

TOWN of RIDGEFIELD
BOARD OF SELECTMEN REGULAR & BUDGET MEETING
THURSDAY, MARCH 8, 2018 – 7:00 PM
TOWN HALL LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM – 12 PM

APPROVED MINUTES

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

In attendance: R. Marconi, R. Hebert, M. Kozlark, B. Manners, S. Zemo

Agenda

1. Public Comment
2. Girl Scout Day Proclamation
3. Ridgefield Prevention Council Interview: Michaela Kane
4. Building Fees: Jason Celestino, Deputy Building Official
5. Richard Venus Building Estimates
6. Schlumberger Phase I Funding Approval
7. Selectman's Report
8. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 1/31/18 5:30 special, 1/31/18 6:30 special, 2/5/18 budget, 2/6/18 budget, 2/8/18 special, 2/8/18 budget

Budget Agenda

1. Final Budget Review

R. Marconi called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and provided a brief update on the Nor'easter. Peter Hill, Public Works Director, said it was one of the worst storms he has experienced in his 40 plus years. Eversource will be working overnight on restoration; we currently have 435 customers without power. Technology at the schools is down (part of the CEN network) – this is an issue originating in Weston.

R. Marconi mentioned the RVNA was not discussed as part of the budget—do we want to revisit this? The request is a \$15,000 grant.

B. Hebert moved, B. Manners seconded the motion to add Item 6a to the meeting agenda—RVNA \$15,000 Grant Request. Motion carried 5-0.

1. Public Comment

Mr. John Locke, 94 Danbury Road, stepped forward for comment. He has been a substitute teacher for 18 years at ERMS. Everyone is concerned about school security. Some want teachers to be trained with weapons—this is irresponsible. First responders have this responsibility. Arming teachers will cause mass confusion. Agree with increased security at all schools, but we don't need more weapons in the school—I strongly urge you to oppose that. R. Marconi stated that there has been no proposal for this in our Town.

2. Girl Scout Day Proclamation

Girl Scout Ruby Labozza came forward as Mr. Marconi read the proclamation to Ruby. R. Marconi also recognized International Women's Day.

3. Ridgefield Prevention Council Interview—this item was postponed to the 3/21/18 meeting.

4. Building Fees: Jason Celestino, Deputy Building Official

Jason Celestino came forward to discuss building fees and the proposed increase. The Building Department compared its fees with 20 other towns and found that we fall \$158-300 short per \$100,000 project. Our last fee increase was in 2006. The suggestion is to raise the fee \$2 per \$1,000 at the beginning of the fiscal year. This will put us more in line with other towns. A typical building permit fee for a new home is \$2,000. This fee applies to renovations as well as new construction—it is a value percentage of what the cost of construction would be. S. Zemo asked about the state fee. A percentage of every fee we collect is given to the state which is used for building officials educational purposes—this is mandated by the state. We receive approximately \$525,000 per year for building fees; this year the number will be slightly less. This proposed increase is expected to bring an additional \$70,000 in fees to the Town. B. Hebert stated his concern that the middle class will be squeezed in addition to all other places where they will be squeezed; however, he can support this, recognizing fees have not increased since 2006.

M. Kozlark moved and B. Manners seconded the motion to increase the building fees \$2 per \$1,000 for new building projects. Motion carried 5-0.

5. Richard Venus Building Estimates

These are costs associated with the expansion of Ridgefield Playhouse and moving the BOE offices to the garden level of the Venus building. R. Marconi will be discussing with Superintendent Karen Baldwin. The total cost is \$1,069,701; we would ask the Board of Finance for a special appropriation. The budget cycle would not allow us to move forward until May. We are targeting this fall for completion—a good time to move the BOE offices would be summer time. A moving company would assist—this cost is included. B. Hebert is concerned that some items are not included in this estimate: HVAC, sprinkler, bathroom upgrade are not included. Gerald Roche provided the estimate. Do we want to install a whole new HVAC system or simply upgrade? The system currently works; it simply is not very efficient. Do we prepare it for a future upgrade? The revenues from the Playhouse would probably not be enough to take care of the debt service over 20 years. But Chef's Warehouse will be taking additional space; that revenue would cover approximately \$1.5 in capital expenditures. M. Kozlark stated that that revenue should not be considered as part of this project. Will Chef's Warehouse ever want to rent the first floor? We would eliminate that possibility if we move the BOE there. S. Zemo stated that as landlords we want to maintain our asset. Many of these items would benefit us no matter what happens with the tenants. B. Hebert would like to know the revenue realized from the building and the expenses. The building right now is self-sustaining. B. Hebert stated he is concerned about the HVAC, the sprinkler and the bathroom upgrade—all these items should be included in the estimate. Fixtures and equipment for the BOE move is not included. The Ridgefield Playhouse is picking up the cost

of their renovations and move. K. Redmond will be asked to attend the 3/21/18 meeting to further discuss costs associated with the Venus building.

6. Schlumberger Phase I Funding Approval

A total of \$680,000 is needed to meeting contractual obligations with Bassam Fellows and ACT, the two Schlumberger building lessees. Bassam Fellows has located the original drawings of the PJB and are moving forward with changes to match the original. They are restoring all of the wood and have installed garage doors and painted them the original color. ACT of CT is nearing completion of the auditorium renovations and has announced their first show in June. Money would be moved from other accounts; we need BOF approval of the transfer of funds to the Schlumberger site account. The transfer has no net impact on Fund Balance.

B. Hebert moved and M. Kozlark seconded the motion to approve the transfer of \$200,000 to meet contractual obligations of Schlumberger leases. Motion carried 5-0.

Ed Tyrrell, Pond Road, asked about whether this is the base bid? Any other alternates that are needed to meet the obligations? The answer is no.

Paving may be needed – that would have to come out of the Highway Department paving budget. B. Hebert asked about whether Charter Group Homes took care of all of their obligations—the answer is yes.

6a. RVNA \$15,000 Grant Request

R. Marconi stated this request was not included in budget discussions. The RVNA expressed disappointment that the BOS did not recognize their request last year. They are looking for a \$15,000 grant to recognize their community work, especially the RVNA Health Fair Day, and all the other work they do. B. Manners asked whether any services during wellness day are free? R. Marconi stated the services and screenings provided at Health Fair Day are free; the RVNA also respond in times of disaster, such as Irene and Sandy.

The BOS approved a 2.49 percent increase to the operating budget. This percentage must remain the same.

E. Tyrrell suggested doing the same thing that was done at the Tuesday night meeting: when the BOS added something in, the same amount was taken out of the benefit line.

S. Zemo asked about whether the RVNA receives any support from the other towns it services? This information is not known. B. Hebert stated that the Town should show some level of support to the RVNA. B. Manners agrees, but recognizes that they do charge for their services. M. Kozlark suggested \$10,000 would be an agreeable amount.

B. Manners moved and M. Kozlark seconded the motion to add \$10,000 to community grants for the RVNA. Motion carried 5-0.

7. Selectman's Report

- Kindness Mural: S. Zemo discussed this positive project and encouraged others to go to the Teen Barn tomorrow, the last day, to participate.
- Nod Hill Brewery is circulating a petition to modify the vendor ordinance to allow a food truck at their brewery
- Lakeside Drive Land Donation—Mr. Romeo wanted to donate property (.44 acres) and the BOS discussed it in 2013 and at that time, the BOS declined the offer until the taxes were paid. The Town recently received a letter to revisit receiving a donation of this parcel. Taxes now owed are \$40,000, much of which is interest. The lot is unbuildable. S. Zemo stated that we would not get the taxes owed if we take the property (property has been lienied); we would incur legal fees if the property goes into foreclosure. This item will be discussed at the 3/21/18 BOS meeting.
- Legislative Update—many bills have been presented; nothing earth-shattering. Have not heard anything on the budget.

Discussion ensued about the cost per inch of snow for snow removal. R. Marconi stated an average storm response is approximately \$12-13,000. This storm will be much much more.

8. Approval of Meeting Minutes: 1/31/18 5:30 special, 1/31/18 6:30 special, 2/5/18 budget, 2/6/18 budget, 2/8/18 special, 2/8/18 budget

M. Kozlark moved and S. Zemo seconded the motion to approve as written the 1/31/18 5:30 pm BOS special meeting minutes. Motion carried 4-0-1 (B. Manners was absent).

S. Zemo moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve as written the 1/31/18 6:30 pm BOS special meeting minutes. Motion carried 5-0.

M. Kozlark moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve as written the 2/5/18 BOS budget meeting minutes. Motion carried 5-0.

M. Kozlark moved and B. Manners seconded a motion to approve as amended the 2/6/18 BOS budget meeting minutes. Motion carried 5-0.

B. Hebert moved and S. Zemo seconded the motion to approve as written the 2/8/18 BOS special meeting minutes. Motion carried 4-0-1 (M. Kozlark was absent).

S. Zemo moved and B. Hebert seconded the motion to approve as written the 2/8/18 BOS budget meeting minutes. Motion carried 4-0-1 (M. Kozlark was absent).

M. Kozlark moved and R. Marconi seconded the motion to adjourn the BOS meeting at 8:44 pm. Motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Wendy Gannon Lionetti