



**Town of Ridgefield  
Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes**

**APPROVED**

**September 6, 2023 at 7.30pm**

Please note – these minutes are not verbatim.

**Present:** Rudy Marconi, Sean Connelly, Bob Hebert, Maureen Kozlark, Barbara Manners

**1. Public Comment**

Many members of the public stood to give their opinions regarding the proposed painting of a pride crosswalk on a town road. The individuals who commented were: Julie Hendersen of 44 Crest Road, John Tartaglia of Danbury Road, Greg McLaughlin of 93 Hunter Lane, Mike Autuori of Florida Hill Rd, Ben Soro of Danbury Road, Richard Steinhart of 49 Country Club Road, Sean Archambault of Ramapoo Road, Susan Cocco of 513 Branchville Road, Will Defino of Aspen Mill Road, Angela Rice of Branchville Road, Caroline Moore of Prospect Street, Chris Murray of Ivy Hill Road, Jennifer Brackenwagon of Pin Pack Road, Ace Carpenter?, Murray Cavanna of Main Street, Jim Kish of Wilton Road West, State Representative Amy Berger Girvalo, Ava Trachtenberg of Hulda Lane, Kurt Totlan of Governor Street, Kirk Carr of 62 Prospect Ridge, Michelle of Longview Drive, Mary Marvis of Silver Spring Road, Reynolds of 34 Old West Mountain Road, Mary Joyce of 203 Nod Road, Jessica Mancini of 53 Wood Long Drive. Out of all public comments given, 21 were in favor of the town having a pride crosswalk and 5 were not.

Mr. Marconi clarified that the painting of a crosswalk on a town-owned road falls under the jurisdiction of the Board of Police Commissioners.

**2. Pension Commission – Town of Ridgefield, Police & Fire Pension Plans**

Chris Christiansen, Pension Commission Chair, and Laurie Fernandez, Director of Human Resources, appeared before the Board to present the proposed amended pension plans for the Fire Union, Police Union and Town Employee Union.

The Board asked questions about interest rates, the number of people on 401K plans vs defined benefit plans, and how well the plans are funded.

*Maureen Kozlark moved to accept the modifications to the amended Firefighter*

*Union Pension Plan, amended and restated Police Union Pension Plan and the Employee Union Pension Plan. Sean Connelly seconded the motion. Motion carries 5-0*

### **3. Environmental Club Presentation**

Ridgefield High School Environmental Club members Annie Raglan, Kate Yanos and Isabella Clarkman have been working with Energy Task Force and RACE member Vincent Giordano on an ordinance regarding gas powered leaf blowers. Together they presented a proposed leaf blower ordinance with the goal of reducing noise pollution and toxic fumes that can cause a variety of health and environmental issues. Electric and battery-operated leaf blowers reduce the negative impacts to individuals and our ecosystem. The Board asked about ordinances in other towns, push back from landscapers, transition costs, enforcement, and battery safety. The Board will review the ordinance and do some more research on the subject.

### **4. Ridgefield Pride Presentation**

Alisa Trachtenberg, founder of Ridgefield Youth Pride Group, and her daughter Ava shared a presentation on the proposal of a pride crosswalk at the intersection of East Ridge Road and Governor Street.

During the presentation, Alisa talked about the reasons for wanting a pride crosswalk and the surrounding towns that have successfully adopted one. Alisa provided related data, results of safety studies and supportive comments from Ridgefield residents.

The Board shared their thoughts and concerns. The decision is under the jurisdiction of the Board of Police Commissioners, who Alisa and Ava will also present to.

*Sean Connelly moved to submit a statement from the Board of Selectmen to the Board of Police Commissioners expressing full support of a Pride Crosswalk on a Town road in Ridgefield. Barbara Manners seconded the motion. Bob Hebert opposed the motion. Motion carries 4-1.*

### **5. Appointments**

#### **a. Affordable Housing Committee – Jennifer Brackenwagen**

Jennifer Brackenwagen was interviewed at a previous Board of Selectmen meeting. The other candidate withdrew his candidacy.

*Sean Connelly moved to appoint Jennifer Brackenwagen for a four-year term to the Affordable Housing Committee. Bob Hebert seconded the motion. Motion carries 5-0.*

#### **b. Board of Ethics Alternate – Yannis Tzamouranis**

Yannis Tzamouranis was interviewed at a previous Board of Selectmen meeting. He could not be at the meeting tonight. Greg McLaughlin, Chair of the Ethics Committee, spoke in support of appointing Mr. Tzamouranis. *Bob Hebert moved to appoint Yannis Tzamouranis as an alternate for a four-year term to the Board of Ethics. Maureen Kozlark seconded the motion. Motion carries 5-0.*

**6. Road Classification Ordinance**

There are proposed changes to the Tertiary Road Classification Ordinance. The Board will review the changes and discuss at a future meeting.

**7. Charter Revision Drafted Ballot Questions**

Rudy Marconi read through the proposed 9 ballot questions to be presented at the Town Referendum.

*Bob Hebert moved to accept the Draft Ballot Questions for the Charter Revisions to be presented at a Town Referendum. Sean Connelly seconded the motion. Motion carries 5-0.*

**8. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

*Bob Hebert moved to approve the August 16, 2023 6:30pm Board of Selectmen Special Meeting minutes. Sean Connelly second the motion. Barbara Manners abstained. Motion carries 4-0-1.*

*Bob Hebert moved to approve the August 16, 2023 7:30pm Board of Selectmen Meeting minutes as modified. Maureen Kozlark seconded the motion. Barbara Manners abstained. Motion carries 4-0-1*

**9. Selectman's Report**

The Insurance Risk Cyber Insurance Policy cost has skyrocketed. Mr. Marconi met with Margaux Lansen, Chair of IRLC, to discuss the possibility of raising the deductible to lower premium costs. The Board of Education in New Haven suffered a 6-million-dollar loss as a result of hackers. The insurance companies don't always cover losses of this kind.

The first container with donations for the Ukraine has been shipped. It included generators, power tools, tires, stretchers, wheelchairs, medical supplies, Chromebooks, stoves, sleeping bags, and more. The focus for the next container will now be on winter clothing and items.

The drop-off/take-free section of the transfer station that was closed down due to traffic & safety issues will be reopened in a new area in the recycling center.

The Board of Finance sent a letter regarding the sale of sewer plant #2 and the money that will be returned to the APRA fund. The ARPA Fund money needs to be allocated by 2024. This sale has not happened yet. There was a discussion about different projects that the money might possibly be used toward.

There has been a request to put in speed cameras on Main Street.

There is a grant that requires a safety study to be performed before the Town can apply for the grant. The Town has applied with a consultant to file the application for a safety study. The study will cost \$400,000.

The Ridgefield Library has proposed an amended agreement. The Board will need to meet and review it.

Dean Miller, Chair sent a thank you for the Town's support of Meals on Wheels.

Mr. Tartaglia sent a letter regarding a proposed Flag Ordinance.

A letter opposing the implementation of a Fair Rent Commission from Ridgefield has been drafted. Mr. Marconi read the letter. The Board is in agreement with sending the letter. Barbara Manners suggested circulating the letter to other towns for additional support. Mr. Marconi will bring the letter to the next COG meeting.

*Maureen Kozlark moved to adjourn the September 6 2023 Board of Selectmen Meeting at 10:24pm. Sean Connelly seconded the motion. Motion carries 5-0.*