

**APPROVED/BOARD OF FINANCE MINUTES –BUDGET DELIBERATIONS MEETING  
THURSDAY, MARCH 31, 2011**

---

A budget deliberations meeting of the Board of Finance was held on Thursday, March 31, 2011 in the large conference room in Town Hall at 7:30 p.m.

Members Present: Peter Gomez, Chairman; Jill Bornstein, Vice Chairman; Marty Heiser; David Ulmer, and Margaret Price Sims

Town Officials: Rudy Marconi, First Selectman; Kevin Redmond, Controller; Deborah Low, Supt. Of Schools; Paul Hendrickson, BOE Business Manager; John Palumbo, Paul Steinmetz; Board of Education, and Joe Morits, Board of Education Director of Facilities; Paul Roche, Director of Parks & Recreation; Phil Kearns, Chairman Parks & Recreation Commission; Gina Carey & David Thaxter, P & R Commission; Barbara Dobbins; Chairman, ;Charlie Fisher; Town Engineer; Andrew,IT Director

A G E N D A

Park & Recreation Department Presentation  
Town of Ridgefield BOE Energy Study Summary  
Town Engineer  
IT Capital Requests

---

Mr. Gomez called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.

**PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT PRESENTATION**

Mr. Kearns made the presentation. He predicted revenue this year will be equal to last year. There have been three years of flat revenue. He said the revenue prediction for this year was overly optimistic and the short fall would be fully covered out of P&R's operating budget.

Mr. Kearns reminded everyone that there are two parts to what P&R does: i.e. 1) maintenance of Town assets (every dollar we make in revenue above break even = \$1.00 less in taxes – *this comment was later challenged by Mr. Gomez*); and 2) parks and recreation programs. P&R sees the Spray Bay project as a means of revenue enhancement that they predict will be at least \$100k annually.

The Park & Recreation Department raises a lot of its project money with fund-raising campaigns, soliciting individual and corporate donations.

Barbara Dobbins made the following two points: 1) a lot of private donors want to know that the Town has some interest in the Spray Bay project; 2) the private donations would not happen without Director, Paul Roche's efforts.

Ms. Bornstein asked about time frame and Mr. Kearns said construction would be scheduled for spring of 2012, allowing a substantial period of time for fund raising. He said the project has been in the P&R budget before and has been put off every year.

Please see the attached Park & Recreation 2011/2012 Budget presentation attached to these minutes.

Mr. Gomez asked how many P&R employees work on field maintenance, and Mr. Roche responded that there is one man out all the time, sometimes two. There are nine employees who work year round. There is no third party contracting for maintenance because the price is exorbitant. He added that there is a need to control whom is on the property, there are also safety concerns, but the overriding factor is cost.

The maintenance and improvement of fencing was discussed. A higher-than-usual fence around one field was discussed for the second year in a row. This time the home-owner (30 Park Lane) was present and said he is all for the fencing because he gets a lot of baseballs flying into his back yard and he is concerned for the safety of himself and his children. Mr. Heiser asked him if he was aware of the problem when he bought the house, and the home owner responded that he didn't realize how many times the balls came into the yard, nor was he aware of the lethal potential of said balls.

### **TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD BOE ENERGY STUDY SUMMARY**

Mr. Palumbo explained that the BOE hired Johnson Controls to do an energy audit of all the Town Buildings and paid them \$65k, which will go into the price of the implementation of the energy program if the Town hires Johnson Controls for the job. There is also a pay-back guarantee if Johnson Controls is hired to implement the proposal. Parts of the energy proposal have the potential for substantial payback, e.g. converting from oil to natural gas.

Mr. Heiser raised the question of laying the gas lines at the same time the new water lines were put in and Charlie Fisher responded that is could not be cone economically. Mr. Marconi added that Yankee Gas could not maintain sufficient pressure in an extended gas line.

Mr. Ulmer asked about rebates available from CL&P. Mr. Palumbo said there is only a certain amount of money allocated for rebates and when it's gone, it's gone. Mr. Morits added that, once a project is approved, the money is held. Mr. Fisher said the weatherization included in the proposal needs to be done.

Please see Town of Ridgefield Board of Education Energy Study Summary attached to these minutes.

### **TOWN ENGINEER**

Mr. Fisher spoke about the energy study, calling it an excellent job and saying that he could use it as a guideline for what he is doing. He noted that the Town just converted the Venus Building from oil to natural gas, a project with a two-heating-season payback. He said the Town is looking to similarly convert every building it can. He added that he is concerned over the supply of natural gas and said it might require a pumping station because Ridgefield is right at the edge of what is available. Other energy projects including converting the high school parking lot lights to LED and installing motion sensors; and insulating the attic at the Town Hall as well as installing sensors that monitor sound and motion.

Mr. Fisher said his budget request did not contain a lot of capital items because he is doing a lot of grant-funding projects, including a \$500k sidewalk project on Danbury Road.

Another project is revamping the second floor of the Venus building to give it a more professional appearance.

Two fire stations have cracks in the floor that need repair.

The teen center needs a new roof, some painting and it has a water issue that needs to be addressed.

Mr. Ulmer asked if all the abatements have been finished and Mr. Redmond responded affirmatively.

### **IT CAPITAL REQUESTS**

Mr. Andrew said he was trying to move as much of the Town as possible to open source, getting away from Micro Soft. He said he supports 187 pcs and does a lot of reuse. He can no longer get Windows XP and is caught in an up-grade cycle. Average life of a pc is four years, but the Town has been extending that life to 5/6 years. He is now responsible for the Police Department's IT needs, which inflates his numbers as compared to previous years.

Mr. Gomez asked to have the equipment list redone to include costs.

Ms. Sims asked why he proposed bonding for twenty years for something that would only last 8/10 years.

Ms. Sims and Mr. Ulmer both said the requested items should be taken out of the capital budget and put into the operating budget.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made by Mr. Heiser and seconded by Ms. Sims to adjourn the meeting at 10:26 p.m. Vote 5-0. **Motion APPROVED.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Karen Rodgers, Recording Secretary