

## SPECIAL BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

February 12, 2002 7:30 p.m.

Town Hall Lower Level Conference Room  
APPROVED MINUTES

### AGENDA

Review of Departmental Operating and Capital Budgets

- 1) Highway, Engineering, Tree Warden
- 2) Fire & Volunteers
- 3) Library

In attendance: Mr. Marconi, Ms. Manners, Ms. Plock, Mr. Zemo; Jay Wahlberg, Town Controller

Mr. Marconi called the meeting to order at 7:35 p.m.

- 1) Highway, Engineering, Tree Warden Departments presented their budget requests. Present were: Pete Hill, Superintendent/Director of the Highway Department; Charlie Fisher, Town Engineer; Bill Hoff, Administrative Manager; Bert Motta, Maintenance Supervisor; and John Pinchbeck, Tree Warden

Discussed the chipping of leaves, wood and brush (chipping everything). Desire an excavator so can put the chips in the landfill. Increased cost of hauling to a transfer station. Residents are also taking clean chips now. Useful life of the machine is much more than five years. \$50,000/year for five years. Will pay for itself in time.

Dump truck desired (replacement) – Cost for a new Mack truck is \$106,000. Trade-in will bring in about \$10,000.

2 Pick-up trucks. Trucks park in the dirt lot – rust from bottom up. Hard on brake lines, fuel lines, all parts underneath sides of the trucks. It would be helpful to pave the parking area. Cannot park next to the building as have to keep the fire lanes open. R. Marconi inquired as to the number of trucks – 2 pick-ups and 8 low-boys. Pete Hill explained the advantage of low-boys; have not increased the total number of vehicles in the last three years. By buying two pick-ups, would increase by 1 total number of trucks. Discussion followed regarding the need for the Foreman on 24 hour duty to drive truck to home in Milford – puts a lot of miles on the truck. Necessary to have such a vehicle as often goes directly to the site where needed and carries a lot of tools in the truck.

Track Excavator for use by the Highway Dept. – Qualifies for LOCIP funding; capital improvement fund provided by the State of CT.

Street Sweeper - \$150,000. J. Plock inquired if street sweeping is contracted. There is a need to sweep up watershed areas immediately to prevent sand going into the lakes and water areas. Often cannot wait for a contract sweeper to come in. When schools are closed, do a spring break clean-up; and maintain Main Street each Friday. Cannot get an outside contractor to do jobs at specific times. Is this an item that can be purchased through a state bid? Bill Hoff will call the State and check on this.

List of projects – drainage repair allotment. Do this every year

Signage machine. The Highway Dept. handles all signage installations. Other departments would order signs to be made by the Highway Dept. The machine would pay for itself. \$6500 for the software.

Charlie Fisher – Town Engineer requests a new furnace for Town Hall and redo of the Highway Department bathroom.

Put off until 2003/2004 wash station for town vehicles. EPA ruling – waste water has to be treated before disposal.

HVAC system for the old high school and roof repair. Study has been done as to what is needed. Putting in request for \$150,000 until have a chance to study in detail the recommendation.

Recycling Center – have to put off to another year and railroad station paving project. Dealing with potholes for now.

Sidewalk improvements - \$150,000 (continuation of annual program)

Would like to be able to work on the Parks & Rec barn.

School Engineering Projects reviewed; high school roof (continue to do part of it each year); handicapped bridge for the stadium and safety improvements for access. Building projects in a state of flux right now as to allocations. All projects are being closely reviewed.

John Pinchbeck reviewed tree replacement program - \$51,500 is cost of annual program. Costs are about \$1,000/tree and have plans for replacement of 50-60 trees annually. This is continuation of a tree planting program started several years ago. Sometimes site preparation costs are necessary also. Seeking a diversity in tree population as a protection against disease.

Public Works – Operating Requests – No changes in personnel numbers. Increases only due to contracts. Highway Department is requesting two additional drivers/laborers. Peter Hill explained the justification for this increase, “Had more personnel in the 70’s than have now.” Now have 17 employees. Ridgefield now has about 60 more miles of road – up to a total of almost 200 miles of road. Do contract out some paving, but still do a lot ourselves. Solving drainage problems is most important for road repair and have a lot of catching up to do in this area. Hire pavers under the State bid, but hard to schedule. Often cannot get the dates when desired.

Highway Dept. is below budget on overtime so far this year. Have made some cuts on Highway Support Services. Bids on fuel are cheaper. Presented list of road scheduled for 2002 paving. Solid waste area cost has gone down because of the wood chipping program. R. Marconi stated the need for a waste oil recycling program. The tanks previously purchased for this are not being used as concerned about how to monitor exactly what people would put into the tanks.

Increased need for tree care in public recreation areas. Asking for slight increase in the budget for dead tree removal. Prefer to hire this done due to the high cost of equipment and insurance for Town employees to do the trimming/removal.

- 2) Fire & Volunteers - In attendance were: Louis Yarish, Fire Chief; David Lathrop, Fire Marshall; Edward Gabbinelli, Chief of Volunteers; and Nick Gieta, Assistant Chief. They discussed the need for the refurbishment of tanker truck #12 - \$175,000. Need to replace chassis and new pump. Also the truck needs to have automatic transmission and a new radio. Volunteers are not experienced truck drivers and thus need automatic transmission. The tanker body will last another 20 years; a new pump has a lifetime warranty on it. Down-time to do this redo would be three months; would notify other towns as to possible need for assistance and would rely on other tanker during this time period.

Headquarters – Requesting \$20,000 for door repairs, painting and replacement of soot covered ceiling tiles. Put an exhaust fan in ten years ago but not adequate. Would be best to have a new exhaust system whereby have a hookup for the exhaust from each vehicle until it leaves the station building.

Need to replace a generator. Existing one is 30 years old. Need to have an adequate generator to handle a situation when all communication lines would go down. R. Marconi noted that a new generator could qualify as a legitimate use for Emergency Fund dollars.

Office Renovation – Pool table is going to the Boys Club.

Requesting \$6,000 for a new radio; the back-up radio.

EMS Equipment desired – does a two-fold reading of heart rate and oxygen saturation of the body. This is used on every patient and aids by providing info for correct steps to be taken during transport of the patient. New systems also provide carbon dioxide level reading on each patient’s bloodstream. \$6,000 each.

Pad Base Reporting System will be mandated eventually.

Air Pack bottles – Need to do a phase-out program for existing bottles. Cannot use after 15 years – OSHA ruling.

Town alert system – Do not currently have a system to notify entire town in an emergency situation. Looking into what is available and the cost. Estimating at \$100,000.

Operating Budget – Asking for 2 additional personnel – a Fire Medic and a Deputy Fire Marshall. Requesting phase-in of the Fire Medic over the next 4 years. This will save in overtime and pay for itself. 150+ more EMS calls than last year! B. Manners inquired if fire inspections can be contracted out? Can an inspector be hired on a per diem basis? This year have eliminated oil tank inspections and have fallen behind in inspection of apartment buildings, etc.

Training Program – Desire to have “confined space” training and rope rescue training. Have been fortunate that have not had a need for a “confined space” rescue to date. This is rescue out of a manhole, piping, well, pit area, etc. – some narrow space. The potential does exist for such a need.

Vehicle Maintenance Costs – need to do a full maintenance check on the trucks each year.

EMT’s – small increase for re-certification costs.

Radio communication to the hospital – estimating cost increase because of increased number of emergency calls this year

Medical Supplies – Use about 100 IV’s per month. Everyone transported gets an IV started – this is SOP (Standard Operating Procedure). Also maintenance of the defibrulators.

Volunteers – No recruitment items requested. Do have some costs for training and equipment provision. Costs \$1700/person. A pager costs \$450. Have to outfit volunteers immediately. Required to do so for insurance purposes.

- 3) Library - In attendance: Chris Nolan, Library Director; Tom Manse and Carroll Brewster, members of the Library Board. Requesting an increase of \$78,000 in fund transfers.

Request \$55,000 for furnace replacement – existing unit dates back to 1903. Should save dollars in increased efficiency. The boiler room heats up to the high 90's causing equipment to rot out in the heat. Parts of the building are on oil and parts on gas. Will then convert everything to gas.

Planned redo of the parking lot never happened last fall. Scheduled for the Spring this year.

Operating Funds – Receiving low return on endowment funds due to low interest rate economic conditions presently. Doing fund raising and grant proposals. Requesting a full-time Children's Librarian – 12,000 children participate in library programs. Use a lottery system for the programs as not enough room to satisfy all requests. Pressured by parents to provide enrichment programs for the children. B. Manners inquired as to the possibility of using students on library internship programs to help staff. Prefer to have a longer term staff person as get to know the children

15% increase in premiums for health insurance.

Funds to provide for regular upgrade of technology.

Library Collection – books, etc. Add to the collection each year. Do have the benefit of some designated funds for this purpose.

Town of Ridgefield provides about 75% of the library budget. The Board of Selectmen appoint about 75% of the Directors to the Library Board.

365,000 visits to the library by citizens of Ridgefield last year. 320,000 books borrowed last year. Average citizen takes out 15 books/year.

**J. Plock moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to close the meeting at 10:45 p.m. Motion passed 4-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Janet L. Johnson