

BOARD of SELECTMEN MEETING – JANUARY 27, 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 Interviews: Eleanor Coleman, Tom Bruno
2. Presentation of Comprehensive Annual Financial Report – Kevin Redmond, Vanessa Rossitto
3. Oil Purchase Approval; Set Special Town Meeting Date (Contingent Upon Board of Finance Approval)
4. Economic Development Commission Presentation
5. Insurance Risk Management Committee Recommendation
6. Traffic Control Ordinance
7. Request for Extension of Employment from Police Officer Maxine Rizzo
8. Ridgefield Housing Authority Appointments
9. Emergency Operations Center Grant Resolution
10. Commission Reappointments
11. Approval of Tax Refunds
12. Selectman's Report
13. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 11/18/09, 12/14/09, 12/21/09, 1/6/10

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

1. Youth Commission Interviews: Eleanor Coleman, Tom Bruno

Tom Bruno and Eleanor Coleman came forward to introduce themselves to the BOS and express their interest in serving on the Youth Commission. R. Marconi read the letter received from Tom and the email received from Eleanor. They are both very active youths in the community. B. Manners asked if they had any particular goals for the Youth Commission? Tom responded that The Barn is always in need of additional funds and he is interested in working on fund raisers.

John Katz, Ridgebury Rd., commented on how he has been a member of the Youth Commission for the past 36 years and the Commission needs a minimum of 25% youth membership. Tom and Eleanor are the types of youth that the Commission needs.

D. Masters moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to appoint both William Thomas (Tom) Bruno and Eleanor Coleman as Youth members of the Youth Commission. Motion passed 5-0.

D. Masters moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to reappoint John Lionetti and Connie Johnson for an additional two-year term on the Youth Commission. Motion passed 5-0.

2. Presentation of Comprehensive Annual Financial Report – Kevin Redmond, Vanessa Rossitto

The audit of the financial statements of the Town of Ridgefield for the fiscal year which ended June 20, 2009, has been received from Blum, Shapiro & Company, PC, and includes a

communication dated December 20, 2009. This communication covers “Accounting Matters”, including “Capital Projects Funds, Documentation of Review, and Recommendations” for the Finance Department and the Board of Education.

Vanessa Rossitto reviewed the highlights of the audit report and commented on how everything was presented correctly. Page 3-12 presents a management discussion analysis summarizing what transpired in Ridgefield in the last fiscal year. Page 13 and 14 present the full accrual budget statements. Page 15 outlines the financial statements for the major funds, with other funds aggregated together. The General Fund balance totals \$9.5 million with \$7.8 million unresolved, 6.3% of general revenues. Ridgefield is in “good financial health”. A percent between 5-10% is good. Page 17 indicates the changes in funds from year to year because of capital outlay. Page 19 indicates the budget to actual for the general fund. Actual revenues were \$1.5 million less than budgeted, and expenditures were \$2.3 less than budgeted. Page 57 details the expenditures line items. The Board of Education’s budget was \$75.2 million and they actually spent \$74 million. They forwarded \$500,000 into the 2010-2011 fiscal year balance. The totals ended up less than budgeted because expenditures and finances were controlled very carefully. The goal is to work on holding constant our fund balance as we want to keep our AAA rating.

Page 20-22 details the internal service funds of the town. Page 23 details the fiduciary funds with a pension trust of \$45 million and agency funds totaling \$2 million (which is really a pass-thru for various agencies – Page 68 lists the different funds that make up this category.) Page 24 shows the change in the pension trust funds with a decrease of \$8 million.

Vanessa commented on the need to review Page 50 detailing the OPED obligation. The new standard requires all municipalities to measure liabilities for benefits for future employees and current retiree amortized over ten years. We have a liability of \$336,000. Our entire liability is about \$17 million un-amortized, which is about the same as other municipalities. 2010 reporting will see a new column detailing assets to pay for these benefits. We do not have to fund the liability but have to measure it. These are important numbers which are considered by rating agencies.

D. Masters expressed a desire for Vanessa to assist with the budget process. Ms. Masters believes it is important to “walk thru” the list of special revenue funds, as she did not realize there were so many funds involved in this category.

Andy Bodner expressed the desire to separate our Parks & Recreation and look at this department in a special way this year. We currently show expenses without listing the revenues. Showing net numbers would result in a more realistic presentation.

R. Marconi and the Board members expressed a thank you to Kevin Redmond and Vanessa Rossitto.

3. Oil Purchase Approval; Set Special Town Meeting Date (Contingent Upon Board of Finance Approval)

The purpose of the oil purchase is to pre-buy for the following fiscal year, 2010 to 2011, as the Town did previously for fiscal year 2009-2010. The Town is locked in this year at \$2.24/gallon and the Board of Education is paying \$2.19/gallon. John Katz inquired as to why the Town price is higher than that for the BOE? It is because the BOE receives larger deliveries at a time, more than the municipal tanks are able to hold. A. Bodner stated that a fair price is usually the commodity price plus 20 cents/gallon.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to set a Town Meeting for February 3, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Large Conference Room, to approve the proposed pre-purchase of heating oil/diesel, and gasoline pending prior approval by the Board of Finance, for fiscal year July 2010 thru June 2011, in the amount of up to 1,405,600 gallons consisting of heating oil at \$2.40/gallon for 360,000 gallons, diesel at \$2.44/gallon for 160,000 gallons and gasoline at \$2.62/gallon for 60,000 gallons. Motion passed 5-0.

D. Masters moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to move up on the evening's agenda discussion of the budgetary meeting calendar. Motion passed 5-0.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to schedule special budget discussion meetings on February 24, 25 and 26, 2010, starting at 3:00 in the afternoon to approximately 5:30 p.m. at the Ridgefield Community Center. Motion passed 5-0.

Additional budget discussions, as previously scheduled, will be held on March 2, 3, and 4, with non-binding recommendations to the Board of Education.

4. Economic Development Commission Presentation

The following members of the Economic Development Commission came forward to present their annual report to the BOS: Bob Knight, Chairman, Chris Fisher, and Magda Fincham. They presented their Economic Development Action Plan (EDAP), which was adopted by the Commission on January 11, 2010. This report is to serve as the Commission's annual report to the BOS for 2009. As the cover letter stated, "the adopted EDAP represents the culmination of a year-long process of appointing a seven-member Economic Development Commission, hiring an economic development consultant, conducting interviews of the local and regional business community, identifying market conditions and assessing Ridgefield's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats pertaining to business development and job creation."

Mr. Knight reviewed the initiatives outlines in the EDAP, each with Major Action Steps and Schedule:

- #1: Investment Attraction and Retention
- #2: Route 7 Developability Study
- #3: Retail Leakage Study
- #4: Downtown Development Blueprint
- #5: Development Process Review
- #6: Incubator With or Without Walls

D. Masters commented on how the Branchville Study was completed and the residents in that area were very involved. The residents were very vocal and many of them have lived in that area for a long time. Their interests need to be respected. Grants are available thru "TOD" – Transit Oriented Development.

R. Marconi commented on this very involved report and expressed the thank you from the Board of Selectmen. A. Bodner indicated that his vision for the Economic Development Commission is to enhance Ridgefield's Grand List. We need to get the "biggest bang for the buck". We need to look at what is best to do to enhance growth. Some of these initiatives will not bring in very much income. Mr. Knight responded that the Commission has not just been working on the report, but has also been working with some current businesses. They have been working closely with Weir

Farm on their plans for a Visitor Center. A. Bodner pointed out that it is great to work with Weir Farm and support their growth, but they are not a tax-producer for the Town.

5. Insurance Risk Management Committee Recommendation

William Jaeger, Chairman of the Insurance and Risk Management Committee and Laurie Scholl, Director of Human Resources, came forward to discuss the Committee's recommendation to the BOS that HD Segur be selected as agent of record for property and casualty and worker's compensation insurance for the Town of Ridgefield. R. Marconi read the January 12, 2010 letter received from Mr. Jaeger discussing the Committee's reasons for this recommendation. Segur's annual fee will be \$37,500 which the Committee feels is a competitive number. The charge for previous years has been \$35,000. This new cost was the result of bids submitted. R. Marconi indicated that he wanted to bring up the issue that A.J. Carnall is a local firm even though their bid is \$40,000/year. We have been promoting support for local businesses and retailers and A.J. Carnall continues to be most generous with their donations to the community. Mr. Marconi feels this should be taken into consideration. Their annual donations to the town total far more than the \$2,500 which is the difference in the bids. This is a legitimate issue to consider. D. Masters asked if a decision is needed immediately and the answer is no. B. Manners indicated that the Town switched to Segur several years ago for specific issues and Segur has done a good job for the Town. R. Marconi pointed out that given the economy, we need to give every opportunity to businesses in our town. He feels that A.J. Carnall deserves a "second look". Jeff Welch, an 18 year resident, is the SVP of Fairfield Bank. A. J. Carnall has all new senior management with thirty employees across from Town Hall. It was agreed that Mr. Jaeger will ask the Insurance and Risk Management Committee to review again A.J. Carnall's bid.

Andy Bodner asked if we are looking again at health insurance costs? The Board of Education is currently running dual programs. The projected savings are on an annualized basis. HSA makes a lot of economic sense, but a "change is scary". Success will depend on how we structure it.

6. Traffic Control Ordinance

Police Chief Roche, Laurie Scholl, Director of Human Resources, and David Grogins, Town Counsel, came forward to discuss the proposed Traffic Control Ordinance.

The ordinance has been modeled after the Redding ordinance with an attached listing of all State roads and Town roads on which there is to be "Public Safeguards and Traffic Control During Construction Within Public Rights-of-Way". It was suggested that the State roads also be enumerated. Chief Roche indicated that he had reviewed carefully all the town roads and listed those heavily trafficked, commuter roads, and cut-thru's. He showed a map which demonstrated that there are still many town roads not affected by the ordinance.

R. Marconi indicated that the ordinance would cover construction situations, tree work, phone line installation and repair, and work on the roadways. There is a clause exempting Town employees. The purpose of this ordinance is for safety and not to generate overtime for the Police. J. Plock stated her concern over the cost for traffic control. A. Bodner asked how many accidents have really occurred to a flag person? R. Marconi responded that the public pay attention to someone in uniform and even more so with a police vehicle parked at the site. A. Bodner indicated his concern that the wording of the ordinance is overly broad.

John Katz, Ridgebury Road, stated that residents who do not live on a "yellow road" do not have the cost. If there is an exemption for the Town, it casts doubt on the need for an ordinance because of the safety issue.

What is the cost for Police coverage at a construction site? – Usually time and one-half or about \$50/hour for a minimum of 4 hours or \$200. The Police Department adds on an administrative fee of about 15% plus a car at the site is also an extra charge. Laurie Scholl pointed out that this latest version does not have a Town exemption in it. A. Bodner asked if there is an official certification process for flag holders? – Yes, is the reply. There is no four-hour minimum for a certified flag bearer. J. Plock suggested that the BOS receive a copy of the official Ordinance to review before voting. A. Bodner indicated the need for some sound judgment – do not need to hire someone for four hours for the removal of one tree.

7. Request for Extension of Employment from Police Officer Maxine Rizzo

This request has been recommended for approval by Police Chief Roche and the Police Commission. Laurie Scholl, Director of Human Resources, came forward to state there is no reason for Officer Rizzo to not remain on the force. Such a request has to be made annually once an officer is past the age of 55.

D. Masters moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve for one year the request of extension of employment by Officer Maxine Rizzo to continue as a Police Officer for the Town of Ridgefield past the age of 55. Motion passed 5-0.

8. Ridgefield Housing Authority Appointments

D. Masters moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to appoint Edward DeVito and Catherine Potel to fill the two vacancies on the Housing Authority for a five year term. Motion passed 5-0. (Both Ed DeVito and Catherine Potel were interviewed previously by the BOS.)

9. Emergency Operations Center Grant Resolution

Dick Aarons made the presentation as the designated representative from the Fire Department (Chief Burford was unable to attend.) The FY 2010 EOC Grant Program is intended to improve emergency management and preparedness capabilities of the Town. The Town is obligated to match about 25% or about \$40,000. The FY 2010 EOC Grant Program will provide \$57,600,000 for construction or renovation of a State, local, or tribal government's principal EOC. Of this amount, \$47,442,500 in non-competitive funding has been appropriated for designated EOC projects throughout the Nation. The remaining \$10,157,500 shall be allocated competitively to eligible State, local, or tribal government's principal EOC's. Eligible EOC's requesting competitive funding may request up to \$1,000,000 for construction projects or up to \$250,000 for renovation projects through the FY 2010 EOC Grant Program.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to authorize the First Selectman, Rudy Marconi, to sign any resolution needed to submit the application for the FY 2010 Emergency Operations Center Grant Program. Motion passed 5-0.

10. Commission Reappointments

The reappointments for the following Commissions were not reviewed nor voted upon – The Building Code of Appeals, the Pension Commission, and the Conservation Commission.

11. Approval of Tax Refunds

D. Masters moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to approve the list of tax refunds as requested in the memo dated 1/22/2010 by Tax Collector, Jane Bernedsen-Hill, for a total of \$11,388.03, except for the final refund, #3593 in the amount of \$5,650.20, which will depend upon approval by the First Selectman, Rudy Marconi. Motion passed 5-0.

12. Selectman's Report

- Bill Reynolds has been selected as Inspector of the Year by the Homebuilders and Remodelers Association with the citation to be awarded next week.

- **D. Masters moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to close the 300th Anniversary Fund and put the remaining dollars into the General Fund. Motion passed 5-0.**

- Ridgefield Responds is the group left over from Ridgefield's response to Katrina, which will now oversee Ridgefield's response to the Haiti crisis. They still have \$6000 in their budget which can now be used for aid to Haiti. A large group of volunteers met earlier today.

- Sturges Park update – Everything is a “go”.

- Schlumberger property – waiting for the executed documents to be returned.

- Highway Department – rainfall issues. Peter Hill submitted a memorandum outlining the Rain Storm Activity Report for January 26th with the rainfall of 2.6 to 3.4 inches of rain. The Highway Department worked many hours. It was agreed that the Highway Department is “the best”.

- Community Center Lease – is ready to be sent out for BOS review with no indemnification paragraph included.

- Judge Egan is retiring as Ridgefield's Probate Judge after many years.

- Children's Corner Lease – Charlie Fisher is working on the concerns raised by Director, Nan Hoskins. They are anxious to get the lease issue resolved as they need to proceed with summer and fall enrollments. A. Bodner asked if the water issue has been resolved? The answer is no – but the tenant is paying rent.

13. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 11/18/09, 12/14/09, 12/21/09, 1/6/10

D. Masters moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to approve as written the minutes of the November 18, 2009, Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 3-0-2. B. Manners and J. Plock abstained as they were not in attendance at the November 18, 2009 meeting.

J. Plock moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the December 14, 2009, Board of Selectmen Special Meeting. Motion passed 4-0-1. B. Manners abstained as she was not present at the December 14, 2009 meeting.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve as written the minutes of the December 21, 2009, 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 January 6, 2010 Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 10:35 p.m. Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet L. Johnson