

BOARD OF SELECTMEN MEETING

AUGUST 14, 2002

TOWN HALL, LOWER LEVEL CONFERENCE ROOM

APPROVED MINUTES

Present: Mr. Marconi, Ms. Plock, Dr. Yanity, Mr. Zemo (B. Manners on vacation)

AGENDA

1. Project Manager's Report: Nels Berg
2. Resolution to sign contract for America the Beautiful grant
3. 8-24 Referral: Proposed easement – North Salem Road – SNET
4. Finance: Fire Department transfer
5. Bennett's Pond northern parcel: budget, tax abatement
6. Student Outreach Counselor update
7. Discussion of September 11th observance plans
8. Request for Medical Plan coverage for new Senior Center employees (to be reimbursed)
9. First Selectman's Report
10. Approval of meeting minutes – July 24, 2002

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

1. Project Manager's Report – Nels Berg

Nels Berg presented his Project Manager's Report dated July 2002. Also present was John Mannuzza, Co-Chair Scotts Ridge Building Committee. N. Berg reviewed the status of the various projects:

Scotts Ridge – Significant progress since last BOS meeting; classroom and administration component to open in mid-October – still a number of open items but loose ends seem to be falling into place. Testing various systems with the goal of getting the Certificate of Occupancy prerequisites fulfilled. A detailed schedule has been established and goals are being met.

Parks & Rec. Center – Coming along; there had been swimming pool problems, but action has been taken.

High School Project – There will be disruptions this academic year and next, but that doesn't mean the high school is not safe for occupancy; just have to work around the construction.

Barlow – The footings have been poured for the addition; running a little behind schedule. A change in the Project Manager has been requested. The change has been implemented, but there is an interim Project Manager for the next sixty days until the new person takes over. There has been no major interference with the summer program.

Ridgebury – All of the work slated for this summer will be completed by the end of August – on track.

East Ridge Middle School - Expecting a construction cost estimate in a couple of weeks; about August 26, will be OK to obtain bids. Window replacement was to be done over a period of three years, but this project resulted in a major design issue for the façade of the school. An architect is currently designing an appropriate appearance for East Ridge which will include the window replacements. It is expected that the new windows will result in significant energy savings.

The meeting was open for Board of Selectmen and public discussion. J. Plock inquired as to the \$50,000 which was to have been released by the Scotts Ridge Building Committee following the BOS meeting on July 24, 2002. The \$50,000 was to be released to the Board of Education with the hope to release more by the end of August. J. Plock pointed out the need for funding to be released earlier than the end of August to enable the order of furniture and computer technology equipment for delivery prior to the October opening date. Previously, IT equipment could be ordered with a thirty-day lead time; now the manufacturer wants a sixty-day order time. John Mannuzza feels very strongly that the funds cannot be released yet, but need to be held for a few more weeks to make sure that no unexpected costs arise. It is his feeling that the furniture and computers can be ordered at a later date – computers and furniture will be of no use unless the Certificate of Occupancy (COO) is obtained. He was of the opinion that significant computers and equipment were to be moved from East Ridge to Scotts Ridge. S. Zemo inquired as to how this dilemma can be solved; R. Marconi wanted to know how we can address the bottom line?

Linda Bunyon, Chairman, Board of Education – reported that the referendum funded \$1.8 million for furniture and fixtures (FF&E); this amount was reduced by \$500,000 as was requested to do so; \$1.3 million was the agreed upon funding for computer, technology needs. The anticipated enrollment at Scotts Ridge was set at 550 students; technology needs were based on that enrollment number. 301 computers need to be ordered to have in time for the October opening date. These need to be ordered within the next week or two. Can dollars be freed up from proposed landscaping plans; is there anything else that can yield additional monies? R. Marconi replied - unsuitable soil and septic tank problems might not arise; dollars may be available from insurance programs; energy credit dollars may be more than originally anticipated; electrical problems may not be as costly as forecasted, but just do not have the actual numbers in as of yet. J. Plock asked how contingency funding will be made available if it does not come from the furniture and equipment funding?

Donna Case, School District Technology Manager, indicated that the computers at East Ridge were always to remain there; East Ridge has always needed additional computers for their own use. The Scotts Ridge bidding prices were based on the size of the order. We need to keep that order in place and not break it down into smaller parts in order to hold the price.

Mary Miller, Board of Education's liaison to Scotts Ridge Building Committee – feels very strongly that the computer IT funding is a “known” cost. Can we fund that now? We are not supporting “known” costs because of saving for “unknown” costs. J. Mannuzza replied that the “unknown” costs, if they do arise, will not be discretionary costs. We will have to spend the dollars necessary in order to get all systems working and obtain a Certificate of Occupancy. He does not feel secure in letting the additional funds be available at this time.

John Katz, Ridgebury Rd. – asked if sufficient funding could be made available to put a deposit on the computer order and the balance would not be due until late November. By then, the unexpected costs would be “known” expenses. We need to ask the Scotts Ridge Building Committee to re-prioritize the funding so the dollars can be made available to order the furniture and equipment.

It was also noted that other building projects are not over-budget at this time. Perhaps additional monies will be available from other projects at a later date; just not sure of what monies from where at this time. R. Marconi pointed out that he has no intention of going to the public for the additional dollars; potential source of funds from other projects, but premature to say so at this time.

Linda Bunyon pointed out that the \$500,000 cut made in furniture and equipment funding did not include monies for phone and security nor moving costs from East Ridge to Scotts Ridge. This was all added on at a later date; but have made a cut in number of orders for computers to accommodate this. The public should be aware of this.

Jo-Ann Keating, Business Office Manager, BOE, pointed out that moving costs were taken on as an administration cost. There are no dollars in the Education operating budget to cover moving costs. Increase of \$51.2 million is because had to go to another vendor – WorldCom was original lower bid. This is being covered by ordering fewer computers.

J. Plock moved and S. Zemo seconded a motion that the Board of Selectmen instruct the Scotts Ridge Building Committee to fund to the Board of Education \$183,883.00. Motion passed 4-0.

R. Marconi read a letter from Dr. Wallace from Aquarian about water system funding. There is nothing in the budget for Scotts Ridge and the High School relative to these needs. This issue is to be researched.

2. Contract for America the Beautiful Grant - This grant is from the Department of Environmental Protection for the purpose of locating and registering all the “notable” trees in the town. R. Marconi read the resolution. Once the Town of Ridgefield provides the information, we will receive the \$3,000. **J. Plock moved and P. Yanity seconded a motion for the Town of Ridgefield to ratify the contract for the America the Beautiful Grant in the amount of \$3,000 between the Town of Ridgefield and the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. Motion passed 4-0.**

3. Proposed Easement – North Salem Road and SNET
This easement would be on town property (High School property) and would be for the purpose of SNET equipment placement (back in the woods and would not be readily visible). **J. Plock moved and P. Yanity seconded a motion to refer to Planning & Zoning for consideration and approval a proposed easement on North Salem Road to The Southern New England Telephone Company (SNET). Motion passed 4-0.**

4. Finance – Funding Transfers – as presented by J. Wahlberg.
J. Plock moved and P. Yanity seconded a motion to approve Department of Finance Memorandum 200301, whereas the Fire Department is requesting an additional appropriation of \$25,000 with a corresponding increase in revenue estimate for the purpose of sending one of its firefighters for training in EMS qualification. Motion passed 4-0. This will enable Firefighter David McDevitt to attend Paramedic School for 1100 hours of training, beginning August 26, 2002. Chief Yarish reported how this training will continue to enhance the Firefighter’s program of service to the town. The number of emergency calls is on the increase since the Fire Department has taken over the paramedic service from the private provider. The contract with Firefighter McDevitt calls for payment back to the Town should he leave employment in Ridgefield.

P. Yanity moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to approve Dept. of Finance Memorandum 200302, whereas the Parks & Recreation Department is requesting an intra-departmental transfer of \$80,000 from its Program expense line to its Part Time Salary account. Motion passed 4-0.

5. Bennett’s Pond Northern Parcel – Budget and Tax Abatement - The Bennett’s Pond Acquisition project status funding was reviewed. **J. Plock moved and S. Zemo seconded a motion to approve the request from the Office of the Tax Collector that the Town of Ridgefield abate the property taxes for a total amount of \$128,486.44 on the following parcels:**

List #2508-G07-0001-458.99 acres	\$117,078.76
List #2511-F08-0206 – 2.00 acres	\$ 5,845.88
List #2512-F08-0208 – 1.18 acres	\$ 5,130.16
List #2513-F08-0207 - .659 acres	\$ 431.64

Motion passed 4-0.

6. Student Outreach Counselor Update – This project is fully funded. There are a few small changes in the wording of the contract and need to confirm that there is no conflict with the Teacher’s Union. P. Yanity wanted assurance that the Town of Ridgefield is not assuming additional liability. **S. Zemo moved and P. Yanity seconded a motion contingent upon approval by the Board of Education at their meeting on August 26, 2002, for R. Marconi, the First Selectman, to sign on behalf of the Board of Selectmen the agreement between the Town of Ridgefield and Kids in Crisis, Inc. for the 2002/2003 public school calendar year. Motion passed 4-0.**

7. Discussion of September 11th Observance Plans – R. Marconi reported on a recent meeting relative to this issue with the Chief of both Fire and Police Departments, the Assistant Chief of Police, the President of the Fire Department Union and John Frey. They all agreed that the observance should be a non-denomination event run by The Clergy Association. The question is whether to hold it in Tiger Hollow or Ballard Green and at 8:46 a.m. or 7:30 in the evening? This is for the entire community to participate in and therefore an evening venue would probably be more well attended. Tiger Hollow already has the lighting and sound systems and an alternative near by in case of rain – the high school. Ballard Green would be more intimate and “gentler”. S. Zemo thought it would be best of all to have a small memorial in the morning (blow fire siren, ring church bells and a small service at the Fire Department location), and a larger service in the evening. The Honor Guard of both the Fire and Police Departments will be part of the program wherever the location. The Ridgefield families affected by September 11th want the service to be “small” in nature. Ballard Park would lend itself well to a more reflective type of service and possible use of candlelight as well. The consensus was to use Ballard Park.

8. Request for Medical Coverage – New Senior Center Employees
Laurie Scholl, Town of Ridgefield Human Resources, presented the request for the new Senior Center employees to be provided medical coverage similar to current plans available to the Library and Housing Authority employees. **P. Yanity moved and S. Zemo seconded a motion to approve the request for Medical Plan coverage for the new Senior Center employees. (The Town of Ridgefield will be reimbursed for the cost by the Corey Foundation.) Motion passed 4-0.**

9. First Selectman’s Report –
R. Marconi reported receipt of a significant number of e-mails relative to East Ridge Middle School. The Board of Finance has requested that R. Marconi and N. Berg attend their August 20th meeting. R. Marconi has requested that the Chairmen of the various Building Committees and Committee members for all the various building projects also be in attendance. This will facilitate a meaningful and answer session.

Steep Grant of \$500,000 through the Small Town Economic Development Plan has been earmarked for Ridgefield. We now have to go through the paperwork, but will then receive the grant.

Survey plan for Bennett's Plan North Side has been received – covers the four mile perimeter. Need to decide on plans for the property; playing fields, picnic area, whatever. This will then determine the amount of acreage to be turned over to the State of Connecticut. Need to check on the exact wording of the referendum relative to land usage. Any sale of property to the State has to be voted upon by a Town meeting.

Request has been made to have severe/bad weather reports as interruptions on stations LAD and 98Q.

10. Approval of minutes – **S. Zemo moved and P. Yanity seconded a motion to approve as written the minutes of the July 24, 2002 Board of Selectmen Meeting. Motion passed 4-0.**

P. Yanity moved and J. Plock seconded a motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 9:55 p.m. Motion passed 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Janet L. Johnson