

PUBLIC HEARING and
BOARD of SELECTMEN MEETING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
MEETING – FEBRUARY 15, 2006

7:30 P.M. – TOWN HALL/LOWER LEVEL CONFERENCE ROOM
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; B. Manners; D. Masters; A. Bodner; and J. Plock

A Public Hearing will be held on Wednesday, February 15, 2006, 7:30 p.m. in the Large Conference Room at Town Hall to review and discuss its proposed Application to the State Department of Economic Community Development for funds under the Small Cities Program.

Board of Selectmen Meeting
AGENDA

1. Ridgefield Arts Council Interviews: Kathleen Carr, Bernard Frazier, Alison Greeley, Kristina Larson
2. Washington Rochambeau March to Victory Resolution – Keith Jones
3. Charter Revision Commission Interim Report – Bob Kleinberg & Lynn Marie Wieland
4. Golf Course Concession Agreement Update
5. Telephone Lease
6. Set Public Hearing Date for Proposed Open Space Ordinance Change for Deer Management
7. Kids in Crisis Counselors (Mike Ferguson, Denise Qualey, Tracy Duva (ERMS), Leslie Boissy (RHS) Student Outreach Counselors
8. Approval of meeting minutes – 2/1/2006
9. Selectman's Report
10. Possible Executive Session – Chief Lou Review

Economic Development Commission
AGENDA

1. Schlumberger Update
2. Economic Development Commission Update

R. Marconi called the Public Hearing to order at 7:30 p.m. The purpose of the Public Hearing is to obtain citizens views on the Town's community development and housing needs and review and discuss specific project activities in the areas of housing, economic development or community facilities which could be a part of the Town's Application for funding. The Town is considering submitting an Application for improvements/renovations to the Ballard Green Senior Housing in the amount of approximately \$700,000.00. Other potential or proposed projects eligible for Small Cities funding may also be reviewed and discussed at this hearing.

The Town will also review the status of its current Small Cities project and programs at this hearing in anticipation of this submission.

Larry Wagner of L. Wagner and Associates, who has been the Town's grant writer for the last five or six years, made the presentation. He said the small cities grants are Federal funds that come to each State and are distributed to communities with populations of less than 50,000.00. Mr. Wagner said the grants can be used for any of four purposes: 1) housing; 2) economic development; 3) community facilities; and 4) social services as long as they meet three major criteria: that they 1) benefit low and moderate income individuals; 2) resolve an imminent threat to public health and safety; and 3) eliminate slums and blight.

Nanette Bracken, Vice Chairman Ridgefield Housing Authority said they are hoping to add twelve more units to Ballard Green, which is for low-income and/or disabled elderly people. There are currently seventy (70) residents in sixty-five units, some of whom have annual income of only \$5,000.00. The minimum rent is \$220.00 per month, but some residents pay less because of their income. There are currently fifty-five people on the waiting list. John Frey was instrumental in getting a \$1,250,000.00 State grant. The Housing Authority is asking the Town to give enough to make up the shortfall between the State grant and the cost of the twelve additional units. Ellen Scott, the Ballard Green manager, spoke of the real need for the funds stating that there is currently a two to four year wait to get in.

Mr. Wagner said that tonight the Board of Selectmen has to decide if it wants to proceed with the application and, if so, then prepare a letter of intent to go to DECD which would most likely come out to look at the site and talk about the project and, if they think the project has potential for funding, they would then invite a formal pre-application which is a short-form document regarding statutory eligibility and "government-speak". After the pre-application, Ridgefield will be invited to submit a full application. The review and processing of the full application by the State takes time. The sooner the process starts, the sooner the Town receives the money and the less the value of that money is eroded.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to proceed with the application process to the State Department of Economic Community Development for funds under the Small Cities Program to build additional units at Ballard Green. Motion passed 5-0.

The Public Hearing was adjourned at 7:42 p.m. and R. Marconi called the Board of Selectmen Meeting to order.

J. Plock moved and D Masters seconded a motion to add two items to the agenda: 1) an 8-24 referral for a new fire department garage on Halpin Lane; and 2) a back-up radio system for the fire department. Motion passed 5-0.

Jim Belote, Ridgefield Volunteer Fire Department made the presentation for the garage to the Board of Selectmen, informing it that P & Z has walked the site and agreed it is a good site for the garage. The garage will house three pieces of memorabilia fire equipment: 1) the old Seagrave currently sitting up in Ridgebury; 2) the B model Mack, first diesel in Connecticut; and 3) the antique hose cart. The building will not be an active firehouse. The plans call for a cement slab and the shell, sixty (60) feet deep at a cost of \$65k. There will be a Public Hearing when this goes to P & Z. The Volunteer Fire Department has arranged for free excavating, if the work can be done in the winter. Mr. Bodner asked what the cost to the Town would be and the response was "zero". Mr. Marconi asked if some of the money the volunteers raised could be used for turn-out equipment and other things. Mr. Vallone responded that the Town gets about forty-five (45) people for \$25,000.00 per year. Mr. Marconi responded: "plus a truck every once in a while."

B. Manners moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to ask Planning & Zoning for an 824 referral on the use of the property for this purpose. Motion passed 5-0.

Fire Chief, Louis J. Yarrish, made the presentation for the back-up radio system that would be housed in the Police Department building. He stated that there is currently \$7,100.00 in the existing radio account, which could be applied to this purpose. Another \$15,700.00 could be taken out of the emergency management account to reach the \$22,800.00 needed for the equipment.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to put \$7,100.00 from the existing radio account and \$15,700.00 from homeland security project toward the back-up radio system for the fire department. Motion passed 5-0.

1. Ridgefield Arts Council Interviews: Kathleen Carr, Bernard Frazier, Alison Greeley, Kristina Larson

The Board of Selectmen interviewed Kathleen Carr, Bernard Frazier and Alison Greeley to fill the two existing vacancies on the Ridgefield Arts Council. The BOS was very favorably impressed with each candidate. Nobody wanted to choose one candidate over another so the BOS discussed increasing the number of board members from nine to eleven. Mr. Marconi said he would add the expansion of the number of members to the Arts Council to the agenda for the March 8, 2006 Board of Selectmen's meeting and the three candidates could be sworn in by the Town Clerk subsequent to that meeting.

2. Washington Rochambeau March to Victory Resolution – Keith Jones

Mr. Jones made an animated presentation to the Board of Selectmen showing pictures of the proposed marker, giving a brief history of the historic march (225 years ago) from Newport, Rhode Island to Virginia. Nine states are marking the route taken by the Revolutionary soldiers, Ridgefield's marker is the eleventh, and last, in Connecticut.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve the following resolution:

RESOLVED:

That First Selectman Rudy Marconi is hereby authorized and directed to enter into an Agreement on behalf of the Town of Ridgefield to accept an Interpretive Panel from the Commission on Culture & Tourism as part of the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route Project.

Resolution passed 5-0.

3. Charter Revision Commission Interim Report –Lynn Marie Wieland, Jan Rifkinson and Ed Tyrrell

Ms. Wieland made the presentation complete with detailed handouts regarding the Commission's progress to date, potential charter changes currently being reviewed, and the Commission's timeline moving forward. The Board of Selectman was interested in the Commission's recommendation to maintain the two-year term limits for selectmen/women. The Commission had concerns about staggered terms, losing an entire experienced board of selectmen in one election, and minority representation. Ms. Wieland and Mr. Rifkinson opined that there should be four-year terms for the selectmen/women, but the CRC voted it down.

4. Golf Course Concession Agreement Update –
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Frank Sergiovanni, Anton Stegar, Carol Ancona, Bill Morris and three other members of the Golf Committee brought the revised (three changes: 1) the name in the first paragraph; 2) dram shop insurance parameters were changed in Section 8; and 3) the signature page was changed to reflect the new LLC) Concession Agreement for the Selectmen's review. Mr. Bodner said he was troubled by the change to the LLC that has no assets, and he wanted a personal guarantee. Limiting the Town's liability to the value of the equipment was discussed at length.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve the Concession Agreement for the golf course amended to cap the Town's liability at \$40,000.00 or the value of the start-up equipment. Motion carries 5-0.

5. Telephone Lease

Controller, Jay Wahlberg, made the presentation for the new telephone system presenting a spread sheet showing the details of the bids received from six different vendors. Although the bids were difficult to compare because the components varied somewhat, B.E. I. had the lowest bid at \$90,740.00 and it also has a history with the Town due to the fact that it has handled the Board of Education's phone system for several years. Tom Weeks, representing Superior which bid the project, pointed out some component differences between Superior's bid and B.E.I.'s in an effort to demonstrate that the cost of Superior's system was the same or less than B.E.I.'s bid. Mr. Wahlberg, who has overseen the bidding process and worked with the various vendors, said all the vendors were good, but B.E.I. would "suit the Town better".

J. Plock moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to approve the B.E.I. contract for the telephone system. Motion carries 5-0.

6. Set Public Hearing Date for Proposed Open Space Ordinance Change for Deer Management

Tom Belote appeared on behalf of the Ridgefield Deer Implementation Committee. The discussion centered on the Conservation Commission's caretaker responsibility for the Town's open space and the need to give that Commission approval authority for hunting of deer on that open space.

D. Masters moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to set the Public Hearing date for the new Deer Ordinance for March 15, 2006. Voting in favor: R. Marconi, J. Plock, A. Bodner and D. Masters: Abstaining: B. Manners. Motion carries.

7. Kids in Crisis Counselors (Mike Ferguson, Denise Qualey, Tracy Duva (ERMS), and Maryann Baldwin

Mr. Ferguson initiated the "Teen Talk, Student Outreach Program" yearly report. They currently have one counselor, Tracy Duva, who spends most of her time at Ridgefield High School and some time at the East Ridge Middle School. The position is part-time without benefits. They would like to make it a full-time position with multi-year funding. Currently, there is no continuity of funding from year to year. Ms. Duva was asked how she gets her name and face out to the students, what kind of problems she hears and how the program is received by teachers and administrators. An enthusiastic letter or endorsement for the program from Dianna Lindsay, Principal of Ridgefield High School was read. Why the counselor was in East Ridge and not Scott's Ridge was also discussed. (East Ridge is larger and was more receptive to the program.)

8. Approval of meeting minutes – 2/1/2006

The Board of Selectmen reviewed the February 1, 2006 meeting minutes and made some corrections thereto.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve the Minutes of the February 1, 2006 meeting of the Ridgefield Board of Selectmen as amended. Vote: 5-0 Motion carries.

9. Selectman's Report

Mr. Marconi reported that the Planning & Zoning Commission reviewed the Eureka application last night and rejected it in a 6/3 vote. The petition was found to be "not valid".

Mr. Marconi gave the Board of Selectman a recap of his meeting with Police Chief, Ligi, Major Roche and Police Commissioner, George Cain all of whom are anxiously promoting a new building on the present site. Mr. Marconi acknowledged existing problems with the building such as tight quarters in the ladies locker room, the disarray on the third floor ("pretty nasty up there"), wiring and technology equipment in less than desirable locations, etc. The Board of Selectmen discussed whether or not it should establish a building committee and decided instead to look at a short-term remediation solution starting with having DiSalvo look at the structural integrity of the building and having Charlie Fisher look at the third floor with an eye to cleaning it up and making it usable. The possibility of obtaining an ADA grant to install an elevator to the third floor was also discussed. Mr. Marconi said he would talk with Charlie Fisher and then bring it back to the BOS.

Wearing his East Ridge Middle School Building Committee hat, Mr. Marconi reported that the Committee had decided to hire professionals to ascertain the origin of the mal odor and/or eye irritation which it has been determined is not caused by mold. He stated that the issues on the punch list are being addressed and the list is getting smaller.

The Scotts Ridge roof is now out of the project. Johns Manville has accepted full responsibility for the roof.

Access to the Barlow roof has been locked off because people were going out there and causing damage. It is a single membrane roof, not covered by warranty and is fairly easy to perforate.

Mr. Marconi read an invitation to a prayer breakfast at the Amber Room on April 27, 2006.

Mr. Marconi also read an invitation to Connecticut municipalities to be one of three "test" municipalities for public financing of municipal elections.

At 10:40 p.m. the BOS recessed its meeting in order to hold the Economic Development Commission meeting.

Economic Development Commission
AGENDA

Schlumberger Update
Economic Development Commission Update

Mr. Marconi reported that he and Betty Brosius met with Michael Katz from Schlumberger regarding disposition of the property. Schlumberger is interested in working with the community to come up with a solution for the property and intends to work on it for a few months to come up with something to present to P & Z.

There are currently three people on the Economic Development Commission, two more are needed. Volunteers are scarce.

The Economic Development Commission adjourned at 10:43.

10. Possible Executive Session – Chief Lou Review

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion for the Board of Selectmen to resume their BOS meeting at 10:44 p.m. and go into Executive Session for the purpose of reviewing Fire Chief Louis Yarrish's job performance. Motion passed 5-0. Laurie Scholl was invited to participate in the Executive Session.

The Board of Selectmen came out of Executive Session at 10:55 p.m. **J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded the motion to increase Chief Louis Yarrish's salary by 3.75% retroactive to his review date of January 10, 2006. The motion carried 5-0.**

R. Marconi moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 10:56p.m. Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Rodgers
Substitute Clerk