



Town of Ridgefield
Board of Selectpersons Special Meeting Minutes
APPROVED

January 30, 2025 at 7:30pm

Please note – these minutes are not verbatim.

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

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

1. Highway Department Budget

Jacob Muller, Highway Superintendent, Steve Metzger, Maintenance Supervisor, and Kevin Redmond, Finance Director, were in attendance. Topics discussed included:

- Mr. Redmond indicated the solid waste line has decreased. Rudy Marconi shared they previously paid an overseer \$3600/mo to haul the scrap metal, but now the Town gets paid for each load of single-stream metal. Mr. Muller confirmed they received \$1200 for the first container. Mr. Marconi shared, once revenue is established with solid waste, the intention is to hire a full-time person to manage that area, oversee the brush pile, recycling, and compost areas.
- Sean Connelly asked about gas and diesel. Mr. Redmond confirmed previously the budget was skewed more toward diesel and now have an appropriate blend.
- Mr. Muller highlighted salt was ~\$4 less per ton and purchased less this year, due to the amount left in reserve. Mr. Muller confirmed salt usage is up given the weather so far.
- Mr. Connelly asked about snow removal, up \$73k. Mr. Marconi confirmed that's driven by outside contractors. Mr. Muller confirmed so far, there have been about twice as many storms as last year, and they pre-treat, scrape, and treat the roads. Maureen Kozlark mentioned a 2019 study exploring the impact of road salt on plants and wells. Chris Murray asked about the potential of using heating coils to clear school sidewalks.
- Mr. Marconi asked about highway maintenance. Mr. Metzger confirmed their new Freightliner is waiting to go to the body builder, with an expected May 2025 delivery.
- Mr. Muller raised the possibility of building a fully dedicated truck wash with humidity management, water storage, and the ability to raise vehicles. Mr. Marconi mentioned other towns could use and pay for service or build a regional facility on State property. Mr. Marconi asked Mr. Muller to explore grant opportunities to build a truck wash.
- Ms. Kozlark asked about the Vactor truck. Mr. Metzger confirmed it will be built in February 2025 and should be delivered to the dealer mid-March 2025. Mr. Marconi asked about WPCA's use. Mr. Metzger confirmed one person from WPCA typically drives and uses the Vactor, and Mr. Muller confirmed when the new Vactor arrives, Highway and the WPCA will be involved in the training together.

- Capital
 - Morbark: Mr. Muller mentioned this would be a system upgrade for the handheld controllers to improve ease of use. Mr. Metzger confirmed 10 years old, and expects it to last another 10 years. Mr. Muller shared residents may take woodchips for free and have a pile on the Bethel-Redding line.
 - Guardrails: Mr. Marconi asked these go into Operating.
 - Welder (\$15k): Mr. Metzger noted their current welder is 30 years old.
 - Tertiary Roads: Mr. Marconi confirmed those roads last 15-20 years due to minimal traffic. Mr. Muller mentioned the possibility to hire an external company to maintain a list from 0-100 of road conditions and prioritize repaving those at the end of the scale, but confirmed their current algorithm includes visual inspection. Mr. Muller shares it starts with an evaluation to build the list
 - Mr. Muller shared a \$4M LOCIP grant for a full-drainage replacement and upgrade, and regrade on Ridgebury Road, which will be a multi-year project. Mr. Muller shared it will be a \$6.5M project and is in discussions about where to source the additional \$2.5M.

2. Facilities Budget

Jacob Muller, Highway Superintendent, and Kevin Redmond, Finance Director, were in attendance. Topics discussed included:

- Capital:
 - Mr. Muller confirmed Yanity Gym façade needs a power wash, paint, and wood seal. Rudy Marconi asked about improving air circulation, Mr. Muller confirmed he'd discuss with Dennis DiPinto, Parks & Recreation Director.
 - Venus Building Site Upgrade (\$1.4M, offset by earmark from Jim Himes' office): to upgrade parking lots, sidewalks, and site lighting. Mr. Muller noted funds have not yet been received but are expected in the next year or so.
 - Furnace Upgrades at the Highway Garage facilities: Mr. Marconi asked about using a waste oil burner. Mr. Muller confirmed they generate sufficient waste oil for one, it could be a good application for heating water for the truck wash.
 - Design Funding (\$27.5k): Explore improving breakroom and locker room facilities at the Highway Department. Mr. Muller estimated \$500k project cost, roughly \$350-\$400/sqft. Sean Connelly and Chris Murray asked about a prefab option. Mr. Muller shared, based on quotes for the proposed A-School/Transition Program Building, that would be more expensive option.
 - RPD Roof Replacement (\$220k): Mr. Muller confirmed the roof must be replaced, if the new PSB is approved, that will impact the scope and timeline.
 - Door Replacement Program (\$62,250): Mr. Muller confirmed this program is proceeding well, just completed three exterior doors at the Venus Building.
 - Farmingville Elementary School Barn: Mr. Muller confirmed in need of repairs, used for RPS storage.
 - Playgrounds (\$225k): Mr. Muller confirmed still doing catch-up, and shared most elementary schools have two playgrounds based on age. Mr. Muller confirmed the \$225k is for a standard, entry-level playground that replaces an existing playground, which the school administration approves, but some schools may do additional fundraising to install a larger, more expensive playground.
 - LED Upgrades (\$84.3k): Replacement of 11-12-year-old LEDs.

- Sidewalks: Mr. Muller confirmed the Main Street area will be the focus, and a section of Danbury Road connecting to the Parks & Rec overflow parking lot.
- MS4 Projects (\$75k): Mr. Muller shared, per the MS4 permit, the Town is required to increase the amount of disconnection completed within our stormwater system, to eventually reach a 2% of the total stormwater system (currently at 1.5%).
- Generators at Cell Towers: Mr. Muller shared for there currently are temporary generators, but these would be full-standby generators for Moses Mountain and Branchville Elementary School.
- Mr. Connelly asked about a traffic light at Parks & Recreation. Mr. Muller confirmed the Town can request the State to install one, but the Town will need to pay. Mr. Marconi shared, per the State Traffic Commission, any site with over 200 spots should have a traffic light.
- Operating:
 - Mr. Muller noted Engineering is \$274k, Highway is \$181k, and the total for Public Works is down 0.9%. Mr. Redmond noted the scrap metal revenue is very beneficial, and Mr. Muller shared their goal is \$40k per year.
 - Mr. Muller noted Tiffany Carlson, Recycling Coordinator, has been searching for additional revenue opportunities, including brush (\$40k/year).

3. General Budget Discussion

Kevin Redmond, Finance Director, was in attendance. Topics discussed included:

- Mr. Redmond confirmed 3.63% current budget for Town and Roads.
- Rudy Marconi asked about a \$3.5M target budget.
- The BOS discussed the Ridgefield Commemorates America at 250 budget request. Mr. Marconi confirmed he would look at the budget for the 2008-09 celebration.
- The BOS discussed the proposed BOE budget, specifically health insurance, and a total of 13 new employees and 5 repurposed employees. Mr. Marconi noted there's a Public Hearing on Saturday, February 1, 2025 at Scotts Ridge Middle School.
- Mr. Marconi shared Al Garzi, Assessor, confirmed Grand List growth of 0.75%.
- The BOS discussed proposing the use of fund balance, which is currently 12%. Joe Shapiro, BOF Member, shared the official BOF guideline is 9-12%. Mr. Marconi confirmed 1% of Fund Balance is 1% of our total budget, so if the budget is \$168M, that would be \$1.68M.

4. Possible Capital/Operating Budget Vote

There were no votes.

Maureen Kozlark motioned to adjourn the meeting at 11:00pm. Sean Connelly seconded. Motion carried 5-0.