

**PUBLIC HEARING & BOARD of SELECTMEN MEETING – JULY 20, 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

**Public Hearing**

Lease By and Between the Town of Ridgefield and The Ridgefield Historical Society

**BOS Meeting Agenda** (*immediately following Public Hearing*)

1. Vendor Permit Application: Paul Bertolami
2. Overview of Prospect Street Project: Charlie Fisher
3. Gino's Way – Request for Acceptance as Town Road
4. Economic Development Commission Interview: Arnold Light
5. Economic Development Commission Reappointments: Mark Blandford, Chris Fisher, Daniel Mandelker, Paul Levine, Joy Strand
6. Year End Transfers
7. Discussion of "Old Business, New Business" Agenda Items
8. Transit Oriented Development Grant Resolution
9. Police and Fire Department Gas Conversion: Set special Town Meeting Date
10. Selectman's Report
11. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 7/6/11

**Public Hearing**

R. Marconi called the Public Hearing to order at 7:30 p.m. to discuss the "Lease By and Between the Town of Ridgefield and The Ridgefield Historical Society". R. Marconi read the call for the Public Hearing for consideration of the proposed Peter Parley School House Lease.

The Historical Society has indicated an interest in possibly heating the building. R. Marconi stated that Casey Fuel has cleaned and inspected the old furnace. It is in need of replacement, but may be adequate to keep the building at 60 degrees for awhile. If the furnace did fail, it would cost about \$5500 to replace. The oil tank was moved inside about 4-5 years ago and there is no leakage. A. Bodner stated how the building has not been heated in the past when leased by The Garden Club. If the Ridgefield Historical Society as the new tenant wants to heat the building, whose responsibility is it if the furnace fails? Nancy Selander was present representing The Ridgefield Historical Society. She indicated how they prefer to not have to remove everything from the building prior to the winter as has been in done in past years. The Town Meeting is scheduled for August 3<sup>rd</sup>. It is important that the lease is worded correctly regarding the furnace. R. Marconi stated that if the tenant wants to heat the building and the furnace fails, then The Historical Society can come back to the BOS for assistance at that time. The Town could pay for the new furnace as they did for the Guild of Artists, and the Historical Society can repay the Town in installments.

D. Masters stated how there are certain historic buildings in town which are important to maintain. This schoolhouse is one of them. It is the responsibility of the Town of Ridgefield to help with repairs if needed. M. Kozlark agreed that historic buildings cannot be ignored as they are an asset to the Town. Town Engineer Charlie Fisher, who was also present, stated how roofs that collapse are most often on

unheated buildings. He recommends that the schoolhouse be heated if possible. R. Marconi indicated that the Town will move ahead with the lease as written for now and the Town Meeting on August 3<sup>rd</sup>. If there is an issue with the furnace at a later date, it will be addressed when the need arises. He expressed a thank you to Casey Fuel for their cleaning and inspection of the furnace and their very generous donation of a tank of oil.

R. Marconi closed the Public Hearing at 7:40 p.m.

### **Board of Selectmen Meeting**

1. Vendor Permit Application: Paul Bertolami

Paul Bertolami came forward to present copies of the Health Department's approval of his truck and generator. He indicated that the location for his hot dog stand will be on Route 7 by Walpole, 2 miles north of Dunkin donuts on the left-hand side heading south. Lobster rolls will be part of his menu starting on July 27<sup>th</sup>. He also will sell "old-time" soda, manufactured by a 100 year-old New Britain, CT company.

**Andy Bodner moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to approve the vendor application of Paul Bertolami for his hot dog stand to be located at a stationery site on Route 7 approved by the State of CT. Motion passed 5-0.**

2. Overview of Prospect Street Project: Charlie Fisher

Charlie Fisher, Town Engineer, came forward to discuss the proposed Prospect Street Project. He reviewed the application for a grant from the State of CT which addresses the Bailey Avenue parking area and the access way from Prospect St. This will involve removal of the blocks at the end of the ramp. He outlined the three parts of the project: 1) municipal parking area – a few years ago a design was completed which included stone walls, curbing and landscaping. This plan was never implemented as the decision was made to look at the "entire area" first and come up with a whole concept plan; 2) Two months ago, met with the 5 – 6 property owners and shared with them the plans for the landscaping, lighting, stone walls, curbs, etc. with a continuous attractive "feel" between the two parking lots. The purpose is to draw people to the area; 3) removal of the cement blocks which currently prevent thru traffic – looking at a different pavement mixture at the bottom of the ramp and possibly a gate at the top. The Town will provide the maintenance and the property owners will pay for the paving.

Funding of the project is to come from a mixture of public and private sources. The Town of Ridgefield will contribute \$65,000, plus the original \$27,000 it previously paid for the final design of the Bailey Avenue portion of the project. The \$65,000 originates from the Town's "Payment in lieu of parking fee." Property owners have agreed to contribute the cost of reclaiming and paving of the surface areas within their properties which is currently estimated to have a value of \$100,000 to be split proportionally between them. The remaining \$415,000 will come from the application of STEAP funds from this grant.

Application for a separate grant of \$75,000 has been filed for improvement of the bad corner at the intersection of the Toll Bros. access and Route 7.

Andy Bodner inquired as to the cost of maintenance for the Bailey Ave. and Prospect St. project. Will there be an agreement regarding maintenance with the owners? R. Marconi replied that the biggest complaint in the past is snow piled on other owner's property. He wants to work on an agreement covering the plowing with everyone to share. D. Masters commented on the huge holes

in the parking area – worst area in town! She hopes all will pitch in to pay for the cost of reclaiming.

M. Kozlark inquired about the ramp area safety. Will there be a crosswalk designation at the bottom? Yes! There will also be a speed bump on the ramp. Traffic will be two-way. C. Fisher replied that safety issues are being carefully reviewed. The one 51% owner wants the Town to accept liability for the ramp thruway. To have the ramp area opened up will be good for getting fire trucks straight thru from Prospect St. A. Bodner asked about monies if we do not get the funding? LOCIP dollars will be used to remove the blocks. LOCIP has been used for sidewalk improvements in the past. M. Kozlark stated how the private owners could be asked to contribute if the grant is not received. R. Marconi indicated that the municipal lot curbing and lighting still needs to be done even if the grant is not received.

R. Marconi expressed a thank you to Charlie Fisher for his work on this project.

3. Gino's Way – Request for Acceptance as Town Road

A question was raised at the previous BOS Meeting regarding the sidewalks on Gino's Way – they do not conform to the plan. R. Marconi read a copy of the July 13, 2011, letter written by Betty Brosius, Director of Planning, indicating that the Planning & Zoning Commission, at its meeting on July 12, 2011, voted to approve acceptance of the as-built plan for the proposed public street now known as "Gino's Way," located off High Ridge Avenue, as a revision to the previously approved "Road Plan & Profile", dated 10/1/08. This approved as-built Road Plan & Profile is dated 5/13/08 and last revised 12/15/08, prepared by Land-Tech Consultants, Inc., shows a modified sidewalk design as compared to the original approval.

**B. Manners moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve the request for Gino's Way to be accepted as a Town road. Motion passed 5-0.**

4. Economic Development Commission Interview: Arnold Light

Mr. Light was not present for the interview. There are currently two vacancies on the EDC.

5. Economic Development Commission Reappointments: Mark Blandford, Chris Fisher, Daniel Mandelker, Paul Levine, Joy Strand

Letters requesting reappointment have been received from all these EDC members.

**B. Manners moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to reappoint Mark Blandford, Chris Fisher, Daniel Mandelker, Paul Levine, and Joy Strand for an additional one year term as members of the Economic Development Commission effective 7/1/11. Motion passed 5-0.**

1. Year End Transfers

Kevin Redmond, Director of Finance, came forward to present Department of Finance Memorandums for Year-End Transfers as follows:

**B. Manners moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to approve Department of Finance Memorandum #201103, Snow Related Transfers, which provides for an increase in expenditures in accounts #10602-51007, Highway Maintenance – OT, #10605-52204 of \$30,000, Road Maintenance – Contractors of \$30,000, and #10691-52013, Maintenance – Buildings, of \$35,000 (Total = \$95,000) and a corresponding decrease in Police Account Expenditures, Account # 10401-51001, Full-Time Salaries, of \$95,000. Motion passed 5-0.**

K. Redmond indicated that receipt of \$112,000 from FEMA is expected mid-August, the result of

a lengthy application process. These transfers have no net impact on Fund Balance but are necessary so that these cost centers do not close the year over budget.

**B. Manners moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve Department of Finance Memorandum #201104, Police Special Services Transfer, which provides for an increase in Account #10903-44230, Police – Special Services Revenue, of \$210,000 and a corresponding increase in Account #10401-51020, Police – Special Services Expense, of \$210,000. Motion passed 5-0.** The Police Special Services Revenue was budgeted at \$60,000 and Special Duty Expense was budgeted at \$100. Special Services Expense will be approximately \$200,000 for the year as a result of higher activity (and higher revenues). This transfer needs to be done every year so that the Police Patrol Expense line item does not close the year over budget.

**D. Masters moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to approve Department of Finance Memorandum #201105, Transfer – Registrars, which provides for an increase in Account #10071-52005, Referendum/Elections, of \$9,000, and a corresponding decrease in Account #10890-59101, Contingency, of \$9,000. Motion passed 5-0.** Registrar Referendum/Election expenses were budgeted at \$40,000. Actual expenses were higher due to the special election. This transfer was necessary so that the Registrars cost center does not close the year over budget.

K. Redmond indicated that the Town will be using about \$150,000 out of fund balance to close the 2010/2011 Fiscal Year. \$300,000 will not be used. Revenues for the year were down, but expenses were more favorable. The BOE may be about \$50,000 ahead and may well use no fund balance.

7. Discussion of “Old Business, New Business” Agenda Items

Jan Rifkinson, New Rd., requested that this item be placed on the agenda for discussion.

B. Manners stated how it is initially attractive to be able to bring up “new business”, but residents become upset when items are discussed which are not on the agenda. Residents do not know to come to the meeting. A. Bodner indicated that he is in agreement – items should not be voted upon when they are not on the agenda. R. Marconi stated how the agenda item, “Selectman’s Report,” allows for new subjects to be brought up, but then these items can be put on an agenda at a later meeting for further discussion. J. Rifkinson stated that other towns provide an opportunity for the residents to bring up items for discussion. Citizens come to the meeting with an idea and an agenda item titled “New Business” would give someone the opportunity to speak up. B. Manners responded that currently residents contact the Selectman’s Office or one of the BOS members and request that an item be discussed. This topic is then put on the agenda.

R. Marconi stated how the BOE has a time set aside for public comment at their meetings. There is a sign-up sheet for those who wish to speak. J. Rifkinson responded that this procedure provides a conduit for comments from the public. R. Marconi asked if the BOS would like to try this approach? B. Manners stated that the most efficient way is for the resident with concerns to contact the Selectman’s Office and request that a specific topic be placed on the agenda. R. Marconi stated how he always invites comments from the public before any vote. A. Bodner indicated that he wants to study *Robert’s Rules* before making any changes – what is allowed under the title of “Old Business” and “New Business” It was agreed to defer further discussion of this issue to the next BOS meeting.

8. Transit Oriented Development Grant Resolution

This is a planning grant application relative to the Branchville area. Ridgefield is applying for \$250,000 with the Town of Redding. Each town’s share is based on population. Wilton was

invited to participate also, but chose not to do so at this time as they are applying for a grant for a pedestrian walkway over the Norwalk River from the train station to Wilton Center. Wilton's First Selectman W. Brennan will send a letter of endorsement for the Redding/Ridgefield application relative to the Branchville Area, but did not want to create a conflict at this time with Wilton's own application. They may join in after they know whether or not they will receive their pedestrian walkway grant. \$250,000 would help the EDC for a long time with the proposed Branchville development. The \$12,500 grant the Town of Ridgefield gave to the EDC has been put on hold. About \$4,000 of this \$12,500 was used to help write this grant for the \$250,000. The grant would be not only for the Branchville area but also the Georgetown Wire Mill project as well.

**B. Manners moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to authorize the First Selectman, Rudy Marconi to execute on behalf of the Town of Ridgefield, the submission of the Branchville TOD grant proposal, in accordance with the Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Pilot Program Request for applications Enhancement Grant; to authorize the Town of Ridgefield to enter into and, if necessary, to amend a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the HVCEO, or any successor organization, which incorporates the requirements outlined in the Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Pilot Program Request of applications; and to authorize the individual serving as First Selectman to sign the grant application, to sign the grant application, to negotiate the terms and conditions of the MOU, to sign the MOU on behalf of the Town of Ridgefield, and to sign any other documents thereto. Motion passed 5-0.**

9. Police and Fire Department Gas Conversion: Set Special Town Meeting Date

R. Marconi indicated that a Public Hearing is not needed as this expenditure does not involve land. The Town is receiving \$94,000 from the State of CT to use for energy savings. Yankee Gas installs the laterals, but the expense is to extend the gas line to the Police and Fire Department buildings and the conversion to gas.

Approval is needed to move the monies left over from the Venus Building account over to this Police and Fire Department project.

**B. Manners moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to set a Town Meeting for August 3, 2011, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Large Conference Room, relative to the Police and Fire Department Gas Conversion. Motion passed 5-0.**

10. Selectman's Report

- Tax Assessor, Al Garzi, has been meeting with Boehringer Ingelheim. They are coming to P&Z with new applications. A. Garzi is putting a chart together detailing income and abatement from these projects, totaling about \$124 million. Building fees could approximate \$800,000 this year for all of these projects. Regarding abatements, R. Marconi indicated that we have given out about \$1 million in abatements to date and have also collected about \$1 million. A seven-year abatement program starts with each Certificate of Occupancy.
- Update on energy savings. A. Bodner provided the last meeting update. We went out to bid and NYCOMM's bid was \$890,000. Nothing has been awarded yet; in the process of qualifying NYCOMM for the job. Northeast Utilities has come to inspect each municipal building and to verify that the specified amount will be saved.

11. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 7/6/11

**A. Bodner moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to approve as written the minutes of the July 6, 2011, Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 4-1-1. B. Manners abstained as she was not present at the July 6<sup>th</sup> meeting.**

**A. Bodner moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 9:12 p.m. Motion passed 5-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Janet L. Johnson