

**PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING & BOARD of SELECTMEN MEETING**  
**MARCH 4, 2009**

TOWN HALL/LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM – 7:30 P.M.

REVISED/APPROVED MINUTES

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These minutes are a general transcription of the meeting and are not intended to be a verbatim transcription.

In attendance: R. Marconi, A. Bodner, B. Manners, D. Masters, J. Plock

**Public Informational Meeting**

*The Town of Ridgefield's Board of Selectmen will be hosting a **Public Informational Meeting** to seek comment on the Town of Ridgefield's impending participation in the Federal Economic Stimulus Package program. It is anticipated that the Town will apply for funding for the construction of sidewalks along Market Street and the paving of various Town roads. Additional pending "shovel-ready" projects will also be discussed. The public is welcome to ask questions pertaining to the application as well as to speak or submit written comment. Information regarding the program as well as written comments should be directed to the Office of the First Selectman, 400 Main Street, Ridgefield, CT 06877. The Public Hearing will take place at 7:30 p.m., Wednesday, March 4, 2009 in the Large Conference Room of the Town Hall, 400 Main Street.*

**Board of Selectmen Agenda (immediately following Public Information Meeting)**

1. BI Tax Abatement: Set PH, STM dates – Al Garzi
2. Economic Development Commission Transfer – Kevin Redmond
3. Ridgefield Arts Council Interviews: Paul Gervais, Emelie Howard, Anne Marcus
4. Commission for Disabled Interview: Joseph Adams, C.J. Thomas
5. Ridgefield Prevention Council Interviews: Dr. Marita Michelin, Karen Facini
6. Parking Authority Interview: Mike Zap
7. IT Status Report/Discussion—Andrew, Laurie, John Roche
8. Girl Scout Week Proclamation
9. WPCA Reappointments
10. Sex Offender Ordinance STM – Set new date
11. DEMHS Equipment Resolution
12. Selectman's Report
13. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 1/20/09, 2/9/09, 2/11/09
14. Possible Executive Session--Police Contract

**Public Informational Meeting**

R. Marconi called the Public Informational Meeting to order at 7:30 P.M. Charles Fisher, Town Engineer, was introduced and came forward to present Federal Stimulus Package ideas that he has been working on. Connecticut municipalities have been asked by the State to submit projects that are "shovel ready". The Governor's office will review these projects and make the selection as to which projects fit the criteria and can proceed. It is Ridgefield's goal to "push ourselves ahead of the pack" and show how we have our projects totally ready to go.

In November '08, a HEFCO project was submitted – \$1.2 million was thought to be available to Ridgefield in February. One of the requirements was that a public informational meeting needed to be held. Tonight's informational meeting would satisfy that requirement.

Regarding the Federal Aid Highway program, it can only apply to State roads, of which Ridgefield does not have very many. We have repositioned our highway projects to try to get the most aid possible. The Market Street sidewalk project has been proposed. The plans and specs are complete and the bids are in. Some road paving projects will be suitable such as Farmingville Rd., Grove St., Old Stagecoach. The estimate is \$770,000. Other roads include: East Ridge, Limestone Rd., Ridgebury Rd., Sawmill Rd., Bennett's Pond Rd.

R. Marconi received a December 17, 2008 letter from Governor Rell defining what is meant by "shovel ready" projects. The project has to be clearly defined, fully designed and fully permitted. The project must be ready to receive approval from the U.S. Corps of Engineers and Environmental Safety. Construction should be able to start within 180 days. R. Marconi sent back to the Governor's office, Ridgefield's list of projects "ready to go".

- 1) North Street Water Main for a cost of \$1.4 million. This will eliminate the use of bottled water at two schools. This project would fit the requirements the best. It is a project favored by the Department of Public Health. This is a project Ridgefield can afford at this time only if and when the money is received.
- 2) Ridgefield Police Department Headquarters redo according to OSHA standards for the cost of \$4.5 million. All that is needed to start is the building permit which can be obtained in one week.
- 3) Market Street sidewalk – this project can be ready to start within four weeks.
- 4) Venus Building roof replacement for a cost of \$800,000. The bids and permits can be ready to go in two weeks.
- 5) Additional parking spaces for a cost of \$380,000 to tie into the Branchville commercial center. The design and permits are ready to go. Construction could start immediately.
- 6) The "dream project" is construction of a transportation center at Ridgefield's Branchville rail station. This would include parking spaces, a parking garage, and a bridge over the Norwalk River. This cost would be \$3.2 million.
- 7) D. Masters commented on a "great project" – electrification of the Danbury Line. Increased use of the Danbury Line would result in reduced congestion on the roads and a reduction in fuel usage. Central switches at Grand Central would allow for more frequent trains up and down this rail line. Now the switching has to be done the old manual way.

J. Plock inquired about the often talked-about idea of also running a natural gas line with the water main line. This gas line could run right to East Ridge Middle School. Wouldn't this also fit President Obama's requirements?

Governor Rell is establishing a task force to make the decisions as to which projects are to receive the funding. We did not prioritize our projects in any way nor was that asked for by the State. R. Marconi indicated that it is expected that the State task force will select first the larger city projects, then other cities in Connecticut and then the smaller towns like Ridgefield. We're ahead of a lot of municipalities, and now we have even held our informational meeting.

Joseph Adams, Langstroth Drive, inquired as to the status of the Georgetown project. R. Marconi indicated that he had met recently with Stephen Soler, the Developer. They are several years away at a

minimum from actually starting construction. Regarding the possibility of a rail center at Branchville Station, Ridgefield looked into the possibility of charging for parking a couple of years ago. Redding and Bethel do charge for parking. Ridgefield commuters objected to the possibility of having to pay for parking. The Branchville Station property is owned by the State of Connecticut. We are therefore prohibited from charging more to non-residents for parking. Any monies received from the parking would have to be earmarked for improvements to the station.

Chris McQuilkin, Nod Rd., inquired about the water main project and in particular regarding the July 1, 2009, date for resolution of the problem. The BOS has talked about drilling new wells, but would not want to incur these costs if there is any change monies would be available for installation of the new water main. We would contact the Department of Public Health for an extension of the July 1<sup>st</sup> date. If we are to drill a couple of wells, we would want to see what the test results are. The tests are to be taken after 72 hours of straight pumping of the water from the wells. We would want to have an OK from the Department of Health as to where we should locate these wells. The testing and report phase would take about three months. We should know about the water main project from the State before the three months are past.

Macklin Reid, Great Hill Rd., inquired about the CTC? This stands for Computerized Traffic Control for the railroads. This is part of the State of Connecticut Master Plan, and is one of our priorities.

Andy Bodner inquired about also submitting a water treatment system project for Barlow School, etc.? This is not "shovel ready". Further testing is recommended before we go out for bids on a water treatment system.

The Informational Meeting was closed at 8:00 p.m.

### **Board of Selectmen Meeting**

#### **1. BI Tax Abatement: Set PH, STM Dates – Al Garzi**

Mr. Garzi came forward to review the Boehringer Ingelheim building projects and the corresponding tax abatements. This will be the third abatement proposal. The first one was for the child care center with a \$59,000 abatement while collecting \$10,000/year. The second project is for Building 10. The abatement has not yet started. We are currently collecting \$460,000 in taxes while the project is under construction. The abatement does not start until the next Grand List year following completion. The third project is for the moving of utility lines. This is a \$5.4 million project with a requested abatement of 85% of the taxes. The taxes will be \$75,000/year with an abatement of \$63,000. During the 7 years of the abatement, Ridgefield will be collecting \$11,000/year. At the end of the 7 years, the taxes will return to the full amount.

R. Marconi reviewed how the abatement process began. Several years ago Boehringer Ingelheim was deciding whether to expand their U.S. headquarters in Connecticut, Virginia or Ohio. Ridgefield negotiated the 7 year abatement program to attract their expansion to Ridgefield. At the time, Al Garzi convinced B.I. that Ridgefield's mill rate is lower than Danbury's and thus B.I. agreed to 100% abatement in Danbury, but only 85% abatement in Ridgefield. The expansion in Ridgefield is estimated to total \$100+ million. The phases to come include: the \$20-25 million Bavarian Building, a new Safety facility for \$30-40 million, and the Product Development Lab for approximately \$80 million. Mr. Marconi reported that he had recently met again with John Hardiman, B.I.'s Director of Facilities, who indicated that German plans to continue with their

expansion projects in the U.S. in spite of the downturn in the economy. They have a couple of drugs with expiring patents, but they also have 3-4 new drugs “in the pipeline”.

Andy Bodner inquired as to the mechanics of the Grand List and the abatement. The new buildings are taxed during construction. The 85% abatement of the taxes doesn't begin until the year after the Certificate of Occupancy is issued and the expanded property is added to the Grand List. Personal Property taxes are abated in the same way, with the Mechanical and Equipment abatement being reimbursed by the State of Connecticut to the Town of Ridgefield. Hopefully, the State of Connecticut will continue to reimburse this abatement.

John Katz, Ridgebury Rd. asked if this current request for abatement relative to the utility line is taxed as personal property or real estate? Mr. Garzi responded that this project is considered to be an improvement to real property. A. Bodner inquired whether we will be losing tax dollars with the abatement if the utility line is currently being taxed as well? The response is that the new line will be worth more than the old one.

**J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to schedule the Public Hearing and Special Town Meeting relative to the Boehringer Ingelheim Tax Abatement for Utility Relocation for Building 10, for March 18, 2009, 7:30 P.M., Town Hall Large Conference Room, 400 Main Street, Ridgefield, CT. Motion passed 5-0.**

Dennis Peters, Ridgebury Rd., inquired about the curve in the road. Mr. Marconi responded that his conversations with Mr. Hardeman indicated that the purpose of straightening the road is for safety reasons. Is there a possibility for a new entrance to B.I. for trucks at this location? There is nothing on the drawing board at the present time, and B.I. is planning way far ahead. We need to schedule another Public Hearing on this issue now that we have additional information.

2. Economic Development Commission Transfer – Kevin Redmond

This transfer is being requested by the EDC (Bob Sill, Interim EDC Chairman's January 26, 2009 memo to R. Marconi) to hire an economic development consultant to help Ridgefield map out future opportunities for economic growth. The Town is mandated by The State of Connecticut to complete a plan of conservation and development in 2009, and these plans for economic growth would be part of that state-mandated plan. The economic development consultant's fee would be \$22,500 if paid fully in one fiscal year. This transfer would cover what the EDC is short to hire this consultant.

**J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve Department of Finance Memorandum #200907, requested by Kevin Redmond, Director of Finance, relative to a \$12,200 Transfer from Central Administration to Commissions and Committees Administration to fund Phase 2 of the EDC Plan of Conservation and Development, to increase #10180-52125, Commissions and Committees Admin. – EDC by \$12,200, and decrease #10040-52026, Central Admin. – Maintenance Agreements by \$12,200. Motion passed 5-0.**

3. Ridgefield Arts Council Interviews: Paul Gervais, Emelie Howard, Anne Marcus

Paul Gervais was not present to be interviewed. There are currently three vacancies on the Ridgefield Arts Council.

Emelie Howard came forward to introduce herself to the BOS. She described how “art is in her blood”. She has always been involved in painting, drawing, singing and dancing. Her business

experience is in marking and promotion. Her audio visual background includes the development of documentaries and brochures. An audio-visual promotion of the arts in Ridgefield could be very helpful. Another idea is promotion of the arts on the public access channel. In response to A. Bodner's question about attendance at Arts Council meetings, she indicated that she had attended the latest meeting and has already agreed to serve on several committees if appointed to the Council. Both J. Plock and B. Manners commented on Ms. Howard's qualifications for the Arts Council.

**B. Manners moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to appoint Emelie Howard to fill one of the vacancies on the Ridgefield Arts Council for a two year term. Motion passed 5-0.**

Anne Marcus came forward to introduce herself to the BOS. From 10/08 to 2/09, Ms. Marcus served as Executive Director of the Ridgefield Guild of Artists. She indicated that she was attracted to Ridgefield because of the town's art/culture focus. She will be involved with the Art Walk again in 2009. Her career has been in TV, marketing and public relations, event planning, and non-profit work. She has already attended two meetings of the Arts Council.

**Andy Bodner moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to appoint Anne Marcus to fill one of the vacancies on the Ridgefield Arts Council for a two year term. Motion passed 5-0.**

4. Commission for Disabled Interview: Joseph Adams, C.J. Thomas

Joseph Adams came forward to introduce himself to the BOS and express his interest in serving on the Commission for Disabled. He has been an EMT with the Ridgefield Volunteer Fire Department for 11 years and has been a volunteer with the Fire Police for the past 23 years. He was a Ridgefield Town Constable from 1978 to 1991 and helped to establish the Neighborhood Watch program. Mr. Adams is a past member of the Danbury/Bethel/Ridgefield Cable Advisory Council and was a Ridgefield Police Commissioner from 1991 to 1995. He has been very involved with the care of a sister with special needs and his wife who has a handicapped permit because of her wheelchair. He has a real appreciation of concern for the disabled residents of Ridgefield. Emma Lou Benedict has written a note expressing support for Mr. Adams' membership on the Commission for Disabled.

**J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve Joseph Adams, Jr. to fill one of the vacancies on the Commission for the Disabled for a two year term. Motion passed 5-0.**

C.J. Thomas was not present for an interview.

5. Ridgefield Prevention Council Interviews: Dr. Marita Michelin, Karen Facini  
There are currently two vacancies on the Ridgefield Prevention Council.

Marita Michelin, M.D., came forward to introduce herself to the BOS. Dr. Michelin is an Emergency Room doctor at Danbury Hospital, and has been a Ridgefield resident for the past 6-7 years. She is very familiar with adults and teenagers at risk because of her work at the hospital. She is interested in substance abuse issues and feels that there are positive interventions possible thru education of the parents and the youth. She commented on the 'staged crash' last year and how real that was.

**D. Masters moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to appoint Dr. Marita Michelin, to fill one of the vacancies on the Ridgefield Prevention Council for a two year term. Motion passed 5-0.**

Karen Facini came forward to introduce herself to the BOS. She has been a volunteer with the Ridgefield Prevention Council for the past year and feels that membership on the Council would be the next step. She will be co-chairing the Family University event this year. As the parent of a teenager, she is passionate about the need to bring awareness to children and parents. She helped with Senior Appreciation Day and commented on the Yellow Dot Program for seniors on medications and the many other programs offered by Founders Hall for seniors.

D. Masters commented on how Family University is a wonderful program, but she agreed that the attendees are those already proactive about substance abuse. How can we get others to come? Ms. Facini commented on how she is continually talking about the programs of the Prevention Council to other residents.

**D. Masters moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to appoint Karen Facini to fill one of the vacancies on the Ridgefield Prevention Council for a two year term. Motion passed 5-0.**

6. Parking Authority Interview: Mike Zap

Mike Zap came forward to introduce himself to the BOS and express his interest in serving on the Parking Authority. He has been a Ridgefield resident for 31 years and since retirement 7 years ago, has been in business for himself as the “Handyman of Ridgefield”. He was part of the Patriot Weekend in Ridgefield in 2002 and served on the event committee for parking and transportation. He indicated that he, “likes to park”! Mr. Zap continues to be involved in re-enactment events and understands the logistics and parking issues involved.

**J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to appoint Michael Zap to fill one of the vacancies on the Parking Authority. Motion passed 5-0.**

7. IT Status Report/Discussion – Andrew, Laurie, John Roche

This item was postponed until the March 18 BOS Meeting.

8. Girl Scout Week Proclamation

**A. Bodner moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to proclaim the week of March 8, 2009 as Girl Scout Week in recognition of the 97<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., on March 12, 2009. Motion passed 5-0.**

9. WPCA Reappointments

Agreement was made to advertise for WPCA appointments. R. Marconi will proceed with this.

10. Sex Offender Ordinance STM – Set new date

**B. Manners moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to set a Special Town Meeting (previously scheduled Special Town Meeting cancelled for snow) for consideration of the proposed Sex Offender Ordinance for March 18, 2009, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall/Large Conference Room, 400 Main St., Ridgefield, CT. Motion passed 5-0.**

11. DEMHS Equipment Resolution

**A. Bodner moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to authorize Rudy Marconi, First Selectman, to act on behalf of the Town of Ridgefield in executing a Memorandum of Understanding with the State of Connecticut Department of Emergency Management and**

**Homeland Security, enabling the Town of Ridgefield to operate as the custodial owner of equipment provided by the FY-2007 Spending Plan for DEMHS Region 5. Motion passed 5-0.**

12. Selectman's Report –

- \$35 million refunding issue previously proposed has been put on hold for now. The economy is currently so unpredictable that it seems best to put this off until the bond/stock market stabilizes somewhat. The psychology is to not invest at this time. We have chosen Eastern Banking Underwriters as our choice to do the re-bonding, but they have advised that it is not a good time to go into the market. It is an IRS ruling that we can only re-bond one time. There are no expenses involved in delaying – only expenses if we initiate action.

13. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 1/20/09, 2/9/09, 2/11/09

**B. Manners moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve as written the minutes of the January 20, 2009, Executive Session Meeting. Motion passed 4-0-1. J. Plock abstained as she was not present at the January 20 meeting.**

**J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve as written the minutes of the February 9, 2009 Board of Selectmen Budget Meeting. Motion passed 5-0.**

**J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the February 11, 2009 Board of Selectmen Budget Meeting. Motion passed 5-0.**

**J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to recess the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 9:15 p.m., and go into Executive Session to discuss the Police Contract with Laurie Scholl, Director of Human Resources, invited to participate. Motion passed 5-0.**

The Executive Session was closed and the Board of Selectmen Meeting was reopened at 9:38 p.m.

**B. Manners moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to approve the Agreement between the Town of Ridgefield and Ridgefield Police Union Local 1235 and AFSCME Council 15 as discussed in Executive Session. Motion passed 4-1. A. Bodner opposed.**

**J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 9:40 p.m. Motion passed 5-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Janet L. Johnson