

Town of Ridgefield
Board of Selectmen Meeting
Wednesday, May 22, 2019 - 6:30pm
Town Hall (Large Conference Room)
400 Main Street, Ridgefield, Connecticut

UNREVISED/UNAPPROVED MINUTES

These minutes are a general summary of the meeting and are not intended to be a verbatim transcription.

In attendance: R. Marconi, B. Hebert, B. Manners (by phone), M. Kozlark, S. Zemo

Agenda

1. Public Comment
2. Collaboration Project Presentation
3. Appointment & Reappointment Requests:
 - Pension Commission:
 - a. Christofer Christiansen
 - b. Christopher Sierakowski
 - c. Thomas Hayes
 - Prevention Council:
 - a. Brian Nash
4. Parking Authority
 - a. Increased Fees
 - b. Parking Policies
5. Parks and Recreation - Perkins Lifter (Transfer of Funds)
6. Refunds Request - Tax Collector's Office
7. Selectman's Report
8. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 05/08/19

R. Marconi called the Board of Selectmen's Meeting to order at 6:30pm.

1. Public Comment

Scott DeYoung of 51 Caudatowa Drive - He wanted to know what the town is doing about complying with the recently passed fracking ordinance, it had come to his attention that it appears as though the town does not have in its possession the requirement of the ordinance which requires the certification of the materials to be free of fracking waste. R. Marconi responded that the town had a public hearing & a town meeting on this and it was

passed so that we now have an ordinance that does not allow for any fracking product to be in any of our asphalt or deicing material for the winter.

R. Marconi explained that we do have certification from the deicing companies stating that they do not use anything associated with the fracking process and that they have given us testimony and an affidavit to that effect. He went on to explain that it's a different story with the asphalt as both Tilcon & O&G has not at this point, the reason the is that they feel because of the asphalt process and the oil process that they use at their plants they can't guarantee that a small minuscule amount may possibly be found.

R. Marconi mentioned that there is a proposed Senate Bill at the State in regards to fracking, and he has been told that if passed the law will supersede any ordinance on the books of municipalities which would allow us to continue paving. This has not yet been voted on.

S. DeYoung asked if we are paving & R. Marconi responded that we are paving, that we started paving the roads today. S. DeYoung asked so you are violating the ordinance? R. Marconi responded that we are in agreement with the ordinance, the spirit of the ordinance but the fact that eliminating paving in town would make it a health, safety & welfare issue for the people of Ridgefield.

The Selectmen had a discussion in regards to the ordinance and they agree with R. Marconi that the paving has to happen and that this should be revisited after the State has made their decision. This will be put on the agenda for the June 19th Board of Selectmen Meeting for further discussion.

2. Collaboration Project Presentation

Bob Costanza, Wayne Addressi & Julia Nable came to present their project. R. Marconi kicked off the presentation, he has been intimately involved with this project for awhile now along with W. Addressi of Addressi Jewelers J. Nable of SandroMax & B. Costanza who has vast experience in the advertising industry. This project started out as an idea that W. Addressi had about two years ago, so he spoke one on one with several merchants & landlords in town. This started as a private initiative that was funded with \$80,000 which was raised by W. Addressi from private investors, supports. Some of the brightest minds in the community advised them, coached them, and worked with them to get to this point. The goal was always to collaborate with the town after building the initial platform to market the positivity and enthusiasm that is Ridgefield.

This project is about people coming together, it's about unification, allowing people to go to one location to find out about all things Ridgefield.

This project is called In Ridgefield (InRidgefield.com), this new marketing initiative uses storytelling, social media, and public relations to widely promote all that is wonderful about our town. There are many great things here in Ridgefield, we have a very philanthropic and caring community, rich cultural assets, excellent schools making it an ideal place to raise a family, a walkable, historic downtown, diverse family-owned shops, proximity to abundant nature and trails and an avid health & wellness community. This is a platform that would tie together all of the Silos in town; Arts & Culture, Residents, Restaurants, Merchants, Realtors, Chamber, ECDC, Landlords, Religious Organizations, Wellness, Sports, Schools, Municipal & Nonprofits with the First Selectman's Office at the center

surrounded by the Leadership Team. Some of the challenges of this platform are to help sustain & build upon successes, attract new residents & to help stimulate the housing market. The success of this platform can be measured by event & venue attendance, restaurant & shopping growth, home sales as well as digital analytics.

They are planning to have quarterly meetings with R. Marconi and the Leadership Team. The next step would be to continue to create content for the platform: Events Promotion, Social Media, Mobile Platform, Tourism Platform, Influencers, Out of Home, Advertising, Print Promotion, Digital Marketing, Public Relations, Video Productions, Search Marketing, E-mail Marketing as well as Blogging & Interviews.

M. Kozlark, B. Hebert & S. Zemo are excited about the idea of this platform but are concerned with the financial contribution that is being asked of the town in the amount of \$40,000 from this current fiscal year and another \$40,000 from the next fiscal year (likely to come from the town's contingency fund) to join this private/public venture. There is a lot to think about when you are talking about taxpayer dollars. The \$80,000 that was raised privately was already spent to get In Ridgefield where it is today, so with the additional \$80,000 they would be able to elevate everything that they have already accomplished.

Big concerns from the BOS were who is the money going to, and how exactly it would be spent, as well as what would happen if there were no private donations. Along with the funds that they are asking the town to contribute additional funds would come from additional fund raising. All the information that would be needed in order for the BOS to vote in regards to entering into a contract and contributing taxpayer dollars was not available at this meeting. They are going to gather more information and put this back on the agenda for the June 19th BOS Meeting, and hopefully they will be able to put it to a vote at that time.

3. Appointment & Reappointment Requests

Pension Commission: Christofer Christiansen (couldn't attend the meeting due to illness), Christopher Sierakowski & Thomas Hayes

They have spent a lot of time over the last two years getting the asset allocation done in a sensible conservative way. They have taken a dramatic amount of cost out of the pension and the results, they have been very satisfied with Vanguard now spearheading the process. Overall its been a very productive, successful two years.

The large pension is at 108 and 18 million as of the close of business in April, the fiscal year to date from last June is up about 5%, and looking back one year is at 5.7%, this includes the dislocation in December when the market was down 20%.

Each of the towns pensions are fully funded at 100 or over which is unusual for a municipality. The move from a defined contribution to a defined benefit was a financially prudent thing to do.

S. Zemo moved and M. Kozlark seconded the motion to reappoint Christofer Christiansen, Christopher Sierakowski & Thomas Hayes to the Pension Commission. Motion carried 4-0.

Prevention Council: Brian Nash

Currently serves in an advisory capacity, he is now a resident. He is in the addiction & recovery field. He is the Executive Director for a place called the Lighthouse, and Recovery 365 program that focuses on helping people as they transition out of treatment back into their communities, and working with them on getting connected with therapists & psychiatrists.

He spoke about how its the isolation of addiction that takes so many people, He is currently in long term recovery and how it's important to get people connected through programs so they there have that continued support.

The BOS challenged B. Nash and the entire Prevention Council to see if they can come up with some type of metrics going forward it can better be determined where resources & help are needed.

B. Hebert moved and S. Zemo seconded the motion to appoint Brian Nash to the Prevention Council. Motion carried 4-0.

4. Parking Authority - Increased Fees & Parking Policies

J. Wilmot the Chair of the Parking Authority is here, she asked that we remove parking policies from the agenda, she wasn't prepared to discuss them at tonight's meeting and would like to have the opportunity to go over them with the Parking Authority so she can come to the table with a thorough & efficient report. M. Kozlark asked if it would be possible to get a copy of the policies, revised police, and/or suggested policies before it comes to the table.

The Parking Authority is moving forward with the new license agreements with the landlords, they already have the signed agreement from L. Benenson, the next one up in the queue is Gavin's.

At the Parking Authority's March meeting it was voted unanimously to increase the Town Permit Fee from \$60 to \$75, the current fee of \$60 has been in place since at least 2006. There has been a reduction in permits being doled out because of the different license agreements & the percentages. In the CVS lot there used to be 64 permits issued and now there are only 30. So with less permits being sold there is less revenue coming in. They are hoping that with the license agreements & more with the Governor St. expansion that with less permits being sold these lots will be full & used, this will result in less tickets being issued which leads to less money to pay for the Parking Authority which covers the salaries of the Parking Enforcement Officers as well as the new signage they will need and don't have the funds to pay for.

M. Kozlark asked when will we know the number of permits we are going to have to sell, and R. Marconi responded that we wouldn't know until we have negotiated every agreement. They are trying to get 2 more license agreements signed by 07/01/19 because that is when the new permits will be issued. In the new license agreements it can be determined how many landlord permits they want when the sign the agreement.

There is a lot of concern about where everyone is going to park with less spots & less permits available. The town was hoping for an agreement with S. Casey but he wanted compensation and the town just doesn't have the funds for that. The town is planning to expand the Governor Street parking lot, they have met with P&Z today and there were some revisions that needed to be made, they are hoping to have them back in another week so that they can be submitted to P&Z. They are hoping that they will be able to start the project in August.

S. Zemo moved and B. Hebert seconded the motion to increase the Town Permit Fees from \$60 to \$75 as per the recommendation of the Parking Authority. Motion carried 4-0.

5. Parks and Recreation - Perkins Lifter (Transfer of Funds)

E. Gabbianelli from Parks & Rec to discuss the Perkins lifter. This is an insert that would be bolted down to the back of one of the pickup trucks that Parks & Rec currently has. This would allow the employee to roll the container up to the back of the truck where the grappler arm would then squeeze it, pick it up, dump it and then to put it back on the ground so it can be rolled back. The reason this has come up is that there are averaging a couple of employees out on workers comp for shoulder injuries due to lifting the containers. Currently they are lifting up the 55 gallon containers by hand and dumping them into the back of a low boy dump truck, they do this twice a week and there are approximately 100 containers out there.

R. Marconi had J. Muller confirm that this was the only product out there that can make this specific item, there is a company called Parkan that makes a similar item for about \$18,500 but the Perkins lifer is the better model as it has a sweep lid on it and it can move the garbage from the front to the back of the truck.

Parks & Rec is looking to move \$29,462 from their full time salaries line to the small equipment line item of the their budget in order to purchase this lifter. They will install the lifter themselves and would be able to take care of any minimal maintenance required.

S. Zemo moved and B. Hebert seconded the motion to move \$29,462 from the Full Time Salaries line item to the Small Equipment line item of the Parks & Recreation Budget. Motion carried 4-0.

6. Refunds Request - Tax Collector's Office

We have the refunds from the Tax Collector's Office totaling \$13,396.54.

M. Kozlark moved and S. Zemo seconded the motion to accept the refunds from the Tax Collector. Motion carried 4-0.

7. Selectman's Report

Capital Projects

Scott Ridge Middle School & Barlow Mountain Elementary School contracts will finalize the 1st week of June and begin the installation of the solar rays the week of June 10th, this will allow the system to be operational by the start of the 2019-2020 school year, we estimate about a \$20,000 savings per school.

EOC & the Playhouse roof capital project, currently the project is out to bid, opening bids on June 6, 2019, they will begin the roof reconstruction at the end of the summer prior to hurricane season. They had a mandatory pre-bid site walk today and 5 qualified roof constructor attended the meeting.

Venus Building Reconstruction, the final review of the design plans are complete and the bid package will go out to bid the 1st week of June.

Governor Street Parking Expansion, met with P&Z and discussed the parking lot layout and received some positive feedback to make minor revisions. He's going to CCA who has been working on it and we should have it in about a week, a week and a half.

Parks & Recreation Parking Lot, they had this as a capital budget, 20 spaces several years ago, the bid package is almost complete, and will be up on June 1st as we discussed with D. DePinto. There is a second option that being looked which is to push out the existing parking lot at Founders Hall, this would yield an additional 42 parking spaces.

Voting

There was a 9.5% turnout for the budget referendum, this is the lowest on record. A discussion took place about different ways to help get more people to the polls, more signage around town could help just reminding people to vote, maybe a banner at Pamby's.

Department of Transportation - Sphere Bus

Wendy gave R. Marconi this, The First Selectmen, Rudy Marconi is hereby authorized to negotiate, and execute all necessary agreement contract documents on behalf of the Town of Ridgefield with the Department of Transportation of the State of Connecticut and to affix the corporate seal. This is specifically for the 13b grant which is for transportation, for the Sphere bus that we get through the DOT, so the specific reason is for the agreement with the DOT.

Sphere wants \$17,000 for the bus, as far as they are concerned the bus is paid off, they have no obligations & the title is clear however Richard Schreiner from HART has informed us that anything over \$5,000 would have to be paid back to the State of Connecticut. R. Marconi wants to find out what the trade in value of the bus is and hopefully Sphere would accept that, as well as to find out if the surplus that is in the HART fund could be used to purchase the bus.

B. Hebert moved and M. Kozlark seconded the motion to approve the resolution allowing the First Selectmen to enter into a contract with the State Department of Transportation specifically for a 13b Grant contingent on the First Selectman coming back with a breakdown of the numbers. Motion carried 4-0.

Plantings

Kitsy Snow of the Garden Club reached out regarding a grant from the Richardson Fund to add planters to Main Street. The planters would look beautiful when planted but the maintenance and upkeep would be of concern.

Dog Stations

Volunteers are needed to handle the dog stations along Main St. as well as the Rail Trail, if no one comes forward they will need to be pulled out. The stations are being used and are often overflowing, they need to be cleaned out on a weekly basis.

In Ridgefield Discussion Continued

The board had further discussion regarding tonight's presentation. R. Marconi is going to look into pulling the \$40,000 out of the contingency fund and possibly putting it into an account for branding with the possibility of putting it into the general fund if they decide not to contribute it to the project.

The BOS still has many questions regarding the project although they are all in favor of branding the town but need to gather more information in order to make a decision. B. Hebert is going to have a sit down in order to get answers to their questions and then the BOS plans on having a special meeting in order to have a further discussion of the project.

8. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 05/08/19

Minutes were not discussed.

S. Zemo moved and M. Kozlark seconded the motion to adjourn the Board of Selectmen Meeting at 11:08pm. Motion carried 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted,
Hollie M. Rapp