



## **Town of Ridgefield Board of Finance**

### **Approved Board of Finance Meeting Minutes Tuesday March 29, 2022**

#### **I. Call to order**

Dave Ulmer called to order the Board of Finance meeting at 7:00 pm on March 29, 2022 in the Town Hall large conference room. Board Members Dave Ulmer, Greg Kabasakalian, Mike Rettger, Karen Ogden, Andrew Okrongly present.

#### Others Participating:

Town Officials and Staff: Rudy Marconi-First Selectman, Kevin Redmond-Controller, Maureen Kozlark, Bob Hebert, Sean Connelly-BOS members, Chief Kreitz-PD, Chief Myers-FD, Mickey Grasso-FD, Jake Muller-Purchasing/Facilities, Andrew Neblett-IT.

#### **II. Board of Selectmen Proposed Operating Budget**

First Selectman Rudy Marconi provided an overview of the proposed Operating Budget for the town. He reported that much of the increase in budget relates to additions to staffing, including an additional half position was added to highway administration, a new part-time recycling coordinator (to be partially funded from a new bottle deposit income stream), a part-time position in IT due to the need for more support, and an additional part-time building inspector due to the increase in permits. The fire department is adding one position, but much of this cost should be offset by less overtime. Due to increased activity, there are also some increases in hours, such as for the fire inspector and for Barlow pool maintenance staffing.

#### Mr. Marconi also reviewed other areas of increases:

IT-replacement of aging equipment as well as costs for system security enhancements.

Registrar-Increases due to redistricting, which requires new maps, and referendum costs.

Conservation Commission-Increase for professional services for tree service contractors.

Tree Warden-Increases due to the continuing need for work on dead trees throughout town.

PD-Increase due to ongoing expense for implementation of Body Cams as well as increased state testing requirements for new hires and existing staff.

FD-Vehicle use expense increased due to recurring problems with the older trucks.

Civilian Dispatch-Increased expense as expected following last year's implementation.

Highway-Snow Removal increase due to cost of material.

Mr. Marconi reported that the budget reflects savings from the prior year in pension contributions, workers' compensation insurance, and health insurance premiums. Utility costs are set for the next twelve months, which should also help avoid the impact of rising energy costs.

Overall, the Board of Selectmen is proposing an increase in the town operating budget of 2.53%, and a 50% increase in the budget for Roads and Infrastructure, resulting in a combined overall proposed increase of 3.82%. The increase for roads is a higher percentage increase due to the use of \$400,000 in Town Aid Road funds to offset a portion of the cost in last year's road budget request, which is not available to repeat this year. The combined Board of Selectmen's approved town operating budget spending request totals \$40,818,807, an increase of \$1,502,246 over the prior year budget. Debt Service costs are budgeted at \$8,265,705, a reduction of \$1,523,963, or -15.57% from the prior year budget. It was noted that because the town is awaiting its next round of bond issuance, a small portion of the debt service cost is estimated for this coming year.

### **III. Capital Budget**

Mr. Marconi reviewed the items in the proposed capital budget for the town, as previously distributed. Among other elements, he noted that this year's proposal includes a request for \$1 million to fund the next schedule of tertiary road repairs, which was last requested two years ago. This plan for maintaining these roads has been successful and well-received.

The capital budget, including BOE items, is proposed at just over \$6 million, which is higher than recent years. To hold down this request, several items have been proposed to be funded out of town's ARPA funds.

### **IV. General Discussion**

Following the presentation by Mr. Marconi, members discussed various questions about the budget with Mr. Marconi and the other town staff present.

The members also discussed their questions about the inclusion of several trucks in the proposed ARPA spending rather than having them in the regular capital budget. It was noted that the BOF could choose to move these items into the capital budget but that this would also require approval by the Board of Selectmen.

The members discussed the BOS non-binding recommendation of a 4% increase for the BOE budget with Mr. Marconi and the other members of the Board of Selectmen who were present.

**V. Adjournment** - Motion to adjourn at 9:47 pm by Mr. Rettger, seconded by Ms. Ogden. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Alison Brown