



Town of Ridgefield
Board of Selectpersons Meeting
Minutes
APPROVED
February 18, 2026 at 6:30pm
Town Hall – Large Conference Room, 400 Main Street, Ridgefield, CT

Please note – these minutes are not verbatim.

Present: Sean Connelly (virtual), Maureen Kozlark, Rudy Marconi, Geoffrey Morris

Absent: Barbara Manners.

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

1. Public Comment-none

2. Ridgefield Arts Council (RAC) Budget Review – Co-chairs Colleen Cash, Jennifer Dineen

Ms. Cash reported that the RAC is requesting a flat budget for the next fiscal year; no changes. They have made a strong “sweat equity” investment in building relationships with new committee members of several town committees. Their strategic planning requires more labor than funding to amplify events rather than produce them. They focus on supporting the local businesses, artists, and arts organizations.

Ms. Dineen added that the costs of Make Music Day, almost \$2500, are entirely borne by the RAC. Last year, 115 musicians performed in 80 performances across 17 venues. This is a revenue generator for the town. This year, the event will be held on June 21, 2026. The musicians will be advertising the events via their own social media and the RAC will work with other local committees to advertise as well, including ECDC. Geoffrey Morris suggested providing specific advertising requests rather than waiting for suggestions from the other committees.

Geoffrey Morris then asked about working with the Cultural District. Ms. Cash reported that the subcommittee work between RAC and Cultural District is on-going with the focus on structure and clarification of task responsibility. They are working on a strategic plan that clearly defines who does what. They are also exploring the use of the town website more and consolidating efforts and expenditures to utilize economies of scale and limit duplicating costs. They hope to realize synergies.

Rudy Marconi asked about the Executive Director Roundtables (EDR). Ms. Cash responded that these quarterly meetings are being well attended by approximately 22 executive directors from local non-profits in the arts and culture space. They plan to hold these meetings at different venues such as Founders Hall, ACT (Weir Farm), and Meetinghouse (Ridgebury) to spotlight each location.

Rudy Marconi asked what's on the horizon. Ms. Cash responded that they plan to focus on leadership, fundraising for the non-profits, and legal compliance at state and federal levels.

3. Appointments and Reappointments

a. Ian Dow – Graveyard Restoration Committee Appointment

Chair Nancy Selander introduced candidate Ian Dow. Rudy Marconi asked the number and location of headstones needing restoration work. Ms. Selander and Mr. Dow explained that there are very large or heavy stones requiring equipment to move them back into their proper place. Rudy Marconi suggested using the town's backhoe. They will coordinate. Ms. Selander added that when a headstone is restored, the data on the headstone and the restoration work is recorded and shared with the Historical Society. Maureen Kozlark asked what brought Mr. Dow to the Graveyard Restoration Committee. He explained that he is an avid student of history. He is especially fascinated by the 18th century artifacts found in Ridgefield and wants to contribute to the preservation of these. Rudy Marconi asked how many cemeteries are found in Ridgefield. Mr. Dow stated that there are 21 cemeteries including all the pocket cemeteries. They are working to update cemetery records. Maureen Kozlark asked about the capital expenses in the committee's budget. Ms. Selander explained that those funds are for one crypt roof repairs and two retaining wall repairs.

Maureen Kozlark motioned to appoint Ian Dow to the Graveyard Restoration Committee. Geoffrey Morris seconded. Motion carried 4-0 (Manners absent).

b. Keith Olsen – Architectural Advisory Committee (AAC) Appointment

Keith Olsen introduced himself sharing that he is a licensed architect in 15 states and has been in architecture for 30 years. He has volunteered in different roles serving the Ridgefield community since moving here in 2012. Maureen Kozlark asked for details regarding the legal aspects of his experience. He explained that the first 20 years were architecture and design, but the last 10 years have included forensics, building science, and expert witness testimony in cases of arbitration or litigation. Maureen Kozlark asked if he could foresee a time when he could be hired in a matter that would create a conflict of interest. He stated that he hasn't faced such a situation in the past ten years. Geoffrey Morris asked what his skills could bring to the AAC. Mr. Olsen explained that his skills would provide the town with a combination of skills to balance the architectural preservation of the town's buildings with sound construction practices. Rudy Marconi asked if he could address structural issues. He explained he has experience working with those issues but would also bring in structural engineers for complex cases. Sean Connelly asked how Mr. Olsen balances a desire to address an applicant's requests with protecting the town's interests. Mr. Olsen responded that buildings have a public face and while interior work

may have more flexibility, the impact of the building's exterior to the town's aesthetic is a priority.

Maureen Kozlark motioned to appoint Keith Olsen to the Architectural Advisory Committee. Geoffrey Morris seconded. Motion carried 4-0 (Manners absent).

4. Refund Request

Rudy Marconi explained that the \$10,000 item is due to an appeal settlement on 38A Grove Street. The previous owners had paid the balance due and now by court order it must be refunded. The other refund requests are for the usual leasing company automobile items. The total is \$26,495.65.

Mareen Kozlark motioned to accept the refund requests totaling \$26,495.65. Sean Connelly seconded. Motion carried 4-0 (Manners absent).

5. Budget Discussion

Rudy Marconi reported that the Board of Finance and Town Treasurer Molly McGeehin, decided to lower the budgeted interest income by \$500,000 based on the appointment of the new Federal Reserve chief coming in May 2026.

The BOF asked the BOS to join their meeting at 8:30pm on March 25th when the BOE will present the BOE budget.

The Grand List came in at .78. The BOS budget target was 3% for operating expenses and with cuts, got it down to 2.96% including roads.

Maureen Kozlark suggested that the ECDC budget be reduced by \$13,000. The ECDC will be speaking to the BOS on February 24th.

Geoffrey Morris commented that if a town administrator is hired, then either the administrator or perhaps the first selectperson, could take on ECDC tasks.

Sean Connelly commented that he feels that the 2.96% operating and roads expenses sounds fair. He would like to see different budget scenarios with no use of fund balance versus some use of it as well as mill rate variations.

The capital expenses will be reviewed in depth on Monday.

Maureen Kozlark motioned to approve a special meeting of the BOS on Monday, February 23, 2026 and Tuesday, February 24, 2026, at 4:30pm, to discuss the town administrator role pending confirmation from the invitees, Matt Knickerboker and Jon Zagrotsky. Seconded by Geoffrey Morris. Motion carried 4-0 (Manners absent).

6. Approval of Meeting Minutes for February 4, 2026

Sean Connelly motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Maureen Kozlark seconded. Motion carried 4-0 (Manners absent).

7. Selectpersons Report

Rudy Marconi presented 6 items for the next town meeting; modify town charter to allow committees to have two alternates, approve senior tax credit if it's included in the budget, approve action to be taken with 29 Lakeview (expenses of \$75,000), HRRRA one town one vote would require a change in the town ordinance, veterans' exemption, and the leaf blower noise ordinance change.

The "A School" project is moving along. Lower-level inspection (for all water lines, electrical, and HVAC) is pending. Once completed, walls can be closed, and work will move to the second story. Project completion is expected in time for the following school year. The Department of Finance is reporting that the project is on track with the budget and timeline.

Don Ciota of Boys and Girls Club asked if the town would sell them the bus that is being replaced.

"America 250" is copyrighted and cannot be used without signing a federal agreement. Town Counsel reviewed the agreement and recommended signing to avoid copyright infringement.

Battle of Ridgefield plans are underway for April 24-26. An estimated 400 reenactors are anticipated. The ball will be held at Lounsbury House.

Rudy Marconi shared that Andrew Neblett has built an Artificial Intelligence server to offer certain services 24/7 online.

Sean Connelly motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:38pm. Maureen Kozlark seconded. Motion carried 4-0 (Manners absent).