

## **BOARD of SELECTMEN MEETING – NOVEMBER 30, 2011**

TOWN HALL/LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM – 7:30 P.M.

### 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, D. Masters

Absent: B. Manners

#### ***Agenda (Immediately following Special Town Meeting)***

1. Public Comment
2. Commission on Aging Interview: Lizabeth A. Doty
3. Police & Fire Second in Command Employment Contracts
4. Tree Committee Reappointments David Andry, William Molyneaux
5. Reappointments of Board of Selectmen Committees, Constables
6. Schlumberger Update
7. Approval of Tax Refunds
8. Selectman's Report
9. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 11/9/11 Special Mtg., 11/16/11 Regular Mtg.

R. Marconi called the BOS meeting to order immediately following the Special Town Meeting. Minutes of the Special Town Meeting are under separate cover.

**M. Kozlark moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to add to the evening's agenda immediately after #1 Public Comment, discussion of the proposal to purchase 25.8 acres on Old Stagecoach for the purpose of Open Space. Motion passed 4-0.**

1. Public Comment – There were no comments from the public.
- 2a. Discussion of the Proposal to Purchase 25.8 acres on Old Stagecoach for Open Space  
Dr. Ben Oko, Chairman of the Conservation Commission, came forward to discuss the next steps in the proposed purchase of the 25.8 acres on Old Stagecoach for Open Space, since there was no vote at the Town Meeting held earlier this evening. A contract is needed before there can be a vote. Dr. Oko now hopes that the contract will be ready next week and a Town Meeting can be held on December 14, the date of the next BOS Meeting. A. Bodner expressed concern that the meeting with The Wilton Bank scheduled for Friday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, may not for sure result in a contract. R. Marconi expressed concern about setting a town meeting until the contract document is ready for review by the BOS. D. Masters stated that the hold-up is the necessary deed restriction requested from The Wilton Bank that a cell tower will not be built on the adjoining bank-owned property to the proposed open space.

Dr. Oko stated that the Conservation Commission is within \$20,000 of the total price of the proposed open space property. The Commission would like to ask the Town of Ridgefield for a contingency of \$20,000 to \$25,000 that they will pay back to the town. The neighbors to the proposed open space have pledged to contribute \$40,000, but if the bank is not agreeable to the deed restriction, some of these neighbors may well withdraw their contribution. This would change the contingency amount the Commission would need from the Town of Ridgefield. The Board of Finance would also have to approve any special appropriation and a special BOF meeting would have to be scheduled to make this happen.

M. Kozlark stated that there are too many variables at this time for the BOS to set a Special Town Meeting date. Dr. Oko stated how the goal is to get closure on this purchase prior to the end of 2011. R. Marconi stated that he would be willing to call a Special Town Meeting for noon on December 6 for the BOS to set a Town Meeting if the contract is ready. There needs to be a five-day notice for a Town Meeting. Notice of a Town Meeting would need to be to the press by December 8<sup>th</sup>.

John Katz, Old Ridgebury Rd., asked if the Conservation Commission could secure a bridge loan for \$40,000 and not go thru the BOF for a special appropriation? R. Marconi stated that the Conservation Commission is a town Commission and they cannot make a financial commitment on their own.

2. Commission on Aging Interview: Lizabeth A. Doty

Liz Doty came forward to express her interest in serving on the Commission on Aging. Christine Robertson, Chairman of the Commission on Aging, was present to support Ms. Doty's candidacy. There are currently two vacancies on the Commission. R. Marconi read the letter received from Ms. Doty. She has been a Ridgefield resident since 2002 and both her mother and brother also live in town. She has been Coordinator for Senior Activities for the Town of Wilton since 2002. Previously, Ms. Doty was a high school teacher and principal and currently teaches adult education in Ridgefield's Continuing Education program.

**D. Masters moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to appoint Lizabeth A. Doty to fill a vacancy on the Commission on Aging for a 3 year term. Motion passed 4-0.**

3. Police & Fire Second in Command Employment Contracts

The following individuals came forward to discuss this issue: Fire Chief Heather Burford, Police Chief John Roche, Carl Lecher representing the Police Commission, and Laurie Scholl, Director of Human Resources for the Town of Ridgefield.

R. Marconi indicated that this item is on the evening's agenda because the two Assistant Chiefs, Police and Fire, are currently non-union, non-contract positions. Both the Chief of Police and the Fire Chief are under contract. L. Scholl reviewed the advantages for these positions Assistant Chief positions to be changed to union contract positions. She checked with the 169 CT municipalities. 38 responded and most of them do not have these positions as contract union positions. Many of those without contracts do have special terms and benefits. Making these positions under contract and union positions would be an enticement for individuals to take the position and stay on staff. Currently if an individual takes this position, they lose the job security that they had previously. John Roche explained that he made the choice himself to take the Asst. Chief position even though it was non-contract and non-union because he hoped it would help him career-wise, which it did. But he did realize that he was losing benefits and security by doing so.

L. Scholl stated that she recommends contracts for both positions. A contract details the terms if an individual wishes to leave the position. This gives the town the time to plan accordingly. The major who just left gave two weeks notice and one week of the two was for vacation time. This gave the town very short notice. A union contract would help in recruiting efforts. R. Marconi indicated that he supports a union contract for these Assistant Chief positions. The dollar amounts of the contracts would still be negotiable.

It was agreed that this issue would be discussed again at the next BOS meeting on December 14. L. Scholl will provide sample contract copies for the Board's review.

4. Tree Committee Reappointments: David Andry, William Molyneux

R. Marconi indicated that both David Andry and William Molyneux have emailed requests for reappointment.

**A. Bodner moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to reappoint David Andry and William Molyneux for an additional three-year term to the Tree Committee, effective 12/01/11. Motion passed 4-0.**

5. Reappointments of Board of Selectmen Committees, Constables

All the committees and constables have responded and wish to be reappointed, except for the Ridgefield Design Council. R. Marconi read the October 19, 2011 memo received from Edith Meffley and Roger Guilfoyle of the Design Council, stating that without a “sharply focused agenda of substantive issues to explore”, the RDC has refrained from inviting people to join. They currently have 3 vacancies. What does the BOS see as the continued role for the RDC? It was agreed to invite the Ridgefield Design Council to attend the next BOS meeting and discuss their role in the community.

**Andy Bodner moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve the reappointments of the following Board of Selectmen Committees: Affordable Housing Committee, Architectural Advisory Committee, Cable TV Advisory Council, Commission on the Disabled, Golf Committee, Graveyard Restoration Committee, Insurance & Risk Management Committee, Ridgefield Arts Council, Ridgefield Prevention Council, Parking Authority, and the Constables. The reappointment of the Design Council is pending on meeting with them first. Motion passed 4-0.**

6. Schlumberger Update

Public tours of the property were held on 11/26 at 10:00 and 2:00. Approximately 80+ participated in each tour. Two additional tours for the public will be held on December 3, again at 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

John Katz, Old Ridgebury Rd., asked for an update on the environmental clean-up situation. R. Marconi responded that there is currently in effect a non-disclosure agreement with Schlumberger, and thus he cannot discuss this subject. Not a lot has changed. Our consultant has come up with some questions – not additional issues, but more on the clean-up process and the timeline of the application to the DEP. We want to “tighten up” the DEP process.

Dom D’Addario, Tanton Hill Rd., asked how much area is contaminated by beryllium? R. Marconi responded that the contaminated area is about 200 ft. x 300 ft., along the edge of the parking lot on the east side. How deep? Soil remediation will need to be about 2 to 3 ft. deep; there is not a problem with the water table.

7. Approval of Tax Refunds

**D. Masters moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to approve as requested in the November 23, 2011 memorandum from Jane Berendsen-Hill, Tax Collector, refunds totaling \$3,480.70. Motion passed 4-0.**

8. Selectman’s Report

- A revenue meeting was held today. The building fees from Boehringer Ingelheim for this year total \$571,000, which were not forecasted. The hope was to put this revenue in fund balance, but now there are expenses from Hurricane Irene and Storm Alfred.

Reimbursement may result in a shortfall of \$125,000 to \$150,000. The Golf Course is going to be short in revenue this year – expecting about a \$120,000 shortfall due to weather conditions. The \$571,000 from BI will disappear quickly. We are now beginning to look at how to control expenses.

John Katz, Old Ridgebury Rd., stated that he had heard that the FEMA dollars had finally arrived from last winter's storm. R. Marconi indicated that we expect to receive about \$350,000 for these last two 2011 storms. We are allowed to claim 75% of the clean-up costs. We decided to not hire crews available from the State because they were so much more costly than using our own people.

Conveyance sales totaled about \$5 million for October and are expected to be about \$12 million for November. Per the budget, we need to do \$20 million in sales/month. If this very low level of sales continues for 5-6 months, there is a potential shortfall in this area also.

Tax collections are coming in on schedule. A Bodner asked if we are getting close to establishing a hiring freeze? R. Marconi responded that yes, but we will wait until December, although he does not foresee any changes in the revenue stream. We need to adjust now to market conditions – curtail travel, unnecessary expenses, training credit costs, etc.

Tri-Board meeting (BOS, BOE and BOF) is scheduled for Monday evening, 7:30 p.m., December 5, in BOE office, Town Hall Annex.

- On December 6, 2011, the Town of Ridgefield will decide at referendum whether to purchase the 45-acre Schlumberger property on Old Quarry Road.

9. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 11/9/11 Special Mtg., 11/16/11 Regular Mtg.

**M. Kozlark moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve as written the minutes of the November 9, 2011, Board of Selectmen Special Meeting. Motion passed 4-0.**

**A. Bodner moved and M. Kozlark seconded a motion to approve as written the minutes of the November 16, 2011 Public Hearing and Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 4-0.**

**D. Masters moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 9:25 p.m. Motion passed 4-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Janet L. Johnson