



Town of Ridgefield
Board of Selectpersons Meeting Minutes
UNAPPROVED

October 23, 2024 at 6:30pm

Please note – these minutes are not verbatim.

Present: Maureen Kozlark, Barbara Manners, Rudy Marconi, Chris Murray

Absent: Sean Connelly

Maureen Kozlark motioned to add “Ridgefield Commemorates America at 250” and “Bob McKnight Reappointment to the ECDC” to the Agenda, as items 2a and 2b. Chris Murray seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

1. Public Comment

Daniel Mann, 66 Grove Street, shared he’s the owner of the commercial building at 66 Grove Street and expressed frustration that proposed 66 Grove Street lease has not yet been signed, despite support from the Town.

Kirk Carr, 62 Prospect Ridge, shared his objection to the proposed 66 Grove Street lease is due to concerns about the lack of contingencies should Planning & Zoning deny the special permit application. Mr. Carr asked the BoS to add that contingency and then sign the lease.

2. Appoint Fire Marshal – Drew Loya

Drew Loya, Interim Fire Marshal, was in attendance. Topics discussed included:

- Rudy Marconi shared Mr. Loya has served as the Interim Fire Marshal for eight months, has done a great job, and is ready to be recognized as the full-time Fire Marshal.
- Mr. Loya expressed he enjoys the role, he’s been working towards the Fire Marshal position, and plans to move out of the Fire Department and into the Fire Marshal role.
- Chris Murray asked about Mr. Loya’s tenure. Mr. Loya confirmed he’s been with the Town since high school, including 2 years as a medic and 25 years with the Fire Department.
- Mr. Marconi asked about inspections. Mr. Loya shared they are implementing a third-party system to assist with compliance, but will be putting in requests for both a full-time Deputy Fire Marshal and a full-time assistant in the upcoming budget cycle.

Maureen Kozlark motioned to appoint Drew Loya as Fire Marshal. Barbara Manners seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

2a. America Commemorates 250 (RCA250)

Pam Jones, RCA 250 Co-Chair, Geoffrey Morris, RCA250 Co-Chair, and committee member James Carone, were in attendance. Topics discussed included:

- Ms. Jones and Mr. Morris shared the plans for the year-long event is coming along nicely, starting on July 4, 2025 with an event at Keeler Tavern, a town-wide BBQ, and reading of the Declaration of Independence. The year will be capped off by a parade on July 3, 2026 at 10:00am, following the Memorial Day parade route, with the theme of liberty, freedom, and their evolution over the years, and a Liberty Ball in the evening. On July 4, 2026, there will be a large event Ballard Park, and fireworks in the evening at RHS.
- Mr. Morris shared RCA250 expects to have an event every month during that year, many will be in coordination with other arts and civics groups in Town. RCA250 has had a logo designed and will have a website to show the events and how to support the activities.
- Mr. Morris distributed a document to the BoS outlining their request for \$10,000, which would fund set-up costs, marketing, and communications to begin fundraising efforts.
- Mr. Carone shared they expect a \$200,000-\$250,000 budget for the next year, and will not be asking the Town for that budget, they will do their own fundraising.
- The BoS discussed what would happen should RCA250 have a fund balance at the end of their work on July 4, 2026, and how it would be returned to the Town.
- Barbara Manners asked about house kits. Ms. Jones shared they would contain bunting and maybe a special flag, and businesses could use them in their windows. They would be designed to give a cohesive feeling for the Town during the year-long event.
- Rudy Marconi shared he discussed with Kevin Redmond, Controller, and approving their \$10,000 budget request is doable, and would leave \$27,000 in the contingency fund.

Maureen Kozlark motioned to approve up to \$10,000 from the contingency fund for Ridgefield Commemorates America at 250 Committee. Chris Murray seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

2b. Bob McKnight – Reappointment to ECDC

Geoffrey Morris, ECDC Secretary, was in attendance. Topics discussed included:

- Mr. Morris shared Bob McKnight was unable to attend due to a scheduling conflict.
- Rudy Marconi read a letter from Glori Norwitt, ECDC Chair, in support of Mr. McKnight's reappointment. Mr. Marconi then distributed a letter to the BoS from Mr. McKnight formally requesting reappointment for another term.
- Mr. Morris shared Mr. McKnight is a great asset and recommended he be reappointed.

Barbara Manners motioned to reappoint Bob McKnight to the Economic & Community Development Commission. Maureen Kozlark seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

3. Dave McFate, Director of Purchasing

Rudy Marconi shared David McFate is sick and unable to attend, and will bring any questions back to Mr. McFate. Maureen Kozlark asked whether these are long-standing practices that are now codified. Mr. Marconi confirmed these are existing policies Mr. McFate has updated.

a. Town Purchasing Policy – Update

Mr. Marconi shared the update that purchases from \$5,000-\$24,999 must receive three written quotes. Barbara Manners asked whether it's practical for purchases less than \$5,000 to get two quotes, given increased costs today. Maureen Kozlark suggested

purchases over \$25,000 be brought for BoS review. Mr. Marconi asked the BoS to review the policy and send their questions and suggestions to himself and Mr. McFate. Ms. Kozlark requested the old version also be sent to compare the proposed changes.

b. Letter of Understanding

Mr. Marconi shared the BoS had previously approved an agreement with Pamby Motors for the purchase of lowboys, and this LoU has expanded that previous agreement to include any vehicle Pamby Motors sells (i.e. Dodge car, pickup or lowboy). Ms. Manners asked if purchases would also go out to bid. Mr. Marconi confirmed no, Pamby would provide the lowest available dealer price, with a 1% margin, as stated in the LoU.

Mr. Marconi read the LoU to the BoS, and expressed the high level of service provided.

Maureen Kozlark motioned to approve the Letter of Understanding with Pamby Motors, as recommended by David McFate. Chris Murray seconded. Motion carried 3-0-1, with Barbara Manners abstaining.

4. Set Public Hearing & Special Town Meeting for Flag Petition

Rudy Marconi shared they received the Flag Petition from Wendy Lionetti, Town Clerk, and distributed copies to the BoS. Chris Murray expressed concern the petition is a violation of the First Amendment and read a piece from attorney Daniel Waking. Maureen Kozlark shared she's not comfortable setting a Town Meeting date until hearing from town counsel.

5. Fair Rent Commission Ordinance

Maureek Kozlark asked whether there should be a set time limit in the ordinance for when a decision may be appealed, and there was agreement amongst the BoS. Barbara Manners suggested 45 days, and further discussion about 30 days.

Rudy Marconi asked about having a committee review prior to coming to the BoS to receive an informed opinion (e.g., Planning & Zoning Director Alice Dew, Assessor Al Garzi, Building Official Jason Celestino). Chris Murray expressed support for the idea. Maureen Kozlark suggested codifying when and how they would meet and discuss. Mr. Marconi shared he would ask town counsel to take another pass at the ordinance language.

6. Tax Collector Refunds

Barbara Manners motioned to approve Tax Collector refunds totaling \$6,324.81. Chris Murray seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

7. Approval of Meeting Minutes

a. October 9, 2024 Special Meeting

Maureen Kozlark motioned to approve the minutes from the October 9, 2024 Board of Selectpersons Special Meeting. Chris Murray seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

b. October 9, 2024

Maureen Kozlark motioned to approve the minutes from the October 9, 2024 Board of Selectpersons Meeting. Barbara Manners seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

8. Selectperson's Report

Rudy Marconi shared 145 Highridge continues to proceed, with the current owner making a voluntary submission to CT-DEEP. Mr. Marconi distributed copies of the letter sent to neighboring property owners with the BoS, and shared several people have had testing done on their properties, with one having levels seriously above the allowable limits. Mr. Marconi shared some neighbors are concerned about the financial impact of the plume and others about what happens to the 145 Highridge property after mitigation costs.

Mr. Marconi shared the Town is addressing the short-term flooding situation on Rolling Lane, and are looking to increase rain water storage capacity and reduce rate of flow. Maureen Kozlark asked about impact to the sewer line, and Mr. Marconi confirmed it would be separate. Mr. Marconi shared Gilbert Street and Casagmo are also areas that need to be addressed.

Mr. Marconi shared the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) informed CT-DEEP that they plan to take out the dam at Fox Hill, which would impact a number of households on that street. Mr. Marconi shared the Town was informed they either need to build a wall or remove the dam, but they must do one or the other or NRCS will walk and the Town will be responsible.

Mr. Marconi shared he's working with Social Services on a program with Stop & Shop and/or Caraluzzi's to be able to donate to Social Services at checkout, with monthly remittance to sustain the gift card program that helps folks buy groceries every month.

Mr. Marconi shared Verizon is installing a cell service extender on Ridgebury Road.

Barbara Manners motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:56pm. Chris Murray seconded. Motion carried 4-0.