

NOTICE OF A SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD, CONNECTICUT
WEDNESDAY JANUARY 3, 2024 AT 7:30PM

RECEIVED

@ 4:15 PM

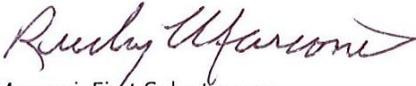
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Wendy Gannon Lionetti
BY TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
RIDGEFIELD, CT

Notice is hereby given that a formal Special Town Meeting for residents will be held on Wednesday January 3, 2024, at 7:30pm in the Town Hall Large Conference room located at 400 Main Street, Ridgefield, CT 06877 to vote on the following:

1. State of CT Grant – Allocation of Reimbursable Funds Requests – Totaling = \$820,917.10
 - a. VW EVSE ZIP grant - \$50,917.10
 - b. CT DEEP Urbanized Act Grant - \$400,000.00
 - c. CT DOT Community Connectivity Grant - \$370,000.00
2. For the allocation of \$23,000 of ARPA funds as approved by the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance to purchase two Zodiac boats and electric motors to be used by our Town safety departments

See the Town calendar for details at www.ridgefieldct.gov



Rudy Marconi, First Selectperson



TOWN OF RIDGEFIELD
Office of the First Selectman

January 5, 2024

Wendy Gannon Lionetti
Town Clerk

RECEIVED
@ 4:17 PM
JAN 05 2024
Wendy Gannon Lionetti
BY TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
RIDGEFIELD CT

This letter is to affirm that the legal public notices for the Special Town Meeting held on January 3rd, 2024, appeared in the *Ridgefield press* on Thursday, December 28, 2023.



Amy Escribano
First Selectman's Office

Special Town Meeting January 3, 2024

First Selectperson Rudy Marconi called the Special Town Meeting to order at 7:30 pm in the large conference room of Town Hall. Mr. Marconi asked the audience to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

The first order of business was to appoint a Moderator. **Selectperson Barbara Manners moved and Colette Kabasakalian, 2 Washington Street, seconded the motion to appoint Ed Tyrrell Moderator for the Special Town Meeting. The "Aye" votes were unanimous and Ed Tyrrell was appointed Moderator.**

Moderator Ed Tyrrell called the meeting to order and requested a motion to appoint a secretary. **Selectperson Barbara Manners moved and Andrew Neblett, Ashbee Lane, seconded the motion to appoint Wendy Gannon Lionetti, Town Clerk, secretary. The "Aye" votes were unanimous and Wendy Gannon Lionetti was appointed secretary.**

Moderator Tyrrell read the legal notice of the meeting that appears on Page 49.

The Moderator then asked for a motion to approve Item #1. **Selectperson Sean Connelly moved and Selectperson Maureen Kozlark seconded the motion to approve the State of CT Grant – Allocation of Reimbursable Funds Requests – Totaling \$820,917.10.**

Moderator Tyrrell then requested that some background for this request be provided. First Selectperson Rudy Marconi stated that Item 1a, the VW EVSE ZIP grant, is money received as part of the Volkswagen law suit. The Town applied for a grant and were given \$50,917. Jake Muller, Purchasing Director, was introduced by R. Marconi and explained that the Town has received many requests to install electric vehicle (EV) chargers throughout town. Six dual chargers will be installed--two at the Governor Street municipal parking lot, three at the Richard Venus building, and one at the Parks & Recreation Center. The users will be charged for the use of the EV and this will offset the cost of the electricity and maintenance of the units for the Town.

Item 1b was received through the work of Rep. Aimee Berger-Girvalo. The grant money will cover the removal of old and installation of new ADA-compliant playground equipment and surfaces at both Ridgebury and Barlow Mountain Elementary Schools.

Item 1c is for the installation of sidewalks on New and Pound Streets, which was requested by the community and neighbors on those streets.

-Maureen Ward, 10 Silver Spring Lane, asked why do people have to pay to use the EVs? Jake Muller responded that the Town will pay the electricity bill for the EVs; the users will pay to offset the cost to the Town.

-Daniel Wehking, 24 Wooster Heights Drive, stated he has an EV and the cost to install it was much lower than the cost of any of the proposed EVs. Why is the Town paying so much for the chargers? Jake Muller responded that the cost includes all the site work for the installation, and the components for these chargers are different than residential chargers.

-Terry Bearden Rettger, 25 Fairview Ave, states she supports the EV chargers. We have an EV and charger so it is not really for us; it will encourage others to come to our town knowing they can use the EVs.

-Geoffrey Morris, 231 Ivy Hill Rd, stated he is a member of the ECDC and they have been looking at EVs—they are an economic draw. There is a shortage of chargers in our Town and this will have a positive impact economically. The location of these machines will be identified on EV drivers' apps, bringing those people into town.

-Mike Raduazzo, 195 Peaceable Street, stated that public safety must be considered when installing the EVs—the car currently plugged into the charger outside Town Hall has stretched the cord between cars and it is one foot above the pavement, making it a trip hazard.

-Derek Shirm, New Street, stated he fully supports the installation of sidewalks on New Street for safety purposes.

-Geoff Harrington, Langstroth Drive, is concerned with the cost of the projects. Will the Town get reimbursed? Jake Muller responded that the grants are fully reimbursable. The Town will pay for the project and will be fully reimbursed. The users will pay for the electricity; offsetting the cost to the Town.

-Mike Rettger, Fairview Ave, stated he is a BOF member and knows that all three requests will be a net zero cost to the Town.

-Fran Riche, 45 New Street, stated she is fearful of injury when walking on New Street. It is dangerous. The cost of injury is much greater than the money that will be spent on installation of sidewalks.

-Daniel Wehking, Wooster Heights Dr, stated he hasn't found a bid for the EV chargers; we can purchase cheaper chargers and have more of them installed. Recommends voting no.

The Moderator then called for a vote to approve the motion. **The "Aye" voted carried (4-5 people of the approximately 85 attendees voted nay) and the motion to approve the State of CT Grant Totaling \$820,917.10 was approved.**

Moderator Tyrrell then asked for a motion to approve Item #2. **Sean Connelly moved and Maureen Kozlark seconded the motion to approve the allocation of \$23,000 of ARPA funds as approved by the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance to purchase two Zodiac boats and electric motors to be used by our Town safety departments.**

The Moderator then asked Rudy Marconi for background information during which he explained that the Town has an ordinance that prohibits use of internal combustion-propelled boats on Great Pond and Pierrepont and Mamasasco Lakes. The Fire and Police Departments will use these boats at the Tri-Ridgefield annual event. Currently they use row boats at this event. The Board of Selectpersons and Board of Finance have both approved using the ARPA funds for this purpose.

-Scott DeYoung, Caudatowa Drive, questioned the scope. As previous owner of Zodiac boat, thinks that fiberglass would be far superior and cheaper (the zodiac can be punctured). Regarding the battery, you won't know the capability of it until you have to use it which will be too late.

-Geoffrey Morris, Ivy Hill Rd, until now the Town has received and paid for help when needed for rescue or for the Tri-Ridgefield event. The Town should have its own boats for rescue operations.

-Andrew Neblett, 31 Ashbee Lane, the Police and Fire Department conduct regular maintenance checks on their equipment.

The First Selectperson clarified that Danbury purchased the Whaley (can be hit with an axe and is unsinkable) and that is what we will be purchasing—we steered away from the zodiac due to the possibility of puncture.

-Maureen Ward, Silver Spring Lane, surprised that this is before us for approval. A row boat could be used for rescue on Ridgefield's lakes. There are much better things that this money can be used for such as fixing roads.

-Sean Archambault, 85 Ramapoo Road, asked for background on the ARPA funds—how they were acquired etc. The Moderator explained that the Town Meeting is not intended for information gathering or asking questions, but for stating your opinion and encouraging others to do likewise.

-Michael Rettger, Fairview Ave, stated ARPA funds were available for the Town's use including the Fire Department, and this is an appropriate use of these funds. In respect to the boat, Great Pond is an ecologically sensitive, spring-fed pond and has been judged the cleanest lake in Fairfield County. There was an incident many years ago when a gas spill occurred and it was a serious issue. This would eliminate this potential environmental hazard.

-Betsy Reid, Great Hill Road, we had a traumatic drowning in Pierrepont Lake this past summer and we had to call for help from out of Town. We need to learn from this. We need those boats.

-Daniel Wehking, Wooster Heights, stated I don't think we are using the ARPA fund money appropriately. I am going to vote no and encourage others to do likewise.

-Geoff Harrington, Langstroth Drive, stated there is a waiver that all Triathlon participants must sign. They pay to participate; the funds paid should be used to offset the cost of the event.

-Greg Kabasakalian, 2 Washington Street, stated he is a member of the BOF. We have very little ARPA money left and it can be used for Fire Department expenses (and has already). The Tri is a Ridgefield tradition; we need this equipment for the safety of the participants and we have the money. I strongly support this.

-Scott DeYoung, Caudatowa Drive, stated I spent much of my career on polyethylene research and development and it is not known for its environmental capability. Polypropylene is preferred. If it is kept outside long term, it should be covered.

The Moderator then called for a vote to approve the motion. The "Aye" votes carried (there were approximately 3-4 nays of the approximately 85 attendees), and the motion to approve the allocation of \$23,000 of ARPA funds to purchase two Zodiac boats and electric motors to be used by our Town safety departments was approved.

Barbara Manners moved and Sharon Dornfeld, Ritch Drive, seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:04 pm. The motion carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Gannon Lionetti, Town Clerk