



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

APPROVED

January 27, 2026 at 7pm

Town Hall – Large Conference Room, 400 Main Street, Ridgefield, CT

Please note – these minutes are not verbatim.

Present: Sean Connelly, Maureen Kozlark, Barbara Manners, Rudy Marconi, Geoffrey Morris

Absent: None

Rudy Marconi called the meeting to order at 7pm.

Director of Finance, Kevin Redmond, provided an overview of the budget. He presented a summary of the operating budget noting the following points; mill rate is 4.82%, school budget is at 4.62%, the debt service is coming up but still lower than 2022, outstanding debt at \$65 million, and the Grand List growth is around 1% but not finalized until the end of the month. Non-tax revenue estimates are flat. Parks and recreation revenues are increasing. Expenditures will increase in golf and Planning and Zoning is requesting to add an assistant Zoning Enforcement Officer, but the Town Clerk head count is decreasing. Capital budget items will be addressed during each department discussion. Sean Connelly requested the operating percentage of the total budget, and whether it includes the off-cycle capital. Expenses have no surprises.

- 1. Information Technology (IT) Department Budget** – Director of IT, Andrew Neblett, provided an overview of the requested IT budget. He lowered professional services because with all the infrastructure upgrades, he expects less need of outside support. Cybersecurity needs were high and will continue to be the greatest need but he doesn't foresee any emergencies. Current fiscal year expenses are tracking the budget. He added that he is working on AI services. He said he doesn't need the IT analyst that is currently listed on the budget. He has contingency plans for IT in case of unforeseen events. Capital expenditure of \$49,000, for cameras and software, which tie into the police department system, was moved to the following year. He hasn't received notice of any unusual subscription increases. Therefore, he budgeted a standard 5% increase for those.
- 2. Parks and Recreation Budget** – Commission Chair, Phil Kearns, reported that current fiscal year revenue is exceeding the budget. Expenditures are tracking the budget. Next year revenue is

expected to increase and will cover increased expenses. The budget is net neutral; revenue is about \$5000 more than expenses. Key sources of revenue are increases in programs, membership, and athletic fields. Increases are not due to fee increases but rather usage. Revenue is reaching pre-Covid levels. The operating budget of \$202,000 includes \$66,000 for buildings and grounds maintenance including needs of the pool (\$14,000), rec center, fields, parks, and portable toilets. Sean Connelly asked how to address school interior courtyards long-term because they are in a dire state. Parks and Recreation Director, Dennis DiPinto, responded that the courtyards will require a removal and replacement. This department is only responsible for maintenance. Parks and Rec is in discussion with the Board of Education to design a plan that the Board of Education can install with the support of the Parks and Recreation Department to maintain. Maureen Kozlark suggested that perhaps it's time to change the design away from greenspace so that it's easier to maintain. One school courtyard could serve as a template. The commission will take the feedback and consider an ad hoc committee to study options.

They all discussed the need to be proactive with field maintenance to bring the field quality back up. Although enrollment numbers seem lower, field use is still high with other sports rising in popularity. One opinion, field quality is not up to the historical standard set by Ridgefield.

Director Dennis DiPinto summarized the \$1.982 million capital budget's 19 requested items in 6 different categories; maintaining facilities (Barlow pool surface coating required every 8-10 years and it's been 12 years since the last and rec center exterior repairs and painting, which is over 10 years old, gym dividing curtain, Rec center HVAC, replacement playground cost to be distributed over two years with community fundraising to share cost), facilities equipment and replacement, improving accessibility (railing at walkway, pavers, door opening button, fence replacement), equipping for efficiency (trailer with mowers, tractor, pickup truck, electric cart, leaf vac), future planning (expansion for up or out or redesign) to increase services that will translate into increased revenue, and added facilities (parking, pickle ball court).

The discussion ended with ideas about artificial turf.

The commission requested that they be given input as to any cuts the BOS proposes.

3. General Budget Discussion – Not shown in the budget is a possible request for additional personnel in Social Services, Highway, and Town Administrator. Sean Connelly requested that the next budget draft include a model showing a salary of \$180,000 for a town administrator, per the special committee. Rudy Marconi warned of potential collateral issues with that kind of salary for a town administrator.

4. Possibly Capital/Operating Budget Vote – None

Sean Connelly motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:55pm. Geoffrey Morris seconded. Motion carried 5-0.