

## **BOARD of SELECTMEN MEETING – APRIL 5, 2006**

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

### REVISED/APPROVED MINUTES

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

#### **Fire Commission Agenda – 6:30 P.M.**

1. Fee Schedule Proposal – Fire Marshall Dave Lathrop
2. Volunteer Fire Department Carnival Update
3. Review Fire Chief Contract – Possible Executive Session

#### **Board of Selectmen Agenda – 7:30 P.M.**

1. Fire Chief Contract
2. Small Cities Resolution—Ballard Green Housing
3. Open Space Deer Hunting Ordinance Review; set date for Town Meeting
4. Fair Housing Resolution
5. State of CT Property Lease at Woodcock Nature Center – Set Public Hearing & Town Meeting dates
6. Approval of Meeting Minutes – 3/15/06, 3/22/06, 3/27/06
7. Selectman's Report

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

R. Marconi called the Board of Selectmen Meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. following the Fire Commission Meeting from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

**B. Manners moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to insert as #2 on the Agenda: Small Cities Resolution—Ballard Green Housing. Motion passed 5-0.**

1. Fire Chief Contract – Ms. Heather Burford, the top choice for Fire Chief, came forward to meet the Board of Selectmen. Ms. Burford has seventeen years of fire service experience. She started as a fire volunteer in Wilton and at one time worked at Boehringer Ingelheim in Ridgefield. She is therefore very familiar with the Ridgefield community. She has spent the last thirteen years with the Manchester, CT Fire Department and most recently as Battalion Chief. Ridgefield's minimum qualifications included experience with paramedics, experience with a volunteer fire department, and experience with a town like Ridgefield. Twenty-two applicants were asked for personal assessments. A peer review panel comprised of the Fire Chiefs from Norwalk, Milford and Wilton then interviewed the top applicants. Through this process, Ms. Burford "rose to the top".

**B. Manners moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to approve a five-year contract for Heather Burford as Fire Chief for the Town of Ridgefield as discussed in the Executive Session, Fire Commission Meeting on April 5, 2006. Motion passed 5-0.** Ms. Burford signed the contract.

A formal swearing-in ceremony will be scheduled with Town Clerk, B. Serfilippi, for early May, complete with pictures and refreshments.

2. Small Cities Resolution—Ballard Green Housing – R. Marconi read the proposed resolution. Federal monies are available under the Connecticut Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program, administered by the State of Connecticut, Department of Economic and Community Development. The funds will be used for the construction of the additional units at Ballard Green. **B. Manners moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to approve the Certified Resolution of the Town of Ridgefield Small Cities Program, whereby the filing of an application by the Town of Ridgefield in an amount not to exceed \$500,000 is approved and the First Selectman is authorized and directed to file this application with the Commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development and to act as the authorized representative of the Town of Ridgefield. Motion passed 5-0.**
  
3. Open Space Deer Hunting Ordinance Review; Set Date for Town Meeting – R. Marconi read the proposed new ordinance, Article IV Open Space Use: Section 4-75 Controlled Hunting, as discussed at the Public Hearing on March 15, 2006. B. Manners then read her proposed wording of this new ordinance which addresses the concerns raised at the Public Hearing. This new wording makes the ordinance more specific. Added was the wording, “the Board of Selectmen, after its review and approval of the procedures, practices and safety measures to be followed by the Deer Management Committee,” etc., and may from time to time authorize the Deer Management Committee to initiate and supervise a “controlled” hunt of deer on “specifically designated” Town-owned space lands. A discussion followed regarding the proposed new wording.

Tom Belote, Bailey Avenue - attempted to define the term “controlled hunt”. This is not a defined phrase under DEP regulations of the State. Other neighboring towns say, “A hunt that is managed by the Town”. The term “controlled hunt” should be defined in a memo to the Deer Management Committee.

Gwen Thaxter, Walnut Grove Rd. – indicated confusion on the status of the proposed Yale study on the deer situation in Ridgefield. It is her understanding that Dr. Oswald Schmidt needs to initiate his study prior to any hunting. R. Marconi indicated that he has tried to reach Dr. Schmidt via phone and emails but has not been able to speak with him since before the Doctor left on his sabbatical. Ms. Baxter would like to see Yale’s proposal made public.

Dom D’Addario, Tanton Hill Rd. – inquired about the selection process for the hunters. Mr. Belote, Chairman of the Deer Management Committee, replied that volunteers will be selected following a thorough screening process. They will be screened by the DEP hunter safety people, screened by the Ridgefield Police, and interviewed by the Deer Management Committee for professionalism and ethics. There will be a proficiency requirement for all hunters; hunting will not be open to the general public who may just wish to participate without a previous record of safe hunting. The names of the hunters will be available to the general public. Could their names be published in the press? Their names would be public information.

Nan Howkins stressed the need for adequate notification as to when and where a hunt will be taking place. She expressed concern about children and hikers who use the trails in the open space properties. A system needs to be put in place to protect the populace. Mr. Belote replied that hunting will not be done on weekends nor when the children are out of school.

The property will be posted and notice of a hunt will be published extensively. Notification will also be done house-to-house on abutting property. Hunting has been done successfully in Wilton for the last two years.

**J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion that the amended proposed Controlled Hunting Ordinance, the copy of which the wording was revised by B. Manners, be sent to a referendum on May 9, 2006, if there is room on the referendum ballot, and if this is not possible, then to a Town Meeting on May 31, 2006. Motion passed 4-1. B. Manners voted no.**

4. Fair Housing Resolution – R. Marconi read the proposed Town of Ridgefield Fair Housing Resolution. This resolution is renewed each year. A letter is then sent to all Ridgefield realtors with a copy of the Resolution. **J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to adopt as the Town of Ridgefield Fair Housing Resolution. Motion passed 5-0.**

5. State of CT Property Lease at Woodcock Nature Center – Set Public Hearing & Town Meeting Date – R. Marconi read the July 29, 2005 letter he sent to Mr. Thomas Naum, Department of Environmental Protection, State of Connecticut, stating that the Town of Ridgefield would like to renew the lease of 6.073 acres that encompasses both the town of Ridgefield and Wilton and of which began on February 1, 1971 and which was terminated on January 31, 1996. The lease should be renewed for the next 25 years, and should be retroactively installed beginning on February 1, 1996 and should be terminated on January 31, 2021.

**J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to hold a Public Hearing on May 3, 2006, at 7:30 p.m., Town Hall/Lower Level Conference Room, and a Town Meeting on May 17, 2006, at 7:30 p.m., Town Hall/Lower Level Conference Room, for the purpose of renewal of the State of CT Property Lease at Woodcock Nature Center. Motion passed 5-0.**

6. Approval of Meeting Minutes – 3/15/06, 3/22/06, 3/27/06

**J. Plock moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the March 15, 2006 Public Hearing. Motion passed 4-0. B. Manners was temporarily out of the room and thus did not vote on the motion**

**J. Plock moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the March 22, 2006, Board of Selectmen Meeting and Economic Development Commission Meeting. Motion passed 5-0.**

**J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve as written the minutes of the March 27, 2006, Board of Selectmen Emergency Meeting. Motion passed 5-0.**

7. Selectman's Report –

- BOS scheduled to meet with the Board of Finance regarding budget deliberations – April 11, 7:30 p.m. R. Marconi has asked J. Wahlberg to review the budget numbers – last year against current and proposed numbers to see where the differences are. One consideration is to do current year-end and then three-year projections. A. Bodner suggested looking at current year's salaries and put in CPI rate as a "planning tool". If we want to hire additional people within the next three years, if we project out the costs, then these

numbers will assist in the decision-making process as to whether or not to hire. To do an accurate forecast, need to make decisions accordingly. We can let the Board of Finance know we are thinking of “going this road”. A. Bodner indicated that this is a wonderful idea but may be too ambitious for this current budget session.

- R. Marconi attended the Mayor’s Institute at Yale last week Wednesday, Thursday and half of Friday. Attendees were from Connecticut, NJ and NY. The purpose was to show how the Regional Planning Authority can work with a community such as Ridgefield. An example would be to work with the parking problem in downtown Ridgefield. They start with brainstorming and put an idea on a tissue overlay which is then placed over a town map. They then come up with a PowerPoint presentation of the need and the proposed solution. It was an excellent seminar. They will come to your town, work on a problem issue, and will provide the leadership for a pro-active solution. Regarding our downtown parking situation, they are suggesting a look at Bailey Avenue eastward toward Governor St. There is a need for serious talk about the growth of the town. It would be helpful to have this group come and meet with us.
- R. Marconi read an April 4’ 2006 email received from Nan Howkins, Director of the Children’s Corner, relative to the use of space at Barlow Mountain Building. She has received calls and e-mails from parents regarding the possibility of the Board of Education taking back the Children’s Corner space and possibly using it for a Special Education facility rather than Ridgefield Special Education children attending school in another town as is the current situation. Students for such a center from other towns could then come to Ridgefield instead of the reverse. Nothing in writing nor orally has been received by the BOS from Dr. Freeston relative to this issue. J. Plock indicated that she does not think the public school can legally initiate and support such a program for students from other towns as well as Ridgefield students. R. Marconi stressed his understanding and concern for Ms. Howkins’ position and the need for an answer as to the continued availability of the Children’s Corner space as soon as possible. Her lease is up in 2009, but she would like to have this question resolved this summer. R. Marconi indicated that the Board of Selectmen needs to send a letter to the Board of Education requesting a “sooner rather than later” decision. A. Bodner requested that Ms. Howkins submit a letter to the BOS explaining what she would like. She will do so.

**J. Plock moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 9:10 p.m. Motion passed 5-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Janet L. Johnson