

BOARD of SELECTMEN MEETING – MAY 25, 2005

7:30 P.M. – TOWN HALL LOWER LEVEL CONFERENCE ROOM
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, D. Masters, J. Plock, P. Yanity
Absent: B. Manners

AGENDA

1. Insurance & Risk Management Committee Presentation & Recommendation, Charge and Appointments
2. Human Resources Director: a) Pension Change, b) Insurance Opt-Out
3. Auditor Selection
4. David Thaxter Reappointment
5. Peter Goldman Tax Refund
6. Tax Rate Signatures
7. Branchville Civic Association Tax Abatement
8. Approval of meeting minutes – 4/27/05, 5/11/05
9. First Selectman's Report

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING

1. CBD Parking

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

- 1) Insurance & Risk Management Committee Presentation & Recommendation, Charge & Appointments -

Tim Bunt and Bill Jaeger, members of the Insurance & Risk Management Committee came forward to review the recommendation of the Committee. The following candidates for the Committee also came forward: Michael Blackwell, James Keidel and Christopher Lang, all who have interviewed at previous BOS meetings, and Al Cava, a new candidate. It was reported that the Committee should consist of 9 members; therefore, all three who have previously applied qualify as there are three openings. There has also now been an additional resignation creating one additional vacancy for which Al Cava is applying. Mr. Cava is a twenty-year resident of Ridgefield and has twenty-five years of municipality experience. He currently directs labor relations for the City of Greenwich.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to appoint Michael Blackwell, James Keidel, Christopher Lang, and Al Cava to fill the vacancies on the Insurance & Risk Management Committee until 12/06/05, at which time the entire Insurance & Risk Management Committee will be up for their annual reappointment as a Town of Ridgefield Committee. Motion passed 4-0. B. Manners absent.

Tim Bunt reviewed the bids received for a new brokerage service to provide the Town of Ridgefield's coverage in the areas of workers' compensation, liability, property and umbrella coverage. H. D. Segur is a Connecticut-based brokerage located in Cheshire, CT. They

currently handle coverage for 60 municipalities, and thus have access directly to the marketplace. Their advice and counsel will be most advantageous. Their fee is also \$35,000 less than the bid from the current insurer, Carnal. The original difference between the two bids was \$300,000. Carnal lowered their bid, but there was still a difference of \$35,000. **J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve H. D. Segur Insurance to provide the insurance coverage for the Town of Ridgefield in the areas of workers' compensation, liability, property and umbrella coverage, effective July 1, 2005, as recommended by the Insurance & Risk Management Committee. Motion passed 4-0. B. Manners absent.** The current charge of the Insurance & Risk Committee will be reviewed by the now fully-staffed Committee.

A discussion followed as to the possibility of obtaining insurance cost numbers earlier in the year prior to the annual budget review process. D. Masters inquired as to the possibility of changing the renewal date from July 1st to an earlier date. J. Wahlberg replied that the municipality is required to run a fiscal year; all Connecticut towns go on this insurance schedule. Tim Bunt replied that the Committee will look into the possibility of obtaining the insurance costs earlier in the budget process.

2) Human Resources Director: a) Pension Change, b) Insurance Opt-Out

Laurie Scholl, Director of Human Resources, was present to lead the discussion. The pension change under consideration is for the Board of Education employees: custodians, secretaries, paraprofessionals, and was approved by the BOS on December 1, 2004. Attorney Greta Solomon, of Cohen & Wolf and Dave Campbell of the Pension Commission are requesting BOS approval of the language changes in regards to updating the Pension Plan Documents. This is not a new plan approval, but the resolution to adopt the language changes into the Town Documents.

J. Plock moved and P. Yanity seconded a motion to approve the language changes of the First Amendment to the Amended and Restated Employee Pension Plan to read as follows:

“RESOLVED, that the First Amendment to the Town of Ridgefield Amended and Restated Employee Pension Plan be, and it hereby is, adopted in the form attached hereto and made a part hereof, effective July 1, 2005; and it is further

RESOLVED, that the appropriate officials do all things necessary to effectuate the above resolution.”

Motion passed 4-0. B. Manners absent.

Insurance Opt-Out Incentive Plan – This incentive plan would be relative to the employee insurance health plan. This has been researched with other nearby towns and approved by the Insurance & Risk Management Committee. Currently, Ridgefield has 6 employees who have opted out of health insurance coverage because they have coverage elsewhere, 3 singles and 3 with spouses, resulting in a savings to the Town of \$73,000. The highest number of “Opt-Outs” was 11 in neighboring communities polled. At least 3 more individuals requesting to opt-out would be needed to break even with the proposed pay-outs being suggested for an incentive plan for the Town of Ridgefield. Ridgefield would be able to have such an incentive plan because the Town’s insurance plan is fully funded; if self-insured, then could not have such a plan. This would be a non-union benefit; not something that would be negotiated. We would also want employees who

select to opt-out to provide proof of insurance coverage. J. Wahlberg suggested payment every six months for the previous six months.

J. Plock moved and P. Yanity seconded a motion to approve the adoption of the Employee Insurance Opt-Out Plan pending sign-up of at least three additional participants, with payment the first week of January and the first week of July, based on the payment plan recommended by the Director of Human Resources for the Town of Ridgefield, of \$1250/year for singles, \$2500/year for couples, and \$3500/year for family plan. Motion passed 4-0. B. Manners absent.

3. Auditor Selection - The Board of Finance received bids from Blum & Shapiro, Scully & Wolfe, and McGladrey & Pullen. Scully & Wolfe withdrew. They conducted detailed interviews with the other two firms. R. Marconi and P. Yanity also participated in the interview process. The BOF voted to select Blum & Shapiro. J. Wahlberg expressed his opinion that both firms are very good firms and deliver timely reports. **J. Plock moved and P. Yanity seconded a motion to approve Blum Shapiro & Company, P.C. as the designated firm to provide independent auditing services for the Town of Ridgefield. Motion passed 4-0. B. Manners absent.**
4. David Thaxter Reappointment – R. Marconi read the letter of resignation from the Parks & Recreation Commission received from Randall Balmer. J. Plock suggested holding off on the reappointment of Mr. Thaxter until the second vacancy is advertised. This item will be put back on the agenda for two meetings ahead.
5. Peter Goldman Tax Refund – This property tax bill was paid twice. Because it is a refund of over \$2,000, approval of the BOS is needed. **P. Yanity moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to approve the refund to Mr. Peter Goldman of property taxes overpaid in the amount of \$2,558.56. Motion passed 4-0. B. Manners absent.**
6. Tax Rate Signatures - **J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve the Rate Bill as follows:**

“At a meeting of the legally qualified voters of the Town of Ridgefield legally warned and held May 10, 2005, it was voted to lay a tax of 23.42 Mills on the Grand List of October 1, 2004.

THE ANNEXED RATE BILL is made in accordance with such vote. At such meeting it was voted that said taxes shall become due and payable on July 1, 2005.

Each motor vehicle tax bill shall become due and payable July 1, 2005. Each personal property bill in excess of \$100.00 may be paid quarterly. Each other property tax bill in excess of \$50.00 may be paid in four quarterly installments commencing July 1, 2005, and quarterly thereafter, pursuant to Section 12-142 of the General Statutes of 1958 revised as of April 1, 1969 (Public Act 54).”

Motion passed 4-0. B. Manners absent.

R. Marconi read the Tax Warrant he signed which is being sent to Jane Berendsen-Hill, Collector of Taxes of the Town of Ridgefield in the County of Fairfield.

“GREETING:

BY AUTHORITY OF THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT, you are hereby commanded forthwith to collect of each person named in the annexed list his proportion of the same as

therein stated, being a tax laid by the Legal Voters of the Town of Ridgefield on May 10, 2005: And you are to pay the amount of said tax, less lawful abatements, less deductions because of lawful corrections, less uncollectible taxes which have been lawfully transferred to the suspense tax book, and less taxes on liens for which have been lawfully continued by certificate, to the Treasurer of said Ridgefield on or before the 30th day of June, 2006.

And if any person fails to pay his proportion of said tax, upon demand, you are to levy upon his goods and chattels, and dispose of the same as the law directs; and after satisfying said tax and the lawful charges, return the overplus, if any, to him; and if such goods and chattels do not come to your knowledge, you are to levy upon his real estate, and sell enough thereof to pay his tax and the costs of levy, and give to the purchaser a deed thereof.

Dated at Ridgefield this 12th day of May, 2005.”

7. Branchville Civic Association Tax Abatement - **P. Yanity moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to approve the 2003 property tax abatement for the Branchville Civic Association in the amount of \$4,602.40, which is the tax assessed on the Branchville ball field. Motion passed 4-0. B. Manners absent.**

8. Approval of Meeting Minutes – 4/27/05, 5/11/05 - **P. Yanity moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the April 27, 2005 Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 4-0. B. Manners absent.**

J. Plock moved and P. Yanity seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the May 11, 2005 Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 4-0. B. Manners absent.

9. First Selectman’s Report –

- New location for Chez Leonard – R. Marconi reported that he has met with Kathryn & Co., The Silver Lining, KaBloom, and the Bell’s, owners of the building. The suggestion is to move the hedges back and move the hotdog stand closer to the street. Charlie is checking on the cost for a concrete slab. P. Yanity stressed his belief that the entrepreneur should pay the costs for such a project and the need to check with the State. All parties involved would need to sign that they are in agreement on this relocation. The consensus was that gathering of the facts is the first step.
- Memorial Day Celebration - Marine Corps will be playing at 9:00; also the Special Firefighters service at St. Mary’s Cemetery at 9:00. An invitation has been received for breakfast served at the Fire House at 10:00, with the parade following. BOS members will be riding one of the antique fire trucks in the parade.
- Schaghticoke Indians – The IBIA (Internal Bureau of Indian Affairs) has turned down their preliminary bid for recognition. They have 120 days to provide additional support. It is expected that they will proceed with this appeal.
- Letter from Conservation Commission and Tree Warden - received requesting funding of \$1850 for the removal of dead trees on open space at 22 Lynn Place, 34 Charter Oak Court, and 124 Mountain Road. The response was not right now, but schedule for next

fiscal year. Important to follow up when advised of potential liability if dead trees are not removed.

- HEFCO Discussion on Magic Salt – Other communities may also try this new product. The salt is costly but saves on sweeping costs and catch basin cleaning. Eliminates the spreading of sand, which is not environment-friendly. Current costs for sweeping – about \$100,000/year.

J. Plock moved and P. Yanity seconded a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 8:32 p.m. Motion passed 4-0.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION MEETING

. Plock moved and P. Yanity seconded a motion to add to the Agenda of the Economic Development Commission Meeting a discussion of the Rail Station in Branchville. Motion passed 4-0.

1. CBD Parking - Regarding the Bailey Avenue parking area, the plan is to completely remove the concrete blocks coming in from Prospect St. The goal is to ensure pedestrian safety – possibly speed bumps. RE - meeting with Gavin Donnelly on plans for his parking lot as additional parking will be needed at his location. He currently puts his snow where the new parking spots would be located. There is room for approximately 62 new parking spots; currently working on a new location for placement of the snow.
2. Branchville Railroad Station – Andy McKenzie, a student at Ridgefield High School, presented the results of his study of the Branchville rail station. He looked at current expenses for maintenance of the station - \$9300/year, much of which is for the cost of snow removal. He is suggesting a budget of \$10,000 for annual maintenance, and the balance raised thru parking permits would be put into a fund for capital expenses. There are 7 stations on the Danbury line and 3 currently charge for parking. He is suggesting \$150 for an annual parking pass and a voucher system for short term parking. These vouchers would be available at Ancona's and other retail locations. Four or five 15-20 minute parking spots need to be available for access to Whistle Stop. The present asphalt is twenty years old and thus repavement will need to be done soon. What will be the goal? – generate just enough income to cover maintenance? Applying for a grant would be an option. Andy McKenzie will be speaking to Wilton about their train station parking.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to adjourn the Economic Development Commission Meeting at 8:50 p.m. Motion passed 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Janet L. Johnson