

BOARD of SELECTMEN MEETING – SEPTEMBER 21, 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, D. Masters (B. Manners called in at 8:03 p.m.)

Agenda

1. Public Comment
2. Ridgefield Prevention Council Interview: Irene Burgess
3. Deferred Compensation Plan (401a) Recommendation and Possible Vote – Laurie Scholl
4. Approval of 2011-12 Deer Hunt Properties – Tom Belote
5. Whistle Stop Electric Charges
6. Family Day Proclamation
7. Habitat for Humanity Week proclamation
8. Selectman's Report
9. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 9/7/11 Special Mtg, 9/7/11 Regular Mtg.
10. Executive Session: Zemo MOU; Possible Vote

R. Marconi called the Board of Selectmen Meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

M. Kozlark moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to make two changes to the evening's agenda: Move #4 – “Approval of 2011-12 Deer Hunt properties – Tom Belote” to immediately following #1, “Public Comment”; and insert as #7A – “Approval of Explanatory Text for November 8, 2011 Ballot”. Motion passed 4-0.

1. Public Comment - It was suggested that in the future Public Comment be first at the BOS Meeting but does not need to be listed as #1 on the Agenda.
2. Approval of 2011/12 Deer Hunt Properties – Tom Belote
The following individuals came forward to discuss the proposed list of deer hunt properties for the 2011/12 Deer Hunt: Tom Belote, Chairman Ridgefield Deer Management Committee, Police Chief John Roche, and Stef Zandri, Chairman of the Hunt.

Tom Belote indicated that the Ridgefield Deer Management Committee has held three public hearings with no public response. Notices of the hearings were sent out to all abutting neighbors of the properties under consideration. Only one abutting neighbor came and he was not opposed to the hunt. This resident wanted a map of properties to be hunted on the Town web site and hunt times posted. One lady on Main Street has expressed opposition to the hunt but there are no deer on Main St. nor any hunting on Main St. Mr. Belote pointed out how the CT DEP allows multiple uses of public property, but the Deer Management Committee prefers to close properties when a hunt is on as a safety precaution. Ridgefield's safety record is excellent and they want to keep it that way. They have cut back on the number of properties this year (not for political reasons) because they want to hold the most effective hunts possible with the help they have. Last year all the acorns dropped at once and it wasn't necessary for the deer to move around. As a result, there were less deer taken last year, but Ridgefield still did well on the State list; he thinks #3 in the state for deer taken.

Mr. Belote indicated that the fly-over listed the number as 61 deer/sq. mile. The goal is to bring the number down to 18 and a time period of five years to achieve reforestation. The goal is not to eradicate the deer – just bring the number down to a reasonable level. The DEP fly-overs are not consistent with what the hunters in Ridgefield say – They say there is a major reduction in the number of deer in Ridgefield. Residents also say they see less deer than in past years.

R. Marconi stated that we are receiving cooperation from Westchester and neighboring municipalities. Wilton and Redding are very aggressive with regard to deer reduction. M. Kozlark asked why are fewer properties being hunted this year? Mr. Belote responded that we do not want the deer “to go nocturnal”. The goal is to move the hunters around to different land parcels. Hemlock Hills has been taken off the list for normal hunting. The State is being asked for special permission for special hunts in January and February for Hemlock Hills -- 3 days/week with shotgun. Signage is going to be even more prominent. Once a request is approved by the State, then they will return to seek BOS approval.

Stef Zandri indicated that 22 hunters are now on the active list, with additional hunters on the wait list. There is not going to be a safety issue.

The parcels that the Deer Committee has designated and also approved by the Conservation Commission, for the 2011-2012 hunt are:

- Levy Park (archery only—AM only, 10/15 – 1/31/12)
- Shadow Lake (bow, shotgun and muzzleloader 10/15-1/31/12)
- Laurel Lane (archery, shotgun and muzzleloader 10/15-1/31/12)
- Linden Lane (archery only – 10/15-1/31/12)
- Scoden Drive/Pheasant Lane (archery only – 10/15-1/31/12)
- Between Old Trolley and Shadow Lake (archery only- 10/15-1/31/12)
- Ridgefield Municipal Golf Course (archery only – dates to be determined)
- Limestone (archery only 10/15-1/31/12)
- Keeler Open Space (archery only 10/15-1/31/12)

Macklin Reid, Great Hill Rd., inquired as to the size of the various open space parcels to be hunted. Mr. Belote responded that Reed Park is 26 acres, Shadow Lake – 50 acres, Laurel Lane – 50 acres and Spectacle – 36 acres. There are 11 sites on the selected list.

Andy Bodner moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve the List of Open Space Parcels for the 2011/2012 Controlled Hunt as requested in the September 13, 2011 Memo from Tom Belote, Chairman, Ridgefield Deer Management Committee, and approved by the Conservation Commission. Motion passed 4-0.

3. Ridgefield Prevention Council Interview: Irene Burgess

Irene Burgess came forward to express her interest in serving on the Ridgefield Prevention Council as one of the adult members. Ms. Burgess is currently a member of the Board of Education. R. Marconi read the letter of application received from Ms. Burgess. In speaking about herself, Ms. Burgess commented on her many years of volunteerism in connection with the children of Ridgefield starting with the pre-school board at St. Stephen’s, Co- President of the PTA at Barlow Mountain, Executive Board Member Scott’s Ridge Middle School, member of various committees, involvement with redistricting, and now the BOE. M. Kozlark asked if she would have time for the Prevention Council in addition to the BOE. Ms. Burgess responded that “volunteerism is her work”. She does not have an outside job.

D. Masters commented on how parents are currently grappling with a lot of issues. There continues to be the need to get parents more involved. The recent report made public by the Coalition shared concerns about boundaries and the youth's need for appreciation – 37% of the youth have had some involvement with drugs. A. Bodner stressed the need to be more consistent with rules and consequences regarding disciplinary issues. We need to look at the Coalition's report closely. 150 people were in attendance which is good. What is needed is a long-term change in values and we as a community deal with everything..

John Katz, Old Ridgebury Rd., stated how the Coalition's report does tell us what we can work on. The intent of the survey becomes distorted when isolated numbers are pulled out. The more assets the child possesses, the less the chance of risky behavior. Some kids of today have no boundaries. We cannot tell people how to parent, but can give them tools; assets in the family model. The goal is to help the child be safe as they mature.

M. Kozlark moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve Irene Burgess to fill one of the adult vacancies on the Ridgefield Prevention Council for a four-year term. Motion passed 5-0. (B. Masters joined the BOS Meeting via telephone at 8:03 p.m.)

4. Deferred Compensation Plan (401a) Recommendation and Possible Vote – Laurie Scholl
Laurie Scholl, Director of Human Resources, came forward to comment on the recent Fire Union and Highway Union settlements and the implementation of a deferred compensation pension plan for all new hires, with hire dates 9/1/11 and thereafter. The non-unionized employee has also been added to this new plan. An RFP for administration of this plan went out in early August and was due back by 8/23/11. There were only two respondents: ICMA-RC and The Hartford. The proposals were reviewed by Kevin Redmond, Controller, The Pension Commission Chairman, Dave Campbell, and Ms. Scholl. It is a small start with only two new hires, but the numbers of employees involved will grow as time passes. Both companies do work with Ridgefield already. The fees with The Hartford were lower with everything else equal. The Hartford was therefore chosen for handling of Ridgefield's Defined Contribution Plan.

Andy Bodner moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve the following two resolutions as revised regarding the Deferred Compensation Plan (401a) and presented by Laurie Scholl, Director of Human Resources:

RESOLVED, that the Board of Selectmen has approved and adopted the Defined Contribution Pension Plan - 401(a) ("Plan"), approving The Hartford to provide employees of the Town of Ridgefield with retirement benefits, for those employees hired September 1, 2011 and beyond.

RESOLVED, that the members of the Board of Selectmen are hereby jointly authorizing the First Selectman to take such actions and to execute such documents as they deem necessary or desirable in order to carry out the intent of the foregoing resolutions and required under the Plan to make the Plan fully effective in accordance with its terms and intent. Motion passed 5-0.

5. Whistle Stop Electric Charges
Lolly Turner, owner of Whistle Stop Bakery at the Branchville Train Station, came forward to discuss the extreme increase in electrical charges from CL&P. She has met with R. Marconi regarding this issue. Also present was Mark Nicyper who works with Ms. Turner.

R. Marconi provided an overview of the situation at the Branchville Train Station. MetroNorth has been installing some upgrades with buses providing transportation from the Branchville Station during the summer months, resulting in a decline in customers for the Bakery. There was also a fire in Whistle Stop's electrical box caused by a short in the wiring. Extinguishers were used and all the bakery's food had to be discarded. Previously, electrical bills had been paid by MetroNorth out of Grand Central in spite of Ridgefield's long-term lease for the Branchville Train Station property. Going forward, Ridgefield will now be responsible for the electrical bill at the Branchville site with three meters and a bill of about \$1,000/month. Charlie Fisher, Town Engineer, brought in an electrician to review the situation as it is felt that the Bakery could not possibly use that much electricity. Ms. Turner stated how she does not pay rent but instead has invested in maintenance of the building, septic system, plumbing and heating repairs.

Andy Bodner suggested that Ms. Turner monitor the parking at the Station to generate revenue to help her cover the cost of her electrical charges.. Patrons could pay for their daily parking at the bakery, which would also increase her patronage. There is no one employed currently to monitor the parking at Branchville. R. Marconi will meet with Laurie Scholl to come up with a weekly fee to be paid to Ms. Turner for monitoring the parking. This suggestion will be available at the next BOS meeting for the Board's review and possible approval. Ms. Turner asked if the Town gets a better rate on electricity? The answer is yes. R. Marconi will have Charlie Fisher put the Whistle Stop's meter on the Town of Ridgefield's account.

6. Family Day Proclamation

M. Kozlark moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to proclaim Monday, September 26, 2011, as "Family Day" in Ridgefield, and that the fourth Monday in September shall be designated National Family Day – A Day to Eat Dinner with Your Children, in the recognition that eating dinner as a family is an important step toward raising drug-free children.

Motion passed 5-0.

John Katz, Old Ridgebury Rd., suggested that future proclamations include the wording "alcohol-free" as well as "drug-free" children as a goal. Children who regularly eat dinner with their family are less likely to get into trouble.

7. Habitat for Humanity Week Proclamation

R. Marconi stated how the Town of Ridgefield has been asked by Habitat for Humanity to build a home in Ridgefield on a lot given to the Town by the Boys & Girls Club. There is currently no property tax revenue from this lot. Building a home on this property would result in a taxable property. Another idea would be to sell this and similar lots. R. Marconi will ask Al Garzi, Tax Assessor, to put together a list of these properties. A. Bodner suggested that the BOS review property donations and possible uses – not just for Habitat for Humanity.

D. Masters moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to proclaim the week of October 2-8, 2011 to be World Habitat Week in Ridgefield. Motion passed 5-0.

7a. Approval of Explanatory Text for November 8, 2011 Ballot

R. Marconi read the sample Explanatory Text – Ballot Question and Explanation. He checked with Town Clerk Barbara Serfilippi and approval can wait until the next BOS meeting on October 5th. She needs to have the final wording in order to send out the absentee ballots the first or second week in October, preferably by October 7th.

D. Masters asked if there is any more information from Schlumberger? How long will environmental remediation take? Is there anything about property lines?

John Katz, Old Ridgebury Rd., stated how he feels the referendum will not be approved unless it is more specific. One cannot vote on the Explanation until the MOU is complete.

8. Selectman's Report

- R. Marconi will send out to the Board copies of all the national data passed out at the recent Coalition presentation. On 9/27/11 there will be a meeting at St. Mary's as a continuation of the Lear Retreat meeting. 30 individuals from various committees, alcohol-abuse task forces, etc. have been sent copies of the survey for their review. BOS members are welcome to attend
- Housing Summit is scheduled for October 17, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Lear Center. Affordable Housing will be present.
- Thank you to the Lear Retreat Center for the generous donation of their facility for town meetings/conferences.
- Kevin Redmond is still working on the expense numbers from Hurricane Irene. Ridgefield has still not received the FEMA dollars from last winter's snowstorm. We were to receive the FEMA money by August.
- Bus route for Shady Lane, etc. Peter Hill is checking on the roads in this area of town. R. Marconi reported on the minutes of a Special Town Meeting on 9/12/58 in which six roads were to be accepted as Town Roads: Crescent Drive, Clearview Terrace, Clearview Drive, Crosshill, Lakeside, and Hill. This request was the result of a petition from residents. Frances Martin objected as the Planning Committee had to approve the list first. The next day another meeting was held in which Old Syb and Syb were to be accepted as Town roads. Crest Drive, Crosshill and Crescent were also accepted. The other roads were dropped. For 20 years the town has been maintaining these roads. Town Counsel has indicated that this practice should be continued. R. Marconi indicated that he was not able to locate any recommendations from the Planning Committee. The Board of Education needs to obtain liability waivers from the owners of the roads for the bus company. What are we going to do with this issue? These roads do not meet Town standards.

There are 54 private roads in Town. It will take a lot of money to bring these roads up to Town standards. Plans are to pave Lakeside, up Shady Lane and one section of Crescent. Bus service has been resumed.

- R. Marconi reported on his recent meeting in Hartford regarding CL&P's response to Hurricane Irene. Line crews were just not available. There were no injuries. CL&P reported that Irene was the worst storm in their history. Based on the size of the storm, they felt that their response was good and timely. Ridgefield had 140 roads closed at one time. CL&P approval had to be in place before a road could be reopened. The whole system did not function well. Thank you all the many volunteers who helped in so many, many ways.

9. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 9/7/11 Special Mtg, 9/7/11 Regular Mtg.

Approval of the meeting minutes was postponed until the next BOS Meeting.

10. Executive Session: Zemo MOU; Possible Vote

M. Kozlark moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to recess the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 9:40 p.m. and go into Executive Session to discuss Zemo MOU with a possible vote. Motion passed 5-0.

The Board of Selectmen returned to public session at 11:25 p.m. No vote was taken.

Andy Bodner moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 11:26 p.m. Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet L. Johnson