

## **BOARD of SELECTMEN MEETING – NOVEMBER 17, 2010**

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, D. Masters

Absent: B. Manners

### **Agenda**

1. Board of Ethics Reappointment—Phil Baumann, Isabelle Ortonowski, Bart Van de Weghe
2. Small Business Saturday Proclamation
3. Approval of 2011 Board of Selectmen Meeting Calendar
4. Vacant Board Seat Replacement Process
5. Selectman's Report
6. Approval of Meeting Minutes (11/3/10)
7. Executive Session: Update on Proposed Land Acquisition

R. Marconi called the BOS meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. The Public Hearing was cancelled until a later date relative to the proposed Halpin Lane lease to the Ridgefield Volunteer Fire Department following the meeting last evening with the VFD. Changes were made to the lease and these changes need to be reviewed by the BOS prior to a Public Hearing.

**D. Masters moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to add to the evening's agenda as Item #8, the scheduling of a Public Hearing and Town Meeting for consideration of the proposed lease of Town of Ridgefield-owned property on Halpin Lane to the Ridgefield Volunteer Fire Department. Motion passed 3-0.**

**A. Bodner moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to change the previous motion regarding Agenda Item #8 to Agenda Item #6a prior to the Executive Session which is Agenda Item #7 – the scheduling of a Public Hearing and Town Meeting for consideration of the proposed lease of Town of Ridgefield-owner property on Halpin Lane to the Ridgefield Volunteer Fire Department. Motion passed 3-0.**

1. Board of Ethics Reappointment—Phil Baumann, Isabelle Ortonowski, Bart Van de Weghe  
Emails have been received from all four of these individuals expressing their interest in being reappointed to the Board of Ethics Commission.

Jan Rifkinson, New Rd., indicated that his statement is not meant to be a political comment, but he looked up the definition of the word "ethics", and he does not feel that Mr. Baumann's recent writing comparing Barak Obama to Adolph Hitler is at all appropriate for a member of the Board of Ethics. This article changed Mr. Rifkinson's confidence in Mr. Baumann. R. Marconi read the charge to the Board of Ethics Commission.

D. Masters stated that this is a freedom of speech issue. How does the Board of Ethics Commission determine an ethical breach? Do they have guidelines? What is their line of thought? R. Marconi responded that their deliberations are done behind a "closed door". We do not have much information as to their deliberation process. Mr. Rifkinson responded that issues that come before the Board of Ethics are matters of judgment, and that is his concern. Dom D'Addario, Tanton Hill Rd. stated how he also serves on the Board of Ethics, and he feels that Mr. Baumann only discusses the topic being

considered, and is very careful to follow the rules of the charter. A. Bodner indicated that he does support Mr. Baumann even though he does not always agree with Mr. Baumann's political statements. Mr. Baumann is a "sensible guy" and continues to contribute to the community.

John Katz, Old Ridgebury Rd., stated how he personally shares none of Phil Bumann's views, but feels Mr. Baumann is a man of integrity. He is in agreement with Dom D'Addario that Mr. Baumann would not bring extraneous views to his position on the Board of Ethics.

**A. Bodner moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to reappoint for an additional four-year term thru 12/31/14 to the Board of Ethics Commission: Phil Baumann, Isabelle Ortonowski, and Bart Van de Weghe. Motion passed 3-0.**

2. Small Business Saturday Proclamation

R. Marconi read the Proclamation to Recognize Saturday, November 27, 2010, as Small Business Saturday for residents to Shop Locally and support local organizations. This is the first annual Small Business Saturday in the Town of Ridgefield in recognition of how small businesses are a cornerstone of Ridgefield's local economy and how local merchants contribute to the vitality and health of the community through their personal interactions with residents and support of local organizations.

**D. Masters moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to proclaim Saturday, November 27, 2010 as Small Business Saturday (Shop Locally) in the Town of Ridgefield. Motion passed 3-0.**

3. Approval of 2011 Board of Selectmen Meeting Calendar

**D. Masters moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to approve the proposed 2011 Board of Selectmen Meeting Calendar as amended to read as follows:  
Board of Selectmen Meeting, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Large Conference Room,**

**January 5 and 19**

**February 2 and 9 (February 9 Budget Meeting also)**

**February 7, 8 and 10 budget meetings**

**March 9 and 23 (March 9 Budget Meeting also)**

**March 7, 8 and 10 and if necessary, March 12 (Saturday 9 a.m.) budget meetings**

**April 6 and 27**

**May 2 – Annual Town Meeting at Ridgefield Playhouse**

**May 4 and 18**

**June 1 and 15**

**July 6 and 20**

**August 3**

**September 7 and 21**

**October 5 and 26**

**November 16 and 30**

**December 14**

**Motion passed 3-0.**

**D. Masters moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to approve the proposed 2011 schedule for the Fire Commission Meetings, to be held quarterly at 6:30 p.m. at the Firehouse on the following dates:**

**January 12**

**April 13**

**July 13**

**November 9**  
**Motion passed 3-0.**

4. Vacant Board Seat Replacement Process

Joan Plock has resigned from the Board of Selectmen due to illness. R. Marconi indicated that he is sending a personal note to Ms. Flock as an expression of concern and thank you. He has asked D. Grogins, Town Counsel about the replacement process for Ms. Flock, and he has received a response from Cohen & Wolfe and a copy of the relevant charter info – Section 4-7 and Statutes 9-222. He has also received information from the Secretary of State and the Town Clerk. The Board of Selectmen is the appropriate authority to appoint a replacement. There are already three Democrats on the BOS, and minority representation cannot be violated. There will need to be an interview process established. The Republican Town Committee will be meeting on November 18, and they will be making a recommendation to the BOS. Two individuals have already come forward expressing their interest in the vacant position: Maureen Kozlark and Jan Rifkinson. The BOS oversaw a similar process six years when another BOS seat was vacated. At that time there was only one applicant – D. Masters.

D. d’Addario, Tanton Hill Rd., stated how this is an important position and the replacement process should be done “out in the open”. R. Marconi indicated that the person who fills the vacated seat should come from the same party as Ms. Flock, but an unaffiliated or independent candidate is welcome to come forward also. He is in agreement that the process should be an “open process” and the individuals should be interviewed as part of a Board of Selectmen Meeting in the Town Hall/Large Conference Room. He is suggesting December 1<sup>st</sup> as an interview date. The BOS has thirty days to fill the position or else another process is to take place. R. Marconi read the description of the process which has been passed on to Ridgefield’s Republican elected officials.

Andy Bodner asked if the BOS should set some criteria, such as minimum length of residency in Ridgefield, volunteer activities in the community, etc. R. Marconi responded that he will have Town Clerk Barbara Serfilippi check with the State about the possible setting of criteria. November 5<sup>th</sup> was the date of the letter of resignation received from Ms. Flock.

5. Selectman’s Report

- The Revenue Committee met this morning for an up-to-date report. Parks & Rec is \$75,000 behind in revenue year-to-date. They plan to reduce programs and have a new plan in place which will hopefully increase revenue. The reduction in programs will be reduced if there is a revenue increase. Al Garzi’s October report indicates about \$23-24 million in conveyance; 4 homes for about \$10 million total. Barbara Serfilippi indicates an increase in recording fees and no foreclosures for October. B. Reynolds indicates five new houses going up currently. He feels overall activity is up slightly and expects to meet budget thru December. He doesn’t know what is going to happen in the Spring. There is talk about Boehringer Ingelheim moving forward on a couple of their projects. Chief Burford has just recently met with BI. No forecast can be made, but the start-up of a BI project for this current fiscal year would be most welcome. J. Bernedsen-Hill reports all on target with tax revenue.

Andy Bodner asked if there is any sense of dollars to be received from the State? The answer is no. The governor-elect has not presented his budget.

If the ECS (Education Cost Sharing) dollars are not going to be forthcoming, then this issue needs to be addressed. R. Marconi stated that the campaign stated that the cuts would not be coming from the municipalities. Hopefully, that is true. A. Bodner indicated that the only way to lower the deficit is to reduce expenses or increase taxes. This will have to be done on the Town level or at the State level. Do we want to initiate a conversation with the Board of Education regarding this issue? What message do we want to give to the BOE and the BOF?

The same message should be given to both Boards. D. Masters stated that with no new stream of revenue coming and if we cannot count on the State, then we in Ridgefield have to stay on a very conservative track. A. Bodner expressed agreement with this approach. Do we make an alternative budget if need be? R. Marconi stated how if the State raises the sales tax and/or the income tax, this will impact our residents. We will need to see what we can creatively do in Ridgefield to help our residents.

John Katz, Old Ridgebury Rd., stated how he appreciates what is being said – zero budget increase except for what is contractually mandated. R. Marconi responded that he hopes to also do something for non-union employees as there were no increases last year. “Conservative” means a lot of different scenarios. The message is unless morally or otherwise mandated, zero budget increases. We will be looking at the “have to haves” and the not “would like to haves”. Capital expenses are going to be very lean. He has met with Kevin Redmond, Director of Finance, who is working on a skeleton ten-year forecast, which he hopes to have ready by November 29<sup>th</sup>. R. Marconi indicated that he has met with each department. The message is that not much change is expected for the next five years. The road out of this economic downturn will be very slow and gradual.

- Eureka vs. Ridgefield Planning & Zoning Commission – P&Z appealed to the CT Appeals Court. A Memorandum of Decision dated October 20, 2010, has been received from Judge Harry Cohn. R. Marconi referred to Judge Cohn’s statement on Page 12, “The protection of a source of public drinking water clearly outweighs the need for affordable housing.” R. Marconi stated that a septic system cannot be installed as the property would require access to the Ridgefield sewer system and not to the Danbury system. There would have to be an agreement with Danbury to use their sewer system, which is already spoken for. This could be another impediment. The issue will be coming back to the Planning & Zoning Commission.
- A letter of resignation has been received from David Menn of the Insurance & Risk Management Commission.
- A. Bodner attended the Board of Education meeting to hear the report from Johnson Controls to the Energy Sub-Committee – their energy assessment of Ridgefield’s school and municipal buildings. A. Bodner felt that Johnson Controls did a thorough job. Their cost-saving suggestions include turning down the heat at night and on the weekends, more efficient lighting, and installation of new technology. An investment of about \$10 million will result in \$1 million in savings. A five-year payback is worth doing, but a ten-year payback needs to be researched carefully. One idea is to tap into existing boilers for a hydro hot water system instead of radiant heat. Perhaps we should have invested in the natural gas line. The BOE has a six-month power contract. Energy prices are down with the reduction in demand. We are also entering a period of declined school enrollment. The energy profile will change if schools are closed. All these variables have to be factored into any decision.  
D. Masters asked if a list can be developed for each location – what can be done at each school and make someone responsible for energy savings at each facility. John Katz, Old Ridgebury Rd. again expressed his request to have the lights turned off at the high school, parking lots and playing fields. The lights are on regardless of the weather and no one is around.

R. Marconi stressed the need for insulation in the ceilings. We should not be paying consultants to do what we can do ourselves. According to Paul Hendrickson, two out of the three Barlow boilers are down. These boilers are not going to make it thru this year.

- Recent meeting was held with four Fire Departments and their CFO's – Wilton, Westport, New Canaan, and Ridgefield regarding regionalization of fire dispatching. This would save Ridgefield about \$120,000/year. Ridgefield and Westport would realize the greatest savings. The central dispatch would be located in Westport as they have the ability to handle the regionalization with the least financial investment. R. Marconi has spoken with Chief Roche about a central dispatch for the Police Departments as well, but they are reluctant. They do not want to have our Police headquarters "go dark" at night. With a central dispatch system, there would be no reason to have an officer at headquarters all night. Those in other towns are not familiar with our roads, plus having coverage at the police station all night offers local security.

6. Approval of Meeting Minutes (11/3/10)

**A. Bodner moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approved as written the minutes of the November 3, 2010, Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 3-0.**

6a. Set Public Hearing & Town Meeting dates – Proposed Halpin Lane Lease

**A. Bodner moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to set a Public Hearing for December 2, 2010, and a Town Meeting for January 5, 2011, 7:30 P.M., Town Hall Large Conference Room, 400 Main Street, Ridgefield, CT., for consideration of the proposed lease of Town of Ridgefield-owned property on Halpin Lane to the Ridgefield Volunteer Fire Department. Motion passed 3-0.**

7. Executive Session: Update on Proposed Land Acquisition

**D. Masters moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to recess the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 9:10 p.m. and go into Executive Session to discuss an update on proposed land acquisition with no vote expected. Motion passed 3-0.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Janet L. Johnson