



Town of Ridgefield
Board of Selectpersons Meeting Minutes
UNAPPROVED
July 17, 2024 at 7:30pm

Please note – these minutes are not verbatim.

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

Rudy Marconi called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.

Maureen Kozlark motioned to add item 3A to the Agenda: “License Agreement with State of Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection and Town of Ridgefield to use Tri-Band Portable Radios.” Barbara Manners seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

At 7:34pm, Rudy Marconi recused himself and left the room, turning the meeting over to the Second Selectperson, Barbara Manners.

1. Public Comment

Brenda Finkel, 638 Danbury Road, distributed copies of a letter to the BoS and read it aloud, addressing the need for an affordable adult day care facility in Ridgefield.

Joseph Ternullo, 66 Grove Street, echoed Ms. Finkel’s comments and offered the Commission on Aging would be happy to work on this project, pending the Selectboard’s request.

John Tartaglia, 638 Danbury Road, supported Ms. Finkel’s comment. Mr. Tartaglia shared he made a FOIA request from the WPCA, expressed concerns about the project being over budget and requested transparency. In terms of the ethics complaint, Mr. Tartaglia shared his support for Rudy Marconi, but expressed concerns about public funds being used for private non-profits.

Kirk Carr, 62 Prospect Ridge, distributed copies of a memo to the BoS that they received via email on July 11. Mr. Carr shared he brought the allegation to the Board of Ethics, not to embarrass Mr. Marconi, but to give the BoS the opportunity to make a different decision with respect to the renegotiated ACT lease.

Erin Craig, 387 Wilton Road West, addressed a question raised about ACT’s 990 forms in a published letter from Mr. Carr. Ms. Craig noted Mr. Carr referenced 2021’s 990, but cited it as 2022’s 990, and shared their 2021 990 shows higher than usual funding due to receiving COVID relief funds, which are reflected as governmental funds. Ms. Craig also noted their nearly \$2M in assets reflect their investments in the building.

Daniel Levine, 35 Oscaleta Road, read a letter from the ACT Board of Directors' Treasurer, Tizzie Mantione, who urged the BoS to uphold their recent vote on the renegotiated ACT lease, sharing the building is a Town asset and ACT has invested in significant improvements, and driven economic benefit to the Town. Mr. Levine added their 990s are available to view online.

Shelley Terry, 75 Acre Lane, shared ACT's ticket sales do not cover their entire operating budget, and as ACT's Director of Development it's her responsibility to bridge that gap through funds from individuals, corporate support, special events, grants, etc., and expressed concerns about damage to ACT's reputation, given recent media publications.

2. Review of Board of Ethics Decision

Barbara Manners read a portion of the Board of Ethics finding, which precluded Rudy Marconi from participating and sent the decision back to the BoS to decide how to proceed.

Ms. Manners shared she doesn't agree with the BoE decision and the BoS is not obligated to reopen the ACT lease negotiation. Ms. Manners stated the lease was approved by the BoS and through a Town Meeting.

Chris Murray shared in one of his first BoS meetings the Theatre Barn asked for relief, and the BoS determined they wouldn't give money, but would rather lend money. Mr. Murray shared he originally agreed with the updated ACT lease, as it placed no additional burden on taxpayers, but has since changed his mind and expressed a desire to create a consistent policy for town entities. Mr. Murray shared ACT lost a primary benefactor due to the BoE decision, requested to see ACT's 990 forms, and would like to renegotiate ACT's lease so they repay the funds allocated.

Maureen Kozlark shared she understands Mr. Murray's perspective but felt the Theatre Barn and ACT situations were different. Ms. Kozlark expressed the BoS typically does a good job at revealing conflicts of interest and doesn't believe Peggy Marconi's role on the ACT Board of Directors had any bearing on the BoS vote for appropriation of funds. Ms. Kozlark expressed the BoS has been consistent with treatment of Town 501c3 organizations, and understands why the BoE reviewed the case, but doesn't agree with their findings, nor wants to reopen the lease.

Sean Connelly shared he appreciates Mr. Murray's thoughts, and the BoE gave the BoS the option to re-open the decision but doesn't see a reason to do so. Mr. Connelly shared everyone on the BoS is involved in a variety of different things and it's difficult to note every potential conflict of interest, but they should be clear about meaningful financial issues. Mr. Connelly shared he respects the BoE process but disagrees with their finding and doesn't feel a need to renegotiate the lease.

Ms. Manners expressed she doesn't see Peggy Marconi being on the ACT Board of Directors as a conflict of interest, and there was no financial gain to be gotten. Mr. Murray shared his main concern was with consistency and being forthcoming.

Ms. Manners declared the item closed, and the ACT lease stands.

At 8:10pm, Mr. Marconi returned to the room.

3. Resolution Appropriating Funds and Authorizing Bonding for Schools' HVAC

Mike Rettger, Board of Finance Vice Chair, and Jill Browne, Director of Finance for Ridgefield Public Schools, were in attendance. Topics discussed included:

- Mr. Rettger distributed copies of a document to the BoS.
- Ms. Browne shared this discussion pertains to an indoor air quality grant, RPS have applied funds to repair existing HVAC systems throughout RPS, and everything applied for had already been included either in capital plan or operating budget.
- Mr. Rettger shared previous resolutions for additional appropriations were approved in 2022 and 2023, but it was decided to wait to have a Town Meeting until grant funds were awarded. The BoF created this new resolution to provide clarity by replacing the two that were previously approved in 2022 and 2023.
- Mr. Rettger confirmed the total is \$812,000, some of the work is already complete and paid for, and no longer needs funding, which leaves a \$718,510 balance total balance and \$549,000 after receiving state grant funds.
- Maureen Kozlark asked if these changes would be reflected in any of the budgets. Mr. Rettger shared these were additional appropriations for off-cycle capital and would be bonded as regular capital. Rudy Marconi confirmed previous budgets will be updated to reflect this change.

Barbara Manners motioned to waive the reading of the Resolution Appropriating Funds and Authorizing Bonding for Schools' HVAC. Sean Connelly seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Maureen Kozlark motioned to approve the Resolution Appropriating Funds and Authorizing Bonding for Schools' HVAC, as written. Chris Murray seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

- Mr. Rettger shared the BoF has a Special Meeting on Wednesday, July 18 to discuss, and requested the BoS set a Town Meeting, pending BoF approval. Mr. Marconi indicated the next BoS meeting is Tuesday, August 14 at 7:30pm.

Maureen Kozlark motioned to set a Town Meeting for August 14 at 7:30pm, for the Resolution Appropriating Funds and Authorizing Bonding for Schools' HVAC, pending Board of Finance approval. Barbara Manners seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

3A. License Agreement with State of Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection and Town of Ridgefield to use Tri-Band Portable Radios

Rudy Marconi shared this agreement would allow the Town to communicate with other Towns through the 800MHz band via the Tri-Band Portable Radios which have been approved.

Mr. Marconi shared the agreement indicates everything is the Town's responsibility, will only be used for the purposes allowed by the State Police, the Town must meet all equipment requirements, use DPP-approved radios, purchase radios for Town subscribers (i.e. RPD and RFD) and compatible dispatch consoles, pay necessary licensing fees, and make reasonable upgrades.

Maureen Kozlark asked about length of contract. Sean Connelly confirmed 5 years, with automatic renewal unless given 2-year written notice.

The BoS agreed to vote on this agreement at their next meeting on August 14, 2024 at 7:30pm.

4. Appointments & Reappointments

a. Board of Assessment Appeals (BOAA) Appointment – Michael Schmer

- Rudy Marconi asked Greg Kabasakalian, Ridgefield Republican Town Committee Chair, if they approve the nomination. Mr. Kabasakalian confirmed, and shared the RRTC formed a sub-committee, interviewed candidates in April, and Mr. Schmer was selected, largely because he had previously served on the BOAA.

Barbara Manners motioned to appoint Michael Schmer to the Board of Assessment Appeals. Chris Murray seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

b. Parks & Recreation Commission

a. Kim Hulber – Reappointment & Russ Porter – Appointment

Phil Kearns, Parks & Recreation Commission Chair, Kim Hulber, and Russ Porter were in attendance. Topics discussed included:

- Mr. Marconi read a letter supporting Mr. Porter’s appointment, citing his impressive credentials and background. Mr. Marconi then read a letter supporting Ms. Hulber’s reappointment, citing her tremendous value and experience with strategic planning.
- Barbara Manners asked Mr. Porter about his specific interests. Mr. Porter shared his background is in finance, has been involved in physical fitness and races around Ridgefield, and served on the TriRidgefield leadership team.
- Chris Murray asked about unfilled capacity at the Rec Center. Mr. Porter discussed the difference between members and active members. Ms. Hulber shared there are a variety of ways to use the facilities, and one of their focus areas is to determine the make-up of members, different segments, and priorities, and to better understand their metrics.
- Mr. Marconi asked what their data shows. Ms. Hulber shared they have had difficulties extracting data in the past, but it will be easier with their new system. Mr. Kearns shared they lost access to their historical data during a software migration.
- Ms. Manners asked about the public comment about an adult daycare facility. Mr. Kearns said they hadn’t but are willing to explore the possibility.
- Maureen Kozlark thanked Ms. Hulber for her years of service and asked about her biggest accomplishment. Ms. Hulber confirmed creation of a strategic plan, which the Commission previously did not have.
- Ms. Kozlark asked Mr. Porter what he would like to work on. Mr. Porter confirmed greater cohesion among Town athletic organizations, to collaborate and potentially bring new services and engagement avenues.

Barbara Manners motioned to appoint Russ Porter to the Parks & Recreation Commission. Sean Connelly seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Barbara Manners motioned to re-appoint Kim Hulber to the Parks & Recreation Commission. Chris Murray seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

c. Commission on Aging Appointments – Christina Nolan & Aaron Crook

Joseph Ternullo, Commission on Aging Chair, Patricia Yaffa, Commission on Aging Vice Chair, Clemencia Saleeby, Commissioner, Christina Nolan, and Aaron Crook were in attendance. Topics discussed included:

- Mr. Ternullo confirmed these appointments will bring the Commission on Aging to full capacity.
- Mr. Marconi shared Ms. Nolan and Mr. Crook have served the Town in various ways for years, and both would be great asset to the CoA.
- Ms. Kozlark asked them both to share their interest in joining. Ms. Nolan shared she wants to help disperse information more effectively about CoA's programming. Mr. Crook shared he has worked at RPS and RVNA and expressed the importance of reaching out to socially isolated seniors.
- Mr. Ternullo shared Brenda Finkel approached him about adult daycare at Founders Hall and voiced the CoA would be happy to assist with that project. The BoS confirmed they would like to explore the possibility.

Maureen Kozlark motioned to appoint Christina Nolan and Aaron Cook to the Commission on Aging. Barbara Manners seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

d. Prevention Council Appointment – Lynn Tidgwell

Mr. Marconi shared Ms. Tidgwell confirmed she couldn't attend this meeting, and requested her appointment be moved to the next BoS meeting in August.

5. Conservation Commission – New Walk Book Presentation

Erik Keller, Conservation Commission Vice Chair, was in attendance. Topics discussed included:

- Mr. Keller distributed copies of the Walk Book to the BoS and shared the Walk Book is currently available at the Ridgefield Public Library, and for sale at Books on the Common and Ridgefield Running Company.
- Mr. Keller shared the first Walk Book was released in 1990 and the last in 2016. They considered having everything online, but they received feedback requesting the book, so the maps are online, and the book has additional information.
- Mr. Keller offered to take the BoS on a hike in Wittman Preserve, the BoS agreed.

6. Parking Authority – EV Charging Station Trial

Lou Yarrish, Parking Enforcement Officer, and Marcus Recck, Parking Authority Chair, were in attendance. Topics discussed included:

- Mr. Recck shared the Parking Authority conducted a two-month trial period, giving 40 warnings to vehicles parked in EV charging spaces while not charging, and have begun to see newly posted signage being respected.
- Maureen Kozlark asked about warnings issued. Mr. Yarrish confirmed most were to non-EVs parked in EV charging spots. Mr. Recck shared if an EV is parked and charging in an EV charging spot, but stays longer than the permitted 4 hours, they would be subject to an overtime violation.

Sean Connelly made a motion that Parking Enforcement may ticket any vehicle parked in an EV designated space that is not actively charging. Maureen Kozlark seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

7. Approval of Meeting Minutes

a. June 24, June 25, and June 26, 2024 Special Meetings

Maureen Kozlark motioned to approve the minutes from June 24, 2024, June 25, 2024 and June 26, 2024 Board of Selectpersons Special Meetings. Sean Connelly seconded. Motion carried 5-0 for June 24, 2024 and June 26, 2024 Special Meetings. Motion carried 4-0-1 for June 25, 2024 Special Meeting, with Barbara Manners abstaining due to absence.

b. June 26, 2024

Sean Connelly suggested to correcting his comment to “recognize long-term resident” on page 5, in the Senior Tax Credit discussion.

Maureen Kozlark requested her comment about the WPCA status update on page 6 be accurately reflected, mentioning the equipment is being calibrated and Rudy Marconi mentioned there was a punch-list that was being completed.

Sean Connelly motioned to approve the minutes from the June 26, 2024 Board of Selectpersons Meeting, as amended. Maureen Kozlark seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

8. Selectperson’s Report

Rudy Marconi shared Mike Riley resigned from the Golf Committee after serving for 9 years, leaving a vacancy. Mr. Marconi shared with Gillian Sheerin to include in the Town newsletter.

Mr. Marconi shared a document from David McFate, Purchasing Director, and shared a former Director of Public Works requested to raise the limit to purchase equipment without needing 3 quotes from \$5k to \$20k. Mr. McFate has reviewed the data and will present at a future meeting.

Mr. Marconi shared the owner of Dr. Nelligan’s estate is interested in purchasing a piece of property from the Town (approximately 1/3 acre). Mr. Marconi asked Al Garzi, Assessor, to put together a property assessment, and the BoS will discuss further in a future executive session.

Mr. Marconi distributed a document about current State legislature.

Mr. Marconi shared he met with the owners of the USPS property and shared their proposed plan; they requested an opportunity to review and will get back in touch.

Mr. Marconi shared the environmental assessment at 145 High Ridge Avenue is ongoing. He knocked on doors in an area considered to be an area of concern, shared the report, and provided contact information for Chris Cole, LEP for Tighe & Bond, for mitigation processes. Mr. Cole will hold a meeting on July 24 at 7:00pm at Town Hall to discuss options with residents.

Sean Connelly asked about 29 Lakeview Drive. Mr. Marconi shared their attorney will ask the Judge whether residents could attend to testify concerns at the next hearing.

Maureen Kozlark motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:49pm. Sean Connelly seconded. Motion carried 5-0.