



**Town of Ridgefield  
Public Safety Facilities Committee  
Minutes  
APPROVED**

**March 12, 2026, 7PM**

**ANNEX, Large conference room, 66 Prospect Street, Ridgefield, CT**

Please note – these minutes are not verbatim.

**Committee Members Present:** Pamela Dunaway, Denis Graves,  
Wally Martinez, Adam Safir, Stephen Scalzo, Ed Tyrrell

**Committee Members Absent:** David Brickley

**Presenters in Attendance:** None

Wally Martinez called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

- 1. Discussion Re: KBA Presentation** – Wally Martinez invited public comment regarding the presentation last week. Mr. Kevin Carr of Prospect Ridge commented regarding the Town of Ridgefield’s request for proposals from architectural firms and KBA’s proposal submitted. In their proposal, they committed to providing a comparison of various potential sites with pros and cons, “a scorecard,” but he hasn’t been able to find that report. Wally Martinez agreed that it would be helpful in fulfilling the committee’s role of stewardship. He will investigate. Pamela Dunaway explained that she has seen a list of several sites that were discarded for unspecified reasons. She agreed that the information could be helpful to the extent that it supports the committee charge. She cautioned that the committee must direct their resources forward-facing. Wally Martinez added that the committee received written comments from Mr. Carr and another commercial member of the town, and their written comments will be added to the meeting record. Pamela Dunaway responded to Mr. Carr's comments stating that Do Nothing has no quantifiable cost but perhaps other intrinsic costs such as loss of services and community safety rating. She also stated that the population trend, although flat over the last ten years, is only one factor in public safety. She believes that population age is arguably more important because the aging population accounts for most of the Fire Department call volume, and that number is growing even though the total population may hold steady. Another factor is mental health of the existing population. As those issues have increased, so have public safety issues. Then she addressed the Clear Value proposition and commented that improving the safety facilities would lead to an

improved insurance rating which would affect the insurance costs. New facilities would allow improved recruitment and better training which would also bring inherent value to the community. Roger Kavanaugh of 420 Prospect asked if the committee has historical information regarding the decision made around 2020 to focus on the combined facilities option. Wally Martinez responded that he asked that question at the presentation and once the answer was given, that there is no additional information about that, his curiosity about that historical information is satisfied. He doesn't feel it would inform the committee's work in the present time. Adam Safir added that the committee must sift through data including PD and FD response times. Speaking from his perspective of site evaluation, response times are driven by much more than population, but also staff and vehicles available. Jim Murphy of Barrack Hill Road commented that KBA admitted that they don't do renovations. He believes that perhaps they never included that in their consideration. Adam Safir added that he attended an officer safety and wellness conference recently where he heard discussions about all the different data studied by towns in their determination of a renovated or new, single or combined PD and FD facility. He explained that there is still much to research and the KBA information is only one piece of the puzzle they must solve before they are able to make a recommendation to the board of selectpersons.

2. **Community Engagement update** – Pamela Dunaway reported that 20,000 emails have been sent to community members. The committee alert subscriptions are up to 364. The committee survey was launched on Wednesday, March 11<sup>th</sup>. 526 surveys have been returned. She will review the demographics of respondents to ensure an appropriate cross-section of the population. Once the committee has a solid grasp of the assessment of the needs, they will plan community engagement sessions.
3. **Planning for future committee meetings** – will ask each for five minutes on the scope of their mission, then their role in the public safety facility building project, and questions from the committee.
  - a. Deputy Chief Pambianchi RVFD – Wally Martinez will schedule with him.
  - b. Planning and Zoning Commission and Inland Wetlands Board (IWB) – Adam Safir will schedule.
  - c. Insurance and Risk Management Committee – Steve Scalzo will schedule.
  - d. Board of Police Commissioners – Pamela Dunaway will schedule.
  - e. Board of Finance – Ed Tyrrell will schedule.
4. **Committee endeavors to build, assess, and seek public input on recommendations** – Wally Martinez confirmed with Pamela Dunaway that the survey will close in ten days. He proposed community engagement at that point to gather public input on the direction of the committee's research. Ed Tyrrell stated that he will not support an \$80 million project. Adam Safir commented that this initial survey may not reflect a reset to a blank slate for the community members. He asked what number of respondents an appropriate representation

will be. Pamela Dunaway responded that about 400 completed surveys across demographics would be a good reflection of the town's 25,000 residents. He also asked if there would be another survey once the committee has completed more of the committee's work and has had more community engagement. Pamela Dunaway explained that ideally there are short surveys throughout the committee's process of needs assessment, site evaluation, and cost analysis to allow the committee to course correct if they see strong community sentiment in one direction. She suggested that completing the needs assessment (needs mandated by legal obligations, needs identified by the departments, and wants) and site evaluations would provide necessary information to take to the public for any community engagement. The survey results are not enough to begin engagement. Wally Martinez cautioned of survey fatigue. Steve Scalzo agrees with Ed Tyrrell. He said that surveys would be great and continued communication with the PD and FD about their needs is important. But ultimately, the committee must focus on the cost and size of the facility. Denis Brickley stated that he feels the critical information is the project cost. The committee needs to get to that point. Adam Safir asked if at any point the committee would engage with a public relations firm to gauge public support. Steve Scalzo asked if that would be after engaging a firm to provide cost estimates. Denis Graves asked who will determine the level of compromise. Wally Martinez replied that the PD and FD should be the ones to say what they can compromise and what they can't.

- 5. Planning for Charrettes** – The committee discussed holding charrettes to receive public input on the facilities designs once they have a strong understanding of needs and sites. Pamela Dunaway strongly suggested that any participants first tour the current facilities, so they all have a baseline knowledge. Rob Camera expressed concern with overwhelming the PD and FD, but Pamela Dunaway responded that they are happy to give community members tours. Adam Safir asked Wally Martinez if he envisioned brainstorming sessions going into the charrettes. Wally Martinez responded that he has no knowledge or experience with charrettes other than what he recently found on Google. He believes this requires a simple approach. Adam Safir explained that he does have experience with charrettes, and they require participants who have a common knowledge, experience, and lexicon mastery of the subject matter. Therefore, he agrees that a simple approach to gather public opinion works but also advantageous for the town would be charrettes where community members with industry (PD, FD, construction, finance, etc) knowledge leverage their expertise in design development. Jim Murphy of Regan Road suggested that the PD and FD be asked to review the previously denied renovation plans in case those would meet the current needs. Steve Scalzo responded that any renovation plans from ten or twenty years ago wouldn't apply today because of code changes alone. Any time you open a wall, you have to bring the structure to current code. Pamela Dunaway agreed that the old renovation plans could serve as a baseline if they are updated to current code requirements. Mr. Kevin Carr of Prospect Ridge added that charrette resources might be available through Mr. Marconi. Mr. Carr also asked about the volunteer firefighter department's interplay with

the fire department. Chief Cirulli explained that there are two firehouses, Old Stage Road and Catoonah. The volunteer firefighters manage some interior needs, the tankers and fire hydrants. The critical difference between Ridgefield career and volunteer department budget and other towns is the emergency medical services they provide. ? Martinez of ? Road asked for clarification of needs being shared with the public. Pamela Dunaway explained that she would like to share the needs assessment with the public to keep them informed but it is not going to be intended as a request for agreement on the needs. Those will be defined by the experts and legal requirements.

**6. Review of previous meeting minutes - *Pamela Dunaway motioned to approve March 5, 2026, meeting minutes as amended. Ed Tyrrell seconded. The motion carried 6-0 (Brickley absent).***

***Wally Martinez motioned to adjourn the Public Safety Facilities Committee meeting at 8:23 PM. Denis Graves seconded. Motion carried 6-0 (Brickley absent).***

Respectfully submitted by,  
Etna Monsalve