

PUBLIC HEARING & BOARD of SELECTMEN MEETING – MAY 3, 2006

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

Public Hearing

A Public Hearing will be held on May 3, 2006, 7:30 P.M., Town Hall Large Conference Room, 400 Main Street, Ridgefield, Connecticut to discuss the proposed lease renewal for property at Woodcock Nature Center from the State of Connecticut.

Board of Selectmen Meeting (immediately following Public Hearing) Agenda

1. Ridgefield Theatre Barn –Sue Manning & Pete Sayer
2. Appointment of 300-Year Anniversary Committee: Sue Manning, Tom Nash, Rudy Marconi, Maureen Kiernan, Kay Ables, Tom Belote, Pam Lowell, Kevin Walsh
3. Transfers – Jay Wahlberg
4. Fire Police Gas Allotment Policy
5. VNA Rent Abatement Request
6. Section 7-9 Code Change (The Use of Internal Combustion Engines and Snowmobiles on Lake Mamasasco, Pierrepont Lake, and Great Pond prohibited) – Set Town Meeting date
7. Approval of meeting minutes – 3/6/06, 3/7/06, 3/27/06, 4/1/06, 4/5/06, 4/18/06
8. Selectman's Report

Public Hearing

R. Marconi called the Public Hearing to order at 7:30 p.m. Mr. Marconi read the call for the Public Hearing – to discuss the proposed lease renewal for property at Woodcock Nature Center from the State of Connecticut. The Woodcock Nature Center was first established in 1956. **J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to hold a Town Meeting on May 17, 2006, 7:30 p.m., for the purpose of approval of the proposed lease renewal for property at Woodstock Nature Center from the State of Connecticut. Motion passed 5-0.**

R. Marconi closed the Public Hearing at 7:35 p.m. and called the Board of Selectmen Meeting to order.

Board of Selectmen Meeting

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to add to tonight's agenda the setting of a Town Meeting relative to the proposed Parking Fees Ordinance. Motion passed 5-0.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to add to the Town Meeting agenda to be held on May 17, 2006, 7:30 p.m., consideration of the proposed Parking Fees Ordinance. Motion passed 5-0.

D. Masters moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to add to this evening's agenda as #3B a discussion with the Lyme Disease Task Force relative to their Task Force presentation last Saturday, April 29. Motion passed 5-0.

1. Ridgefield Theatre Barn – Sue Manning & Pete Sayer

Sue Manning and Peter Sayer came forward to present a proposal for an addition to the Ridgefield Theatre Barn. They are seeking permission from the Board of Selectmen to move forward on this proposed addition. If they receive the requested approval from the BOS, they will then proceed in seeking permits and any variances needed and approval from the Zoning Board of Appeals. The Ridgefield Theatre Barn has been leasing the Halpin Lane property from the Town for the last 41 years. As the renters, they have been responsible for all the improvements, maintenance and operating expenses. The small addition proposed would provide two new multi-sex bathrooms, one with handicapped access, and a lobby area. The small box office area would be outfitted with a sink which would be useful when serving coffee and other refreshments. The basement beneath the new space would provide rehearsal and set and storage space. Their budget is aiming for \$150,000 with the realization that the cost may well be approximately \$200,000. They have already received promised donations of dollars and assistance in time. They will also seek possible grant dollars. They do not expect to have to do any septic work.

J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion for the Board of Selectmen to endorse with best wishes the proposed expansion of the Ridgefield Theatre Barn. Motion passed 5-0.

2. Appointment of 300-Year Anniversary Committee: Sue Manning, Tom Nash, Rudy Marconi, Maureen Kiernan, Kay Ables, Tom Belote, Pam Lowell, Kevin Walsh -

Ridgefield's 300-year anniversary will be in 2008. The BOS will appoint the Anniversary Committee and the Committee will in turn appoint their officers. **J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to appoint the following individuals to serve on the 300-Year Anniversary Committee: Sue Manning as Chairman, Tom Nash, Rudy Marconi, Maureen Kiernan, Kay Ables, Tom Belote, Pam Lowell, and Kevin Walsh. Motion passed 5-0.**

B. Manners suggested that the fyfe & drum corps credit from the re-enactment a couple of years ago due to rain be used at the 2008 anniversary celebration. John Frey had sent her an email suggesting use of the credit for part of the summer concert series, but she feels it would be most appropriate to use the credit instead for the 300-year celebration.

3. Transfers – Jay Wahlberg –

Jay Wahlberg, Town Controller, came forward to present transfers as requested by the Department of Finance. Accompanying him was John Pinchbeck, Tree Warden, who showed pictures of trees on Town property which needed and/or need to be taken down for safety reasons.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve Department of Finance Memorandum #200606, an Appropriation from General Contingency, as requested by the Town Tree Warden to cover costs incurred by an unprecedented storm season for tree removals, with an increase of #10370-52130, Tree Care, in the amount of \$15,000 and a decrease in #10890-59101, General Contingency, in the amount of \$15,000. Motion passed 5-0. A. Bodner indicated his willingness to support this motion as the tree work is necessary, but he expressed concern as it seems as if each year this is a budget issue. John Pinchbeck indicated that his department has been actively clearing and trimming Town trees for the past ten years, and it is their intention to have the Town in shape relative to this issue in the near future. A discussion

ensued relative to tree care on Town open space property. Should the cost of this tree care not be the responsibility of the Conservation Commission? John Pinchbeck indicated that the trees that his department are trimming, etc. are on peripheral areas of open space property.

J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve Department of Finance Memorandum #200607, an Inter-Departmental Transfer for an increase as requested by the Highway Department to cover snow removal costs incurred during the winter season 2005-2006 above its estimated budget and a decrease in the Insurance Liability fund as the Town has benefited from reduced insurance costs after the budget was approved by referendum. This memorandum calls for an increase in #10603-53210, Snow Removal, in the amount of \$145,000, an increase in #10605-52204, Snow Removal Contractors, in the amount of \$25,000, and an increase in #10602-51007, Overtime, in the amount of \$20,000 and a decrease in #10851-57006, Insurance Liability, in the amount of \$195,000. Motion passed 5-0.

R. Marconi indicated that a fax had just been received from the State indicating the State's reimbursement for the 48 hours of snow removal costs from February 10 & 11, 2006. This should amount to about \$61,000 to the Town which will help to cover overtime costs for the Fire Department and Police Department relative to this storm. This money should be received in the summer.

J. Wahlberg was asked to comment on estimates for 2006 fiscal year-end. Revenue is doing very well, above estimates. Expenses are very tight due mainly to Parks & Rec overtime snow removal costs and the cost of fuel. How are the pluses and minuses coming out at the end of the year at this point? We are going to come out with a surplus due to conveyance tax dollars and tax collections – estimating at about \$500,000 to \$1 million in excess. A. Bodner inquired as to how much did the Board of Finance take this increase in income into consideration in their budgeting process (for establishment of the mill rate for next year)? The surplus would help get the fund balance up to 6%. Does putting the brakes on mean putting expenditures into the next year? Is this a good idea? R. Marconi pointed out that the goal is to avoid “purchase order frenzy” in May and June. Costs that can be put off for a month or two into the next fiscal year seem appropriate.

3B. Discussion with the Lyme Disease Task Force – The following individuals came forward to discuss their experience on Saturday, April 29 relative to their Task Force Seminar: Jennifer Reid and Karen Gaudian, Ridgefield Lyme Task Force Co-Chairmen, and Tom Belote, representative of the Ridgefield Deer Management Committee and the Fairfield County Deer Management Alliance.

On Saturday, April 29, the Lyme Disease Task Force scheduled a seminar to increase public awareness of Lyme Disease with a prevention focus. Such a program especially appeals to newcomers. Attendance is usually 30-40 people. The program was to include a Power Point presentation by a Ridgefield Girl Scout troop, which they hope to take into each public school, Tom Belote, who would review the history of the Deer Committee and various deer control options, a veterinarian, a landscape designer, a health educator, and Dr. Kirby Stafford, from the State of CT Agricultural Experiment Station and a specialist in tick reduction. This seminar would be held at no expense to the Town of Ridgefield.

Jennifer Reid and Karen Gaudian reported on the letter they received from Barry Corn demanding equal time for a Save the Deer presentation and threatening a law suit if the Task Force did not comply with his request. The Task Force shared this letter with Town Counsel who advised them

to ahead with their seminar program as planned. According to Ms. Manners, she suggested that they offer two tables with info on each side of the deer control question or have Mr. Belote not speak at the seminar. She felt this would defuse the situation if they did not want to give Mr. Corn ten minutes to explain his Save the Deer views. There was much confusion as to what to do with Mr. Corn's request. Police Chief Ligi was called and made aware of the situation. Jennifer Reid has written a letter to the Ridgefield Press, which she read to the Board of Selectmen. It will appear in the paper on May 4. The Deer Committee has a charge to do public outreach and May is designated Lyme Prevention Month. D. Masters stressed that the Board of Selectmen voted to establish the Deer Management Committee and this committee has the right to proceed unimpeded as does the Lyme Disease Task Force. Any sensitive letter received by a Town of Ridgefield committee should be forwarded to Mr. Marconi and then on to David Grogins, Town Counsel, for review and response.

4. Fire Police Gas Allotment Policy - This policy provides for compensation when the Fire/Police use their personal vehicles at an incident or event when activated by any town agency through the fire dispatch unit. The first hour of duty will not be compensated. The second and each succeeding hour thereafter will be compensated for at the rate of one gallon of gasoline per hour. Compensation shall be made on a quarterly basis. **Andy Bodner moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to approve the March 1, 2006 Fire/Police Gasoline Allotment Policy whereby the Fire/Police shall be compensated for the operation of their personal vehicles at an incident or event when activated by any town agency through the fire dispatch unit per the terms of the proposal. Motion passed 5-0.**
5. VNA Rent Abatement Request – A letter has been received from Jane Fields, President & CEO of the Visiting Nurse Association, expressing appreciation for the proposed rent abatement for the 2006-2007 budget year. She also requested that since the town grant was halved from \$42,000 to \$21,000, would it be possible for the rent abatement to begin April 2006 to offset part of this reduction?

D. Masters moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to approve the proposed VNA Rent Abatement for the next fiscal year starting July 1, 2006, and also an abatement of the VNA rent for the months of May and June 2006. Motion passed 5-0.

6. Section 7-9 Code Change (The Use of Internal Combustion Engines and Snowmobiles on Lake Mamasasco, Pierrepont Lake, and Great Pond Prohibited) – Set Town Meeting Date

This code change was previously approved by the BOS at a Special Town Meeting on March 23, 2005. Additional changes in the wording were then requested by the Department of Environmental Protection, and thus the need to hold a Town Meeting again to revote on the code change.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to hold a Town Meeting on May 17, 2006, 7:30 p.m., for the purpose of approval of Section 7-9 Code Change (The Use of Internal Combustion Engines and Snowmobiles on Lake Mamasasco, Pierrepont Lake, and Great Pond prohibited). Motion passed 5-0.

7. Approval of Meeting Minutes – 3/6/06, 3/7/06, 3/27/06, 4/1/06, 4/5/06, 4/18/06

D. Masters moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to approve as written the minutes of the March 6, 2006, Special Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

J. Plock moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the March 7, 2006, Board of Selectmen Budget Meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

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

D. Masters moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to approve as written the minutes of the April 1, 2006, Board of Selectmen Emergency Meeting. Motion passed 4-0-1. J. Plock abstained as she was not present at the April 1 meeting.

J. Plock moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the April 5, 2006, Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

J. Plock moved and R. Marconi seconded a motion to approve as written the minutes of the April 18, 2006, Board of Selectmen Emergency Meeting. Motion passed 4-0-1. D. Masters abstained as she was not present at the April 18 meeting.

8. Selectman's Report =

- Charter Revision Commission Report – The report was submitted to the Town Clerk's office on May 2, 2006. R. Marconi passed out copies to the Board of Selectmen for their review. The consensus issue 10-3 is one topic to be reviewed and discussed. The report will be on the May 17 BOS agenda for discussion. A Public Hearing will need to be scheduled for May 31; the report back to the Charter Revision Commission by June 14 with BOS recommendations; back to the BOS by July 18, and the final report due in August.
- Certificate of Achievement – R. Marconi read the press release received indicating that the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting has been awarded to the Town of Ridgefield by the Government Finance Officers Association of the U.S. and Canada (GFOA) for its comprehensive annual financial report (CAFR). This is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting. An Award of Financial Reporting Achievement has been awarded to the individual designated by the government as primarily responsible for preparing the award-winning CAFR, and this goes to Jay Wahlberg, Town Controller. This is an award that Mr. Wahlberg receives year after year. Congratulations to Jay.
- Economic Development Commission – A. Bodner inquired and R. Marconi replied that four applicants have submitted requests to serve on the Economic Development Commission in response to the advertising for such. It was agreed to run the ad one more time.
- Children's Corner Issue – No correspondence or communication has been received relative to this issue from the Board of Education. The first priority for town property is for it to be used by a municipal facility if needed before renting the property to someone from the outside. The Board of Education is a municipal facility, but they need to indicate in writing if they have a need to use the town property currently being rented by the Children's Corner. A letter has not been received either from Nan Howkins, Director of

the Children's Corner, expressing their interest in renewing their lease when it next expires. Three years remain on the lease, but the BOS does understand the Children's Corner need to have sufficient notice if their lease is not to be renewed..

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 9:15 p.m. Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet L. Johnson