

**TOWN of RIDGEFIELD – BOARD of SELECTMEN**  
**BUDGET MEETING – FEBRUARY 4, 2016**

TOWN HALL/LARGE CONFERENCE ROOM – 7:00 P.M.

APPROVED MINUTES

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

In attendance:       R. Marconi, R. Hebert, M. Kozlark, B. Manners, S. Zemo  
                              K. Redmond, Director of Finance

**Agenda**

1.     Engineering Budget
2.     Highway Department Budget
3.     Police Department Budget
4.     General Budget Discussion

R. Marconi called the meeting to order at 7:05pm.

1.     Engineering Budget

Charlie Fisher, Engineer, and Kevin Redmond, Controller, came forward to review the Engineering Department budget.

Discussion ensued about the Philip Johnson Building. We don't want to lose the building; it must not be neglected. The power is currently off due to safety concerns because of the construction currently underway on the property. Once the construction is complete, the power will be turned on and the building will be addressed. Charlie stated one concern is downgrading the 13k volts that comes into the property; this must done by a trained high voltage electrician. Another concern is the transformers that are located at the PJB. The cost to lay a new electric line from the PJB to the auditorium is \$45k. Original appropriation was \$7M; we received an additional funding source from state; authority was increased to \$7.7 million; we are currently very close to exhausting it. \$1.7M has been spent on demolition.

C. Fisher discussed his Engineering operating budget—it increased 2.5% for incidentals. Chef's Warehouse has complained about the exterior of the Venus building; Bailey Ave parking lot was not well maintained after it was re-done. Money has been added to the budget for the envelope of the Venus building and landscaping maintenance for Bailey Avenue parking lot. Is Parks & Recreation responsible for landscaping maintenance and litter removal at the Venus building? Yes, but they have much to maintain; this would be to help supplement their work

load. Perhaps Parks & Recreation should revisit with the coaches the etiquette for cleanup. R. Marconi will talk to Paul Roche about the protocol for field usage and team responsibility to clean up. Window replacement has begun; the first floor is complete; second floor windows will be addressed next year.

Per K. Redmond, \$2.7 is the total capital now — this figure includes the Library website.

The Engineering Capital budget was then discussed. Floor repairs for the Highway Department are necessary: Garage 1 was built on part of the old dump (not a landfill)—and over a period of time the floors have been settling. Significant cracking occurred and the floor pitched because of the void underneath. P. Hill excavated and removed a good part of the floor. It must be repaired — properly engineered and repaired.

East Ridge Middle School roof is in need of repair — lap repairs are necessary on all the flat roofs. This repair should give us 15 years at least on replacement, which would cost millions of dollars. R. Marconi asked whether this roof would be a candidate for solar panels? The answer is no due to snow load. In significant snow, a protocol is in place to remove snow quickly because of the possibility of roof collapse.

Grant application has been submitted for \$2M for infrastructure renovation at the Branchville train station. Sidewalk renovations from Dunkin Donuts to Branchville School; two pedestrian bridges over the river; signalization improvements; decorative lighting; among other improvements.

MS4 stormwater permits – the state changed the permit requirements last year. The key term is ‘Illicit discharge detection’ — which means we must actively search out pollutants, map every catch basin, manhole, etc. within the limits of the Town. The easiest way to address this is to purchase a GPS data collection system. By using this methodology we can meet these requirements efficiently. The stormwater permit is good for five years.

In December we applied for a grant for a 60-space commuter parking lot (on the back side of East Ridge Middle School) on Prospect Ridge through DECD. Sidewalks will also be installed. There is a very low probability that we will

Dam inspection was required last year; as a result, Shadow Lake, Bennetts Pond, and Windwing dams must be repaired. In addition, Mamasasco Lake drainage must be addressed at Third Lane. The Army Corps of Engineers are involved in this project. The LOCIP program is paid back by the state; we have been repairing sidewalks through the LOCIP funding. We are currently looking at the sidewalks in front of Casagmo north to Route 116. Handicap accessibility has been a focus also. They are being retro-fitted to make them handicap accessible. C. Fisher was thanked by the Board members for his work on the budget.

## 2. Highway Department Budget

Peter Hill, Supervisor, and Ellen Rossini, Office Manager, joined Kevin Redmond, to review the Highway Department budget with the Board. P. Hill asked about the status of personnel—he has asked for personnel for the past five years and this year he did not ask. Other departments have requested personnel. What has changed? R. Marconi responded that Highway has ability to outsource some work and this costs less.

The internet service is for the garage personnel. Much of their information is available online—manuals etc. This will cost \$1800 per year—the government price.

Support services is down 1.96% because of diesel fuel costs. The cost of asphalt has dropped slightly. Class 1 material has gone down also. We still have a lot of money left in our current fiscal year overlay budget. \$1,700,000 was for overlay.

For the current fiscal year, there is a total of 10.5 miles for \$2.7M (includes \$700,000 of special funding)--\$230,000 per mile. The additional funding was requested last year because the roads took such a beating due to the winter weather in early 2015.

The total number of miles for 2016-17 paving is 9.6 miles. Roads are prioritized by PCI - Pavement Condition Index. A road rated 73 (such as Haviland Road) is acceptable. We have raised our PCI to 76 on many roads. There is little difference between the two, however. All roads on the paving candidate list are at 60 or less on the PCI scale. After paving, the rating increases to 100. We are not doing any reconstruction of any roads this year. Most roads will be either overlaid or milled—none will be reclaimed.

Capital budget discussion ensued. Guard rails were discussed. How many feet can be replaced with \$40k? The loader and the sweeper were moved to next fiscal year. There are 30 people in the Highway Department.

### 3. Police Department Budget

Chief Roche, Major Brown, and Commissioner George Kain approached the table and began discussing the Police Department operating budget. In 2009 the Town froze four personnel; many new people have been hired over the past few years. With new people, we are seeing increases because of contractual obligations. Matt Siebert just returned from deployment; there is a 4.67% increase in personnel due to this fact. The per diem food request has increased from \$4/day.

Tasers were used two times last year; one time in each of the prior years. A full report is generated if used. Major Brown discussed the proposed video surveillance program—it will allow the department to view videos from all sources. Power DMS program is a training program. This will help with audits, depositions of officers, officers can constantly brush up on policies and laws.

We currently have a 4/3 replacement program of cruisers. We allow 60,000 miles max for a cruiser—an additional 1/3 miles are added to the car to allow for idling time. R. Marconi asked about possibly purchasing alternative cars, such as Honda or Subaru. Chief Roche responded that we have attempted this in the past but it did not work. Two SRO vehicles are being replaced and the charges will be absorbed by the BOE. The DARE program has changed. R. Marconi asked if there is flexibility within the program? Opioid abuse should be covered. Major Brown responded that yes, there is flexibility. This could be included. R. Marconi asked whether bullying is a town-wide issue? Do we have it managed? Yes, per Chief Roche. Many situations do not rise to the level to involve police—the schools will often times manage the situation before it increases to the next level. The Kids and Cops program was started several years ago. Jeff Kreitz is now involved; Major Brown and several other officers recently went to the Boys & Girls Club to play soccer with the kids. It is a very positive program.

B. Manners asked Chief Roche to consider Animal Control Officer Dave Coles checking on the bark park visitors. The proposal is to give permits to Ridgefield dog owners when they get their dog license from the Town Clerk. Non-residents would have to pay a nominal fee. Many New York residents currently use it. The maintenance costs have increased because of its popularity. This could be a new revenue line item. Chief Roche stated he will have Dave Coles drive by and assess the situation.

The Capital Budget was then discussed. \$25,000 has been allocated to update the training room; items currently are outdated (from 1993).

Chief Roche provided a brief history of the studies and proposals that were completed over the past regarding Central Dispatch—a central police, fire and ambulance dispatch—at the Police Station. The proposed renovation would be to the interior of the building; an elevator would be installed; locker rooms; among other things. This would be a \$5.2M improvement project. The building was built for 25 officers; currently we have 42—not including support personnel. On average, 15-20 people per day are in the building. R. Marconi asked do you see having a multi-use public safety building? Chief Roche responded no—the organizational structure works well. Public Safety buildings can be seen in the mid-west where a county system of government is predominant. The Central Dispatch would manage all fire, police and EMS calls. The building is currently 17,000 square feet; it would increase approximately 7-8,000 more square feet. The addition includes a large conference room. A basement would be built under the new addition.

The timing of the building is such that it is in the 'bonding sweet spot' – within the 2020-21 fiscal year. S. Zemo suggested speaking with an estimator to calculate the cost of waiting until then.

It will take approximately 18 months to build. When will we want to begin the discussions? 2018—so it would not be too soon to begin today. Chief Roche will begin tomorrow bringing the building plans up to code to reflect new ADA requirements.

Bethel's police station is 18,000 square feet and the cost is \$19M.

There was discussion of consolidating the PSAPs (Public Safety Answering Protocol)

The role of the police officer is changing; a tsunami of information must be managed. The oversight of the Police Commission is effective for discipline etc. Discussion ensued about body cameras. Cost per year is approximately \$30-50k for storage only. Cameras cost approximately \$800-1,000 each.

**B. Hebert moved and S. Zemo seconded the motion to adjourn the BOS budget meeting at 10:28 pm. Motion carried 5-0.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Wendy Gannon Lionetti