



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

March 19, 2025, at 6:30pm

Please note – these minutes are not verbatim.

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

Rudy Marconi called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

Maureen Kozlark motioned to move Appraiser Agreement for Route 102 property and the recently proposed Pound Street property to Executive Session. Chris Murray seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Public Comment

Denise Colaianni, 337 Old Branchville Rd, asked which properties are proposed for appraisals and if there would be neighborhood appraisals as well. Mr. Marconi explained that only the properties in question would be appraised.

Nathan Sved, 327 Old Branchville Rd, shared his excitement for the Sewer Study but is not in favor of a sewer plant near a school. He asked for an update on the Candee's Pond property and the petition to acquire and convert it to a park and preserve. He is not opposed to development nor in favor of preservation but wishes to stop the social injustice of no open space near that property.

Denise Colaianni, 337 Old Branchville Rd, reported that she is an immediate neighbor of the property where clear cutting has removed numerous trees. She said no one has reached out to the neighbors to ask input or give notice of potential impacts.

Laurie? (Resident, Name and Address does not audible) asked if the owner received approval for such extensive tree clearing. Mr. Marconi responded that the project was permitted but there was no tree work plan submitted nor required.

Sarah Sved, 327 Old Branchville Rd, supports connection to the Georgetown sewer but not a sewage plant.

Alan? (Resident, Name and Address does not audible) asked what decisions the Candee's Pond discussion will involve. Mr. Marconi stated that no decisions will be made today, only discussion to explore an appraisal.

Rodrigo Zamudio 336 Old Branchville Rd expressed concern about a sewage plant next to a school and the impact of a sewage plant on property values.

(Resident, Name and Address does not audible) is concerned with the traffic impact of a sewage plant at that location and stated that the clear-cutting of all those trees created an eyesore.

Ralph Baskin, 337 Old Branchville Rd, stated that several calls were made to Planning to ask about the activity occurring at Candee's Pond and surrounding area. They were repeatedly told that there were no plans for the property. Planning said they would investigate but the activity continued, and Planning gave no answers to address the apparent lack of due process.

Cory Kuhlmann, 646 Branchville Rd has watched that owner fundamentally change the property with no town oversight.

Kevin O'Connor, 42 Jefferson Drive said there is a common theme in the BOS responses tonight stating that there is no knowledge of activity on the property nor any plans for future development. Other homeowners commented that no one invests in the work done thus far with no intention of future development.

Susan O'Connor, 42 Jefferson Drive really wants everyone to come together to help Ridgefield fight against 8-30G.

Mr. Marconi closed Public Comments stating that Ridgefield has more open space than ever before. He will reach out to Planning to get more details on the work on that property.

Mr. Murray stated that voters elected the people in Hartford who are voting in favor of Affordable Housing mandates affecting the local communities. The BOS must comply with those mandates. If you don't like the decisions being made in Hartford, vote differently.

Ms. Kozlark stated that attending these meetings and speaking out is important and appreciated.

Ms. Manners added that town leaders opposed the state mandate but were outnumbered. Community members must become activists and run for office.

Mr. Connelly concluded that the TOR BOS sphere of influence is limited, and community participation is needed and appreciated.

Appointment of Colette Kabasakalian to the Commission on Aging Appointment

Colette Kabasakalian was present, as well as some of the CoA members. Topics discussed included:

- Ms. Kabasakalian is a Ridgefield realtor serving the community since 2004 and has seen some challenges that seniors face as they downsize or transition into assisted living.
- Commission members shared that some have known Ms. Kabasakalian for many years and met her at commission meetings. She has the qualities they want and the desire to serve the senior community.
- Mr. Marconi shared about the upcoming Senior Expo on April 26th at the Recreation Center.
- Ms. Kozlark asked if communication with the senior community has improved. The commission members stated that right now there is only digital and word-of-mouth communication.
- Mr. Murray asked what challenges the seniors face when moving. Ms. Kabasakalian shared that Ridgefield seniors have had to leave the area due to lack of senior accessible housing such as one-story units.

Maureen Kozlark motioned to appoint Colette Kabasakalian to the Ridgefield Commission on Aging. Barbara Manners seconded. Motion carried 4-1.

Vendor Permit Renewal – Bridge Street Premium Ice Co.

Michael Cunningham, applicant, was present. Topics discussed included:

- Mr. Marconi explained that under the town charter, the business permit must be renewed each year by the BOS.
- Mr. Cunningham stated that he is in season six of providing sorbet.
- Ms. Kozlark asked if he has any employees. He responded that his young adult children assist him but never work without him. Mr. Marconi stated that if ever they were to work without him, they need to come in and file proper paperwork.
- Mr. Connelly asked if he takes non-cash payments and Mr. Cunningham stated that he now takes Venmo.

Barbara Manners motioned to approve permit renewal for Bridge Street Premium Ice Co. Sean Connelly seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Tertiary Roads – ordinance update

Mr. Marconi explained that tertiary road paving is funded through the capital budget because the low traffic allows for a long useful life of about twenty years. However, restrictive language in the ordinance disqualifies some of these low traffic roads for capital funding and requires funding through the operating budget. He requested BOS support to edit the ordinance Chapter 310-44, section C (2) by removing the last phrase, "...serving not more than seven interior residential lots." This will allow roads with very low traffic, but more than seven residential homes, to still qualify under the ordinance, for capital funding for paving.

- Mr. Connelly asked if some qualifier is needed to limit much longer streets such as his.
- Ms. Kozlark suggested that some language is needed to provide the clarification without creating a restriction.
- Mr. Murray added that the consideration should be the usage of the road and paving frequency, so the language should reflect the accuracy of the need.
- Mr. Marconi stated that section G states the restriction of 1400 feet in length for tertiary roads which satisfies Mr. Connelly's suggestion that there be some language to limit these roads.
- BOS agreed to proceed with the process to edit the ordinance. A public hearing and vote are required.

Emergency Management Performance Grant (EMPG) Resolution

Mr. Marconi stated that this is passed yearly to receive \$12,000 from the state of Connecticut. \$5,000 is used to pay the stipend to the Emergency Management Director.

Sean Connelly motioned to approve the resolution as presented with the revised dates. Chris Murray seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Branchville Sewer Study

Mr. Marconi shared that he, Ms. Kozlark (as the BOS liaison to the Water Pollution Control Authority, WPCA), Amy Seibert (WPCA chair), Al Dew (Planning Director), and Jake Muller (Director of Public Works), met with Jackie Reelick, of the Western Connecticut Council of Governments (WestCOG), who is assigned administration of a grant from Congressman Himes' office of \$200,000 to study the Georgetown sewer and potential gallonage, and, the Branchville pathway. Ridgefield and Redding had been required to contribute a share of \$25,000 each to the study. However, Redding representatives stated that Ridgefield is not guaranteed any of the sewer gallonage. Ms. Kozlark asked Ms. Reelick if Ridgefield could perhaps commit the \$25,000 as a reimbursement to Redding if, once they complete the study, some amount of gallonage

is dedicated to Ridgefield. But Ms. Reelick could not give a definitive answer. The state requires that both towns contribute to the study, but it isn't clear if the contribution must be equal. Mr. Murray asked if there was any room for negotiation with Redding to lock in a percentage of gallonage for Ridgefield. Mr. Connelly asked if a percentage of excess gallonage could be secured in exchange for a proportional percentage of the \$50,000 state required contribution. The BOS is not willing to contribute \$25,000 to an assessment of the Redding sewer system if there is no benefit for Ridgefield. Discussions will continue.

Tax Collector Refunds

Barbara Manners motioned to approve the tax collector refunds presented totaling \$11,523.65 for cars. Maureen Kozlark seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

February 19, 2025 BOS Special Meeting

Sean Connelly corrected on page 3, in the Fire Department Budget discussion, "confirmed" instead of "conformed."

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

February 19, 2025 BOS Meeting

Maureen Kozlark suggested a clarification to Rudy Marconi's Selectperson's Report regarding the Mamasco property to add that the house on the property would have to be demolished at a cost of approximately \$20,000.

Sean Connelly motioned to approve the minutes from the February 19, 2025 Board of Selectpersons Meeting, as amended. Maureen Kozlark seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

February 24, 2025 BOS Special Meeting

Barbara Manners requested a correction to her comments in the first item.

Maureen Kozlark motioned to approve the minutes from the February 24, 2025 Board of Selectpersons Special Meeting, as amended. Sean Connelly seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

February 25, 2025 BOS Special Meeting

Maureen Kozlark motioned to approve the minutes from the February 25, 2025 Board of Selectpersons Special Meeting, as presented. Sean Connelly seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

February 26, 2025 BOS Special Meeting

Maureen Kozlark requested a missing public comment from David Yolen, East Farm Lane, be added to the record. His comment was in support of the budget. Rudy Marconi will request the audio be reviewed and minutes revised.

Sean Connelly corrected on page 2, second bullet, "...four proposed additional..." and on page 3, second dash, fourth line, "...competing understandings expectations..."

Minutes tabled.

February 27, 2025 BOS Special Meeting

Sean Connelly motioned to approve the minutes from the February 27, 2025 Board of Selectpersons Special Meeting as presented. Chris Murray seconded. Motion carried 4-0-1 (with Barbara Manners abstaining).

March 5, 2025 Special Joint Meeting of the BOS and Fire Commission

Chris Murray motioned to approve the minutes from the March 5, 2025 Special Joint Meeting of the Board of Selectpersons and Fire Commission as presented. Maureen Kozlark seconded. Motion carried 3-2 (with Sean Connelly and Barbara Manners abstaining).

Selectpersons Report

Mr. Marconi reported that the Inland Wetlands Board did not fill their vacancies in the thirty-day window. Therefore, the BOS has the duty to appoint. There are four candidates to be interviewed.

145 High Ridge continues. The neighborhood is working with Department of Public Health.

An Avian Flu Fact Sheet was provided with a report to the BOS. It has mutated to humans and concerns are elevated.

BOS allocated \$16,000 to do an Open Space Forest Management Plan. DEEP issued a grant to Conservation Commission of \$9250, which will be applied toward the \$16,000.

Mr. Connelly shared that he attended the Board of Education meeting last night and heard budget discussions as well as a study group review of how curriculum changes may impact physical space requirements.

Maureen Kozlark motioned to enter Executive Session to discuss the possible appraisals of the Route 102 property, Candee's Pond, and the Pound Street property. Sean Connelly seconded. Motion carried 5-0. The board entered Executive Session at 8:47pm.

The Board exited Executive Session at 9:16pm.

Maureen Kozlark motioned to contract for an appraisal of Candee's Pond property on Route 102 as presented in Executive Session. Chris Murray seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

Sean Connelly motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:17pm. Maureen Kozlark seconded. Motion carried 5-0.