



**Town of Ridgefield
Board of Selectman Meeting Minutes
UNAPPROVED**

February 15, 2023 at 6:30pm

Please note – these minutes are not verbatim.

Present: Rudy Marconi, Sean Connelly, Barbara Manners, Maureen Kozlark

Absent: Bob Hebert

1. Public Comment

There were no public comments

2. Pension Commission – OPEB Plans

Pension Commission Chair Chris Christiansen and member Andrew Okrongly appeared before the Board to present the Pension OPEB plan.

Christiansen first talked about the need to assign Jill Browne as Plan Administrator for the Board of Education and Laurie Fernandez as Plan Administrator for the Town.

Maureen Kozlark moved to approve Jill Browne as the Pension Plan Administrator for the Board of Education and Laurie Fernandez as the Pension Plan Administrator for the Town of Ridgefield. Sean Connelly second the motion. Motion carries 4-0.

Christiansen reported that the OPEB Plan is currently 90% funded, whereas in the past it has been over 100%. The Town contributed \$600,000; however, Christiansen explained that the funded percentage depends on the markets not the contribution. The surrounding towns are experiencing the same dip as Ridgefield.

There were discussions about Vanguard, the difference in the amount contributions from the schools vs other departments, and the idea of having a floor instead of a formula for budgeting contributions.

In summary, Ridgefield's investment strategy remains the same and despite this year's dip, is still in a very good position.

3. **Town Vendor Permit Request – Greek Crave Food Truck**

Andreas Grivas appeared before the Board to request a vendor permit for his Greek Crave Food Truck. Grivas talked about his experience running a food truck in Greece and his desire to get back into that business here in Ridgefield. The Board explained that the Town Ordinance does not allow food trucks to keep a permanent location. Vendors are permitted to serve at locations when invited and private events. Examples include Martin Park, Parks & Rec, Nod Hill, and residential private parties.

Sean Connelly moved to approve the Vendor Permit request from Greek Crave Food Truck. Barbara Manners second the motion. Motion carries 4-0.

4. **Appointments & Reappointments**

a. **Conservation Commission Reappointment**

Jean Linville and Matthew Sharp are up for reappointment to the Conservation Commission. Matthew Sharp could not attend tonight's meeting and requested that the Board move forward with his reappointment.

Conservation Commission Chair Jim Coyle attended the meeting in support of Jean Linville and Matthew Sharp's reappointment.

Linville talked about the projects she's focused on during her time on the Commission which included collaborating with the library to create STEAM packs that relate to hiking, creating educational signs that provide background information at the McKeen property, and the recent collaboration with the Woodcock Nature Center creating monthly walks at different open space locations in town.

There were discussions about the NRV, the donation of the property in Pine Mountain, the property on New Street that is up for sale, and the online mapping system Avenza.

Barbara Manners moved to reappoint Jean Linville & Matthew Sharp for a 3-year term to the Conservation Commission. Maureen Kozlark second the motion. Motion carries 4-0.

b. **Architectural Advisory Committee**

Phillip Maggi would like to join the Architectural Advisory Committee as an alternate. Maggi told the Board about his time in Ridgefield and his background as a telecommunications lawyer and more recently Garden Designer.

The Board asked about his meeting attendance and his thoughts on the Native Plan Policy.

Maureen Kozlark moved to appoint Phillip Maggi as an alternate for a 3-year term to the Conservation Commission. Sean Connelly second the motion. Motion carries 4-0.

5. Charter Revision recommendations

The Board of Selectmen need to submit Charter Revision Recommendations to the Charter Revision Commission.

The Board discussed creating a Legal Committee for the purpose of reviewing legal issues and possibly mitigating legal costs to the Town. There will be a survey conducted of surrounding municipalities to find out their procedures and policies.

The Board also talked about the idea of changing the Tax Collector, Treasurer and Town Clerk to hired positions. Currently these positions are elected which means any person, qualified or not, can run for it.

There was a discussion about creating a Town Manager position. The Town Manager would be a nonpolitical hired position for the purpose of helping to run the Town.

Sean Connelly asked about the history behind the Board of Selectmen acting as the Fire Commission, which prompted a discussion on developing a Safety Commission (Police & Fire combined).

There was a discussion about the language that allows for motions and adding or removing line items at the Annual Town Budget Meeting.

The Board of Selectmen will compile their list of suggestions and submit them to the Charter Revision Commission.

6. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Maureen Kozlark moved to approve the January 30, 2023 BOS Budget Meeting Minutes as amended. Sean Connelly second the motion. Motion carries 4-0.

Sean Connelly moved to approve the January 31, 2023 BOS Budget Meeting Minutes as amended. Maureen Kozlark second the motion. Motion carries 4-0.

Maureen Kozlark moved to approve the February 1, 2023 BOS Regular & Budget Meeting Motions as amended. Sean Connelly second the motion. Barbara Manners abstained. Motion carries 3-0-1.

Maureen Kozlark moved to approve the February 2, 2023 BOS Budget Meeting Motions as amended. Sean Connelly second the motion. Motion

carries 4-0.

7. Selectman's Report

Rudy Marconi gave an update on the Ponds Edge Property purchase and sale agreement. There will be a Public Hearing and Town Meeting scheduled. There was a discussion about the completion date for the work done by the WPCA and the addition of language into the agreement to protect them if there are unforeseen delays.

The Entrypoint Broadband Study will be completed in 4-6 weeks. Marconi can provide updates if requested.

Rich Morell and Darren Brown from the Highway Department provided a road assessment report. Of the 453 roads in town, 162 are more than 40% deteriorated. The report details the length of each road and the length of deterioration.

Currently there are 7 legal cases generating additional costs for the Town.

The Town is moving forward with the foreclosure on the 7-acre property known as the Port of Missing Men.

Marconi recently gave a State of the Town address in which he covered the following capital projects:

- Branchville – the TAP agreement of \$2.2 million is for sidewalks, street lamps, intersection work and a pedestrian bridge.
- Ligi Way – project has been approved
- ADA upgrades to Ridgebury, Barlow Mountain and Branchville Elementary Schools – work is scheduled to begin this summer.
- New Street and Pound Street sidewalks – bid will go out in a few weeks
- Roof replacement on Garage 2 at the Highway Department is moving forward.
- Branchville Elementary School – solar project has an expected May 2023 connection
- Ridgefield High School – solar panels will be installed this summer.
- Governor Park Basketball Court replacement will be done as soon as schools gets out.
- Public Safety Building – the Fire & Police Chiefs are reviewing the new layout. More meetings will be held to finalize details.

Marconi handed out a report from Kevin Redmond, Director of Finance, with some highlights from Moody's, the Town's current bond rating company. Moody's has recently adopted a new score card which has affected Ridgefield's rating.

Many Veterans Park Elementary School parents have been parking at the Lounsbury house for school pick up and drop off. The Lounsbury House does not want parents using their lot. There was a discussion about school pick up and drop off protocols and why the lot can't be used by the parents if there are no events at the Lounsbury House during those times.

The Planning & Zoning Commission has drafted an Inclusionary Zoning Plan and held Public Hearings to get input from residents. The Board of Selectmen did not provide input, however as an Ex-officio member Marconi can bring the Board's comments to the Commission. The Board will review the draft and discuss at the next Board of Selectmen meeting.

The final guideline book for Boards, Committees and Commission has been distributed to the Charter Revision Commission who is reviewing it to see if any of the guidelines should be adopted into the Charter.

There is a stream back up on Stony Hill Road. The neighbors rallied and petitioned the Town to pay for it. The Town agreed to split the cost which comes out to \$314 each.

There is an ongoing FOI case against the ECDC for a meeting that was held without proper notice. The ECDC has recognized their mistake, rescinded the meeting, and held another meeting with a 24-hour advanced notice as required by the Freedom of Information Act. The complainants have denied the request to withdraw the case, despite the rectification. As a result the Town continues to burn through their legal budget, which ultimately costs the tax payers more money.

The Social Services reserves are way down. Social Services provides support to residents who experience food insecurity or low income with basic needs like: food, heat, rent, medical needs and so much more. Anyone can donate to help. There was a discussion about how to get the word out.

Assessments from the Tax Assessor Revaluation went up. Tax increases and decreases are not a result of the revaluation.

A rapid flashing beacon will be installed at the cross walk that is in front of the Conservatory of Dance on Main Street. The painting of the cross walks will be done in the spring. There was a discussion about also installing one at the

Veterans Park Elementary School cross walk. The Town has been looking for a Crossing Guard for some time now but cannot seem to fill the position.

There was a discussion about the intersection at Maple Shade Road and Route 116, which is an accident-prone juncture.

The pump station project is running into delays due to electrical parts. The sewer plant is 80% complete.

Barbara Manners moved to adjourn the February 15, 2023 Board of Selectmen Meeting. Maureen Kozlark second the motion. Motion carries 4-0.