

**BOARD of SELECTMEN MEETING – MARCH 22, 2006**

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING**

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, D. Masters, J. Plock

**Board of Selectmen Agenda**

1. Wrestling Team Recognition: Corey Paulish, Alex Blank
2. Transfers – Jay Wahlberg
3. Discuss Increasing Parking Ticket Fine
4. Golf Course Lease
5. Pin Pack Road Tax Abatement Request
6. Historic Document Preservation Grant
7. Approval of Meeting Minutes – 3/8/06
8. Selectman's Report

**Economic Development Commission Agenda**

1. Boehringer Ingelheim Building Progress Report
2. Schlumberger Update

R. Marconi called the Board of Selectmen Meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

1. Wrestling Team Recognition: Corey Paulish, Alex Blank – Rob Murguard, Director of Athletics, Ridgefield High School, introduced the two Wrestling Team winners, Corey Paulish and Alex Blank. Alex, a sophomore at Ridgefield High, is the very first wrestler to win the State championship in Ridgefield High School history. His record is 43 & 4, and he won first place State L championship, Connecticut State Large School Division. Alex has a 3.7 GPA

Corey Paulish's record is 53 & 2, FICAA Championship L Class, Open Division. In twelve minutes, Ridgefield had two State championships! Corey placed third place in the New England Championship. Like Alex, Corey is a good student with a 4.4 GPA.

R. Marconi presented Corey and Alex each with a plaque honoring them for their wrestling championships and academic focus as well. Mr. Marconi expressed the Town's appreciation in their accomplishments for Ridgefield High School and the State of Connecticut. Both the Head Coach and the Assistant Coach of the Wrestling Team have been designated "Coaches of the Year". Corey and Alex's achievements helped the coaches receive these awards.

2. Transfers – Jay Wahlberg – R. Marconi asked Mr. Wahlberg for an update on the recent Board of Finance budget review meeting. The Board of Finance has asked the following departments to each appear at a BOF meeting to review their budget requests: Parks & Recreation, Golf, Police,

Fire, and Highway. The Board of Education has been asked to come on two different nights, and the Board of Selectmen on one night. The dates are being set.

Jay Wahlberg requested approval of the following Finance Memorandums:

**J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve Department of Finance Memorandum #200603 as requested by the Police Department for an Appropriation with a Corresponding Increase in the Revenue Estimate based on future and past activity of the police special services, with an increase in #10401-51020, Special Duty (Overtime) Account, for \$151,000 and an increase in #10903-44230, Police Special Services Revenue Account, for \$151,000. Motion passed 5-0.**

**J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve Department of Finance Memorandum #200604 as requested by the Fire Department for an Appropriation with a Corresponding Increase in the Revenue Estimate based on future and past activity of the EMS Department, with an increase in #10903-44241, Ambulance Service Revenue Account, for \$30,500 and an increase in the following accounts, #10502-52414, for \$22,500, #10502-52054, Medical Supplies, for \$5,000, and #10502-52414, Vehicle Maintenance, for \$3,000, all part of the Fire Emergency Medical Services Department Budget, totaling \$30,500. Motion passed 5-0.**

**J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve Department of Finance Memorandum #200605 as requested by the Fire Department for an Appropriation with a Corresponding Increase in the Revenue Estimate based on future and past activity of the Fire Department, with an increase in #10903-44242, Special Fire Services Revenue Account for \$13,000, and an increase in #10501-51020, Special Duty (Overtime) Account for \$13,000, Motion passed 5-0.**

J. Wahlberg also requested approval of the Building Department's proposed increase in the permit fee from \$5.00/sq.ft. to \$8.00/sq.ft. Ridgefield's current \$5 charge is lower than the permit fee charged by surrounding towns. Norwalk and New Canaan charge \$10/sq.ft. There has been some decline in the number of building starts. This increase will help to cover the deficit if the number of permits continues to decrease. **J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve the Building Department's proposed increase in the building permit fee from \$5.00/sq.ft to \$8.00/sq.ft, effective May 1, 2006. Motion passed 5-0.**

Peter Hill, Director of Public Works has proposed establishment of a fee to cover the costs for the Highway Department to oversee a curb cut, issue a permit, or conduct other inspections as required by construction needs. **B. Manners moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to approve the Highway Department's request for permission to charge a \$50.00 fee, effective May 1, 2006, to cover processing and inspections for permits issued by the Highway Department. Motion passed 5-0.**

- 3. Discuss Increasing Parking Ticket Fine – R. Marconi read the March 8, 2006 letter received from Michael Kaufman, Member of the Parking Authority, requesting approval of the penalty for a parking violation as set forth in Sec. 14-10 of the Ridgefield Code be increased from \$10.00 to \$20.00. The \$10.00 fine has been in effect since 1978. The Parking Authority also would like the opportunity to review all existing leases for parking areas and request that the Office of the First Selectman provide the Parking Authority with copies of said leases. They are looking at recommending changing the time limits in certain areas and want to understand their obligations**

and rights under the leases with respect to each parking area leased. The Authority also wants to pursue the possibility of establishing parking permits at the Branchville Train Station.

A. Bodner suggested a graduated fee structure where the fine is greater for an increased number of infractions, if a system can be established for ticket tracking.

D. Masters indicated her comfort with the requested recommendation of an increase to \$20.00 with a review again next year. Such a decision requires a vote at a Town Meeting, as this fee is part of an ordinance under the Parking Authority. **D. Masters moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to schedule a Town Meeting on May 3, 2006, 7:30 p.m., for approval of an increase in the parking fine to \$20.00 as requested by the Parking Authority. Motion passed 4-0-1. J. Plock abstained as she would like to see the fine increased to \$25.00 instead of the proposed \$20.00.**

The Parking Authority is requesting R. Marconi's attendance at their next regularly scheduled meeting – April 4, 2006 at 8:00 a.m. Mr. Marconi will attend.

4. Golf Course Lease – David Grogins, Town Counsel, came forward to discuss the revised proposed Golf Course Concession Agreement. Also present were the following members of the Golf Committee: Carol Ancona, Al Fazi, Todd Kolb, Jay Saks, and Ed Tyrrell. Mr. Grogins pointed out that change made in Item #13 in the main body of the agreement to agree with #13 in the rider.

The question was raised as to whether Mr. Wool is willing to sign the agreement without the ability to sell hard liquor? Mr. Wool is asking for the opportunity to appear before Planning & Zoning to seek a revision of the permit. D. Masters pointed out that the Ridgefield Playhouse was given a liquor license – why should it be different for the Golf Club? It is felt that there is a difference between cocktails served following an evening event at the Playhouse and a concession at a golf course.

Carol Ancona indicated that the Golf Committee would like to expedite the permit process as much as possible – perhaps secure a beer/wine license and then seek a hard liquor license next. John Katz, Ridgebury Rd., pointed out that he was against expanding the permit to include hard liquor, but he is willing to re-open the vote if the Board of Selectmen feels that it is appropriate to do so. Mr. Katz indicated that he does not want the golf course to be in jeopardy. If this is the only issue preventing Mr. Wool from signing the agreement, then perhaps the BOS and Planning & Zoning need to do whatever possible to solve this issue. The primary use of the concession is to serve the golfers. It is not to be a “town restaurant”. D. Grogins indicated that the Town can request expedited processing for a liquor license. Mr. Wool is already approved for such a license at a different Connecticut location. If Mr. Wool decides to not proceed with the concession agreement, the Golf Committee will pursue someone else who has expressed interest.

**B. Manners moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve as amended the proposed Golf Course Concession Agreement, and to give R. Marconi, as First Selectman, permission to sign the contract as the representative of the Town of Ridgefield. Motion passed 5-0.**

5. Pin Pack Road Tax Abatement Request – R. Marconi read the March 20, 2006 memo received from Al Garzi, Assessor, relative to Tax Abatement for Property on Pin Pack Road owned by The Land Conservancy of Ridgefield, Inc. The property is just north of Barrack Hill Rd., the Seth Lawrence estate. **B. Manners moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to approve the tax abatement for the 05/06 Fiscal Year in the amount of \$248.08 and whatever property tax**

would be billed for the 06.07 Fiscal Year, for property on Pin Pack Road owned by The Land Conservancy of Ridgefield, Inc. Motion passed 5-0.

6. Historic Document Preservation Grant – R. Marconi read the March 16, 2006 memo received from Barbara Serfilippi, Town Clerk, requesting permission to execute the application to the State Library for the Historic Documents Preservation Grant. **D. Masters moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to permit Rudolph P. Marconi, as the First Selectman, or the Town Clerk as his designee to execute and deliver in the name of and on behalf of the municipality of Ridgefield, CT, an application and grant with the State Library for a Historic Document Preservation Grant. Motion passed 5-0.**
7. Approval of Meeting Minutes – 3/8/06 - **J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the March 8, 2006, Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 5-0.**
8. Selectman’s Report –
  - Fire Chief Lou Yarrish Retirement Party – March 24
  - A letter has been received from the Ridgefield Board of Education asking for a meeting with the BOS. The Charter Revision Commission wants to change the charter to have the Board of Education budget submitted to the BOS before it goes to the Board of Finance. The Board of Education is not in favor of this change. D. Masters indicated support for a meeting with the Board of Education relative to what items are in the BOS budget and what items are in the Board of Education’s budget. There needs to be discussion as to “who is paying for what”. All the costs per student need to be “in the same pot” so a valid comparison can be made of cost per pupil as compared to other surrounding communities. Dr. Kenneth Freeston, Paul Roche, and R. Marconi are scheduling a meeting. One issue for discussion is the return of outdoor maintenance of school grounds returned to the Board of Education budget.
  - Children’s Corner – Nan Hawkins, Director, has requested a decision if possible on renewal of their lease scheduled for 2009. She would like to make some capital improvements and does not want to do so, or at least do so in a less expensive way, if her contract with the Town of Ridgefield is not going to be renewed. If the Children’s Corner needs to move in 2009, they will need ample time to plan for such a move. The Board of Education will need to make a decision as to whether or not they will need to use this space for their needs, possibly a Special Education facility. D. Masters pointed out the need to consult with census results, the demographics to see if this property will need to be returned to the Board of Education for their use. R. Marconi will send Dr. Freeston a letter asking for consideration of the Children’s Corner issue. Ms. Hawkins should call the Board of Education and request to be on their meeting agenda. Ms. Hawkins pointed out the need for new lighting and window replacement in their space.
  - Open Space Ordinance – A Town Meeting needs to be set for this issue. Changes to the ordinance will be discussed at the Public Hearing on April 5.
  - Safe Rides – The new Connecticut state law prohibits children under 18 from driving after 12:00 midnight. John Frey, Ridgefield’s State Representative, worked on a new bill which

exempts Safe Rides from this ruling. This will enable Safe Rides to continue to be effective.

- Acre Lane Situation – The DEC came to review and walk the Ballard Green property. This meeting provided an opportunity to request possible State assistance with the Acre Lane uranium in the water problem. The DEC will investigate if any grant dollars are possibly available for Acre Lane residents.
- BOS Meeting Schedule – April 5, May 3, May 17, May 31

**J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 8:55 p.m. Motion passed 5-0.**

### **Economic Development Commission Meeting**

R. Marconi called the Economic Development Commission Meeting to order at 8:55 p.m.

1. Boehringer Ingelheim Building Progress Report – This \$372 million building project is proceeding. Al Garzi, Assessor, has prepared a schedule of the additional taxes the Town will receive as a result of this building project. The tax abatement doesn't take place until the COO is issued; taxes will be assessed up to that point. Ridgefield's ordinance provides for an 85% tax credit for the first year and a decreasing rate of credit each year for a total of seven years. Our mill rate is lower than Danbury's mill rate. Danbury gave Boehringer 100% tax credit. The State is considering elimination of the machinery and equipment tax. This would cost Ridgefield about \$2 million/year in lost revenue. If the State does eliminate this tax, we would want to be able to levy this tax ourselves on Boehringer. The State is talking about eliminating the vehicle property tax. We would then want to be able to levy this tax ourselves on our residents, as the revenue is needed. Al Garzi will be attending the May 3 Economic Development Commission Meeting. He is working on a five-year projection on tax income – a "forecast".
2. Schlumberger Update – We are yet to hear back from Michael Katz, the Real Estate developer that Schlumberger has hired. He is to be putting together a couple of possible scenarios. Schlumberger does not want to act as a developer. They say they want to do something for the community as they were in Ridgefield for fifty years.
3. Eureka – Haven't heard anything from them. Casey Healy, their attorney, called David Grogins, Town Counsel, to set up a time for discussion.
4. Economic Development Commission - should have at least five members. Will ask the press to advertise for additional applicants.

**B. Manners moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to adjourn the Economic Development Commission Meeting at 9:10 p.m. Motion passed 5-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Janet L. Johnson