

BOARD of SELECTMEN MEETING – JULY 26, 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

Special Town Meeting – 7:30 p.m.

Notice is hereby given that a Special Town Meeting will be held on Wednesday, July 26, 2006 at 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Lower Level Conference Room, 400 Main Street, Ridgefield, CT, to consider and authorize the Town of Ridgefield to close completed bonded (\$108,387) and non-bonded (\$6,030) capital projects and transfer bonded funds to the general fund for the reduction of bond principal and interest for said projects pursuant to the Internal Revenue Service guidelines and transfer non-bonded funds to the capital reserve fund pursuant to Town policy.

Special Town Meeting minutes under separate cover.

Board of Selectmen Meeting Agenda (immediately following Town Meeting)

1. Appoint Kay Ables as Town Historian.
2. Economic Development Commission Interview – Paul Levine
3. Vendor Permit application – Edward Freeman
4. Elected Officials budgeted salary increase
5. DEMHS resolution – Emergency Management Performance Grant
6. Acceptance of Open Space Donation – Public Hearing date 8/9/06, Town Meeting date 9/6/06
7. Senior Tax Credit Cap Amount
8. Complete Charter Revision Commission Report Review and Possible Vote
9. Approval of Meeting Minutes:6/19/06, 7/12/06
10. Selectman's Report

Economic Development Commission Meeting (immediately following BOS Meeting)

1. Schlumberger Update

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

1. Appoint Kay Ables as Town Historian – Kay Ables came forward to speak with the BOS regarding her candidacy to fill the vacancy of Town Historian following the death of Dick Venus. She has served as the Assistant Town Historian for the past several years and commented on how Mr. Venus was such a wonderful social historian – “he will be hard to follow”. There were no questions from the BOS members as they all know Kay Ables so well. She pointed out that the Town Historian is responsible for answering questions that come in regarding genealogy, town records, town cemeteries, Ridgefield's history. Ridgefield's 300th anniversary is coming up. The 20th century is well documented as well as previous history.

B. Manners moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to appoint Kay Ables as Town Historian. Motion passed 5-0.

2. Economic Development Commission Interview – Paul Levine

Mr. Levine came forward to present his candidacy. R. Marconi read the letter received from Mr. Levine expressing his desire to serve on the Commission. His experience includes working under Mayor Lindsay in New York and on the rebuilding of Yankee Stadium and the conversion of the Brooklyn Navy Yard into an industrial park. He is most interested in the potential opportunity for economic development of the Schlumberger property and has toured the property with Mr. Marconi. Mr. Levine stated that it is going to take time and dollars to market this property. A creative brochure needs to be printed and distributed. He feels Ridgefield needs to be a “balanced community”, not just a “bedroom community”, but Ridgefield is also not a commercial town. Maintaining the correct balance and building on Ridgefield’s public spirit are most important. Mr. Levine indicated that he continues to work with the NYU School of Real Estate and has several students assigned to him to work on new projects. He could have such a student do some detailed analysis and research for Ridgefield.

R. Marconi indicated that seven applicants for the Economic Development Commission have been interviewed to date.

B. Manners moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to appoint the following applicants as members of the Economic Development Commission: Paul Levine, Penny Hoffman representing the Chamber of Commerce, Stephen Scalzo, Robert Cascella, and Aaron Prills. Motion passed 5-0. R. Marconi will notify the seven applicants of the Board’s decision. He will provide each new member of the Commission with a copy of the charter and their responsibilities from the charge. R. Marconi will call the first meeting of the newly appointed Commission, and the new Commission can then elect their own new Chairman. The BOS will review the Commission’s charter and charge and can add to the charge if they wish at the August 9 BOS Meeting.

3. Vendor Permit Application – Edward Freeman

Mr. Freeman came forward to introduce himself to the BOS and present his desire to receive a vendor permit from the Town of Ridgefield to sell artwork, photography, digital and botanical watercolors, etc. at Ballard Park during concerts. Mr. Freeman is a self-employed resident of Redding. B. Manners informed Mr. Freeman of the Parks & Rec prohibition of solicitation of any kind at the park during concerts. Mr. Freeman indicated that he would want to sell his art in town but did not have a definite idea of what other location he would like instead of the park. He will research other locations and return to the BOS to present his vendor application again. R. Marconi pointed out that he will need to seek permission to sell from the owner of the location(s) he chooses.

4. Elected Officials Budgeted Salary Increase –

Laurie Scholl, Director of Human Resources for the Town of Ridgefield, came forward to request BOS approval of the budgeted proposed 4% salary increase for the 2006-2007 budget year for all elected officials, which the Board has set in the past. R. Marconi recused himself from the discussion.

B. Manners pointed out that the First Selectman's salary was low compared to the Superintendent of Schools and school principals. A. Bodner indicated a desire to see comparisons of salaries from neighboring towns. Laurie Scholl will secure this information. She also pointed out the disparity between the salaries of the Town Clerk and the Tax Collector; both positions are evaluated at the same level. The Registrar position differs from town to town with number of hours worked, number of assistants, etc. Our Registrar's are paid for 21 hours/week and a stipend for referendums, and they do have assistants. A. Bodner inquired as to the average salary increase given to Town employees this year? The answer is "around 4%", the majority is 3.75%. Mr. Bodner would like to know what kind of raises have been given by other communities this year. Ms. Scholl responded that one needs to look at the total package including benefits when making comparisons. B. Manners indicated a desire to have the comparisons include Darien, New Canaan and Wilton, not just Bethel and Newtown. New housing in Ridgefield is comparable to some of the new housing in Wilton, New Canaan, and Darien. A. Bodner expressed the desire for consistency between the raises for elected officials and other town employees, independent of a merit raise. D. Masters expressed appreciation for the good people filling the elected positions – "Every two years they face the electors". Ms. Scholl indicated that a 4% increase is consistent with other town employees for 2006-2007.

J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to increase by the budgeted amount of 4% the 2006-2007 salaries of the Registrar-Democratic, Registrar-Republican, First Selectman, Tax Collector, and Treasurer and in addition increase the salary of the Town Clerk to be aligned with the salary of the Tax Collector, the amount of which includes the 4% salary increase. Motion passed 4-0. R. Marconi recused himself from the discussion and the vote.

5. DEMHS Resolution – Emergency Management Performance Grant

R. Marconi read the proposed resolution seeking a grant for approximately \$11,000 to assist with emergency preparedness management. **D. Masters moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to authorize First Selectman Rudy Marconi to act on behalf of the Town of Ridgefield in executing a Memorandum of Understanding with the State of Connecticut, Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, for participation in the FY 2007 Emergency Management Performance Grant program. Motion passed 5-0.**

6. Acceptance of Open Space Donation – Public Hearing date 8/9/06, Town Meeting date 9/6/06 – This is regarding acceptance of Florida Rd. open space which the town has been working on for quite awhile.

D. Masters moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to set a Public Hearing for August 9, 2006, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Lower Level Conference Room, relative to acceptance of the Open Space Donation (Florida Road) by the Bard Family Trust. Motion passed 5-0.

D. Masters moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to set a Town Meeting for September 6, 2006, 7:30 p.m., Town Hall Lower Level Conference Room, relative to acceptance of the Open Space Donation (Florida Road) by the Bard Family Trust. Motion passed 5-0.

7. Senior Tax Credit Cap Amount –

This is a subject that has been much discussed in the past. Approximately \$37.00 is added each year to the senior tax credit thru the year 2011. Each year the necessary amount to cover the

increased tax credit is put into the budget. R. Marconi read the two letters received relative to this issue – one dated January 9, 2001, from Martin Carr, Chairman of the Legislative Committee of the AARP Chapter 4852 requesting a modest increase in elderly tax relief over the next ten years – thus, the senior tax credit thru the year 2011, and a July 10, 2006 note from Pete Massagli with a breakdown showing the increases through the period of the “bundle” – 2002 to 2012 for a total of \$1120. No ceiling has been voted on this. It is just put into the budget each year. D. Grogins pointed out that if such an increase is approved for up to ten years with an ordinance, then there would have to have been a Public Hearing and Town Meeting to put this into effect. The consensus was to continue until the year 2011 as in past years, looking at the increase each year as a budgeted line item.

8. Complete Charter Revision Commission Report Review and Possible Vote -

D. Grogins indicated that statute allows for rejection or acceptance of the total revised charter or can vote on individual sections, but cannot make changes. It was decided to review the changes Section by Section and vote accordingly.

J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve Section 3-5 (Petitioned Town Meetings) as presented by the Charter Revision Commission. Motion passed 5-0.

J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve the deletion of Section 3-15 (Referendum) in its entirety as presented by the Charter Revision Commission. Motion passed 5-0.

J. Plock moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to approve Section 4-5 (Eligibility for Election to Town Offices) as presented by the Charter Revision Commission. Motion passed 5-0.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve Section 4-7 (Vacancies; Elective Boards, Offices and Commissions) as presented by the Charter Revision Commission. Motion passed 5-0.

D. Masters moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to approve Section 4-8 (Election of the Board of Selectmen) as presented by the Charter Revision Commission. Motion passed 5-0.

J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve Section 4-9 (Election of Tax Collector, Treasurer and Town Clerk) as presented by the Charter Revision Commission. Motion passed 5-0.

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve Section 4-12 (Board of Appeals on Zoning) as presented by the Charter Revision Commission. Motion passed 5-0.

J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve Section 4-18 (Restriction on Holding Multiple Elected Offices) as presented by the Charter Revision Commission. Motion passed 5-0.

B. Manners moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve Section 10-3 (Powers and Duties of the Board of Finance in Connection with the Preparation of the Budget for the Coming Fiscal Year, and Levying of Taxes) as presented by the Charter Revision Commission. Motion passed 5-0. This vote followed much discussion on this Section led by D.

Grogins, Town Counsel. Currently the Board of Finance approved Town budget goes to the Town Meeting. The BOS can choose to remove consideration of the budget from a Town Meeting format and go to referendum instead. This new provision sends the budget directly to referendum which is what was desired. If the referendum fails, then the budget will go back to a Town Meeting for review and vote. The changes have to be either accepted or rejected. It was agreed that acceptance was the best way to go. The thought was that more was gained than lost

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve Section 10-4 (Powers and Duties of the Board of Finance with Respect to the Management and Monitoring of the Budget for the Current Fiscal Year) as presented by the Charter Revision Commission. Motion passed 5-0.

This vote also followed much discussion. B. Manners indicated that she felt the wording of this Section was confusing and contradictory. The term “special appropriations” is not defined and thus would be confusing to the general population. A discussion followed relative to clarification of the wording. A. Bodner indicated that the BOS is asking for the ability to go to a Town Meeting or referendum if the Board of Finance says “no” to the proposed budget. The BOS are the “gate keepers”. It was agreed to accept this Section.

A. Bodner moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to approve Section 10-7 (Powers and Duties of the Board of Finance in Connection with the Development of Long-Range Financial Planning) as presented by the Charter Revision Commission. Motion passed 5-0.

A discussion then followed as to how best to combine these questions for the referendum. One suggestion was to combine as follows:

- 1) 3-5 and 3-15
- 2) 4-5 and 4-7 and 4-18
- 3) 4-8 and 4-9
- 4) 4-12 should stand alone
- 5) 10-3 Section 1
- 6) 10-3 Section 3 and 6
- 7) Section 10-7

It was agreed to prepare a mock-up of what the referendum questions would look like and make a decision as to how best group the questions following a look at the referendum sample.

9. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 6/19/06, 7/12/06

J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve as written the minutes of the June 19, 2006 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 July 12, 2006 Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

10. Selectman's Report -

R. Marconi indicated that he had nothing to report.

B. Manners indicated that she had received a complaint from someone regarding being solicited at a park concert for contribution to a special fund. There is to be no soliciting for any cause at a concert. The question is whether or not a permit is needed for soliciting on the street. R. Marconi will ask Town Counsel's opinion on this. Do we want this to be permitted?

J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 10:00 p.m. Motion passed 5-0.

Economic Development Commission Meeting

R. Marconi called the Economic Development Commission Meeting to order at 10:00 p.m.

1. Schlumberger Update - Schlumberger was previously discussed during the interview of Mr. Paul Levine.

J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to adjourn the Economic Development Commission Meeting at 10:05 p.m. Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet L. Johnson