**Town of Ridgefield, Connecticut**

# Board of Police Commissioners

## DRAFT Minutes

### Special Meeting: August 31, 2026 at 6:30 pm

### Town Hall Annex Large Conference Room

Drafted September 4, 2026

*These minutes are summary notes only, not a verbatim transcript*

**NOTE**: This Special Meeting of the Police Commission took place simultaneously with a separately noticed Special Meeting of the Town's Board of Selectpersons.

Board of Police Commissioners (BPC)

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| Members present: | Commissioners Dornfeld, Money and Riebling (a quorum) |
| Members absent/excused: | Commissioners Caporale and Frey |

Also in attendance:
Board of Selectpersons (BOS):
Members present: Sean Connelly, Maureen Kozlark, Barbara Manners, Rudy Marconi, Geoffrey Morris
Public Safety Leadership:
Police Chief Kreitz and Major Fowler; Fire Chief Duckworth, Assistant Chief Cirulli, Volunteer Fire Pambianchi, Volunteer Assistant Chief Gabbianelli
Public Safety Facilities Committee (PCFC)
Members: Adam Safir, David Brickley, Denis Graves, Steve Scalzo, Ed Tyrrell, and Pamela Dunaway

Meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm.

Rudy Marconi stated that this was a special meeting of the BOS and a special meeting of the BPC. He introduced members of both boards present.

Rudy also introduced the members of the PSFC present and thanked them for their work.

Rudy acknowledged the members of the public who took the time to attend this evening.

There was a short discussion of whether to follow the noticed agendas and open the meeting with agenda item number 1 "Public Comment" (the first agenda item on both the BOS and BPC agendas) and allow members in the audience to share their comments up-front or to move Public Comment further back in the agenda. It was decided to follow the noticed agenda order and open with Public Comment.

## *1…Public Comment*

1…Rob Camera, Acre Lane, read a prepared statement thanking the BOS for creating the PSFC and the thoughtful process undertaken in their selection and in their actual work. He also expressed deep appreciation for the work done by the PSFC and he asked that the PSFC continue to be involved in any community information sessions.

2. Sean McAvoy, High Ridge, read a statement summarizing his understanding of the prior failed referenda. He commented on public safety facilities needs and costs, the deferred maintenance needs of the Board of Education, his thoughts on the advisory committee's process and transparency, and open questions that he believes need to be addressed before a new referendum goes to the voters.

3. Chuck Hancock, 480 North Street, stated that tonight's proposal has value for the Town, the fire department, and the police department. It meets three criteria in his view: cost (reduced over $20 million); location; and avoidance of Schlumberger property. He plans to vote yes and asks the community to support it as well.

4. Greg Kabasakalian, 2 Washington Street, thanked everyone for their work and asked about the concept, cost, and location.

5. Andy Sternlieb, 62 Ridgecrest Drive, listed concerns including if the proposed site had room to grow, where the $50 million price came from.

6. Roger Cavanaugh, 120 Prospect Street, raised a point regarding the site and that prior to tonight, the location had not been made public and it seemed to him that many in the room knew the location.

First Selectperson Rudy Marconi shared that it is on Danbury Road, near the Recreation Center. The location had been kept confidential, as legally permitted, because it is privately owned land, but the owner has discussed with the Town and agreed not to sell to anyone else, and authorized disclosure.

7. Elizabeth DiSalvo, 57 White Bridge Road, stated that parts of the road into may be narrow and asked if it would need to be widened. First Selectperson Rudy Marconi stated that there is a traffic study underway.

8. Kirk Carr, 62 Prospect Ridge, thanked the committee for their work and looking forward to seeing a side-by-side comparison of the options. He was hoping to see the committee host a design charrette as part of its process.

## *2…Public Safety Building Committee final recommendations to the Board of Selectpersons and the Board of Police Commissioners*

Adam Safir, Acting Chair of the PSFC, began his presentation, stating that the committee met in session 24 times. They engaged in public comment at every meeting and are confident that they've addressed the concerns expressed in public comments tonight. He shared that the committee kept the official "Charge" first and forefront in their actions.

Executive Summary.
One consolidated public safety facility housing the Police Department (with consolidated 911 dispatch), the career Fire Department and the Volunteer Fire Department —on a central 5.3-acre campus at 217–221 Danbury Road. ~48,000 square feet, ~$55 million, centrally located.

He explained that the square footage was built from the "ground up" based on needs. They explored different locations, weighed good versus perfect options, and balanced current needs with careful future growth estimation. They performed financial analyses including the cost of inflation. The committee's final report includes one committee recommendation as well as information on five other fully explored options. He described the process they followed to complete work and named the different parties who assisted such as police and fire chiefs, KBA, NAFCO, and a soil engineering firm.

Committee member Steve Scalzo presented so-called "Option D", the Committee's recommended option to the BOS and BPC. Steve stated that option D and C were similar except that option D had a "common / shared core." Option C is a 49,500 square foot combination building without a shared core. Option D is a 48,000 square feet with a shared core that has square footage and economic efficiencies from shared spaces such as a larger shared gym (versus two gyms), one reception area (versus two), a single, larger meeting room (versus two), etc. Both Options D and C are similarly situated at the Danbury Road site. Option D provides ~23,000 square feet for career and volunteer fire and ~25,000 square feet for police (including 911 dispatch operations). The Option D cost was estimated at $55 million, roughly $1145 per square foot.

Committee member David Brickley discussed the costing model developed to assess each option. He shared that each option went through the same "apples to apples" analysis that proved helpful for comparison purposes. He shared additional details of Option D. He described the conversations with the police and fire chiefs to ensure that the overall square footage would meet operational needs. In discussion with fire leadership, all agreed to include seven (7) apparatus bays, each of the seven bays were "drive-through" bays and could house ~14 pieces of apparatus. He described the logic, reasoning, and calculation used for each line item in the cost estimate.

Steve Scalzo discussed the tax impacts of this proposal, including the debt service and tax cost to the residents. He calculated that the mill rate would increase by .85 mills. He gave the example of the incremental property tax on a $709,000 home would increase an estimated $389 per year during a 20-year bonding life.

Adam Safir reviewed the Committee's public survey results, which also guided the Committee's discussions and plans. He described the expertise on the committee and thanked the committee members for their collaboration and the BOS for their trust.

First Selectperson Rudy Marconi stated that the Board of Police Commissioners and the Board of Selectpersons must discuss and decide if they move forward with an option by September 2 to allow that a question be placed on the next ballot.

BPC Chair Sharon Dornfeld, also thanked the committee for their work, time, effort, and professional knowledge.

Selectperson Geoffrey Morris asked KBA's input and comments about Option D. David Brickley stated that KBA would likely prefer another 5% contingency, but they confirmed that these estimates fell within the range of what they've seen. Geoffrey also asked where the volunteer fire department fits within this Option D. Adam Safir responded that the seven proposed bays include the apparatus used by the volunteer firefighters. Adam made the statement that he believes that apparatus is owned by the Town and use is coordinated between the chiefs. He also asked about the contingency and if it might be wise to increase it.

Selectperson Maureen Kozlark asked for clarity on the total cost, including the contingency. She also asked for the next steps. David Brickley stated that what they have today is the "fit test" and the next step would be more detailed "concept design". The next steps would include further site work and schematic drawings and floor plans. He mentioned about eight weeks is needed.

Member Pamela Dunaway stated that another 5% contingency of $55 million would be ~ $2.75 million.

Shaon Dornfeld stated that she doesn't yet have enough knowledge to reach a decision tonight. She feels there are several process procedures to complete before she can be ready for a vote. However, she doesn't want the cost of inflation to impact this project every month. She recognizes that the proposal addresses current needs not all potential future needs. She is concerned with leaving a problem for future residents. She is also concerned that not enough people may be aware of this issue in time for a confident successful vote in November.

BPC member Ralph Money asked for a timeline regarding how long it might take to have KBA render floor plans for the Chiefs to review. He wanted the Chiefs not only to validate that Option D was a good concept to support but that Option D was "operational sound" after reviewing the floor plan schematics. David Brickley explained that he estimates about eight weeks for floor plans where the Chiefs could design the actual space allocation, fit, and flow and confirm full support of Option D and operational readiness.

Then Mr. Money asked what potential "offsets" could be, specifically items that the committee discussed during their deliberations that might lower the total costs to tax payers and reduces the size of the bonding over time. . Adam Safir explained that the committee's talked about the opportunity for the Town to potentially sell both old buildings and use the proceeds to lower the borrowing. He also noted that placing the properties on the Town's tax rolls would be a potential value add to the Town. He also mentioned the possibilities for grants. Money noted that while none of these are guaranteed, the voters should be made aware of these potential offsets.

First Selectperson Rudy Marconi added that there are several possible grants and property transfer ideas.

Mr. Money then commented on the importance of voter engagement and community outreach. Adam Safir explained that the committee discussed a plan to pursue such events once their recommendation was approved by the BOS and BPC.

BPC member, Steven Riebling asked about getting clarity on the IFs" - further test fits, boring tests, and other "IFs", for example if the Chiefs concluded after their review of the detailed floor plans would not work, if wetlands or zoning did not support, if the grounds proved unstable to support future growth, etc. He asked if a bit more time would be helpful and gaining clarity on these issues and a firmer bond amount. Adam Safir responded that there is no single standard to determine how to reach the final cost amount listed in the question for the ballot. There may also be a case to be made for a special election not on November.

BPC Chair Dornfeld asked what is the next best option after Option D in case Option D did not work after review of the follow-up items.

Pamela Dunaway explained that she voted against this option because she wasn't sure Option D had all the Chiefs' full support at this time and if the Chiefs would benefit from more detail. She was also concerned that there were too many unaddressed factors and open item at the moment. She summarized and briefly described the minority report.

Selectperson Maureen Kozlark questioned the numbers listed in the majority report. Steve Scalzo clarified her confusion.

Selectperson Barbara Manners appreciated the committee's work and dedication and expertise. She added that she shares Ms. Dornfeld's concerns about the open items of the combined facility Option D. She added that the proposed bays seem too tight to her. She feels they need more room and space for growth. The police department at Schlumberger made sense to her. She would also prefer to build for the future not just for today. Adam Safir responded to why the committee chose away from Schlumberger and added that the committee did in fact include a growth factor in Option D.

Selectperson Sean Connelly commented that not only is the goal a facility that meets the public safety needs but also that will achieve voter approval. He also asked for details about the test fit. He was concerned that it might be a tight fit but appreciated the reinforced steel that would allow for upward expansion for future growth. He too would like to be closer to a final design that can be presented to voters for approval.

First Selectperson Rudy Marconi explained what steps are required to place the referendum on the next ballot. He summarized that all of them want to present to the community a proposal that will be approved. The general consensus is that more time is needed to reach that point. Therefore, if a separate referendum is needed, then that's the direction to take. He is confident that the committee addressed the growth factor satisfactorily but also recognizes the need for
an awareness campaign.

Chief Kreitz expressed his appreciation to the committee. He likes the concept and is optimistic that it will address needs. He would like to see the schematic drawings and floor plans to ensure his operational concerns are addressed and everything actually fits.

Chief Duckworth also thanked the committee and appreciated the collaboration between the Chiefs and the committee. He also felt that the schematics are needed before they can fully support the plan.

Selectperson Geoffrey Morris expressed support to move forward exploring Option D.

Selectperson Rudy Marconi explained the process to follow and that nothing will be forced. They will avoid a special referendum during the holidays.

Selectperson Sean Connelly stated that he is not fully tied to Option D until he sees the added discussed items.

Pamela Dunaway offered her expertise with the community outreach.

First Selectperson Rudy Marconi explained that once the committee completes the charge, it is dissolved. The BOS feels there is more work to be done and the committee members agreed to continue to serve on a follow-up committee.

Ed Tyrrell stated that the BOS has risks to weigh; costs increasing and timeline stretching out. Possible vote to approve the question to be placed on Nov 3rd ballot or at later date.

The BOS will reappoint members to the Public Safety Facilities Committee to continue with the next steps.

Open items include: ground borings/further soil samples; floor plan details (especially for the Chiefs to review); overall site fit with adequate parking and set-backs; sites ability to add square footage within the footprint for potential future growth.

Meeting adjourned at 9:03 pm.

Attestation: No motions were made and no votes were taken during the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

-Ralph Money, Commissioner