

BOARD of SELECTMEN MEETING – JANUARY 6, 2010

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, B. Manners, D. Masters, J. Plock

Agenda

1. Youth Commission Interview: Scott, Sam Nuechterlein
2. Housing Authority Interviews: Ed DeVito, Cathy Potel
3. Commission for the Disabled Interview: Jim Heus
4. Charter Revision Commission Presentation
5. Approval of Assistant Treasurer
6. Traffic Control Ordinance Review
7. Approval of Deer Hunt at Ridgefield Golf Course
8. Code of Ordinances – set Public Hearing & Special Town Meeting Dates
9. Selectman's Report
10. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 10/7/09, 11/4/09 Regular & Special Meeting, 11/16/09

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

1. Youth Commission Interview: Scott, Sam Nuechterlein

Scott Nuechterlein came forward to express his interest in serving on the Youth Commission. Daughter Samantha was not able to be present as she is co-captain of the Ski Team and they were practicing this evening. R. Marconi reviewed both Samantha's and Scott's CV's. Both Sam and Scott have been attending the Youth Commission meetings for the past year and both are active in Ridgefield activities. D. Masters asked Scott what he would like to accomplish as a member of the Youth Commission. He responded that the Youth Commission needs to be more proactive. Ridgefield youth need to feel like they are members of the Ridgefield community and are responsible for their town. There are 1800 youth in Ridgefield High School. Sam is a senior this year and has just been accepted to the University of Denver. Scott indicated that he would like to stay on as a Youth Commission member even after Sam graduates. B. Manners and J. Plock expressed a thank you to Scott for his involvement with the youth of Ridgefield.

B. Manners moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to appoint both Scott Nuechterlein to fill the adult vacancy on the Youth Commission for a two-year term and daughter Samantha Nuechterlein to fill one of the youth vacancies. Motion passed 5-0.

2. Housing Authority Interviews: Ed DeVito, Cathy Potel

Ed DeVito came forward to express his interest in serving on the Housing Authority. R. Marconi read the email received from Mr. DeVito and a detailed resume. His career is in residential and commercial real estate finance. Mr. DeVito indicated that he is fluent in the vocabulary of affordable housing and has parents who are in their 80's living in Fox Hill. He has three children in the Ridgefield schools. He has been looking for a venue that suits his background where he can contribute to the town. B. Manners indicated that there are a number of committees for which he

would be suited. Mr. DeVito stated that he has met with Anna Marie Roller of the Ridgefield Housing Authority and has walked around the various housing projects with her. D. Masters asked Mr. DeVito if he had delved into the finances of the projects? Mr. DeVito responded that he realizes that times are tight and it is a balancing act with a combination of tax credits and financing. He has attended one meeting of the Housing Authority. There is one opening on the Housing Authority at the current time.

Cathy Potel came forward to express her interest in serving on the Housing Authority. R. Marconi read the letter received from Ms. Potel and her resume detailing her many years working in healthcare in New York, most recently as Weekend Administrator and Director of Housekeeping for Beth Abraham Hospital in the Bronx. She has also worked in the capacity of Administrator at a senior housing complex in Wilton, a HUD Housing facility. She is now fully retired and would have the time to devote to the Housing Authority. She also toured the projects with Anna Marie Roller and attended the last meeting of the Board. She is most familiar with Ballard Green. A. Bodner asked about any ideas she might have regarding senior housing? B. Manners stated how she was impressed with Ms. Potel's background and is familiar with Beth Abraham Hospital, a wonderful facility, and indicated that Ms. Potel would be a wonderful addition to the Housing Authority. D. Masters asked Ms. Potel if she had any particular area that she would like to work on? Ms. Potel responded that she feels she needs more information and would need to assess the current situation regarding the housing projects first.

J. Plock indicated a desire to not make a decision on the one vacancy at this evening's meeting.

3. Commission for Disabled Interview: Jim Heus

Jim Heus came forward to express his interest in serving on the Commission of the Disabled. Mr. Heus is well known in Ridgefield as he is the Headmaster at Ridgefield Academy. R. Marconi read the letter received from Mr. Heus indicating his desire to work with the Commission on the Disabled. He has been a Ridgefield resident for ten years and has a 20 year-old daughter disabled with Spina Bifida and is currently confined to a wheelchair. As Mr. Heus stated in his letter, he has a genuine interest in the welfare of all who are disabled and a desire for the town to be as accommodating as possible. He feels the town has done much in this regard and he would like to be part of future initiatives for the disabled.

J. Plock moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to appoint James Heus to fill the vacancy on the Commission on the Disabled for a four-year term. Motion passed 5-0.

4. Charter Revision Commission Presentation

The following members of the Charter Revision Commission came forward to present their initial report to the BOS: John McNicholas, Andrew Kelemen, Sharon Hyde, Lisa Carroll, and Andrew Berger.

John McNicholas indicated how the Charter Revision Commission members have been excited about the work they have been doing and have had some interesting discussions. He is pleased with how the Commission is working together and functioning as a group. Ed Tyrrell was very helpful during the first few meetings getting the Commission off to a good start.

The latest copy of the revised charter was distributed to the BOS earlier today. This is a quarterly report. Sharon Hyde reviewed various topics whereby the wording is to be changed:

Section 10-3: Delete a Town Meeting - Town Meetings are called by the Board of Finance. Instead the wording should read, "The budget shall go to referendum". "The annual capital and operating budgets shall be brought to a Town Meeting for discussion." They added a new paragraph but did not delete the previous wording.

Section 7-3: Regarding the power of the BOS, Frank D'Ercole, Bond Counsel, brought this up regarding incurring indebtedness. The BOS does not have the power to do this. Delete the wording, "to incur indebtedness of the Town".

Andy Bodner indicated that the process is to go to a referendum. A Town Meeting gives the Board of Selectmen the power to follow thru administratively—we aren't actually incurring the indebtedness. The Commission will look again at this section. The intent is not to take any powers the BOS may need.

Section 3-10: Issuance of bonds – A Town Meeting is to be held to vote on a resolution to issue bonds. The BOS and BOF should not be involved in the issuance of bonds. R. Marconi indicated that the BOS and BOF solicit opinion. The BOF should have a say in everything that is going on. They will take our comments back to bond counsel.

Section 10-4: Regarding additional appropriations, a Town Meeting may not make special appropriations without Board of Finance approval.

Section 4-16: No #16 – need to renumber. Several Selectmen have suggested a Fire Commission other than the Board of Selectmen as another option. What about the idea of one Commission, a Public Safety Commission that includes both the Fire and the Police, perhaps called an Emergency Services Commission? This is an idea worth exploring. B. Manners pointed out the need to balance the needs of the entire town. A. Bodner indicated that we do not need to look at elected and appointed officials separately. We need to look at the role of the Police Commission as something besides budgets. Let's see what the Charter Commission can come up with. R. Marconi stated that we need to look with a "long view" at the roles of both the Police Commission and Fire Commission. We need to structure a model that grows with the growth of the Town. A. Bodner challenges the Commission to look carefully at the entire safety issue. Dollars are spent on radios, emergency equipment, etc., etc. We need to look at consolidation.

The Charter Commission has reviewed the charters of surrounding towns to see what Ridgefield is lacking and if some changes need to be made.

Attendance at Charter Commission meetings has been good—always more than a quorum. The Commission will report back to the BOS again in March or April.

5. Approval of Assistant Treasurer

J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to appoint Linda Hannah as Assistant Treasurer for the Town of Ridgefield for a one-year term from November 2009 thru November 2010. Motion passed 4-1. D. Masters opposed.

6. Traffic Control Ordinance Review

Police Chief John Roche came forward to discuss the proposed ordinance titled, "Public Safeguards and Traffic Control during Construction with Public Rights-of-way". BOS members stated that the latest version of this proposed ordinance is not in agreement with the previous

discussion. This ordinance is to pertain only to major roads. How does one define “major roads”? - State highways and those with heavy traffic; not feeder roads. R. Marconi stated that the BOS does not want a Police monopoly providing traffic control at construction sites and a resultant increase in construction costs passed on to the taxpayers. A. Bodner inquired as to the public safety accident history with flag personnel? Chief Roche responded that motorists do slow down when there is a police car present with their lights flashing. He commented on the many distractions motorists face – cell phone calls, texting, pedestrians walking on the roads, dogs, etc. The nature of traffic control has changed with a necessary need for work zone safety. Rear-end collisions are on the rise. A. Bodner indicated the need to solve this situation with an ordinance that “works”. D. Manners stated how the cost of public safety is a balancing act – we do not want to pay for a policeman at every corner! J. Plock commented on the need to differentiate between road work and work on someone’s property.

It was suggested that Item # (e) would be changed to read as follows:

In the event the work is on behalf of a resident of a single family dwelling located on a town road (as determined by the First Selectman), and the cost shall prove to be a financial hardship, The Chief or Police or his or her designee shall authorize the use of trained flag persons.

7. Approval of Deer Hunt at Ridgefield Golf Course

Tom Belote, Chairman of the Deer Management Committee, Golf Course Superintendent Tony Steger, and Police Chief John Roche came forward to discuss the proposed extension of the town’s controlled bow hunt to include the Ridgefield Golf Course for the remainder of the month of January 2010. There continues to be an overpopulation of deer on the golf course. The deer are a destructive force on the greens plus the tick problem and resultant Lyme Disease. This same parcel of the golf course was open to bow hunting last year, but was not part of the original approval for this year’s hunt.

B. Manners inquired about the Lynchbrook area. She not only objects to hunting but the Lynchbrook area is so close to homes. We continue to add more and more properties not open to the public because of the hunting. She suggested closing the Lynchbrook area to hunting if the golf course is added to the parcels available for the hunt. Mr. Belote pointed out that the Deer Management Committee does not have control over hunters allowed on private property. Are there children sledding and cross-country skiing on the golf course? Tony Steger responded that there are occasionally children out on the golf course in the winter, but there are signs designating hunting times posted everywhere. B. Manners asked who is responsible for representing the interests of the children? Has anyone actually reviewed the situation – swing sets in yards nearby; children out walking, etc.? R. Marconi responded that safety has been and continues to be a concern. The signage has been put up and it does “stand out”. The huntmaster is the responsible individual overseeing the controlled hunt times at the designated locations. B. Manners asked if signs are effective deterrents for children? Tony Steger responded that the hunt is in the thick of the woods and the swamp areas – not areas of the golf course where the children would be sledding.

John Katz, Ridgebury Rd, asked about the possibility of creating good will and positive PR by no longer hunting in the Lynchbrook area in return for expansion of the hunt to the Golf Course for the next three weeks. The citizens of the town would appreciate this cooperative spirit. The Deer Committee feels this might create a new problem whereby other neighborhoods would come forward and begin trading properties designated for hunting. Mr. Belote indicated that the Committee will review all the properties and look carefully at the hunt results from this year and

past years as well. If the State approves, the Committee may be shifting some of the hunt dates from the fall to late winter instead.

A Lynchbrook area resident indicated that there are five residents who have expressed opposition to hunting in the Lynchbrook area. There are 18 children in 7 homes on Lynchbrook. The hunt has created a hardship with regard to safety for the children out in their yards. Mr. Belote indicated that this is something the Committee will carefully review.

J. Plock commented on the problem with private hunters being hired and no one reviewing their credentials. Chief Roche responded that the police investigate any complaints and follow thru on any poachers.

Andy Bodner moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve the proposed expansion of the Controlled Bow Hunt as supervised by the Deer Management Committee to the Ridgefield Municipal Golf Course for the remaining three weeks in January thru January 31, 2010. Motion passed 4-1. B. Manners opposed.

8. Code of Ordinances – Set Public Hearing & Special Town Meeting Dates

A copy of the Revised Draft of the Code of the Town of Ridgefield, along with the proposed Code Adoption Ordinance has been received by the Board of Selectmen for their review. This is a subject that needs to be focused upon; it is a big project to review all the ordinances

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to set a Public Hearing for February 3, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Large Conference Room, 400 Main St., Ridgefield, CT, to review the Code of Ordinances. Motion passed 5-0.

9. Selectman's Report

R. Marconi indicated that he has spoken again with Debbie Low, Superintendent of Schools, about the Board of Education's plans for the school space currently being used by Children's Corner. Ms. Low indicated that she is scheduled to present her ideas about the Ridgefield schools to the Board of Education at their meeting on January 11. R. Marconi has conversed with the tenant and they are waiting for a decision from the Town. D. Masters proposed a draft of a possible lease available for the February 3 meeting for the BOS to review and discuss as a starting point. The tenant (Children's Corner) does not want a short-term lease because of their desire to do some capital investments in the space. The BOS can review the Children's Corner "wish list" at their February 3rd meeting. The terms of the lease need to include the rental price, the length of the lease, the cost of utilities (What would be the cost for installation of a separate meter for the Children's Corner space?), etc. R. Marconi will begin the discussion of these issues. It has been determined that the Town of Ridgefield is receiving a fair price for this footage. If Children's Corner decides to not continue to lease the space, the Town will need to advertise the space for a new renter.

10. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 10/7/09, 11/4/09 Regular & Special Meeting, 11/16/09

J. Plock moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to approve as written the minutes of the October 7, 2009, Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the November 4, 2009, 6:00 p.m., Board of Selectmen Special Meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the November 4, 2009, 7:30 p.m. Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to postpone until a later date the approval of the minutes of the November 16, 2009, Special Meeting of the Board of Education, Board of Finance and Board of Selectmen. Motion passed 5-0.

J. Plock moved and D. Manners seconded a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 9:50 p.m. Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet L. Johnson