

BOARD of SELECTMEN BUDGET MEETING – FEBRUARY 9, 2009

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. 2009-2010 **Capital Items** Budget Discussion

R. Marconi called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Kevin Redmond, Director of Finance, came forward to participate in the discussion. K. Redmond indicated that he has reviewed all the base numbers to be sure they are correct. R. Marconi indicated that he has met with all the various departments. Tonight's meeting is to discuss capital requests. The target for the year is to look at a 0% increase. There are some items that are absolutely necessary such as the continued paving of the road program and a generator for IT. The total request to date is \$3,750,696. The goal is to par this number down.

General Government Capital Improvement Plan –

Planning & Zoning - \$37,500 for development of a plan for Conservation & Development.

Andy Bodner pointed out that the Economic Development Commission (EDC) is seeking funding for their business planning study. They wish to develop their own strategic plan. We need to make sure that this is not a duplication of what Planning & Zoning is also doing. Betty Brosius, Director of Planning, pointed out that Planning & Zoning's plan would include one chapter which would cover the EDC's plan. R. Marconi indicated that Ridgefield has never had a comprehensive business development plan which the EDC is proposing. It was agreed that this request by P&Z will stay.

Information Services – They would love to have everything on their list. - \$10,000 for PC Replacement – Lower to \$6,000; \$50,000 for VM/Ware Server Center will stay; \$11,300 for SQL Server Hard/Software, \$7,500 for File Server Hard/Software, and \$9,100 for Surf Control/Antivirus Server will delay to '011. \$1,250 for Printer Replacement – do not want to pay for over four years.

Police - \$16,800 for Interior Computer Equipment – Tie-in with IT

Parks & Recreation – Will defer all their IT requests

Finance - \$34,585 for PO Module – Munis – This has been recommended by the Auditors, and K. Redmond is in agreement with this expenditure also.

Community Grants – Tiger Hollow Stadium \$70,000 (Less \$50,000 TH Inc. Funding – cost the Town only \$20,000) for heavily used stairs and walkway repair. Is this a “have to have” or “like to have”? If the Board of Education gets the gate revenue, they should chip in here also. The rental revenue to the Town for Tiger Hollow totals approximately \$177,000/year. The Board of Education pays for the lighting at the stadium. D. Masters pointed out that these repairs are for safety; Ridgefield citizens and not just the students use the stadium. Regarding maintenance and

repair requests, it usually costs more to repair at a later date. J. Plock indicate that she would vote no for this item. If this expenditure is delayed, it will be pushing it off for 2-3 years.

Community Golf Course Capital Improvement Plan –

Equipment Replacement – Greens mower for \$18,700 and \$50,000 for Lowboy dump truck with plow; used to move sand, topsoil and plow in the winter. The greens mower is more important than the truck – Ed Tyrell, Chairman of the Golf Committee, is in agreement with this.

Parks & Recreation Capital Improvement Plan – Paul Roche came forward to discuss.

Recreation Center - \$13,000 for major building maintenance (no heat at the Front Desk); Senior Outdoor Fitness Course \$40,000 (less \$20,000 matching funds donation) – Put off until '011.

Town Properties - Defer \$25,000 for Martin Park

Vehicle Replacement -This year Parks & Rec received a loader and dump truck from the Highway Dept. \$39,900 for 1 ton dump truck with plow – defer; \$30,000 for pickup with plow would like to have. R. Marconi indicated the need for a washbay to wash down the trucks as then the trucks last much longer. He is suggesting putting in a new hydrant for a new wash station. D. Masters asked what trucks need to be replaced. P. Roche reviewed the list of Parks & Recreation trucks. One replacement/year for the next three years would be best. Plowing is hard on a truck – everything loosens up. When the frame starts rusting out, then the truck needs to be replaced.

Equipment Replacement – Reduce Grounds Maintenance to \$17,600 (defer cost for Ballard Park); Keep F-10 tractor for \$61,000; defer turf tractor for \$33,700.

Recreational Fields

Park Safety Improvements (fences for play areas) – Defer \$8,000

Police Department Capital Improvement Plan – R. Marconi indicated that he has already reviewed the Police Department's requests with Chief Roche. Chief Roche will attend the BOS Budget Meeting on February 11 to answer any questions.

Vehicle Replacements – Police Dept. requests include Police cruisers for \$107,008 and a lease for an unmarked car for \$37,000. The cruisers have been on a 4-3-4-3 cycle. This is a “4 car” year – 2 marked cars and 2 unmarked. The Chief's feedback is needed on this cycle. What about a 3-3-3 cycle? Do we want to interrupt the current cycle of the Police vehicles? What do the numbers look like if we were to say no new cars this year? What about keeping the vehicles to accrue higher mileage than the ideal? What about using diesel vehicles? Police cars are recycled after about 80,000 miles. They are then passed on to another town department. The cars spend a lot of time idling and thus 80,000 miles is really more than that number.

Headquarters – Interior Improvements for \$125,000 – Will defer.

Equipment Replacements – Cruiser Electronics Center for \$6,000 and Cruiser Light Bar Replacement for \$10,900 – defer for one year? “4 year” program? Portable radios for \$11,500 – also a “4 year” program?

Canine – Does every town have to be in the canine business? The canine shelter is required by the State to be air conditioned in the summer and have heat in the winter. The request is for a

generator for \$5,000. Can we combine the Town shelter with the ROAR shelter – they are across the street from one another? What if a rabid animal is brought into the shelter?

Fire Department Capital Improvement Plan – These requests have already been discussed at the Fire Commission meeting. The requests have been reduced to essential items: SCBA equipment for \$57,000 (four year program) and \$35,000 for EMS cardiac monitor.

Highway Department Capital Improvement Plan –

Equipment Replacement – Mini Excavator for \$96,500 (\$10,000 trade-in), going up one size. This excavator is used extensively with a lot of stress which creates wear on certain spots.

Vehicle Replacements – 3 different trucks are requested: Mack Dump Truck for \$177,000, Lowboy Dump Truck for \$55,000 and Service Truck for \$55,000. Which one is needed the most? Let the Highway Dept. choose. It is very important to continue to redo the roads – maintain the previous schedule. They have hired a couple of landscapers who help out part-time. The purchase of a paver shared with Redding has been suggested. Governor Rell is suggesting sharing between the towns. We have always purchased new equipment, but a lot of contractors are having financial problems and there may be good used equipment available

Engineering Department Capital Improvement Plan –

Town Buildings – Playhouse Ceiling \$50,000 – Can this be deferred for one year? Something needs to be done here; the heavier sheetrock that was installed added to the problem; there is no safety problem now and periodic inspections are done, but it is a temporary fix. A long term permanent solution is needed. Town Hall generator for \$40,000 is a “have to”. \$40,000 is the cost of the generator but there is also the cost of installation. Miscellaneous Building Repairs for \$25,000 includes firehouse back stairs (erosion at the foundation level) and new roof for American Legion building. These are necessary repairs.

Town Tree Warden – Tree replacement program for \$35,000. Can this be deferred for one year? Jan Rifkinson, New Rd., suggested an Adopt a Tree Program. Richardson Park is the location of the Town tree farm.

Board of Education Capital Improvement Plan – Asbestos abatement for tiles in the schools (has been a long-term project - \$135,000; HVAC replacements for \$775,000 defer; window replacement study for Branchville \$25,000 to save energy with double-pane windows; energy study for heating plants \$100,000. Kitchen hood is a “have to have” – no.

Jan Rifkinson, New Rd., asked about the possibility of two schools merging with a decline in enrollment? R. Marconi will ask the Board of Education about this issue. Want to see how the downturn in the economy will affect school enrollment if residents cannot afford private schools.

R. Marconi reported that the Energy Committee has been meeting and would prefer new windows rather than the new furnace. Also, we wouldn’t want to replace the furnace at Veteran’s Park School now if there is a possibility that the gas line would allow for a new gas furnace instead. A. Bodner stated the need for energy savings numbers for replacement windows. Is this what we really want to do this year? R. Marconi will get the quotes so the BOS can look at the numbers.

School Building & Grounds Capital Improvement Plan -

School Properties – Grounds/Safety Improvements for playground fencing, cut from \$22,500 to \$8,000

Vehicles, one ton dump truck with plow - will defer.

Equipment, Grounds Maintenance – cut from \$46,000 to \$24,000; 2 trailers and 2 48” mowers. Replace 2 each year.

Andy Bodner pointed out that no allowance has been made for a water treatment system if one is needed. R. Marconi indicated that he had spoken with the Department of Public Health last week regarding the possibility of obtaining monies from the State for such an expenditure. This project does fit the State’s definition. If the Federal stimulus package is approved, Ridgefield’s water main could be part of the stimulus package. We do not want to move ahead on new wells unless the State is on board with this solution to the water problem. A. Bodner indicated that it would be better to put something in the budget for this project and not use it, than to wish later that a water treatment solution had been addressed in the budget. Can we find out from the State before March regarding this issue?

Kevin Redmond was asked about Ridgefield’s contingency fund – what possibilities are there for monies coming into the general fund?

- 1) Designated funds where the monies have not been spent? Bennett’s Pond?
- 2) Close out of remaining school projects. This will not all happen before budget time but probably within the next eighteen months. Any dollars left over will go into the fund balance.
- 3) Refunding of the debt will result in less cash out next year.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Budget Meeting at 10:15 p.m. Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet L. Johnson