

BOARD of SELECTMEN MEETING – MAY 9, 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, D. Masters, J. Plock

Agenda

1. Athletic Recognition: RHS Boy's and Girl's Ski Teams
2. Boehringer Ingelheim Building 10 Tax Abatement Application – set Public Hearing & Special Town Meeting
3. HRRRA Appointee and Alternate
4. Police Commission: Police Transport for Zeus
5. Reappointment of Board of Ethics Members
6. Selectman's Report
7. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 4/9/07, 4/11/07, 4/12/07, 4/25/07
8. Police Commission: Police Chief Contract (possible Executive Session)

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

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to add before #1 on the evening's agenda – "Appointment of Assistant Fire Chief". Motion passed 5-0.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve the recommendation from the Fire Commission to appoint Kevin Tappe as Assistant Fire Chief pending: 1) Police background and any other background checks, 2) Physical and job fitness related tests, 3) Drug and Alcohol screening, and 4) Successful negotiation of benefit package. Motion passed 5-0.

1. Athletic Recognition RHS Boy's and Girl's Ski Teams

R. Marconi welcomed the members of the Ridgefield High School Boy's and Girl's Ski Teams and asked the team captains to come forward. The Boy's Ski team achieved a flawless 19-0 team record and won both the "Class L Championship" and the "State Open Championship". The Girl's Ski Team had an equally impressive season with a 15-0 team record and also won the "Class L Championship" during the 2006-2007 season. R. Marconi expressed the Town of Ridgefield's congratulations and read the citation presented to each team.

Carl Forcheski, a member of the Parents Group, came forward to present Boy's Ski Team Captain Kevin O'Brien a framed #1 ski shirt in honor of Kevin as first place winner in every race. This commemoration will have a permanent place of honor in the sports trophy cabinet in Ridgefield High School.

A five minute recess was called for team pictures with R. Marconi, First Selectman.

2. Boehringer Ingelheim Building 10 Tax Abatement Application – Set Public Hearing & Special Town Meeting

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to set a Public Hearing for May 23, 2007, Town Hall Large Conference Room, and a Special Town Meeting for June 6, 2007, Town Hall Large Conference Room, to act on the proposed tax abatement between the Town of Ridgefield and Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals, Inc., for Phase Two (Building 10) of Boehringer's Ingelheim's construction project. Motion passed 5-0.

The Public Hearing and Special Town Meeting dates had to be reset as the previously scheduled dates weren't announced in the press.

3. HRRRA Appointee and Alternate

R. Marconi has served as Ridgefield's representative to HRRRA with Dr. Peter Yanity as the Alternate. A meeting is held monthly and is usually the third Friday of the month at 10:30 a.m. at the Brookfield Town Hall. The alternate attends the meeting only if the regular representative is unable to attend. R. Marconi will check with Dr. Yanity as to his desire to no longer serve as the HRRRA Alternate. The representative does not have to be a member of the Board of Selectmen, although Mr. Marconi is willing to continue as Ridgefield's representative.

J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to reappoint First Selectman Rudy Marconi as Ridgefield's representative to HRRRA and Bill Huff as Alternate pending approval from Peter Hill, Director of Public Works, relevant to Mr. Huff's appointment. Motion passed 4-0-1. R. Marconi recused himself from the vote.

4. Police Commission: Police Transport for Zeus

The following members of the Police Department and the Police Commission came forward to discuss their request for transport for Police Dog Zeus: Police Chief Richard Ligi, Police Major John Roche, Canine Officer Sean Murray, Charles Knoche, Police Commission Chairman, and Police Commission members Sue Craig, Tom Reynolds, George Kane and Carl Lecher.

The Commission is requesting that Officer Murray be permitted to transport Zeus to his home and back in the canine vehicle rather than in his own pickup truck. There is no heat in the winter or air conditioning in the summer in the back of a pickup truck. Zeus is a \$25,000 Ridgefield-owned tool. In case of an accident, Zeus would be contained. The way it is now – if there was an accident and Sean was injured, Zeus would not let anyone come near Sean. Also, in case of a call, Officer Murray has to come from his home in New Milford to Ridgefield to pick up the canine car and then go out on the call. This results in a delay in response time. A. Bodner inquired as to the additional cost? The estimate is approximately \$8,000/year. These extra miles would also result in the need for a more rapid vehicle turnover – a trade-in one year earlier. A police car purchase currently costs \$23,006 plus \$1275 to transfer the dog equipment to the new vehicle. Annualized, the vehicle would cost \$5500/year plus gas, insurance and maintenance.

B. Manners stated that Zeus is a well-trained dog and thus should not be out of control in an accident situation. Couldn't Zeus be crated in the back of Officer Murray's personal vehicle? This, however, does not solve the call response time issue. She realizes that Zeus is also a "tracking dog" in case of a burglary as well as a "narcotics dog". Ms. Manners is concerned about changing the vehicle policy.

Andy Bodner expressed concern about amending the budget before the budget is even passed.

Chief Ligi reported that he had conducted a random sample of other municipalities. The State Police all take their police canine vehicles to and from home. For Bethel, the distance to and from home is 3 miles, Cromwell – the canine officer lives right in town, Danbury – 21 miles, Greenwich – 20 miles, Monroe – 5 miles, Old Saybrook – 5 miles. Officer Murray has agreed that the canine vehicle will be in the garage at his home.

Major Roche suggested that the canine vehicle be a separate line item in the budget with the mileage and expenses tracked.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve the request by the Police Commission that Dog Handler Sean Murray be provided a Town of Ridgefield canine vehicle to commute with Police Dog Zeus back and forth from his home in New Milford, to approve an amendment to the Town of Ridgefield Vehicle Policy to include the canine officer's name as an "emergency respondent" qualified to commute in the Town of Ridgefield canine vehicle, and to approve up to an additional \$6,000 to cover the cost of this commute for the fiscal year 2007-2008. Motion passed 4-1. B. Manners voted against.

5. Reappointment of Board of Ethics Members

Bart Van de Weghe reported that the Board of Ethics usually meets quarterly. Attendance of the Board members has been excellent. It is best that the reappointment dates be staggered. If three members are reappointed effective January 2007, then the terms of the other three members will expire 12/31/08.

The Board of Ethics did meet in January 2007, but there was no need for votes from the term expired members.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to reappoint Bart Van de Weghe, Phillip Baumann, and Alternate Bill Hildebrand to an additional four-year term on the Board of Ethics Commission, effective January 1, 2007. Motion passed 5-0.

6. Selectman's Report

- Town Meeting was held Monday evening, May 7 with a turnout of approximately 160 residents. There were two recommendations for future budget approval town meetings: 1) The questions should be called and voted upon at the end of the meeting rather than at the beginning. The feedback was positive relative to the oral reports from the various departments; and 2) paper ballots would be preferable.
- R. Marconi has drafted a letter to Captain Walker of the U.S. Post Office relative to the 28 Catoonah Street property.
- R. Marconi read the draft of a letter to Federal and State authorities as well as Ridgefield's State Representative John Frey relative to the proposed redesign of the flight paths over Connecticut with Newburgh becoming a major domestic airport. Connecticut's National Historic Park Weir Farm will lose its tranquility, part of its charm.
- Ridgefield has received Standard & Poor's AAA rating. This is good!!
- Nothing received from the Conservation Commission relative to Turner Hill. Once a draft ordinance is ready for review, this item will be placed on a BOS agenda.

7. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 4/9/07, 4/11/07, 4/12/07, 4/25/07

J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve as submitted the minutes of the April 9, 2007, Board of Selectmen Special Meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the April 11, 2007, Public Hearing and Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 4-0-1. B. Manners abstained as she was not present at the April 11 meeting.

J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve as submitted the minutes of the April 12, 2007, Board of Selectmen Special Meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the April 25, 2007, Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

8. Police Commission: Police Chief Contract (possible Executive Session)

R. Marconi moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to recess the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 9:35 p.m. and go into Executive Session with the Police Commission to discuss the Chief of Police contract. Motion passed 5-0.

The Board of Selectmen Meeting was called back to order at 10:40 p.m. **J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 10:40 p.m. Motion passed 5-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Janet L. Johnson