

## **BOARD of SELECTMEN MEETING – FEBRUARY 1, 2006**

TOWN HALL/LOWER LEVEL 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, B. Manners, D. Masters, J. Plock

### **AGENDA**

#### **Fire Commission Agenda – 6:30 P.M.**

1. Update from Fire Chief Lou Yarrish

#### **Special Town Meeting – 7:30 P.M.**

A Special Town Meeting will be held on February 1, 2006 to discuss proposed leases between the Town of Ridgefield and LifeCare Design, Inc.; and the Town of Ridgefield and the Visiting Nurse Association.

#### **Board of Selectmen Meeting – immediately following Town Meeting**

1. Ridgefield Housing Authority Tenant Representative Interview – Ann Morrisroe
2. Police Department New Headquarters Feasibility Study
3. Patriot's Way – Ward Mazzucco
4. Ridgefield Community Prevention Council Interview – terry Budlong
5. Update on Mold Issue at East Ridge Middle School
6. Sturges Park Easement – set Public Hearing & Town Meeting dates
7. Insurance Risk Management Committee Draft Charge
8. Approval of meeting minutes – 1/4/06
9. Selectman's Report
10. Golf Course Concession

#### **Economic Development Commission Agenda**

1. Schlumberger Update
2. Economic Development Commission Update

R. Marconi called the Board of Selectmen Meeting to order at 7:45 p.m.

1. Ridgefield Housing Authority Tenant Representative Interview – Ann Morrisroe  
Ann Morrisroe came forward to introduce herself to the BOS and discuss her candidacy. She is a lifelong resident of Ridgefield and a resident of Ballard Green. R. Marconi read the letter received from Ms. Morrisroe detailing her volunteer activities with the Ballard Green Food Pantry, working with Mrs. Barberi of the Western Connecticut Area Agency on Aging in organizing events for Ballard Green tenants, driving residents to doctor's appointments, etc, and serving as an active member of Ridgefield A.A.R.P. working on Senior Appreciation Day. R. Marconi read the letter received from Philip Bergquist, Chairman of the Ridgefield Housing

Authority, recommending Anne Morrisroe for the tenant vacancy on the Housing Authority. R. Marconi asked Ms. Morrisroe if she thought there might be problems with the tenants when the proposed construction of an additional twelve units begins with construction-related noise in the early morning hours. She replied that she did not think the Ballard Green tenants would complain about the noise as the garbage trucks currently make their rounds at an early hour.

There is only one tenant vacancy on the Housing Authority. There are two candidates – Peter Casagrande interviewed with the BOS on January 4. It is a difficult decision as both candidates are well qualified. Mr. Casagrande indicated that he is willing to serve on another committee and will meet with R. Marconi to discuss this option further. **J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to appoint Ann Morrisroe to fill the tenant vacancy on the Ridgefield Housing Authority. Motion passed 5-0.**

2. Police Department New Headquarters Feasibility Study – The following individuals came forward to discuss the Feasibility Study for a proposed new headquarters for the Police Department: Police Chief Richard Ligi, Major John Roche, Richard Lyn of the Police Department, and Police Commissioners George Kain, Susan Craig, Carl Lecher, and Charlie Knoche, as well as Peter Coffin of DCA Architects. Carl Lecher served as the spokesperson. Their objective is to present the inadequacies of the present building. It was built in 1890 as a residence, then became a girls' school, a State Police headquarters in the 1920's as a dormitory-type police barracks facility, and then the headquarters for the Ridgefield Police Department about twenty-five years ago. It is still basically a residential building. Only paint and the fire exit have been added in the last twenty-five years. A \$25,000 grant was recently received to finance a feasibility study. Peter Coffin is the architect responsible for the feasibility study. The drawings are only sketches of possibilities. There are many steps to planning a new Police headquarters, selection of site, etc., etc.

Chief Ligi pointed out how the Police Department has outgrown the present facility. Additional officers are now on the force; technology changes take up space and generate heat. Chief Ligi commented on the usage of the various floors while Major Roche held up photos of each area under discussion. The third floor is used for storage for such things as DARE equipment and items for the annual Children's Halloween party, and this floor has never been renovated. The wood frame is old and there is no sprinkler system nor air conditioning. Phone equipment is in a storage room, communication equipment is in an old closet. The second floor is for the detective bureau and evidence storage. Evidence has to be retained in custody for pending cases. One area is used to process the evidence before said evidence is put into storage. Boxes of uniforms are stored on this floor. Uniforms are returned to the Police Department if an officer leaves the force. The first floor is where officers bring in the prisoners. There are storage boxes and file cabinets everywhere. The basement level is the "day room" and the arsenal, where weapons are stored. There is very little shelving available. There are three lockers in the women's locker room – no room for additional female hires. The men's locker room is also in the basement level. There is a laundry area where cleaning is dropped off and picked up; racks for coats, and storage of equipment such as parts for radar equipment. Central dispatch is now required and this involves nine additional staff.

Carl Lecher pointed out deficiencies– no fireproof construction, lack of exits, lots of electrical cords hanging about, electric installations are not according to current codes. It is a "tired old wooden building." Mr. Lecher indicated that he has spoken with Al Garzi and J. Wahlberg about possible costs for a new building. A cost of about \$13 million could be bonded over twenty years – costing about \$1 million/year to carry this debt. A taxpayer who pays \$10,000

per year in taxes to the Town would see his/her tax bill increase by about \$100.00 per year to cover this expenditure.

Architect Peter Coffin reported on the results of the feasibility study – possible renovation or relocation? They took a look at the needs of the Ridgefield Police Department twenty-five years out and put together an “ideal program” with a headquarters of about 33,000 sq. feet. The current building is about 17,650 sq. feet. They looked at four possible solutions:

- 1) Start-over on a green site – undeveloped land. Old Quarry Road could be one such site, although it is not ideal. It would be difficult for vehicles to get in and out; one side of the property is quite a steep elevation; the elevation of the property is about 100 feet lower than the current property – really need about 240 feet of height for the dispatch tower.
- 2) New building on the existing site – it is easier to build at a completely different site and then move to the new location upon completion of the new facility. It would also be difficult to build a new headquarters in keeping with the neighborhood. A building of this proposed size would affect coverage of the piece of land. The current location is desirable as centrally located and is high in elevation. There is really not a lot of the original house still intact if one examines the current headquarters closely. Many of the architectural details have been replaced.
- 3) Additions to the existing facility – The previous feasibility study of 2002 proposed additions to the building but they were not looking at the needs of the Police Department twenty-five years ahead. Mr. Coffin indicated that they did, however, look at the 2002 study and updated what that study would cost today.
- 4) Building a large addition to the existing building. They did do a cost estimate for this. They did look at modular construction but primarily this is used for residential construction and is not appropriate for a concrete reinforced building. The biggest negative to renovating would be the retention of the inherent deficiencies of the present building. By renovating to meet codes and support the weight on the floors, this would really involve almost re-building the current building.

The estimates for these four scenarios are \$15 million for a new building, \$13.2 million for a new building on the existing site, \$9.1 million for the redo as outlined in the 2002 study, and \$12.1 million for a new large addition on the existing site.

The Police Commission’s preference is to use the existing site. The communication system is located there and functions well because of the elevation of the property, and a garage is already located there as well. Dealing with a redo of the old building would require extreme sensitivity to the exterior of the old building.

J. Plock pointed out that a resolution will not be made this evening. The Fire Department has needs also. The Town cannot afford two new separate headquarters. Perhaps we need to look at a joint venture – an Emergency Services complex. George Kain felt that one large building will not work – if there is an Emergency Services complex, then there would need to be two separate buildings – one for fire and one for the police. Such a complex would require quite a sizeable piece of property.

J. Plock suggested the need for both a short term and a long term solution. The storage situation in the current headquarters needs immediate attention. B. Manners suggested some storage room in the old high school for the interim.

Andy Bodner inquired as to the possibility of a more modest new building. Mr. Coffin replied that a 9,000 sq. foot addition would be more modest, but it would still be expensive to bring the current building up to code.

B. Manners inquired as to the possibility of a satellite police office on the north side of town. The response was that an office at Ridgebury would not really accomplish anything; any individuals arrested would still have to be brought downtown.

Susan Craig pointed out that all present seemed to agree on the need. The Commission did not feel that the Old Quarry site was adequate in terms of space. Is there room on the current site to meet the proposed needs? Do not know!

R. Marconi asked if the tower would have to be moved if the headquarters was at a different site? It was felt that it would be difficult to secure the tower if the headquarters were to be located elsewhere. Mr. Marconi pointed out that it was right to get the school projects completed first before the building of a new police headquarters, but it is important to get debt service down also. He suggested a committee be formed to study how the Police Department can get along with their present facility for another year or two, and also where is the Town going to go as a whole with regard to emergency services. This committee would look at the financial health of the Town in relation to the needs of the Town. He will meet with Chief Ligi and together they will set up a committee and a timetable.

3. Patriot's Way – Ward Mazzucco

Peter Young, of Litchfield County Land Consultants, was hired to do an analysis of the project. He presented the owner's proposal for the property. They are proposing 30 detached three-bedroom units on 11 acres of land and 1 acre donated to the Town. These units will be age-restricted with no children under 18 as residents for more than three months/year. It is estimated that these 30 units will generate about \$500,000 in tax revenue/year. They have conducted a survey of potential buyers. They feel such buyers would be downsizing from 5,000 sq. feet homes, but still want a home large enough to keep their dining room furniture and a home office. This would fill a niche in the market. They are seeking 13,500 gallons of sewer allotment for this project from the Town. This would leave 36,500 gallons of sewer allotment in reserve. An easement is also needed for entry into the property. The one acre of land would be donated to the Senior Center to provide 148 parking spaces. They would provide paving, lighting and drainage for this parking area in exchange for the sewer allotment. The parking at the Senior Center is inadequate now.

J. Plock asked how does this proposal impact the previous plans for affordable senior housing units on this property? D. Master responded that she does not look favorably on this project. The sewer reserve is to be a reserve for failures. A building project such as this has not been part of the sewer plan. This is too congested an area for more development.

Ward Mazzucco replied that their plan calls for the removal of five curb cuts and the installation of a traffic light. This proposed sewer allotment would not expand overall capacity. The project would add additional tax dollars to the Town and would not create a

demand on the infrastructure being deed restricted to be age-restricted. The cost of the units would be about \$1.4 million for a 3200 sq. feet home.

B. Manners indicated that she feels there are enough 3200 sq. feet homes available in Town currently for residents to downsize if they so desire. Most residents cannot afford to downsize to something that costs \$1 million. Less expensive housing is what is needed. There is a need to maintain the heterogeneity of Ridgefield.

Andy Bodner indicated that he likes the idea of additional tax revenue. What is the opinion of the neighbors? Is it a fair trade for the sewer allocation?

Ed Zandri, Danbury Rd., asked to speak. He owns 3.3 acres at this location. He has requested sewer access many times and it has continually been denied. This will be an upscale age-restricted gated community. This will be good for the Town and will pay more taxes than the Schlumberger property.

R. Marconi indicated that this evening's meeting was not intended for public comment. There would be future opportunities for public comment should this proposal go before Planning & Zoning. However, it was decided to open the meeting to the public as there were quite a few present who wished to speak.

Justine Butler, Tanton Hill Rd., indicated that the area under discussion is wetlands. Parking at the Senior Center would not be a problem if the Center was limited to Ridgefield residents.

Dom D'Addario, Tanton Hill Rd., asked if this is a trade of parking spaces for sewer? Not a good deal!

Debbie Oliver, Fairview Ave., pointed out that the next generation of retirees will have more income than previous generations. There needs to be all prices and kinds of housing. There will be buyers looking for an upscale home.

John Pambianchi, 55 White Birch Rd., indicated that he owns two acres and has had calls from perspective buyers.

Ken Brown, Tanton Hill Rd., indicated that age-restricted housing would tax the emergency response system.

John Norden, Tanton Hill Rd., feels that 30 more homes would not help solve the traffic problem which exists currently. There are 10,000 members of the Recreation Center – these few proposed parking spots will not solve the parking problem. There is too much going on in a small space.

John Proscio, 127 Tanton Hill Rd., indicated that traffic is a problem currently. It is difficult to pull out onto Route 35.

R. Marconi thanked those who came to discuss this proposed building project and indicated that the Board of Selectmen will consider the proposal.

#### 4. Ridgefield Community Prevention Council Interview – Terry Budlong

Terry Budlong came forward to introduce herself to the Board. R. Marconi read the letter received from her expressing her interest in serving on the Ridgefield Community Prevention Council. She has been attending meetings of the Council and works with parents of teenagers. It was agreed that she is very well qualified.

**J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to appoint Terry Budlong to fill the vacancy on the Ridgefield Community Prevention Council. Motion passed 5-0.**

4. Update on the Mold Issue at East Ridge Middle School – Jason Travelstead, O&G’s East Ridge Middle School Project Manager, and Joanne Duncan, Director Interior Air Quality for the Board of Education, came forward to discuss this issue. Mr. Travelstead reviewed what has been done to date to rectify the mold situation. in Corridor 1119. They investigated the odor by opening up the wall and roof line and removing the floor tile in an attempt to find out where the odor was coming from. The goal was to mitigate the moisture. He explained what they did to prevent water from coming in. They then want to hepa-clean the entire area.

Two employees in the library experienced sudden eye and throat irritation. EnviroScience has been called to come and test. They took aero-cell samples and identified non-viable mold spores in the air and another test for viable mold. Viable mold means it will grow. There are no recognized standards for these tests, but they did compare indoor and outdoor mold count. They did not find positive tests, but did not feel that any procedure had been done in the school that particular day to have caused the eye and throat irritation. Other teachers complained also of eyes burning. One had to leave the building. Ms. Duncan stressed that any cleaning, etc. should not be done during school hours, and should be done in a sealed-off area. Mr. Travelstead replied that they had contained the area and no chemical solvents are used for cleaning of the slab. He pointed out that school personnel regularly used the corridor in spite of the “closed” status of the corridor. EnviroScience observed throughout the cleaning process.

O&G has hired a third party to assess the situation and solve the water problem and the possibility of mold. Ms. Duncan expressed frustration with the amount of time this process has taken. She thinks the mold is gone, but the moisture incursion problem has taken four months to solve. No outdoor air comes into this corridor. If all the moisture is not gone, the problem will reoccur.

J. Plock indicated that she feels that bringing in outside air will help the situation. The grading also needs to be corrected. Mr. Travelstead is suggesting a cut-off drain at the slab. The design people want to have the grading done first and see what happens as a result. They want an incremental approach to solving this problem. O&G is anxious to move forward also.

R. Marconi inquired as to the possibility of installation of the cut-off drain now as a capital expenditure and not wait any longer. Original plans called for a fresh air vent, but such a vent did not coordinate well with the air handler. J. Plock inquired if air conditioning should not be present in the corridor as well?

Ms. Duncan pointed out that space gets very hot and humid when the sun shines in; the situation needs to be looked at from this perspective as well.  
Also – the cleaning solutions need to be checked – any bleach?

D. Masters stressed the need to understand what happened to cause the eye and throat irritations and prevent it from happening again.

6. Sturges Park Easement – Set Public Hearing & Town Meeting Dates  
**J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to hold a Public Hearing on February 15, 2006, 7:30 P.M., Town Hall Large Conference Room, and a Town Meeting on March 8, 2006, 7:30 P.M., Town Hall Large Conference Room for consideration of the proposed Sturges Park Easement. Motion passed 4-0. Andy Bodner abstained due to his concern over Roger Provey’s disputed ownership of the property.**
  
7. Insurance Risk Management Committee Draft Charge –  
**J. Plock moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to approve as amended the draft of the new charge for the Risk Management and Insurance Committee. (The first paragraph is to be eliminated) Motion passed 4-0. D. Masters had stepped out for a few minutes.** The former charge was written in the 70’s. This proposed draft is more contemporary and describes more fully the responsibilities of the Insurance Risk Management Committee.
  
8. Approval of Meeting Minutes – 1/4/06  
**J. Plock moved and B. Masters seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the January 4, 2006 Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 5-0.**
  
9. Selectman’s Report –
  - An alternate HVCEO representative is needed to replace the vacancy created by the retirement of P. Yanity. They meet on Friday afternoon one time/month in Brookfield. B. Manners volunteered.
  
  - BEI Update – The bidding process had been questioned. There had been a State bid for this equipment that satisfied our requirement to go out for a bid, but the original bid was in 1994. There was really no formal bidding process. Thus, the project was put out to bid and bids did come in. BEI was the low bidder, \$9,000 lower than their previous bid. The numbers are currently being checked for accuracy.
  
  - Al Garzi memo was shared relevant to the possible elimination of the tax on manufacturing machinery and equipment. Ridgefield would lose \$1 million in revenue if this were to happen.
  
  - Update on snow removal materials. We do have a healthy supply of sand and salt and hope to get thru February. The supply is being closely watched. This has been a “tricky” winter.
  
  - Airport Noise Study Hearing to be held in Danbury on February 2<sup>nd</sup> in the evening. FAA is looking at micro-jets which can use shorter runways. Smaller airports could help to reduce pressure on the major airports. The beacon lights have gone up and are not as bad as what was feared – they are red lights on the top of telephone poles. Signage is still needed at the airport. Cooperation is needed from the Airport Manager with an educational program regarding signage. Ron Price is serving as the mediator between the Mayor of Danbury and R. Marconi on airport issues. Some progress is slowly being made. R. Marconi will attend the meeting on February 2<sup>nd</sup>.

- SafeRides cannot be used after midnight as teenagers under 18 are restricted from driving after 12:00. This will put a severe damper on SafeRides as everyone would have to be picked up and dropped off by 11:30. R. Marconi is working with the Clergy Association on this. Youth do not want their parents to pick them up. This program serves a real need. The reason Mr. Marconi is speaking is because there is an exemption for religious organizations.

10. Golf Course Concession Discussion –

The following individuals came forward to discuss the Golf Course Concession:

Frank Sergiovanni, Golf Club Director and members of the Golf Committee – Todd Kolb, Al Fazi, Carol Ancona, Jay Saks, Ed Tyrrell, and several others.

Frank Sergiovanni reported that the initial RFP notices did not generate any interest for an individual who would like to manage the Golf Course Concession as their own food business. The advertising campaign generated a lot of response. Frank spoke with each applicant individually and they were asked to submit a proposal in writing. Seven candidates were interviewed at 20 minute intervals. Two finalists were invited back for a final interview session. The applicant selected was Frederick “Fritz” Zivitt. He currently lives in Litchfield but plans to relocate to Ridgefield. He had retired from the restaurant management business, but now wants to get back into it. The financial terms were reviewed. He will purchase all kitchen equipment, etc. and will receive a rent abatement at the rate of \$12,000/year for five years to cover the cost of the equipment cash outlay. He is a licensed food operator. David Grogins, Town Counsel, is drawing up a preliminary agreement.

Inspection of the septic system is the big outstanding concern. The ladies room is not in bad shape. The men’s room is in very bad shape – tiles, partitions, sink area all need major repair. The estimate is \$25-30,000 to redo. A patch-up for now may be the immediate solution with the redo put in the budget. J. Wahlberg suggested using some of the contingency dollars for repairs. He will come back with a breakdown of what contingency can provide, and would like to see some of the bids on the septic repair.

**J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 11:15 p.m. and convene the Economic Development Commission Meeting. Motion passed 4-0. D. Masters had to leave a few minutes earlier.**

**Economic Development Commission Meeting**

R. Marconi called the Economic Development Commission Meeting to order at 11:15 p.m.

1. Schlumberger Update – Michael Katz of New York City, has been hired by Schlumberger to represent them. R. Marconi will be meeting with Mr. Katz on February 8; Betty Brosius will accompany him. The purpose of the meeting is to come up with an idea as to what can be done with the Schlumberger property. Tom Zimmerman is the current General Manager there. He is willing to work with the Town of Ridgefield. Schlumberger needs to be able to deliver clear title and clean property. One thought would be for Schlumberger to give it to the Town as a tax deduction. They have had the property since the 50’s.
2. Bennett’s Pond – Planning & Zoning work session held relative to Bennett’s Pond. Lots of questions still need to be resolved. The next meeting is February 14. One issue is the sewer – no

one wants the sewer to come up Route 7 to Danbury. There is a concern about density with an on-site septic system.

3. Economic Development Commission Update – Requests coming in to serve on the Commission. It was agreed that the Commission would deal with the Schlumberger issue and not establish a separate committee for such.

**J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to adjourn the Economic Development Commission Meeting at 11:27 p.m. Motion passed 4-0. D. Masters was not present.**

Respectfully submitted,

Janet L. Johnson