

**BOARD of SELECTMEN MEETING – OCTOBER 26, 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  
(B. Manners left the meeting at 9:32 p.m.)

**Agenda**

1. Public Comment
2. Set Public Hearing and Special Town Meeting Dates for Conservation Commission Land Purchase
3. Ridgefield Prevention Council Interview: Nancy Gordon
4. Branchville Train Station Parking
5. Housing Authority Reappointment
6. Public Health Grant Resolution
7. Electric Vehicle Grant Resolution
8. Approval of Tax Refunds
9. Selectman's Report
10. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 10/1/11 Special Mtg., 10/5/11 Regular Meeting; 10/6/11 Special Mtg.

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

1. Public Comment  
There were no comments from the public.
2. Set Public Hearing and Special Town Meeting Dates for Conservation Commission Land Purchase

Dr. Ben Oko, Chairman of the Conservation Commission, and Kitsey Snow, Conservation Commission Member, came forward to discuss the Conservation Commission's request for approval of the purchase of the 28.8 acres previously under consideration for cell tower construction, but now to be used only as open space. The owner of the property is still interested in selling and approached Dr. Oko to see if a deal could be reached. He showed a map outlining the 28.8 acres under consideration and the adjoining open space, which will result in about a 40 acre total open space parcel. The original \$1 million price was reduced to \$900,000. The Conservation Commission currently has \$810,000 in their budget, and the neighbors abutting the property have raised about \$40,000 for a purchase price of \$850,000. No approval is needed from the BOS or the BOF, but there does need to be a public hearing and town meeting for consideration of a land purchase. A contract is in hand. R. Marconi stated that this is a good partnership with the neighbors.

**D. Masters moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to set a Public Hearing for November 16, 2011 and a Special Town Meeting on November 30, 2011, both at 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Large Conference Room, 400 Main Street, Ridgefield, CT relative to the proposed Conservation Commission Land Purchase, the 28.8 acres previously considered for a cell tower location. Motion passed 5-0.**

3. Ridgefield Prevention Council Interview: Nancy Gordon

Nancy Gordon came forward to express her interest in serving on the Ridgefield Prevention Council. R. Marconi read the email received from Ms. Gordon. She and her family have lived in Ridgefield for the past ten years. They have two children who graduated from RHS in 2009 and 2011 and a third child currently in 7<sup>th</sup> grade. She is familiar with SafeRides through one of her children, attended the September meeting of the Coalition Against Substance Abuse as a guest and substitutes in the Ridgefield public schools. Ms. Gordon described her previous work experience in NYC in the fields of public health policy, education and administration.

Ms. Gordon commented on how Ridgefield parents need to get more involved. “We all need to be a community; they are all our children”.

M. Kozlark inquired as to any specific ideas Ms. Gordon wants to promote? She stated that she would like to see collaboration between RHS and Danbury Hospital and the Dept. of Motor Vehicles. R. Marconi stated that it is difficult to get parents to attend meetings. The parents do not know the real statistics. They want to know what is happening but without names. There is a tremendous amount of alcohol being consumed by our young people. A. Bodner expressed concern about SafeRides. Some of the students use it as a taxi service enabling them to drink as they know they will not be driving.

B. Manners asked, “How do you make parents listen? How do you get a captive audience?” Ms. Gordon responded that she wished she knew the answers. What about more police involvement? That involves police overtime. Maxine Francis stated that it needs to be stressed that the parents will be held accountable for sponsoring parties and serving alcohol in their homes. This needs to be emphasized in the press. Matt Hicks asked when was the last parent arrested? R. Marconi responded – 1 ½ years ago. The parent’s sentence was 300 hours of community service. No one has received jail time. Once an individual is arrested, the sentencing, etc. is the responsibility of the court. Mr. Hicks indicated that once an individual is arrested and it goes into the court system, that individual can lose their license to practice if they are in finance, are a lawyer, whatever. This needs to be stressed and made to happen if there is cause.

**Andy Bodner moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to appoint Nancy Gordon to fill one of the vacancies on the Ridgefield Prevention Council for a four-year term. Motion passed 5-0.**

4. Branchville Train Station Parking

Laurie Scholl, Director of Human Resources, and Matt Hicks and Eugene Boehringer, representing The Parking Authority, came forward to discuss the previously proposed suggestion of having Lolly of The Whistle Stop Café, give our tickets for daily or permit violations at the Branchville parking lot. Her payment for serving as the parking attendant will help her meet her increase in electric charges. An email dated October 12, 2011, from Michael Zap of The Parking Authority indicates that The Parking Authority voted unanimously to not have Lolly give out tickets for daily or permit violations. They cited conflict of interest and conflict of priorities as the reason for their decision. Parking customers could not take her seriously – not in uniform; “who are you? and “what is this?”

L. Scholl indicated that advertising and interviewing of two possible candidates for a parking lot attendant for the Branchville location had been “put on hold” pending the decision regarding Lolly. Assuming this additional responsibility could result a change in insurance coverage and costs for Lolly.

Mr. Hicks commented on the many problems with the Danbury line – MetroNorth took some of the Branchville spots for their fibre-optic installation which is not yet complete; trains have been eliminated after 9:00 a.m. with bus service instead; the flood in Bethel; and diesels taken off the Danbury line for use on the mainline. He also pointed out that are often the same cars parked in the Whistle Stop parking spots all day. More individuals have lost their jobs and/or are working more frequently from home, resulting in fewer commuters from Branchville than previously.

L. Scholl stated that 100 of the 150 spots have renewed. A part-time person for this position would be paid \$15/hour. If they were to write one ticket per day, we are even. If we could hire two people to split the job of 4 days in the downtown area and one day in Branchville, we would have continual coverage. One person could cover for the other when needed.

M. Kozlark pointed out how we continue to interview a certain type of individual for our employees. Would Lolly fit into this group? Is she someone we would hire? Also, would it always be Lolly handing out the tickets, or would she be passing this responsibility to her staff? We have no connection to her staff; there would be no semblance of authority. L. Scholl indicated that Branchville is an inconvenient lot to monitor. It costs time and money to have an individual go there from downtown on a regular basis. This extra income would help Lolly maintain her business which is a plus. It is advantageous for the town to have a business in operation at the Branchville station location. But the town should not be supporting one business and not others.

Andy Bodner expressed interest in outsourcing this parking lot monitor position to a third party. What if an employee were to fall?

D. Masters pointed out the existence of The Parking Authority with the responsibility for monitoring the parking in Ridgefield. We asked for their evaluation and they came back with a decision. We should honor their decision and find another way to solve this situation.

The BOS was in agreement to have L. Scholl continue advertising and interviewing candidates for the position.

#### 5. Housing Authority Reappointment

Annemarie Roller came forward representing The Housing Authority. Cathy Potel sent an email requesting reappointment to the Ridgefield Housing Authority. She was completing someone else's term and that term is now up. R. Marconi indicated that as renewals are considered, we need to alternate lengths of terms because three members complete their terms 10/31/12.

Ms. Roller commented on the pending hiring of a management company. The contract is about ready to be signed. R. Marconi inquired about complaints about lack of communication with the residents. Has this improved? Are regular meetings being held with the residents? Ms. Roller said she felt that communication is improved but regular monthly meetings are not held on a specific date each month, and minutes are lacking. It is difficult to take minutes and participate in the discussion. R. Marconi suggested that someone be hired to take their minutes. They can also tape the meetings.

R. Marconi commented on another complaint that the management company has been allowed to come into the office and go through the files before the contract has been signed. This is a violation of privacy. The agreement with the management company has to be signed first and also a confidential agreement needs to be signed and in place before any files can be reviewed. Is there a secure location for files with personal information, Social Security numbers, etc? Files need to be locked and also in a locked room.

Town employees who work for The Housing Authority (4 full-time and others part-time) will become employees of the management company once the agreement takes place. Their health coverage will become effective after a 90-day waiting period. The Town of Ridgefield will cover this 90 day gap. Their pay scale and insurance coverage will remain the same. They do have to fill out an application form with the new management company. What about years of service? Ms. Roller thought that the maximum vacation allowed would be three weeks. One of the full-time employees currently has more vacation accrued than that. This needs to be worked out.

Andy Bodner asked if the cost of the management company is built into the rent? The answer is yes – the management company will be responsible for administration and operations.

R. Marconi stressed the need for more communication. B. Manners suggested regular bi-weekly meetings where residents can come and ask questions of the management company.

Coco Barron, a resident, asked for an increase in communication and wants to be sure that the new management company will do repairs.

**D. Masters moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to re-appoint Catherine M. Potel for an additional five-year term to the Housing Authority. Motion passed 5-0.**

6. Public Health Grant Resolution

An October 26, 2011 memo has been received from Edward Briggs, Director of Health, requesting BOS support for application of a Public Health Emergency Response Grant Resolution as follows: DPH Grant 2012-1152, which is a continuation of Public Health Emergency Preparedness grants from the CDC and managed through the Department of Public Health. This is a 3-year grant period with the first year's funding being \$32,830, from August 10, 2011 to August 9, 2012. This year the Department of Public Health has selected five (5) of the fifteen (15) CDC target capabilities that local health departments must address: Community preparedness; Community recovery; Medical countermeasures dispensing; Mass care; and Emergency public information and warning. These grants have been used in the past during the H1N1 outbreak and during tropical storm Irene. There is no cost to the town for this application.

**A. Bodner moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to pass a resolution approving 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 Public Health, for application for the DPH Grant 2012 – 1152, a continuation of Public Health Emergency Preparedness grant from the CDC and managed through the Department of Public Health, a 3-year grant period with the first year's funding being \$32,830, from August 10, 2011, to August 9, 2012. Motion passed 5-0.**

7. Electric Vehicle Grant Resolution

This is a grant for \$29,200 toward the purchase of an electric vehicle or could also be used to retrofit a diesel vehicle. The town is not obligated to use this grant once it is awarded, but this way it is available if the town wants to make use of it during the next budget cycle. R. Marconi stated that this vehicle must be good for the assessor's car.

**D. Masters moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to pass a resolution approving First Selectman, Rudy Marconi, to execute and deliver any and all documents on behalf of the Town of Ridgefield to the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation for a cash grant toward the purchase of alternative/clean fuel vehicle(s) and/or diesel retrofit**

**technologies pursuant to the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). Motion passed 5-0.**

8. Approval of Tax Refunds

**D. Masters moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to approve the tax refund applications as submitted by Tax Collector, Jane Berendsen-Hill, in her memo dated 10/21/11, for a total of \$5,458.59. Motion passed 5-0.**

9. Selectman's Report

- Discussion with Moody's Investors, Service, Inc. This discussion was relative to the lowering of Ridgefield's AAA rating this past summer to a "negative watch" as was the case with all the Fairfield County municipalities. Copies of the response prepared by R. Marconi, First Selectman; Maureen Kiernan, Town Treasurer; Al Garzi, Town Assessor; Kevin Redmond, Controller; and Janette Marcoux, Financial Advisor, FSC, was made available. The two main questions were relative to how many of our residents use New York City for their job source and how many rely on Federal government positions. Ridgefield is not a community which depends on Federal government employment, which should be a plus.

The report includes response to the MSA Questions – Do you believe that your current MSA (Bridgeport-Stamford MSA or New Haven) MSA is reflective of your local economy?; Employment by Industry for the Town of Ridgefield and the State of Connecticut; Health Care Exposure; Federal Procurement; Federal Employment; Financial Operations – Estimated Results Fiscal Year 2010-11; Adopted Budget Fiscal Year 2011-12; Boehringer Expansion; Undesignated Fund Balance as a Percent of Total Expenditures & Transfers Out for years 2005 to present; Outstanding Bonded Debt as of June 30 for years to 2002 to 6/30/11; and Miscellaneous Data regarding Population Increase, Per Capita Income, and Median Family Income.

Response to Ridgefield's submission should be available the week of November 14<sup>th</sup>.

- Golf course revenue is off due to all the bad weather this summer and fall – about \$40,000 off.
- L. Scholl has submitted the TR Paul Report – will be flat for this year. The report indicated that Ridgefield's Police and Fire will not be part of the plan. It should have said that they are not part of the plan because another plan was adopted as the result of negotiations.
- Met with Schlumberger on Tuesday. The BOS is still interested in moving forward as is the seller. The goal is to not delay remediation at all. Ridgefield needs a signed contract before any buildings are to be taken down.
- Some complaints have been received regarding the yellow phone books which were put in everyone's driveway. Will make the number available for those to call who want to "opt out" of the phone book delivery.
- Revenue meetings were held today with all departments:  
Parks & Rec – Revenue is off, but have lowered expenses accordingly and have not hired as planned  
Building Dept. – 3 Boehringer Ingelheim projects with revenue of about \$800,000.

Town Clerk's Office – October was a “dead” month – real estate has come to a screeching halt – normally, \$12-15M; now \$3.8M. One foreclosure this month which is better than previous months.

Want to look at areas where can cover the loss of revenue – what are the areas experiencing shortfall and how can we really “tighten up”.

Al Garzi reports increase in new equipment purchases, which is a good sign; 134 new businesses in Ridgefield, many of which may be residents who have been out of work and have started new businesses; expecting more income from Silver Spring Clubhouse with their new clubhouse and pool.

- Have not yet received FEMA dollars from last year's snowstorm. Was supposed to be paid by August. What about PIA (post incidence analysis) from Irene? Chief Burford will be invited in to discuss or possibly at the quarterly Fire Commission meeting on 11/9.
- EDC grant request for Branchville was denied. About \$10,000 was spent on this grant application. The municipalities that received the grants are on the Springfield/New Haven line.
- Board of Finance meeting on Friday, 10/28 at 8:00 a.m. Suggest BOS attend. D. Masters asked about the two week freeze period prior to an election – Is this a problem? R. Marconi will check with Town Counsel. A majority of the BOS are remaining, so perhaps this is not an issue.
- After the election will set up the BOS meeting schedule for 2012.
- A petition has been received from residents in the Rainbow Lake/Shadow Lake area regarding their roads. The residents want to show their concern. There is no proof as to who owns the roads. Crosshill and Crescent Drive are the only two roads with records available that they were made into public roads. The roads in this area were never brought up to code. There is record of a P&Z settlement in court where the roads were recognized for maintenance and service by the town, but it is questionable whether P&Z had the authority to do this. If we were to go to court now over this issue, the town could lose because there is a history of maintenance and service of the roads in this area. R. Marconi suggested having these roads qualify for the scenic road ordinance. The roads under consideration would then be allowed to stay in their natural state, but brought up to safety code without taking people's property to make the roads wider. This is a thought. We need to show a pattern here – what about the process for other private roads? We would need to do due diligence on each road.
- M. Kozlark requested that Peter Hill be asked to come to a BOS meeting to present an update on the roads – what is the town going to pave and what are we going to outsource, if at all? All our roads need to be categorized as to their needs and when what has been done to each road.

10. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 10/1/11 Special Mtg., 10/5/11 Regular Mtg., 10/6/11 Special Mtg.  
**D. Masters moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to approve as written the minutes of the October 1, 2011 Board of Selectmen Special Meeting. Motion passed 4-0. (B. Manners not present for the vote - left tonight's meeting early.)**

**A. Bodner moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to approve as written the minutes of the October 5, 2011 Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 4-0. (B. Manners not present for the vote – left tonight’s meeting early.)**

**A. Bodner moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve as written the minutes of the October 6, 2011 Board of Selectmen Special Meeting. Motion passed 4-0. (B. Manners not present for the vote – left tonight’s meeting early.)**

**Andy Bodner moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 9:40 p.m. Motion passed 4-0. (B. Manners not present for the vote – left tonight’s meeting early.)**

Respectfully submitted,  
Janet L. Johnson