



Town of Ridgefield

Board of Education, Finance, Selectmen Special Meeting

Approved Meeting Minutes

Tuesday November 19, 2019 7:00 p.m.
BOE Conference Room Annex building
66 Prospect St. Ridgefield, CT. 06877

I. Call to order

D. Ulmer called to order the special meeting of the Board of Education, Finance and Selectmen at 7:00 PM on November 19, 2019 at Ridgefield Town Hall Annex, Ridgefield, CT.

II. Overview of Current Budget: Dawn Norton, Business Manager, BOE.

The RPS budget is an expenditure budget that covers approximately 747 FTE's and educate approximately 4610 students. The current budget is slightly more than \$98 million. As of the end of the first quarter, the BOE has obligated or expended approximately \$85.5 million of the \$98 million budget which is approximately 87%. 80% of the budget is salaries and benefits with certified and non-certified salaries at approximately 60% and employee benefits approximately 20%. The BOE has locked electricity and oil through June 2020 with rates slightly lower than budget. Considering all known factors, BOE is projecting to finish this budget year with no over expenditures.

Items that could positively affect the budget:

- Outplaced students returning to Ridgefield.
- Few short/long term disability claims and Worker's Comp claims.
- Positive medical claims experience.
- Unpaid leaves of absences.

Items that could negatively affect the budget:

- Increased number of settlements and/or outplacements and their associated expenses.
- Unforeseen plant expenses (boilers, pumps, drain lines etc.)
- Substitute expenses (teachers, paras, custodians).
- Higher than anticipated legal expenses (cases).
- Higher than anticipated claims experience.
- Colder than usual winter months resulting in higher fuel/oil and electrical expense.

Kevin Redmond, Controller, Town of Ridgefield.

2019 is favorable with \$1.9 million driven by tax sales. \$800,000 favorable on expenses. Revenue side-short falls with golf and conveyance. 2.7 favorable overall. The fund balance is at 10%; high for Ridgefield, low for Fairfield county. Fiscal 2020 looks good, no issues; winter weather is unforeseen. Much money has been put toward tree work. At this time, nothing in 2020 looks negative. Debt service is still down; seeing a small decline in debt service in 2021, going down more in 2022, 2023. Debt service looks good with positive benefits.

Boehringer Ingelheim -In 2021 a small portion of funds will go back into tax roll. A larger piece comes back in 2022 from abatement. 1 million in 2022 expected from Boehringer Ingelheim.

III. Comments from Public: None at this time.

IV. Comments from Board of Education, Boards of Selectmen, Board of Finance; JeanAnn Paddyfote, Superintendent, Rudy Marconi, First Selectmen, Dave Ulmer, Board of Finance Chairman.

JeanAnn Paddyfote, Superintendent-As of right now we're looking to continue what we are doing this year, next year we are looking at 5.75%. So far, the drivers of the increase are salaries, benefits, medical insurance, other benefits-OPEC, Pension, Special Education including transportation. Unknowns are locking in for energy, oil, gas and electricity, Liability insurance and Workers Comp.

Rudy Marconi, First Selectman. Capital projects-traffic is detoured due to closed bridge. Plan is submitted to put a turn lane on Route 7. Must fix the Depot Road bridge; a rough estimate of \$1.4 million, applying for 80% state grant. Main Street project-holes being dug, excavating underground utilities; this has been fed into 2020 plans with anticipated construction in 2021. The Ash Tree problem is severe across the state and is aggressively being worked with spending \$200,000 since July. \$95,000 from FEMA went to the tree care budget. The golf course has identified 44 dangerous trees and anticipating many more infected ones. Road paving-all surrounding towns have a low quality of asphalt and using less recycled material which is not bonding properly causing erosion. We may ask for more money for the road budget. All state grants are currently on hold. Muni projects go directly to the general fund which is used to supplement paving in the Spring. The expansion of the Governor Street and Venus building parking lots are waiting a decision. Hopes are to come within budget; budget deliberations not started yet. We're \$400,000 under on insurance due to the consolidation of positions. Currently nothing comes to mind in regards to major plans on any town buildings such as roofs.

Dave Ulmer, BOF Chairman-A nice surplus for 2019. \$1.675 million into revenue for 2020. This rolls in when we have a surplus. Good news-2021 will be able to replace \$1.675 million; revenue piece stays the same. The organic growth is between ½% and 1%. This generates about \$500,000. The growth of the town is positive. Everything else is flat. Parks and Rec is flat, golf is down. A disconcerting number is conveyance. Next year's revenues look to be up \$1 million. Trying to keep taxes close to inflation rate; average 2%. Anticipating the grand list to be .75. Good news in 2022-numbers will be better. Large impacts are state and county. A needs assessment is being done for police and fire stations. There are capital projects.

V. General Discussion-

Sean Connelly asked if there was a feeling of staying conservative. Per Dave Ulmer, around 9%. We're lower than other towns because we don't have exposure to loss of large companies. Most funds come from tax payers. Boehringer Ingelheim was built in Ridgefield due to the lower mill rate than Danbury.

Margaret Stamatis thanked the boards for being collaborative and doing school walk throughs and advocating for schools.

VI. Adjournment-motion to adjourn at 7:52. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted

Mia Belanger