



Town of Ridgefield
Board of Selectpersons Meeting Minutes
UNAPPROVED

October 22, 2025 at 6:30pm

Please note – these minutes are not verbatim.

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

Absent: None

Location: Town Hall, large conference room, 400 Main Street, Ridgefield, CT

Rudy Marconi called the meeting to order at 6:33pm.

Rudy Marconi reported that while at the last meeting the Compassionate Ridgefield Committee was established, no members can be appointed until party affiliation is confirmed.

1. Public Comment

Andrew Neblett, 31 Ashbee Lane, expressed support that the four-day work week with extended hours has been a positive change. He also commented that he thinks a town administrator role should be more of an assistant to the first selectperson. He supports maintaining the current structure. Clemencia Saleeby, 66 Grove Street, apartment C16, stated that while a police department is needed, she doesn't believe the 77-million-dollar expense is justified. Jennifer Rousseau, 19 Rock Spring Lane, asked how to get information on the road paving criteria because Rock Spring Lane and Lantern Lane are in dire need of repairs. Joseph Adams, 44 Langstroth Road, commented that both Langstroth and Ridgebury are both in need of paving and repairs. Mr. Marconi commented that Ridgebury Rd. will be done in stages with the engineering already completed. The repairs will include drainage work. Carl Forcheski, 12 Revere Drive, expressed appreciation for the board appointing the Senior Tax Committee who worked very well together. He added that seniors comprise 22% of the town's population and contribute significant volunteer hours serving on boards and committees. He is grateful for the town's consideration of seniors, who mostly depend on a fixed income, and assured the board of selectpersons that the Senior Tax Committee also prioritized the town's needs along with the needs of seniors. Gillian Lewis, the Town Office Administrative Manager, wrote a letter of support for the four-day work week expressing that office morale and quality of life have improved.

2. Appointments - Jack Sanders as Town Historian, Betsy Reid as Assistant Town Historian

Both were present.

- a. Mr. Marconi expressed great appreciation for the work done on behalf of the community. Ridgefield has a deep and rich history, and their effort and research has far exceeded the board's expectations.
- b. Mr. Morris asked how their research is recorded. Mr. Sanders said they print and keep records digitally. He also has a Facebook page that the community uses to share old photos. Ms. Reid added that any hard copy materials are preserved in the Historical Society's vault as well as the website.
- c. Mr. Connelly asked if there are any efforts to preserve current events, and Mr. Sanders reported that it's too difficult without a town newspaper. He said the town clerk's records and meeting minutes are critical, and Mr. Marconi added that the town newsletter is also a valuable resource.
- d. Ms. Manners asked if there were many books on Ridgefield history written before contemporary times. Mr. Sanders responded that there are several. Ms. Reid added that the Historical Society has a list of such books, and many are available on the Historical Society's website.
- e. Mr. Marconi asked about the status of the Battle of Ridgefield and the Old Branchville Schoolhouse. Ms. Reid reported that Heritage Consultants perform metal detection throughout Ridgefield every Friday. There is no update yet.
- f. Ms. Kozlark thanked Mr. Sanders and Ms. Reid for their work.
- g. Ridgefield Historical Society submitted a letter of support for the appointments of both candidates.

Sean Connelly motioned to appoint Jack Sanders as Town Historian and Betsy Reid as Assistant Town Historian. Barbara Manners seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

3. Town Hall hours of operation

- a. Laurie Hernandez, Director of Human Resources, reported that the four-day schedule started June 16th and was not well received at first but now there is much positive feedback internally and externally. A survey among the public was conducted with 117 respondents and only 11 were not pleased with Fridays being closed. The employee survey has shown positive support for the change.
- b. Mr. Marconi asked if once the affected union approves the change to the four-day work week, that they cannot object if the board eventually returns to a five-day work week.
- c. Ms. Kozlark added that while she is still in support of the services available five days, she is pleased to hear employee morale has improved. She asked if the change would tie in with the union contract because it is a concession being granted.
- d. Ms. Hernandez clarified that the work schedule is a negotiated topic within the union. If it is to be changed, it must be negotiated with the union, tied to the contract, and include a time limit.
- e. Mr. Morris added that he felt the trial results were positive.
- f. Ms. Manners stated that she also spoke with many employees who all expressed support.
- g. Mr. Connelly also supports the change but would like to extend the trial period rather than making it a permanent change.

Sean Connelly motioned to approve the four-day work week to run concurrently with the current union contract. Barbara Manners seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

4. Ramapoo Rifle Lease

Jon Finch, Ramapoo Rifle and Revolver Club, Inc., and Major Nick Fowler, Ridgefield Police Department, were present.

- a. Mr. Marconi stated that the gun club occupies the westerly end of the Highway Garage at 60 South Street. The new terms extend the lease period for another 25 years through 2050, with two renewal options of 5 years each, and annual rent of \$1.00 plus heating and electricity costs.
- b. The town's police officers use the facility for pistol training and certifications at no cost to the town.
- c. Ms. Kozlark asked why they want to increase the term to 25 years. Mr. Marconi and Mr. Finch explained that as a tax exempt 501c4, they qualify for grant funding that requires longevity at the location as can be demonstrated either through ownership or long-term leases. She also asked why the rent should be decreased from \$4000 to \$1. Mr. Finch explained that the club would take over the air filter replacement costs currently covered by the town.
- d. Mr. Connelly asked who is responsible for insurance coverage. Mr. Finch responded that the club maintains all the insurance coverage with copies of policies on file with the town.
- e. Mr. Marconi added that the club maintains and covers the cost of upgrades to the building such as the recent HVAC system upgrades.
- f. Major Fowler added that the police department works very well with the club. It's the most convenient training option that is local and available when needed without much lead time or logistics. If officers had to travel to another gun range, the training budget would have to be greatly increased.
- g. Mr. Marconi added that Town Counsel agreed that the board of selectpersons does have the authority to approve the amendment to the lease without a town meeting.

Maureen Kozlark motioned to approve the Ramapoo Lease Amendment. Barbara Manners seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

5. Senior Tax Credits – presented by Gary Roman, Chair, Senior Tax Committee

- a. Mr. Roman summarized the existing tax programs and assumptions about the senior population of the town.
- b. He reported that the committee has four proposals (two new and two updated existing programs) to align tax benefits with economic realities affecting today's seniors.
- c. The proposals have been presented to the Board of Finance, Commission on Aging, Board of Selectpersons, and Town Counsel for support and legal compliance.
- d. The existing non-income-tested credit for seniors meeting age and residency requirements is proposed increased in fiscal year 2027 from \$1048 to \$1200 and in fiscal year 2028 to \$1400.

- e. The proposed new Supplemental Means-Tested Tax Credit would be an additional tax credit for low-income seniors. The suggested maximum adjusted gross income would be \$65,000. The proposed tax credit in fiscal year 2027 is \$400 and in fiscal year 2028 it's \$800.
- f. The proposed new Supplemental Longevity Tax Credit has the same requirements as the non-income-tested tax credit of age and residency but adds residency ownership for 26 or more years. Ownership of residence need not be in the same location or continuous. The proposed tax credit in fiscal year 2027 is \$100 and in fiscal year 2028 it's \$200.
- g. The existing Elderly Deferment Program caps participant income at \$65,000 and allows seniors to defer taxes for a given year. Taxes and interest accrue and become payable at the conveyance of the real estate. This proposal would increase the income threshold to \$85,000.
- h. The Senior Tax Committee also proposes that the senior tax credits be indexed either to tax rate growth in the town or to Social Security cost-of-living increases.
- i. The BOS discussed the justification for a non-income means credit weighed against the means-testing tax credit and the threshold to qualify. Some board members lean away from the non-income based credits in favor of increasing the means-testing benefits.
- j. Town meetings, public hearing, and ordinance would be required to move forward.

No action was taken.

6. Form of government – Dennis Tracy, Form of Government Committee reported.

- a. The BOS received an executive summary highlighting the committee's research and findings. They recommended keeping the town meeting form of government and hiring a town administrator to support the First Selectperson, transferring limited decision-making authority from the town meeting to the board, and improving town meeting accessibility by setting a regular town meeting monthly schedule and changing voting procedures to allow for anonymous and possibly electronic voting.
- b. Ms. Kozlark commented that she supports hiring for a non-elected role of town administrator or professional manager who has the expertise and can do the day-to-day management so that the first selectperson can be dedicated to the role of liaison with regional and state agencies.
- c. Mr. Morris asked if towns with successful town administrator roles shared their employment agreements. Mr. Tracy explained that there were two structures to emulate; one incorporates the role into the town's charter, and the other has a job description and a contract with a two- or three-year term.
- d. Mr. Connelly commented that the first selectperson is the elected leader that the community will hold responsible for everything, including whatever the administrator does. The administrator answers to the board while the manager would have greater responsibility.
- e. Ms. Manners clarified her understanding is that a town administrator would be hired without a charter revision, to take over daily operations and implementation so that the first selectperson can represent the town in other regional and state agencies. The administrator would be overseen by the BOS.
- f. Mr. Morris asked Mr. Marconi to start documenting tasks he should do as first selectperson and tasks he should leave to a town administrator.
- g. Ms. Kozlark and Mr. Morris asked that this role be funded for the next fiscal year.

- h. The BOS asked that the Form of Government Committee start researching and developing a job description.
- i. The BOS will hold public hearings to present to the community before the next budget season.

No action was taken.

7. Refunds – Tax Collector proposed vehicle tax refunds

Barbara Manners motioned to approve vehicle tax refunds totaling \$8969.66. Maureen Kozlark seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

8. Approval of Meeting Minutes

a. August 19, 2025 Special Meeting

Maureen Kozlark motioned to approve the minutes from the August 19, 2025 Board of Selectpersons Special Meeting. Sean Connelly seconded. Motion carried 4-0-1, with Barbara Manners abstaining.

b. October 8, 2025 Meeting

Ms Kozlark asked that the minutes reflect the location of East Ridge Middle School.

Geoffrey Morris motioned to approve the October 8, 2025 meeting minutes as amended. Maureen Kozlark seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

9. Selectpersons Report

Mr. Marconi explained that the proposed board of directors for Compassionate Ridgefield will be appointed at the next BOS meeting after confirming party affiliation.

The parcel on New Street may be purchased and donated to the town. Conservation Commission approved a swap of conservation land in exchange for the New Street parcel.

Mr. Marconi is working on Adopt-A-Street.

Several high school students, led by student Emily Anri, would like to reconstitute Safe Rides, to be led by the Prevention Council.

Meals on Wheels thanked the town for the \$250 contribution.

Mr. Marconi met with Standard & Poor's for the \$17,450,000 bond issuance. Their report is due October 29.

Mr. Marconi confirmed with Town Counsel that funds cannot be used in any expense to campaign in favor of the proposed safety building.

***Sean Connelly motioned to adjourn the meeting at 10:09 pm. Geoffrey Morris seconded.
Motion carried 5-0.***