



Town of Ridgefield
Board of Selectpersons Meeting Minutes
APPROVED

February 7, 2024 at 7:30pm

Please note – these minutes are not verbatim.

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

Rudy Marconi called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.

1. Public Comment

Richard Steinhart, 49 Country Club Road, voiced frustration that out-of-state doctors are no longer able to provide telehealth services in Connecticut and being unable to reach House Representatives Berger-Girvalo and Denning, Senator Maher, and Governor Lamont about the issue. Rudy Marconi offered to send along his concern.

A resident (no name stated) asked about the potential to bring sewer hookups to Branchville. Mr. Marconi shared that project, if it does happen, would be a few of years away.

Another resident (no name stated) suggested Mr. Steinhart reach out to the Connecticut Nurses Association for assistance.

2. Highway Department – Management Reorganization

Laurie Fernandez, Director of Human Resources, was in attendance. Topics discussed included:

- Upcoming retirement of David Buccitti, Superintendent of the Highway Department, and management reorganization: adding an Assistant Foreman and hiring a replacement for Mr. Buccitti. Ms. Fernandez shared a document with the Department's current organizational structure with the BoS. Rudy Marconi suggested Ms. Fernandez move forward with hiring for the Assistant Foreman role.
- Barbara Manners asked about Charlie Fisher (retired 2018). Mr. Marconi shared Mr. Fisher has a 20-hour/month contract with the Town and proposed foregoing that contract to hire a town engineer to fill Mr. Buccitti's role. Sean Connelly asked about a transition period between Mr. Fisher and a town engineer for institutional knowledge sharing. Ms. Fernandez shared the Town had difficulty hiring a town engineer in 2019-20, due to the specificity of the role.
- Maureen Kozlark asked about combining Parks from Parks & Recreation with the Highway Department to gain efficiencies. Mr. Marconi shared there had been pushback previously from the Parks & Recreation Commission. Mr. Marconi, Ms. Kozlark, and Mr. Connelly felt the conversation should be attempted again.

3. Fair Rent Commission – New Article XI to Review from Legal

Rudy Marconi shared language from Attorney Jason Buchsbaum, Cohen & Wolf, finding nothing in the State Statute that would preclude the BoS from serving as the Fair Rent Commission.

Maureen Kozlark asked about meetings and reports, Mr. Marconi confirmed the BoS would have separate Fair Rent Commission meetings, record minutes, and file with the Town Clerk.

Sean Connelly asked about meeting and reporting requirement language, and suggested it simply say the BoS/Fair Rent Commission would “annually prepare a report of its activities.”

Maureen Kozlark motioned to schedule a Public Hearing for the Fair Rent Commission on March 20, 2024, as modified. Chris Murray seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

4. General Budget Discussion

Barbara Manners requested to reach out to the remaining Commissions to discuss their budgets. Rudy Marconi shared they would extend the invitation again.

Graveyard Restoration Committee: an increased budget request (\$40,000) for lawn mowing and maintenance, and cleaning and restoring headstones. Mr. Marconi shared volunteers do most of the restoration work, and the Town pays for materials.

School roofs: increasing costs of materials, exploring new materials and best building practices, and doing further research into bundling roof projects. Chris Murray asked about bonding, Mr. Marconi confirmed typically 20-year bonds, with an aggressive pay down strategy.

5. Approval of Meeting Minutes – January 17, 2024

Maureen Kozlark clarified language in Discussion – Leaf Blower Ordinance Task Force, a previous positive meeting was with petitioners, not members of the community.

Sean Connelly clarified language in Commission on Aging – 2024 Plans, Joe Ternullo’s concerns on driving speeds in town were based on feedback from seniors, and not a personal comment.

Mr. Connelly clarified language in Discussion – Committee to Study Change Form of Government that Charter Revisions happen every five (5) years, not three (3).

Mr. Connelly noted a missing space between sections in the Selectperson’s Report.

Sean Connelly motioned to accept the Meeting Minutes from January 17, 2024, as modified. Maureen Kozlark seconded. Barbara Manners abstained. Motion carried 4-0-1.

6. Selectperson’s Report

Rudy Marconi shared Rev. Whitney Altop, St. Stephen’s Church, met with him about Braver Angels, who host interactive discussions in a controlled debate format. Rev. Altop asked Mr. Marconi for topics, he suggested: Housing for the future of Ridgefield, and the Ridgefield Flag Policy. Mr. Marconi distributed Braver Angels pamphlets to the BoS.

Mr. Marconi shared he'd be asked to attend a recent Planning & Zoning meeting to discuss the Transportation-Oriented Development study and plan for Branchville. Mr. Marconi shared P&Z is looking into density and an overlay zone, they've met with Francis Pickering, Executive Director of WestCOG, to discuss regional considerations, and Francisco Gomes, Senior Project Manager at Fitzgerald & Halladay, who completed the original report in 2016-17. Mr. Marconi shared the BoS will wait to engage further on the project until P&Z determines if or how they will proceed.

Maureen Kozlark motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:21pm. Chris Murray seconded. Motion carried 5-0.