agreed it should be a capital item.

Mr. Gomez said it should be called an improvement , because it adds to the existing infrastructure and adds to the life of the functionality of the building. This qualifies it for a capital item.

Tree Warden-John Pinchbeck

\$35,000 Tree Replacement

Mr. Pinchbeck explained he proposes to replace thirty five or forty trees every year. The ash trees have a disease and there are problems with the elms and red maples.

Public Discussion: None

Police Department-Chief John Roche

\$49,600 Equipment Replacements/Improvements

Chief Roche explained that this proposal is for two items, the cruiser electronic control center and the light bar replacement program. It is the second year of a multi year program. They will be switching over to LEDs and phasing out strobe lights. The second item is for Motorola portable radios that the

officers carry with them. This is a second year approval and should complete the program. The life of the radios is ten years.

Public Discussion:

Tony Ceretta, Red Oak Lane, asked if the officers have video cameras in their cruisers. Chief Roche replied that they do not.

Fire Department-Chief Heather Burford

\$60,471 Firefighter Air Packs (SCBA)

Chief Burford explained that the department has 41 airpacks, devices that keep the firefighter safe in hostile respiratory environments. This is the third of a four year replacement program. This year's proposal would replace one quarter, or ten, airpacks.

Public Discussion:

Scott DeYoung, 51 Caudatowa Dr., asked why they cost so much.

Chief Burford replied that each air pack costs about \$6,000. They have a ten yr. life expectancy and are pretty sophisticated.

Information Technology-Andrew Neblett

\$78,200 Server/Software

Mr. Neblett explained that the Town has reached its end of life on its support for its server and software. Departments especially affected by this would be the Police Dept. Parks & Rec., and the Munis system used in Town Hall.

\$22,000 Routers/Switches

Mr. Neblett explained that the above items need to be upgraded to support new systems and they have to be able to speak to each other.

The Moderator asked for a motion to waive the reading of resolutions 1 thru 8 in their entirety. John Katz moved, Di Masters seconded to waive the reading of the entire resolutions that appear on page 335.

Vote: "Aye" votes unanimous, and the reading was waived.

The Moderator read the following short form of the resolutions for purpose of discussion:

Item #1

Recommendations of the Board of Finance relative to the appropriation of \$45,179,476 for Town expenditures (including debt service on both Town and Education capital projects) for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2011 and ending June 30, 2012.

Irene Burgess moved, Kitty Fischer seconded to approve for discussion. **"Aye" votes unanimous. No discussion.**

Item #2

Recommendations of the Board of Finance relative to the appropriation of \$79,213,314 for Board of Education expenditures for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2011 and ending June 30, 2012.

John Palermo moved, Ed Tyrrell seconded to approve for discussion. “Aye” votes unanimous. No discussion.

Item #3

Recommendation of the Board of Finance relative to the appropriation of \$96,000 for the purchase and/or lease of police vehicles for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2011 and ending June 30, 2012.

Peter Gomez moved, John Palermo seconded to approve for discussion. “Aye” votes unanimous.

Discussion:

Tony Ceretta, Red Oak La., suggested that video cameras be added to police cars. Gene Waradzin, Marcadon Ave., stated he was confused as to why police cars were in the capital items. Mr. Marconi stated that it is not a capital item, and it is not in the operating budget, because it would inflate the operating budget by \$100,000 and what the Board of Finance wants to do is move it into operating slowly. Kevin Redmond, Finance Director, stated that they are going to try to migrate it into the Town operating budget in the future, and it does not affect the mill rate. Peter Gomez, Board of Finance Chairman, has recommended that it be put into the operating budget next year.

Item #4

Resolution appropriating \$1,900,000 for both Ridgefield Public Schools and Town building energy projects and authorizing the issuance of \$1,500,000 bonds of the Town to meet said appropriation and pending the issuance thereof the making of temporary borrowings for such purpose.

Peter Gomez moved, John Palermo moved to discuss.
“Aye” votes unanimous.

Discussion: John Noonan, North St., recommended that the schools be converted to natural gas from oil. John Palermo informed the audience that Yankee Gas is looking into bringing a gas line to the north end of town down to the high school and possibly to Scotland and Barlow Mtn. Schools. He also stated that most of the schools now have dual fuel boilers.

Item #5

Resolution making appropriations aggregating \$1,704,500 for various town roads and infrastructure improvements and equipment and authorizing the issuance of \$1,704,500 bonds of the Town to meet said appropriations and pending the issuance thereof the making of temporary borrowings for such purpose.

Peter Gomez moved, Tony Ceretta seconded to discuss.
“Aye” votes unanimous.
No discussion.

Item #6

Resolution appropriating \$754,500 for the acquisition of Fire Vehicles and authorizing the issuance of \$754,500 bonds of the Town to meet said appropriation and pending the issuance thereof the making of temporary borrowings for such purpose.

Peter Gomez moved, Di Masters seconded to discuss.
“Aye” votes unanimous.
No discussion.

Item #7

Resolution appropriating \$150,000 for sidewalk improvements and authorizing the issuance of \$150,000 bonds of the Town to meet said appropriation and pending the issuance thereof the making of temporary borrowings for such purpose (provided that the bonds shall be reduced by the amount of any state LOCIP grants received for such purpose).

Kitty Fischer moved, Paul Sutherland seconded to discuss.

“Aye” votes unanimous.

No discussion

Item #8

Resolution appropriating \$170,000 for asbestos abatement at Farmingville School and Veterans Park Elementary School and authorizing the issuance of \$170,000 bonds of the Town to meet said appropriation and pending the issuance thereof the making of temporary borrowings for such purpose.

Peter Gomez moved, Lynn Merrill seconded to discuss.

“Aye” votes unanimous.

No discussion.

The Moderator then announced the a vote would be taken to approve or disapprove the individual line items under Item #9.

Item #9

Resolution making appropriations aggregating \$728, 821 for the acquisition of equipment and improvements and authorizing the issuance of \$728,821 bonds of the Town to meet said appropriations and pending the issuance thereof the making of temporary borrowings for such purpose.

Peter Gomez moved, Barbara Manners seconded to approve the resolution.

HIGHWAY DEPT.

\$55,000 Asphalt Recycler

Irene Burgess moved, Barbara Manners seconded to approve. No discussion
unanimous, and the motion was approved.

“Aye” votes

\$28,500 Plows

Rudy Marconi moved, Barbara Manners seconded to approve. No discussion.
“Aye” votes unanimous, and the motion was approved.

\$40,000 Grader Re-build

Margaret Price Sims moved, Di Masters seconded to approve. No discussion
“Aye” votes unanimous, and the motion carried.

\$60,000 Dump Truck With Plow

Barbara Manners moved, Margaret Price Sims seconded to approve. No discussion.
“Aye” votes unanimous, and the motion carried.

\$48,000 Service Truck Utility Body

John Palermo moved, Kevin Tappe seconded to approve. No discussion.
“Aye” votes unanimous, and the motion carried.

\$35,000 Mamasasco Lake

Barbara Hart moved, Ellie Dowling seconded to approve. No discussion.
carried. 2 Nays

“Aye” votes

PARKS & RECREATION DEPT.

\$10,100 ADA Accessible Entrance

Barbara Manners moved, Irene Burgess seconded to approve. No discussion.
“Aye” votes unanimous, and the motion carried.

\$21,500 Field Conditioner Tractor

Barbara Manners moved, Gina Carey seconded to approve.
Discussion: Jan Rifkinson asked why this was asked for now when it was given up in order to have the Spray Bay approved? Mr. Marconi replied that the Board of Selectmen felt they should not give up equipment that is needed everyday in place of having the Spray Bay.
“Aye” votes carried. 2 Nays.

\$30,000 Yanity Courts Safety Improvements

Di Masters moved, John Palermo seconded to approve. No discussion
“Aye” votes unanimous, and the motion carried.

TOWN ENGINEER

\$40,000 Building Repair-Venus Building

Andy Bodner moved, Barbara Manners seconded to approve. No discussion.
“Aye” votes unanimous, and the motion carried.

\$20,000 Building Repair-Fire Station

Maureen Kozlark moved, Peter Gomez seconded to approve. No discussion
“Aye” votes unanimous, and the motion carried.

\$20,000 Building Repair-Teen Barn

Irene Burgess moved, John Palermo seconded to approve. No discussion.
“Aye” votes unanimous and the motion carried.

TREE WARDEN

\$35,000 Tree Replacement

Margaret Price Sims moved, Peter Gomez seconded to approve. No discussion.
“Aye” votes unanimous and the motion carried.

POLICE DEPT.

\$49,600 Equipment Replacements/Improvements

Di Masters moved, Irene Burgess seconded to approve. No discussion.
“Aye” votes unanimous and the motion carried.

FIRE DEPT.

\$60,471 Firefighter Air Packs (SCBA)

**John Palermo moved, Barbara Manners seconded to approve. No discussion
“Aye” votes unanimous and the motion carried.**

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

\$78,200 Server/Software

**Barbara Manners moved, Peter Gomez seconded to approve. No discussion.
“Aye” votes unanimous and the motion carried.**

\$22,000 Routers/Switches

**Peter Gomez moved, Margaret Price Sims seconded to approve. No discussion.
“Aye” votes unanimous and the motion carried.**

EDUCATION

\$55,000 School Buildings/Grounds

**Peter Gomez moved, Irene Burgess seconded to approve. No discussion.
“Aye” votes unanimous, and the motion carried.**

\$20,450 Grounds Safety Improvements

**Irene Burgess moved, Gina Carey seconded to approve. No discussion.
“Aye” votes unanimous, and the motion carried.**

The Moderator announced that the total expenditure of \$728,821 was approved, and she asked if there was any other business to come before the Town Meeting. Hearing none, she entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting in accordance with the action of Board of Selectman to a paper ballot vote on resolutions 1 thru 8 of the notice of the meeting to be held on Tuesday, May 10, 2011 between the hours of 6:00 A.M. and 8:00 P.M. at Yanity Gym and to reconvene to Town Hall to consider and act upon the tax levy.

John Palermo moved, Kitty Fischer seconded the motion.

“Aye” votes unanimous, and the meeting adjourned at 9:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Serfilippi, Town Clerk

