

**BOARD of SELECTMEN MEETING – 4/27/05**

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 verbatim transcription.

In attendance: R. Marconi, B. Manners, D. Masters, J. Plock, P. Yanity

**AGENDA**

1. Board of Ethics Interview – Bill Hildebrand
2. Buchsbaum Accessway Approval
3. Finance Transfers, RFP Insurance & Risk Management Committee Audit, Travel & Training Freeze – Jay Wahlberg
4. Conservation Commission Reappointments (Susan Baker, Carroll Brewster, George Orland)
5. Golf Committee Appointment
6. July 2006 Rochambeau Weekend – NPS marker, town celebration – Keith Jones
7. Re-name South Street Bypass
8. VNA Lease
9. Charter Revision Commission Charge
10. Approval of Meeting Minutes – 3/7/05
11. First Selectman’s Report

**Economic Development Commission Agenda**

1. Venus Building – Second Floor

**Fire Commission Agenda**

1. Discussion of General Orders
2. Fire Chief Review (Executive Session)

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

1. **Board of Ethics Commission Interview – Bill Hildebrand**  
Mr. Hildebrand came forward to introduce himself to the BOS and present his credentials for consideration as Alternate to the Board of Ethics Commission. This vacancy occurred as a result of Phil Baumann’s appointment as full-time member of the Board of Ethics. Mr. Hildebrand is a Ridgefield residence since 1996 and is an unaffiliated voter. Mr. Marconi read Mr. Hildebrand’s e-mail expressing interest in the position and outlining his professional background as an attorney and his special interest in the subject of ethics. Mr. Hildebrand attained the rank of Eagle Scout as a

youth. He attended the most recent Board of Ethics meeting. **J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to appoint Bill Hildebrand as Alternate member of the Board of Ethics Commission. Motion passed 5-0.**

2. Buchsbaum Accessway Approval – Attorney Bob Jewell presented the request for approval of the Buchsbaum Accessway (17 acres between Spring Valley Road and Bridle Trail). Six acres will be dedicated to the Town as open space as part of this application, and a subdivision of three lots. The easement has already been approved and thus do not have to return to Planning & Zoning for approval; this is approval of the accessway agreement to prevent any confusion. **P. Yanity moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to approve the Buchsbaum accessway agreement as amended. Motion passed 5-0.**

3. Finance Transfers, RFP Insurance & Risk Management Committee Audit, Travel & Planning Freeze – Jay Wahlberg

- **J. Plock moved and P. Yanity seconded a motion to approve the Department of Finance Memorandum #200512 providing for Intra-Departmental Transfer for the Parks & Recreation Department to cover the 2004-2005 winter season for snow removal. Motion passed 5-0.**

The transfer will be as follows:

Increase:

10352-51007	Overtime	\$ 21,378
10357-51007	Overtime	14,956

Decrease:

10352-51001	Full Time Salaries	\$ 21,378
10358-51010	Part Time Seasonal	9,956
10357-31010	Part Time Seasonal	5,000

- J. Wahlberg requested formation of a panel to review and interview the bids received for selection of a new auditing firm for the Town of Ridgefield. The proposed fees vary greatly. The current fee is approximately \$64,000/year. R. Marconi suggested that Jeanette Morrow, Bond Advisor, serve on this panel, providing there is no conflict of interest. In addition, R. Marconi, P. Yanity, J. Wahlberg, and a representative from the Board of Finance will serve on this five-member audit firm review panel.
- Richard Inserra, Chairman of the Insurance & Risk Committee presented a request for the hiring of an outside consultant to review and audit the current insurance program for the Town of Ridgefield and the Board of Education. This has not been done since 1987. A set of “fresh eyes” would be welcome to review, for example, the risks being covered, is the funding appropriate, and a review of the self-insurance fund. A request for proposal would be put out to three to four firms with an estimated maximum cost of \$25,000, payable out of the self-insurance fund. **B. Manners moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to**

**approve, subject to approval by the full Insurance & Risk Management Committee, the issuance of an RFP (Request for Proposal) to hire an outside consultant to review and audit the insurance program for the Town of Ridgefield & the Board of Education. Motion passed 5-0.**

- Proposed Travel & Training Freeze – Costs of snow removal and oil this winter have significantly strained the budget. A possible freeze in travel and training expenses could help to alleviate this budget crunch. B. Manners pointed out how it is not a simple decision. Public safety and certification requirements are required and need to be met. She feels the decision should be made by each department head relative to previously approved expenditures in their individual budgets. “Thinking out of the box” should be encouraged. This is being proposed for just the completion of this year’s current budget. Planned travel and training for certification should go ahead, but no to new ideas. The First Selectman shall approve any proposed expenditures involving travel and training for the balance of this fiscal year.
4. Conservation Commission Reappointments (Susan Baker, Carroll Brewster, George Orlan) – All three candidates came forward to present their interest in being reappointed to the Conservation Commission, effective February 1, 2005. R. Marconi read the charge of the Conservation Commission. The three candidates were asked to summarize the year’s highlights for the Conservation Commission. Letters were sent out soliciting those interested in having an ecological appraisal of their property. The letters presented ways in which residents could participate in preserving their land as open space. They did receive a few replies and are following up on the replies. The Commission functions as advisors to Planning & Zoning on wetlands. The Commission has also assumed the responsibilities of the previously solicited Open Space Task Force. The percent of open space in Ridgefield is currently between 23 to 24%. P. Yanity inquired as to how does Ridgefield stand with regard to the percent of open space as compared to neighboring towns? Wilton is very aggressive with their acquisition of open space. Redding also seems to have a lot of open space. No such survey has been conducted. **J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to reappoint Susan Baker, Carroll Brewster, and George Orlan as members of the Conservation Commission, effective February 1, 2005, for a three-year term. Motion passed 5-0.**
  5. Golf Committee Appointment – All the interviewed applicants are very qualified. The Golf Committee has recommended the appointment of Ed Tyrrell to fill the vacancy. He has applied three to four times to serve on the Golf Committee. **B. Manners moved and P. Yanity seconded a motion to appoint Ed Tyrrell to fill the vacancy on the Golf Committee. Motion passed 5-0.**
  6. July 2006 Rochambeau Weekend – NPS Marker, Town Celebration – Keith Jones – Keith Jones reviewed the history of the nine-state trail traveled by French and American armies between June 1781 and December 1782 en route to victory in the American War for Independence. By act of Congress this trail has been deemed of

National significance and the National Park Service has been directed to mark and maintain the W3R Route. To celebrate the 225<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of W3R, events will be staged in five Connecticut towns, including Ridgefield during June/July 2006. The Historical Society is requesting the proclamation of July 1 & 2, 2006 as Ridgefield's 225 Anniversary "March to Victory Weekend" and authorize the Event Planning Committee, as well as the placement of a marker at Ridgebury Meadow, the place where Rochambeau's army camped in Ridgefield.

**D. Masters moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to approve the requested installation of the National Register of Historic Places marker at Ridgebury Meadow at the intersection of Old Stagecoach and Ridgebury Roads, indicating the March Route and Encampment of Rochambeau's French Army during the War for Independence. Motion passed 5-0.**

**J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to proclaim July 1 and 2, 2006 as March to Victory weekend, in commemoration of the French soldiers' encampment at Ridgebury Meadow and their march under Rochambeau's leadership to link up with George Washington's Army. Motion passed 5-0.**

7. Re-name South Street Bypass – The Board of Selectmen has the authority under Chapter 13 of the Town Code to name streets. To be an attractive address for economic development, the South Street Bypass should have a more attractive name. R. Marconi will ask Jack Sanders to come up with an idea for a new street name for the South Street Bypass and will bring the idea back to the BOS for their consideration.
8. VNA Lease – The VNA have moved to the first floor. They moved on January 5<sup>th</sup>, but the new lease will be effective as of January 1<sup>st</sup>. The difference is about \$8,000 to the Town. We are asking for an annual rent increase; the VNA is requesting an increase every three years. The BOS agreed that the goal is consistency in Town leases with annual rent increases. BOS members are to review the latest draft of the lease and call R. Marconi with any comments or suggestions. R. Marconi will meet with the VNA to review the details of the lease. It was agreed that the VNA second floor should be rented out as soon as possible.
9. Charter Revision Commission Charge – R. Marconi read the Commission Charge as follows:

The Charter Revision Commission shall examine the Charter of the Town of Ridgefield and confer with the various agencies of the Town and conduct public hearings to solicit possible changes to the Charter. The Commission shall hold at least two public hearings; one prior to the beginning of any substantive work on such charter, and one after the draft report to the appointing authority has been completed. The Commission may hold other public hearings as it deems necessary. The Commission shall furnish to the Board of Selectmen quarterly status reports of its

activities with a final report presented to the Board of Selectmen no later than July 31, 2006.

**P. Yanity moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to approve the Charter Revision Commission charge as written and read by R. Marconi. Motion passed 5-0.**

It was also agreed that personal e-mail addresses of the Commission members would not be published. Instead, a special e-mail address would be set up for Town Revision matters. All Commission members would then have access to that e-mail address.

10. Approval of Meeting Minutes – 3/7/05

**P. Yanity moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the Special Town Meeting and Board of Selectmen Meeting of March 7, 2005. Motion passed 5-0.**

11. First Selectman's Report – R. Marconi reported that he had sent a letter on April 11, 2005 to the Mayor of Danbury, Mark Boughton, relevant to the tree clearing at Danbury Airport. He has not yet received a reply no acknowledgement of receipt of the letter.

Economic Development Commission Meeting

R. Marconi called for a recess of the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 8:50 p.m. and convened the Economic Development Commission Meeting at 8:51 p.m. to discuss the Venus Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor. A space diagram was distributed. This is the space that Norwalk Community College has been considering, but right now this project is on hold due to budget constraints. NCC is still very interested in coming to Ridgefield, but they do not know when they can make that happen. R. Marconi has suggested that NCC confers with Peggy Bruno, Director of Ridgefield's Adult Education, to see if they could work together in making some NCC courses a reality in Ridgefield. The BOS agreed not to wait for NCC, but to actively solicit renters for the space (5-6,000 sq. ft.) Air Age is currently being charged approximately \$15,000.

P. Yanity suggested that a survey be made of surrounding towns as to whether or not they currently have an Economic Development Director on staff? If so, what area of the Town does that individual report to? P. Yanity feels that Ridgefield needs to hire either an Economic Development Director or a consultant to aid in corporate development of Ridgefield. This individual would also keep in contact with current corporate entities in Town. A volunteer Director would not be enough – Ridgefield needs to grow their tax base.

**J. Plock moved and P. Yanity seconded a motion to adjourn the Economic Development Commission meeting and reconvene the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 9:00 p.m. Motion passed 5-0.**

Fire Commission Agenda

1. Discussion of General Orders
2. Fire Chief Review (Executive Session)

The Board of Selectmen serves as the Fire Commission.

Laurie Scholl, Director of Human Resources and Fire Chief Lou Yarrish came forward to discuss the General Order for Physical Fitness issued 1/14/93. The Fire Department encourages its members to maintain a high state of physical fitness due to the strenuous nature of the work in which a firefighter is involved. In this regard, the Fire Department has allowed over the years, the introduction of various pieces of physical fitness equipment stored in the firehouse for use by members of the Department, both on and off duty. No release is required from the individual using the equipment nor does a representative of the Town sign a release from liability. Laurie Scholl pointed out that if the individual is using the equipment during work hours and there is an injury, they are covered by workmen's compensation. If the individual is using the equipment while off duty and an injury occurs, the Town still has liability. She feels a waiver of liability should be obtained from individuals using the exercise equipment while off duty.

P. Yanity feels that this matter should be referred to Town Counsel and they in turn should consult with the Town insurance company. One suggestion was to have an instructor come over from the Parks & Recreation facility and provide the firefighters with an exercise equipment orientation program. Each individual would then be checked out on the various pieces of equipment for safe and correct usage procedures. Notes should also be on file from each individual's doctor providing permission for safe usage of the exercise machines. R. Marconi indicated that signage on machine usage and a training and liability protection policy is needed. He will refer the matter to Town Counsel. There is no history of anyone being hurt on the equipment or liability issues to date.

**J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to adjourn the public session of the Board of Selectmen meeting at 9:05 p.m. and move into Executive Session for the purpose of the Fire Chief Review with Laurie Scholl, Director of Human Resources, and Fire Chief Louis Yarrish present. Motion passed 5-0.**

The Executive Session was adjourned at 9:45 p.m. and the Public Session of the Board of Selectmen Meeting was called back to order.

**J. Plock moved and P. Yanity seconded a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 9:45 p.m. Motion passed 5-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Janet L. Johnson