

**BOARD of SELECTMEN MEETING – SEPTEMBER 5, 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. Education Cost Sharing: Keith Miller, Deborah Low
2. Ridgefield Community Prevention Council Interviews: Nancy Gibson, AnneMarie Surfaro-Boehm, Petra Wynkoop, Dr. Susan Leib, Gina Pin
3. Economic Development Commission Reappointments: Bob Cascella, Penny Hoffman
4. Vendor Permit Interview: Gamze Ceylon
5. Transfers: Jay Wahlberg
6. Tax Refunds Approvals
7. America the Beautiful Tree Grant Resolution
8. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 1/24/07, 1/31/07, 3/6/07, 3/21/07, 3/21 (special), 8/8/07

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

**J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to add to the Agenda, Item #9, Selectman's Report, and Item #10, Executive Session to discuss the Police Chief's Contract and a Personnel matter. Motion passed 5-0.**

1. Education Cost Sharing: Keith Miller, Deborah Low  
Deborah Low, Superintendent of Schools and Board of Education members, Keith Miller, Chairman, Bob Cox, Kathy McGerald, and Kitty Fisher came forward to discuss Keith Miller's August 15, 2007 memo to the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance relative to ECS Funds. Mr. Miller reviewed his memo, the BOE's prior request and background for use of the ECS funds, and the BOE's current request for \$298,000 in increased funding to restore items removed from the 2007-08 Proposed Budget. This request would provide for \$78,000 for elementary math paraprofessionals, \$75,000 for security improvements, \$90,000 for a High School guidance counselor and clerical support and \$55,000 in reduction in Athletic Participation Fees for a total of \$298,000. Kathy McGerald detailed how these requests are important and needed expenditures.

J. Plock raised the issue of the BOE's 2006-07 surplus left over from the 2006-07 budget year and how was this surplus to be spent? How much of this surplus is earmarked for items not covered by the 2007-08 budget? Mr. Miller replied that about \$200,000 has been designated for capital items such as boilers, refrigerators, security items that were removed from the 2007-08 capital appropriation discussion. The balance is for energy over-runs. Mr. Miller indicated that in certain accounts there is a positive variance; other accounts have a negative variance. J. Plock inquired why the Math Paraprofessionals and High School guidance counselor priorities were not put into the budget? What about the teacher contingency line of a surplus \$240,000? Ms. Low responded that the new budget year has just started; it is too early to take funds from the contingency line; not at all sure about utility costs ahead.

J. Plocki stated that she understands the need for paraprofessionals and the desire to reduce athletic costs. If a program is tied to the curriculum, then there cannot be a charge for participation in that program. How do athletic costs fit into this scenario. This issue has not been challenged.

D. Masters stated there is the need for an additional guidance counselor at the High School, but the Selectmen should not be talking about this. She is speaking about this need as a parent of children at the High School. The budget process took place and the vote was taken at the polls; thus, we should not be growing the bottom line of the operating budget for the school system. She recognizes that the schools do have capital needs, but she does not feel comfortable growing the operating budget.

Andy Bodner stated that he is in agreement with Ms. Masters. What about the Special Education budget? J. Plock indicated that there was a \$500,000 over-run in the Special Education category. That has never happened before. She knows there are extra dollars there, but she does not know the exact number.

Keith Miller responded that the Special Education budget was for \$7.5 million and almost \$7.9 was spent. \$989,777 has been received from the State for Special Education reimbursement; otherwise this part of the budget would be “over”. But this money from the State cannot be budgeted for – cannot be sure it will arrive or what will be the exact amount.

J. Plock indicated that capital expenditures do not expand the operating budget, nor do they expand the bottom line. If reimbursement funds are spent on capital expenditures, bonding costs are saved as well.

Andy Bodner inquired as to the security study. The full report will be available on September 17. Will the BOE then be coming to the BOS with security requests? Mr. Miller responded that the \$50,000 allocated to security in this year’s budget in a special revenue account is just a “down payment” on security initiatives.

R. Marconi pointed out the problem created when the State legislature is far behind the municipalities in their individual budgetary process. If we knew what the State was going to supply at the time of the budget, then we could plan accordingly. A. Bodner stated that capital expenditures are fine because then not spending dollars that we might not get again in the future.

R. Marconi suggested that \$223,000 could be a loan to the BOE that they would then have to re-pay.

B. Manners suggested that the BOE report back to the BOS on September 17 with some capital requests. “Capital is the word”. It was agreed that the BOE would do so at a later BOS meeting.

2. Ridgefield Community Prevention Council Interviews: Nancy Gibson, AnneMarie Surfaro-Boehm, Petra Wynkoop, Dr. Susan Leib, Gina Pin

Ms. Gibson, Ms. Surfaro-Boehm, Ms. Wynkoop and Dr. Susan Leib came forward together to introduce themselves to the BOS and express their interest in serving on the Ridgefield Community Prevention Council. Gina Pin had previously indicated that she would be attending the Open House at the High School and would be arriving late. There are currently five vacancies on the Ridgefield Community Prevention Council. The Council will be applying for a \$100,000 Drug-Free Community Grant. An active Council is needed to help Ridgefield in the Town’s effort to minimize the use of alcohol and drugs in the community. J. Plock asked the applicants to express “what kind of a goal do they see this Council setting?” Responses included – students need help in protecting themselves from the use of alcohol and drugs, there is a need to educate 8<sup>th</sup> graders in a “real way”, constant conversations with the youth are most important, work with the parents to increase awareness of the problems, “communication is key”. The Council currently receives about \$4200 from the State of Connecticut and \$1,000 to \$1,500 from the Town budget to support their awareness projects. The balance of their income is thru fund-raising. Several mentioned the outstanding speaker at last year’s outreach program, Wilkie Wilson, and how they would like to have him return.

**Andy Bodner moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to appoint for a two-year term, Nancy Gibson, AnneMarie Surfaro-Boehm, Petra Wynkoop and Dr. Susan Leib to fill four of the vacancies on the Ridgefield Community Prevention Council. Motion passed 5-0.**

3. Economic Development Commission Reappointments: Bob Cascella, Penny Hoffman  
Per the Charter, each year the Economic Development Commission members need to be reappointed or new members appointed. Bob Cascella, Chairman of the Economic Development Commission and Penny Hoffman came forward to express their interest in being reappointed. Commission members Paul Levine and Steve Scala were unable to be present this evening but have sent an email expressing their interest in reappointment. Aaron Prills sent an email resigning from the Commission as he will be moving to Michigan to attend graduate school. Bob Cascella commented on how Aaron Prills is continuing to work on the Commission's website. An ad will be placed seeking applications for this vacancy. The BOS expressed a thank you to the Commission for their continued efforts.

**B. Manners moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to reappoint Robert Cascella, Penny Hoffman, Paul Levine and Steve Scala for an additional term of one year on the Economic Development Commission. Motion passed 5-0.**

4. Vendor Permit Interview: Gamze Ceylon  
Gamze Ceylon came forward to introduce herself to the BOS and express her interest in selling ice cream from her truck around town. Her truck has been inspected and her Police approval obtained. **J. Plock moved and A. Bodner seconded a motion to approve the vendor permit application for one year, effective September 1, 2007, for Gamze Ceylon to sell ice cream. Motion passed 5-0.**

5. Transfers: Jay Wahlberg  
Jay Wahlberg, Controller, came forward to present various year-end transfer requests. Mr. Wahlberg indicated that he has reviewed the various funds. When there are no cost over-runs on finished projects, these funds are waiting to be closed. Any excess funds have to be transferred out to cover bond issuance costs or debt service reduction and subsequently applied to principal payments on those bond issues for capital bond projects. In the case of non-bond projects, the funds can be closed once any excess funds are transferred to a capital reserve fund. Mr. Wahlberg will provide breakdown of each of these funds ready to be closed at the upcoming Town Meeting proposed for October 3, 2007.

**J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve the Department of Finance Memorandum #200803 pending approval by the Board of Finance and send this request for approval to a Town Meeting on October 3, 2007, relative to the Capital Bond Projects Close-Out & Transfer of Funds, to increase #30951-56310, Bonding Costs, in the amount of \$87,645 and transfer to various accounts relative to bond issuance costs or debt service reduction on those bond issues in the like amount of \$87,645. Motion passed 5-0.**

**D. Masters moved and B. Manners seconded a motion relative to the Department of Finance Memorandum #200804, Capital Non-Bond Projects Close-Out & Transfer of Funds, to transfer \$36,237 of surplus capital project funds to a Main Street Fountain Maintenance Reserve Fund pending approval by the Board of Finance and send this request for approval to a Town Meeting on October 3, 2007. Motion passed 5-0.**

**J. Plock moved and D. Masters seconded a motion relative to the Department of Finance Memorandum #200804, Capital Non- Bond Projects Close-Out & Transfer of Funds, to transfer \$26,847 in excess funds from Various Capital Projects to #31095-44826, Capital Reserve Fund, pending approval by the Board of Finance. Motion passed 5-0.**

**J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to schedule a Town Meeting for October 3, 2007, to approve the transfer of \$26,847 in excess funds from non-bonded projects to #31095-44826, Capital Reserve Fund. Motion passed 5-0.**

Chief Burford came forward to explain the Fire Department's request for an appropriation from the Capital Reserve Fund to purchase replacement radios as the Fire Police need to integrate its communications with the Fire Department, Police Department and Emergency Operations Center more effectively.

**J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve Department of Finance Memorandum #200806 as requested by the Fire Department for an appropriation from Capital Reserve Fund for replacement radios, with an increase in #30951-56239, Emergency Operations, in the amount of \$29,000, and an increase in #31095-54826, Transfer of Funds, in the amount of \$29,000, pending approval by the Board of Finance. Motion passed 5-0.**

**J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to schedule a Town Meeting for October 3, 2007, to approve Department of Finance Memorandum #200806. Motion passed 5-0.**

The Assessor's current vehicle is no longer useable resulting in the Assessor's Department currently sharing the First Selectman's vehicle during non-business use. The Police Department has a Chevrolet Impala in excellent condition coming off a 3-year lease. Therefore, the General Government Department is requesting approval for an appropriation from the capital reserve fund to cover said buyout from the auto dealership. A. Bodner inquired as to the possibility of the Police Department continuing to use this vehicle after the lease runs out as well? The Assessor wants a Ridgefield marked car when he is about town checking on properties. It looks official.

**D. Masters moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to approve Department of Finance Memorandum #200807, as requested by the General Government Department, for an increase in #30650-00000, Vehicle, in the amount of \$11,000 and an increase in #31095-54826, Transfer of Funds, in the amount of \$11,000, pending approval by the Board of Finance. Motion passed 5-0.**

**J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to schedule a Town Meeting for October 3, 2007, to approve Department of Finance Memorandum #200807. Motion passed 5-0.**

6. Tax Refunds Approvals

**B. Manners moved and D. Masters seconded a motion to approve the list of certified refund applications for a total of \$7,254.89 as requested by Jane Berendsen-Hill, Tax Collector, in her August 31, 2007 memo to the Board of Selectmen. Motion passed 5-0.**

7. America the Beautiful Tree Grant Resolution

**B. Manners moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to approve the resolution for Rudy Marconi, First Selectman, to execute and deliver in the name and on behalf of the Town of Ridgefield a contract with the Department of Environmental Protection of the State of Connecticut for the fulfillment of the America-the-Beautiful Grant, relative to the Largest Tree Contest. Motion passed 5-0.**

8. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 1/24/07, 1/31/07, 3/6/07, 3/21/07, 3/21/07 (special), 8/8/07

**J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the January 24, 2007 Public Hearing and Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 4-0-1. D. Masters was not present at the January 24, 2007 BOS Meeting.**

**J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve as written the minutes of the January 31, 2007, Board of Selectmen Special Meeting. Motion passed 4-0-1. D. Masters was not present for the motion.**

**J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the March 6, 2007, Board of Selectmen Budget Meeting. Motion passed 4-0-1. D. Masters was not present for the motion.**

**J. Plock moved and R. Marconi seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the March 21, 2007, Public Hearing & Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 4-0-1. D. Masters was not present for the motion.**

**J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve as written the minutes of the March 21, 2007 Special Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 4-0-1. D. Masters was not present at this Special Meeting.**

**J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve as amended the minutes of the August 8, 2007, Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 4-0-1. D. Masters was not present at the August 8, BOS Meeting.**

9. Selectman's Report

- September 11 Memorial Service – 7:00 p.m. in front of Ridgefield Fire Department. Catoonah Street will be closed at 6:30 p.m. R. Marconi and Chief Burford will both speak. Also participating will be Ridgefield clergy, honor guards, a bag piper, and special music.
- Bill Hoff's Resignation – A resignation letter has been received from Bill Hoff, effective Friday, November 2. He will be missed greatly. Mr. Hoff was Employee of the Year a couple years back.
- Parking Authority Employee -The current Parking Authority employee is joining Ridgefield's Police Department. Interviews are being conducted for a replacement.
- Lighting Pollution - A written request has been received from Dr. Michael Autuori requesting the initiation of discussion and action on a possible BOS ordinance on lighting. He feels an ordinance could be more effective than current Planning & Zoning regulations on non-residential lighting. Dr. Autuori would hope such an ordinance could be "all inclusive and retroactive (within reason)". He feels current regulations are limited as to application and timing (grandfathering). He is vigilant on the concept of "dark sky so one can see the stars" and concerned about light pollution. CL&P cannot make these changes; the individual municipalities have to be in the forefront on this issue. It was agreed that a letter would be sent to Planning & Zoning seeking their opinion on this issue. An invite will also be sent to Dr. Auturoi inviting him to attend soon a BOS Meeting to discuss his request and how Ridgefield can best address his concerns.
- Fair Rent Commission - Mr. Goldsmith came forward to express his desire for establishment of a Fair Rent Commission in Ridgefield. Such a Commission would serve as an outlet for residents to voice their concern over rent increases. Currently, a resident has no other recourse than to go

to court. He has researched this subject and indicated that there is not State statute against such a Commission. D. Masters suggested this role as a possible function of the Housing Authority, but realizes this might not be feasible as the Housing Authority is also a landlord. Perhaps the Council on Aging could take up this issue? This issue will be put on the October 3 BOS Agenda. Mr. Goldsmith shared his research with Mr. Marconi who will make copies and share the info with the Board of Selectmen.

- Rotation of the Playing Fields - Paul Roche, Chairman of Parks & Recreation, will attend the next BOS Meeting to explain the planned rotation of the playing fields. There have been complaints from parents relative to the upcoming closing of the grass field at the high school.
- Town of Ridgefield Annual Report - There have been inquiries as to why there is no longer a Town of Ridgefield Annual Report printed and available for residents to pick up at Town Hall, the press, or the library. Instead, the Annual Report is put on email – “We’re green!” In the past many copies were printed and many were left over. The Treasurer of the Town of Ridgefield is responsible for collecting the information and formatting such a report. R. Marconi will ask for her opinion on again printing such a report.

(Continuation of Agenda Item #2, Ridgefield Community Prevention Council Interviews)

Gina Pin came forward to introduce herself to the BOS and express her interest in serving on the Ridgefield Community Prevention Council. **D. Masters moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to appoint for a two-year term, Gina Pin to fill one of the vacancies on the Ridgefield Community Prevention Council. Motion passed 5-0.**

10. Executive Session

**J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to recess the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 9:45 p.m., and go into Executive Session with Laurie Scholl, Director of Human Resources, invited to attend. Motion passed 5-0.**

R. Marconi called the BOS Meeting back to order following the adjournment of the Executive Session at 10:05 p.m. **B. Manners moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 10:05 p.m. Motion passed 5-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Janet L. Johnson