

**SPECIAL TOWN MEETING, PUBLIC HEARING, &
BOARD of SELECTMEN MEETING – MARCH 21, 2007**

TOWN HALL/LOWER LEVEL 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, J. Plock

Absent D. Masters

Agenda – Public Hearing

1. The proposed Water Main Extension Ordinance
2. The change of the Ridgefield Code under Chapter 6, Article 1, Section 6-5
3. The proposed lease at the Richard E. Venus Building between the Town of Ridgefield and Virginia Roebuck.

Agenda – Special Town Meeting

1. The proposed Water Main Extension Ordinance
2. The change of the Ridgefield Code under Chapter 6, Article 1, Section 6-5

Agenda – Board of Selectmen Meeting (immediately following the Town Meeting)

1. Appointment of Historic District Enforcement Officer (2-year term): Richard Baldelli
2. Affordable Housing Committee Interview: Kevin Batterton
3. CT Municipal Consortium for Fiscal Responsibility Presentation & Possible Vote: Mike Guarco, Town of Granby, CT
4. Boehringer Ingelheim Tax Abatement Agreement – Set Public Hearing & Special Town Meeting Dates
5. Jesse Lee Church Refund & Tax Abatement Request
6. Boys' & Girls' Club \$250,000 Special Appropriation
7. Architectural Advisory Committee Charge and Composition
8. Town of Lewisboro Parking Issues: Founders Hall Parking Fee
9. Reappointment of Board & Commission Members
10. Appointment of Annual Town Meeting Committee
11. Proposed Horse Ordinance
12. Approval of meeting minutes: 2/28/07, 3/5/07, 3/7/07, 3/9/07, 3/10/07
13. Selectman's Report
14. Executive Session: Discussion of Possible Land Acquisition

R. Marconi called the Public Hearing to order at 7:30 p.m.

1. Proposed Water Main Extension Ordinance – relative to agreements between the Town of Ridgefield and Aquarion Water Company of Connecticut for extension of water mains (copies of the proposed ordinance available at the front of the Conference Room). R. Marconi opened the meeting to comments from the public – there were none. Mr. Marconi then closed the Public Hearing relative to the proposed Water Main Extension Ordinance.

2. Change in the Ridgefield Code for the Historic District under Chapter 6, Article I, Section 6-5. This change is relative to the requirement that the Historic District Commission shall hold a public hearing upon each application for a certificate of appropriateness within not more than sixty-five (65) days rather than sixty (60) days after the filing. R. Marconi opened the meeting to comments from the public – there were none. Mr. Marconi then closed the Public Hearing relative to the proposed change in the Ridgefield Code for the Historic District.
3. The proposed lease at the Richard E. Venus Building between the Town of Ridgefield and Virginia Roebuck (copies of the proposed lease available at the front of the Conference Room). R. Marconi opened the meeting to comments from the public – there were none. Mr. Marconi then closed the Public Hearing relative to the proposed Richard E. Venus Building lease between the Town of Ridgefield and Virginia Roebuck.

R. Marconi called the Town Meeting to order at 7:40 p.m. Minutes of the Town Meeting under separate cover.

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

1. Appointment of Historic District Enforcement Officer (2-yr term): Richard Baldelli - **B. Manners moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to reappoint Richard Baldelli to an additional two-year term as Historic District Enforcement Officer. Motion passed 4-0.**
2. Affordable Housing Committee Interview: Kevin Batterton - Mr. Batterton came forward to introduce himself to the BOS. R. Marconi read the February 11 email received from Mr. Batterton expressing his desire to serve on the Affordable Housing Committee. He attended the Committee's January 30th meeting and would be available to serve on the Committee as he is now working in Greenwich and not NYC. R. Marconi also read the letter received from David Goldenberg, Chairman of the Affordable Housing Committee recommending that Mr. Batterton be appointed to fill one of the vacancies. There are currently two vacancies on the Committee.

B. Manners moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to appoint Kevin Batterton to fill a vacancy on the Affordable Housing Committee. Motion passed 4-0.

3. CT Municipal Consortium for Fiscal Responsibility Presentation & Possible Vote: Mike Guarco, Town of Granby, CT – Mr. Guarco came forward to introduce himself to the Board of Selectmen. He has served as Chairman of Granby's Board of Finance since 1989. He discussed how it is increasingly difficult for a town's BOS to keep the budget low and how the local community has its hands tied more and more when it comes to managing the town's financial affairs. Revenue does not return to the local government as promised. The State is continually operating in a financial deficit. Bills come up in Hartford and special interests and lobbyists show up. Local people need to participate more. There needs to be a presence felt by legislators from local representatives seeking control of their own town's financial matters. These unfounded mandates from the State are not welcome at the local level. Mr. Guarco and others from the CT Municipal Consortium are visiting Connecticut municipalities seeking a motion of support from these local governments. The Consortium seeks to hold regional meetings and will on occasion ask for support from local towns relative to specific bills under consideration in Hartford. Mr. Guarco showed a color-coded map of Connecticut depicting support for the Consortium to date of 113 towns, two-thirds of the towns of Connecticut.

Ridgefield's legislative representative to Hartford, John Frey came forward to discuss the work of the Consortium. Connecticut's employment situation is flat. This is a coalition on unfounded

mandates. They are currently working specifically on two to three issues upon which the local municipalities can agree.

R. Marconi read the resolution in Support of the Connecticut Municipal Consortium Group for Fiscal Responsibility:

“Whereas state interventions into traditionally local budgetary affairs have negatively impacted the delicate balance between a municipality’s capacity to provide services and the local taxpayers’ ability to pay for said services,

and whereas, such interventions have effectively reduced the municipalities’ ability to manage major components of a typical town budget,

and whereas, COST, CABE, CCM and other municipal advocacy agencies have all traditionally called for repeal or reform of prevailing wage and binding arbitration laws that currently apply to and negatively impact the municipalities across Connecticut,

and whereas, the state legislature in Connecticut continues to force new mandates upon the towns while reneging on it’s own statutory municipal aid commitments to said towns.

Therefore, be it resolved, that said board body in said Town join and support the CT Municipal Consortium for Fiscal Responsibility in its effort to bring about changes beneficial to the municipalities and taxpayers across Connecticut.

Said changes include:

- 1) raising the cost thresholds under the prevailing wage statute from the current \$100K/\$400K levels to minimally the \$1 million level,*
- 2) leveling the playing field in binding arbitration by allowing an arbitrated settlement, if rejected by the local legislature body, to then be sent back into negotiations, rather than directly into the last round of appellate review, and*
- 3) a prohibition on new mandates upon the towns from the state until the legislature meets its own funding commitment already existing on the books.*

The Towns seek to be better able to live within their own means, as well should the government of our state of Connecticut.”

J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve the resolution in support of the Connecticut Municipal Consortium Group for Fiscal Responsibility as read by R. Marconi. Motion passed 4-0. R. Marconi will print the resolution on Ridgefield Town stationery, sign it, and forward it to Mr. Guarco, c/o Granby Town Hall.

4. Boehringer Ingelheim Tax Abatement Agreement – Set Public Hearing & Special Town Meeting Dates – Al Garzi, Assessor, came forward to review the latest draft of the proposed agreement to abate increases of tax assessments between Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals, Inc. and the Town of Ridgefield. This has been discussed before and there is still the possibility that Boehringer Ingelheim may request some additional changes in the agreement, but this is the latest version to date. This agreement covers tax abatements in both real estate and personal property taxes on Boehringer’s building expansions, improvements, and renovations. B. Manners pointed out a change in wording on Page 3, Section 4, Part (a), last sentence, to read – “but in no event less than \$75,000,000 U.S. dollars”. Clarification was stated that tax abatement is not on property not associated with the expansion. The various building projects are named/labeled. Taxes on

machinery and equipment will be abated, but there will be reimbursement from the State relative to machinery and equipment.

J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to schedule a Public Hearing for April 11, 2007, 7:30 p.m., and a Town Meeting on April 25, 2007, 7:30 p.m., for the purpose of approval of the proposed Boehringer Ingelheim Tax Abatement Agreement. Motion passed 4-0.

5. Jesse Lee Church Refund & Tax Abatement Request – Al Garzi, Assessor, has requested a refund and tax abatement for Jesse Lee Church relative to their property at 21 King St., E16-0068 for the 10-01-05 Grand List. They currently have paid \$6,226.83 while still owing \$6,272.83 for the 2006/2007 fiscal year. Jesse Lee’s pastor, Bill Pfohl, came forward to answer any questions relative to his January 18, 2007 letter requesting this refund and tax abatement, and explanation of the use of 21 King St. by the church and the community. Mr. Garzi’s March 21, 2007 memo to R. Marconi, First Selectman, details the history of the tax assessment and the exemption request.

J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve a refund of the taxes paid by Jesse Lee Memorial United Methodist Church relative to the property at 21 King Lane for 10-01-05 Grand List, and abatement on the remaining balance for fiscal year 2006/2007 as well for a total of \$12,499.66. Motion passed 4-0.

6. Boys’ & Girls’ Club \$250,000 Special Appropriation – R. Marconi requested that this agenda item be postponed to a later BOS meeting date.
7. Architectural Advisory Committee Charge and Composition – **J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve the proposed change in the composition of the Architectural Advisory Committee to five (5) full-time members and five (5) alternate members, with alternate members having the right to vote when sitting as a fill-in for one of the full-time members. Motion passed 4-0.**
8. Town of Lewisboro Parking Issues; Founders Hall Parking Fee – R. Marconi reported on his attendance at the Public Hearing in Lewisboro relative to this parking issue whereby non-Lewisboro cars are taking up spots in the parking lot. Mr. Marconi requested neighborly cooperation seeking a solution rather than the passing of an ordinance against Connecticut cars. Mr. Marconi reported that he did speak with Founders Hall regarding the possibility of Ridgefield in turn prohibiting out-of-town free parking at the Founders Hall location.
9. Reappointment of Board & Commission Members - There will be a list for the annual reappointment of Board & Commission members at the next BOS meeting. However, it was decided to review the reappointment of the Parks & Recreation Commission this evening. This is a seven member board and five terms expire April 1, 2007. All five responded and said they would like to remain on the Commission. A. Bodner asked if turn-over is actively encouraged? Are advertisements run for new members? B. Manners indicated it would be helpful to know how long members have served on various Boards and Commissions before proceeding with reappointment.

B. Manners moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to reappoint for a three-year term Jonathan Chase, Barbara Dobbin, Charles Hall, Jr., and Philip S. Kearns to the Parks & Recreation Commission effective April 1, 2007, and reappoint Wayne Tinker for a two-year term to the Parks & Recreation Commission effective April 1, 2007. Motion passed 4-0.

10. Appointment of Annual Town Meeting Committee – This appointment needs to be made annually to comply with the Charter. **B. Manners moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to appoint the Board of Selectmen as the 2007 Annual Town Meeting Committee. Motion passed 4-0.**
11. Proposed Horse Ordinance – A draft of a proposed horse ordinance has been distributed to the BOS for their review – “it is a place to start for comments”. The draft was submitted by Town Counsel’s firm, Cohen & Wolfe. This would be a town-wide ordinance. An individual municipality can be more stringent than State ordinances but not less strict. R. Marconi indicated that he does not prefer an ordinance. Should animal control come under zoning enforcement or health issues? Zoning enforcements could not occur based on the current code. This issue will be put on the agenda for the April 11 BOS meeting. Board members are to review the draft and forward comments to Wendy at Town Hall. John Katz, Ridgebury Rd., inquired as to whether public response to such an ordinance is welcome. The answer is yes.
12. Approval of meeting minutes: 2/28/07, 3/5/07, 3/9/07, 3/10/07

J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the February 28, 2007 Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 4-0.

J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve as submitted the minutes of the March 5, 2007 Board of Selectmen Budget Meeting. Motion passed 4-0.

J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the March 7, 2007 Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 4-0.

J. Plock moved and R. Marconi seconded a motion to approve as submitted the minutes of the March 9, 2007 Board of Selectmen Special Meeting. Motion passed 4-0.

B. Manners moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the March 10, 2007, Board of Selectmen Special Meeting. Motion passed 4-0.

13. Selectman’s Report –

- R. Marconi reported on his meeting with Kathleen Walker of the U.S. Post Office relative to expanding the parking lot at Ridgefield’s post office. They would like to demolish the old Mrs. Cummings house to provide space for the lot expansion. The house is in disrepair, but is one of the old structures in Ridgefield - back to 1855. Phil Esser of the Historical Preservation Association has expressed concerned about this possible demolition. The house is on the National Historic Register. Should it be moved? Who would pay to move it? The Post Office is required to work with the State Historical Society before any historic structure can be torn down. The additional parking is needed.

J. Plock moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to recess the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 9:10 p.m. and go into Executive Session at 9:20 p.m. for discussion of a possible land acquisition.

R. Marconi closed the Executive Session at 10:00 p.m. and reopened the BOS Meeting.

J. Plock moved and R. Marconi seconded a motion to adjourn the BOS Meeting at 10:00 p.m. Motion passed 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Janet L. Johnson