



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

**March 5, 2026, 7PM**

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

Please note – these minutes are not verbatim.

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

**Committee Members Absent:** Ed Tyrrell

**Presenters in Attendance:** Jake Muller, Director, Ridgefield Public Works; Todd Costa, Principal, Kaestle Boos Associates (KBA; kba-architects.com); Bob Mitchell, Wendel Companies (mitchell-architects.com)

Wally Martinez called the meeting to order at 7 pm.

**1. Public Comment – None.**

**2. KBA presentation on past proposals –** Mr. Costa and Mr. Mitchell introduced themselves and gave a brief overview of their industry leadership and combined over 50 years of public safety building experience. Mr. Costa managed the police department aspect of the work, and Mr. Mitchell managed the fire department aspect. They presented a project overview. The project and design approach employed for all their projects includes research and stakeholder input as follows: questionnaires from departments covering department activity; department interviews to determine how much, if any, operational facilities sharing each department is open to; and a balance of performance, durability, and cost weighed against a mixture of requirements, needs, and wants. The program and operational requirements included analysis of space for training, decontamination, anticipated growth based on models, and consideration of two stand-alone structures requiring 7 acres total, or combined facilities requiring 5 acres total. The site test fits included analyses of the current sites to accommodate renovations but found renovations to be cost inefficient. At that point, they moved toward analyses of sites for a joint facility. They analyzed Copps Hill Road but the space couldn't accommodate the required buffers or parking. It was considered for the police and fire departments alone but also couldn't efficiently accommodate the

volunteer fire department and parking needs. They also looked at the Danbury Road site, Diniz Field site, and Veterans Park School site but site particulars such as buffer zones, parking layout, and topography made responses less beneficial. The Old Quarry Road site was tested for multiple variables. Despite the challenge of topography, this site allowed accommodation of all needs. The site selection process involved a comparison of the following factors for each site; adequate lot size, usable area, prepared area, anticipated site development costs, property acquisition costs, room for growth, municipal water and sewer, neighborhood impacts, historic restrictions, and historic concerns. Assigning a value of good, bad, or neutral (green, red, yellow) revealed the outcome of Old Quarry Road to be the most suitable site. The heat map showing the location of most calls to 911 supported the placement of the building at Old Quarry Road to preserve or enhance response times to that area. They also showed construction costs for different size buildings and charts depicting increasing per square footage costs for smaller buildings. This data supported the premise that a joint facility would be more cost efficient. Additional data showed that the construction cost of a building in 2016, had increased 82% today.

Steve Scalzo asked how many meetings were held with FD and PD representatives after the initial questionnaires to discuss the plans. Mr. Costa explained that there were 3 or 4 meetings to prepare the questionnaire and then several meetings to review the data. Mr. Mitchell explained that he estimates several meetings with the fire committee of a few hours each to produce the initial questionnaire and then some meetings to review the data acquired. Then, Steve Scalzo asked if there was any analysis of Ligi Way access. Mr. Costa responded that the criteria they require is at least three points of access to the road, not the road itself.

Pamela Dunaway asked for a deeper explanation about free seats in training rooms. These free seats are filled by neighboring communities who don't host their own trainings and pay to send their staff outside. Mr. Costa explained that free seats are a cost savings opportunity because staff can be trained in-house. The FBI recommendation is 50 or 60 free seats but most departments build out for 40 free seats.

Denis Graves asked for the resulting cost savings from a combined facility. Mr. Costa explained that there was a savings in the square footage. The estimated cost per square foot for separate police and fire facilities is currently \$1200-\$1300. However, the combined buildings are estimated to cost \$1000 per square foot. Cost efficiency comes from scaling equipment such as electrical, generators, and fire suppression systems. David Brickley then asked for clarification if the estimates are consistent from concept through to completion. Mr. Costa explained that costing and estimating is done by professional estimators not the architects.

David Brickley asked for elaboration on the commercial aspects of the design such as concrete decks and metal framing. Mr. Costa explained that the design was a concrete base, steel frame structure, infill, metal studs, highly insulated, and concrete deck with floorboards. Then Denis Graves asked if roads were analyzed to determine if they needed to be widened. Mr. Costa explained that they considered the response time map and current experience with the trucks already traveling on Ridgefield roads and have sufficient turning radius. Jake Muller added that no additional town-wide traffic study was conducted.

Adam Safir asked if there was any site-specific analysis to determine if a site could accommodate one building, either the PD or FD. Mr. Costa explained that once the data showed that from operational and cost perspectives, a joint facility was the optimal choice, there was no further exploration of single facility accommodating sites. Then Adam Safir asked how to best address the fire department considering that Ridgefield has both the career and volunteer firefighters and some remote areas that are currently served by an apparatus parked away from the station to provide faster response. Were substations considered? Mr. Costa, Mr. Mitchell, and Mr. Muller spoke in depth to address the inquiry.

Wally Martinez asked for one sentence describing the main driver that led to the combined structure decision. Mr. Costa explained that the drivers were efficient operations, efficient cost, and the historical collaboration between departments. The trend shows an increase in the number of PD and FD collocating. Then Wally Martinez asked if there were discussions to separate the must haves and nice to haves such as the gun range. Mr. Costa responded that yes, there were instances where he asked if certain specific items could be removed or altered to lower the cost.

Steve Scalzo asked what percent of KBA projects are retrofitting buildings. Mr. Costa explained that surprisingly not many. Then Steve Scalzo asked if there was any strategic value or disadvantage to having dispersed assets such as firetrucks parked throughout town. Mr. Mitchell responded that it increases labor costs.

Pamela Dunaway asked if there was any cost factoring. Mr. Costa replied that costs continue to go up roughly 4%. Then she asked if there was any way to resituate the proposed combined structure on the Old Quarry Road site to avoid the site preparation cost. Mr. Costa replied that it was considered, and the structure was situated to minimize that necessary work to the greatest extent possible.

Denis Graves asked if the existing structures were considered for expansion. Mr. Costa explained that the police department had previously been deemed to need a 40% expansion, and it wasn't feasible at the time. Therefore, at this point, it wasn't explored again because now the expansion needed was beyond that 40% and would be even less feasible. Then Denis Graves asked if the Copps Hill site was considered for just the police

department. Mr. Costa replied that it was not considered, but it would need full structural reinforcement.

Adam Safir asked what sites were considered for either single structures or a combined facility. Mr. Costa and Mr. Muller explained that once the decision was made for a combined structure, they looked for sites that could accommodate the square footage needed. Additionally, they considered acquisition costs for each lot which drove the total cost of the project on that lot to exceed other the cost of the project at a different site. Then Adam Safir asked if they have any experience building substations. Mr. Mitchell explained that substations need apparatus bays, bedrooms, decontamination units, laundry facilities, kitchen, etc.; all the same facilities that the main facility would have. Mr. Costa added that substations are 10,000 to 16,000 square feet. Adam Safir and other committee members asked for forward looking guidance for a project that is financially constrained, and contingent on voter approval. Mr. Costa explained that he feels the proposal meets the highest operational and cost efficiencies.

3. **General Discussion** – Pamela Dunaway shared that she did a 12-hour observer shift with the fire department. She was impressed with their knowledge, people skills, housekeeping, and physical fitness required to serve as firefighters.
4. **Proposed agenda items for March 12 meeting** - early-stage input for recommendations from each working group; discussion with Tim Pambianchi; discussion with Insurance and Risk Management Committee Chair, Margaux Lansen and Purchasing Manager and Purchasing Director, Dave McFate;
5. **Adoption of meeting minutes** – *Steve Scalzo motioned to approve the February 26, 2026 meeting minutes with two modifications. David Brickley seconded. The motion carried 6-0 (Tyrrell absent).*

***Denis Graves motioned to adjourn the Public Safety Facilities Commission meeting at 9:05 PM. Adam Safir seconded. Motion carried 6-0 (Tyrrell absent).***

Respectfully submitted by,  
Etna Monsalve