



Town of Ridgefield
Board of Selectpersons Meeting Minutes
UNAPPROVED

January 31, 2024 at 7:00pm

Please note – these minutes are not verbatim.

Present: Rudy Marconi, Maureen Kozlark, Sean Connelly, Barbara Manners, Chris Murray

Rudy Marconi called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

1. Parks and Recreation Budget

Phil Kearns, Parks & Recreation Commission Chairman, Dennis DiPinto, Director of Parks & Recreation, David Shofi, Parks & Recreation Commissioner, Bob Scheider, Assistant Director of Parks, and Eileen Cipolla were in attendance. Topics discussed included:

- Mr. Kearns shared data on program participation, memberships, aqua use. Increases in salaries due to minimum wage increases, operating expenses, ground supplies, building maintenance, contracted cleaning and service, and union-negotiated uniforms.
- Mr. DiPinto distributed a document to the Board of Selectpersons with pictures of items requested in the Parks & Rec capital budget, and shared their capital asks (\$1,529,000):
 - o Annual ADA compliance work (\$2,392) to pave handicapped spots and/or accessible walkways at Sturges Park, the Dog Park, and Ballard Park.
 - o Replacing chain-link fence (\$27,000) and baseball field netting and rigging system at Governor's Park (\$13,000).
 - o Replacing Spray Bay surface, glue on the existing floor failed in summer 2023 (\$89,788, Parks & Rec contributing \$22,000, requesting \$67,688).
 - o Replacing one 11' lawnmower (\$103,000).
 - o Restoring original wood floor at Yanity Gym (\$40,000).
 - o Upgrading HVAC BMS control software (\$100,000) to remotely control rooftop HVAC units. A one-time upgrade, with modest annual software update fees.
 - o Repainting the rafters in the Parks & Rec Center Gym.
 - o Renovations to the main hallway and public locker room bathrooms (\$120,000).
 - o Replacing moveable walls at the Parks & Rec Center Gym (\$160,000-170,000), the current motor is operational but cannot be repaired or replaced.
 - o Site Engineering for Martin Park (\$10,000) for eventual replacement of existing bathhouse with more accessible facilities.
 - o Construction of new pickleball courts (\$780,000, exploring potential sources for grant money). Proposed location at Prospect Ridge, below the slope of the Diniz Field, backing up to the tree line. Parks & Rec meeting with Planning & Zoning for an informal discussion on February 6, 2024.

- Barbara Manners asked about proximity to the Bark Park. Mr. Kearns confirmed it was 300-350'. Rudy Marconi mentioned that site was purchased by the Town for recreational and/or open space use.
- Ms. Manners asked about charging for use. Mr. Kearns stated Parks & Rec doesn't charge for use of existing tennis or basketball courts, but charges teams for field use. Maureen Kozlark shared Yanity Gym has a drop-in fee for the indoor pickleball courts, and folks come from neighboring towns to play because Ridgefield's fees are very low. Mr. Kearns said they'd research what neighboring towns are doing.
- Chris Murray voiced concerns about sound pollution and neighborhood impact. Mr. Kearns confirmed they would discuss that concern with Planning & Zoning. The proposed site is 450-500' from nearest neighbors, with woods in between. Mr. DiPinto shared they could install Acoustiblok (acoustic-dampening blocks) to reduce perceptible noise.

2. IT Department Budget

Andrew Neblett, Director of Information Technology, was in attendance. Topics discussed included:

- Rudy Marconi asked Mr. Neblett about major cost drivers for the current fiscal year. Mr. Neblett confirmed: (1) upgrading the Ridgefield Police Department server (\$62,000), (2) implementing new Town email policy (\$60,000), and (3) remediating the cybersecurity incident, and subsequently implementing an increased level of software and security.
 - Sean Connelly asked for a recommendation on maintaining records. Mr. Neblett confirmed other communities plan to store data infinitely. Mr. Connelly recommended the Town develop a FOIA data storage policy until the State does.
- Mr. Marconi proposed a 10.82% increase to the IT budget (\$988,000 total, less than the ~20% increase Mr. Neblett requested).
- Capital request: replacing 3 servers in Town Hall and updating the required software.

3. General Budget Discussion

The Board of Selectpersons discussed reviewing the remaining commission budgets. Rudy Marconi said they could be invited to future BoS meetings or the next round of budget meetings.

Sean Connelly and Chris Murray discussed the impact of the ECDC, and their request to hire a consultant. Mr. Marconi mentioned ECDC's original focus was on non-resident tax revenue but have shifted toward generating traffic to help new and existing Town businesses. Mr. Murray asked about businesses supporting ECDC to help promote their businesses and fund the consultant role. Mr. Marconi felt there would be mixed support for that proposal.

Sean Connelly motioned to cancel the scheduled Board of Selectperson Budget Meeting for Thursday, February 1, 2024. Maureen Kozlark seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

4. Possible Capital/Operating Budget Vote

There was no vote.

Maureen Kozlark motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:55pm. Sean Connelly seconded the motion. Motion carried 5-0.