



**Town of Ridgefield
Board of Selectpersons Meeting
Minutes**

UNAPPROVED

July 15, 2026 at 6:30pm

Town Hall – Large Conference Room, 400 Main Street, Ridgefield, CT

Please note – these minutes are not verbatim.

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

Absent: None

Rudy Marconi called the meeting to order at 6:32pm. Rudy Marconi reported a special meeting (executive session) immediately prior to this meeting in which several items discussed but only one vote was taken. The BOS approved hiring a volunteer firefighter, Stephen Boals, in a career firefighter position.

1. Public Comment

Alan Hershkowitz, 77 Sunset Lane, thanked the BOS for their group work to keep Ridgefield beautiful. As a career environmental scientist, he explained the severity of the public health issue that is caused by gas powered lawn equipment. He encouraged the BOS to overlay science with business realities and provide any feasible support for Ridgefield landscapers to comply with any new town ordinance.

Andrea Beebe, 378 Main Street, asked if elected state representative Aimee Berger-Girvalo could attend and inform the community about the work on route 7. Rudy Marconi responded that she has contacted Garrett Eycalito, Commissioner of the DOT, who will be speaking to the COG and will stay an extra hour to discuss with local officials.

2. Auditor Letter FY2026

Board of Finance Chair, Mike Rettger, presented the BOF recommendation for reappointment of the auditor, CliftonLarsonAllen LLP, to audit financial records of the town, the board of education, and the library. Their current fee is \$128,000 which reflects a 3% increase over the prior year. The BOS is asked to approve the BOF recommendation. Sean Connelly asked if there are any other CPA proposals to compare. Mr. Rettger explained that not many CPAs perform audits for towns. Maureen Kozlark

asked if an annual 3% increase was standard. Mr. Rettger responded that it has been standard for the past few years. Mr. Rettger explained that there may be an opportunity in the future for some cost savings if a new system is implemented called Period 13, which allows the town to do more work and save time for the CPA.

Geoffrey Morris motioned to approve the BOF recommendation to contract the same CPA, CliftonLarsonAllen LLP, to conduct the town's annual audit. Sean Connelly seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

3. Appointment – Pamme Jones ECDC

Economic and Community Development Commission Chair, Bob Knight, Vice Chair, Kay Gelfman, and other ECDC members addressed the BOS. They reported that they have developed a commercial real estate tracker that tracks occupancy and vacancy rates. There is a potential transaction for 650 Ethan Allen Highway. The entity purchasing the property has goals that align with Ridgefield economic goals. Sean Connelly asked if the entity will attract the public. Mr. Knight explained that more information will be provided as the transaction is finalized. Tiger Shark Tank is planning the fifth annual event. The next Ridgefield Connect will be held in September. The cultural district is bringing together 30 entities to support the cultural district and newcomer, Pamme Jones, will work with that group. Mr. Knight also reached out to the chair of the Board of Ethics to speak to the ECDC to ensure that they are following all ethical standards and guidelines as they work to bring online several initiatives.

Vice Chair Kay Gelfman introduced Pamme Jones as the ECDC person to work with Corrin Arasa on the cultural district activity. Ms. Jones' experience as the executive director of the Ridgefield Theatre Barn, and member of the Arts Council, has prepared her to lead the ECDC's efforts in the cultural district with the goal of progress not perfection. She explained that the state is launching a pilot program to work with selected towns' cultural districts and will provide a consultant, Beth Flowers, to create a strategy for each town. She intends to push Ridgefield interests forward with the state's initiative for Connecticut Arts tourism. She added that there is call for artists to paint the traffic boxes around town. There is an effort to create a logo and tag line. The ECDC and the cultural district will continue to find other local collaborators to drive arts and culture tourism to Ridgefield.

Vincent Giordano, 28 Fairview Avenue, commented that the town doesn't have a good mass transit system and the EV population is growing fast. He asked if charging stations are in the town's future to accommodate out of towners who would want to attend cultural events. Mr. Knight responded that the incentives have shifted with the current administration and the maintenance of charging stations is challenging. It is an on-going subject of discussion but no decisions have been made and it is not a top ECDC priority at this time.

Sean Connelly motioned to appoint Pamme Jones to the ECDC. Barbara Manners seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

- 4. Vendor Permit – Keith’s Ice Cream Truck, Keith Capozzi – TABLED** - due to truck breakdown.

- 5. EMPG Grant resolution (yearly)**

Rudy Marconi stated that the Emergency Management Planning Grant must be approved every year allowing the first selectperson to enter into agreement and sign with the state for services. He read the text of the resolution.

Barbara Manners motioned to approve the resolution and allow Rudy Marconi to sign the agreement. Maureen Kozlark seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

- 6. Report Public Safety Building**

Rudy Marconi presented a draft report from the Public Safety Facilities Committee. The committee is researching several options and finding there are very few. There is one potential commercial property that could serve the town’s needs well. It will be discussed in executive session. They are considering keeping the Catoonah Street station for the volunteer fire fighters. Geoffrey Morris added that this draft report was submitted in compliance with the timeline set by the BOS. Maureen Kozlark stated that they are using quantifiable benchmarks which is helpful to ascertain which direction to follow. Fire Chief Duckworth stated that the departments have been working closely to support the PSFC research. Rudy Marconi shared that the committee is working to reduce proposed square footage to lower the cost. Barbara Manners cautioned that reducing the square footage of the apparatus bays could be counterproductive in solving the current issues with existing bays. Rudy Marconi clarified that the bays need to meet certain height and width requirements but the total square footage of the apparatus bays could be less. Sean Connelly cautioned that multiple structures could look good theoretically, although in practice might reveal challenges.

If the BOS wants to put this on the November ballot, they will have to move the timeline for the PSFC now scheduled for September.

Sharon Dornfeld, Police Commission Chair, shared that the Police Commission has not reviewed the draft report from the PSFC. Sean Connelly clarified that this report is confidential due to the real estate item reported.

- 7. Leaf Blower**

BOS intern, Brady Manning, has done extensive research on this item. He reported that several towns and municipalities have instituted some kind of restriction. The proposed language would ban gas powered leaf blowers from Memorial to Labor Day, but no restrictions the rest of the year. Agricultural operations, golf courses, and emergency services would be exempted. Barbara Manners asked why golf courses would be

exempted. Mr. Manning explained that due to their size, golf courses cannot be efficiently maintained with electric equipment. Rudy Marconi explained that Mr. Vincent Giordano of Silver Spring reported that they have made a huge effort moving away from gas powered equipment.

Sean Connelly crafted draft language, as well, for an ordinance that incorporated a quiet summer ban: Spring April 1 to May 31; Fall Oct 1 through Nov 30; prohibitions during holidays; exemptions for properties that are 500-1000 feet from a boundary with another property; daytime operating hours; financial penalties.

The two drafts will be sent to the town counsel to consolidate and bring to the BOS for a vote.

8. Town Administrator

Rudy Marconi reported that if the timeline is to engage someone for a January 2027 start, the hiring process should begin in September with a 30-day in-house call for applicants. Rudy Marconi will get proposals from hiring firms for a candidate search. Geoffrey Morris asked if a public hearing or other notice to the community is needed but Rudy Marconi explained that the BOS has the authority to hire personnel.

9. 217 Danbury Road Residential Lease – Set a date for Public Hearing and Town Meeting
TABLED - Lease was to be renewed as a one-year lease but due to PSFC progress, this lease will now be considered for a month to month.

10. Approval of Meeting Minutes

a. June 10, 2026 BOS Meeting

Sean Connelly submitted two corrections. Maureen Kozlark submitted two corrections.

Sean Connelly motioned to approve the minutes from the June 10, 2026 Board of Selectpersons Meeting, as amended. Maureen Kozlark seconded. Motion carried 4-0-1, with Barbara Manners abstaining.

b. June 10, 2026 Fair Rent Commission Meeting

No corrections.

Sean Connelly motioned to approve the minutes from the June 10, 2026 Fair Rent Commission meeting. Maureen Kozlark seconded. Motion carried 4-0-1, with Barbara Manners abstaining.

c. June 10, 2026 Public Hearing

Sean Connelly corrected the meeting location.

Sean Connelly motioned to approve the minutes from the June 10, 2026 Public Hearing as amended. Maureen Kozlark seconded. Motion carried 4-0-1, with Barbara Manners abstaining.

d. June 22, 2026 Public Information Meeting

Sean Connelly corrected the meeting location. Maureen Kozlark corrected a name. Geoffrey Morris corrected the start time.

Geoffrey Morris motioned to approve the minutes from the June 22, 2026 Public Information Meeting, as amended. Barbara Manners seconded. Motion carried 4-0-1, with Maureen Kozlark abstaining.

11. Selectpersons Report

Rudy Marconi shared that he received housing growth plan costs as part of the requirements from OPM regarding timelines imposed on municipalities and the options available. He will forward to the Affordable Housing Committee.

Rudy Marconi reported an incredible year for the public golf course with revenue of \$1.565 million. \$429,000 went back into the General Fund.

Rudy Marconi reminded the BOS that the Senior Tax Credits require public hearing and town meeting and vote.

The Pension Commission must be modified to add 2 alternates.

The 29 Lakeview blight has been cleared up. A public hearing and town meeting will be scheduled to approve sale of the property.

Rudy Marconi reminded that the HRRRA ordinance change is needed to allow for one town one vote. A public hearing and town meeting are required.

There will be one public hearing and one town meeting in September to address each of these items.

Real Estate market slowed. 35% of homes sold without a mortgage, down from 45%.

Branchville has a utility pole pending Eversource to move it before the final paving can be completed at the bridge.

Summerfest is July 25th.

The revaluation is coming up but it doesn't mean an automatic increase on your taxes.

State Representative Aimee Berger-Girvalo requested that State Department of Transportation commissioner will address the COGG and several local town officials after a COGG meeting.

Sean Connelly motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:28pm. Barbara Manners seconded. Motion carried 5-0.