



Town of Ridgefield
Board of Selectpersons Meeting Minutes
APPROVED

November 5, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.

Please note – these minutes are not verbatim.

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

Absent: Barbara Manners

Location: Town Hall, large conference room, 400 Main Street, Ridgefield, CT

Rudy Marconi called the meeting to order at 6:31pm.

1. Public Comment

- Peter Bancel, 120 Prospect Street, commented that the Public Safety Building proposal needs to be something the public can support.
- Jennifer Brackenwalen, 96 Pin Pack Road, is concerned about school safety at the AHS, next to the door park. More fencing may be necessary. She will bring her concern to the Board of Education as well.
- Andrea Beebe, 378 Main Street, commented that as a candidate running for a board seat, she felt attacked by a board member who wrote a public comment against her party, and signed the letter representing the board and the Friends of Ridgefield. Ms. Beebe asks the Board of Selectpersons to review the Friends of Ridgefield board for possible conflict of interest.
- Kirk Carr, 62 Prospect Ridge, quoted from Section 5-16 allowing the BOS to create and appoint committees. He added that Robert's Rules of Order have a distinction between abstention and recusal. He is also grateful to have the Hartford representatives address the housing items.

2. Update on legislative responsibilities and housing theme

All four state representatives were present, Savet Constantine, Aimee Berger-Gervalo, Julie Kushner, and Ceci Maher. Maureen Kozlark asked to begin with the special session, housing bill, and share any decision regarding the required ingress/egress for emergency exists people are concerned about. Aimee Berger-Gervalo stated that the bill hasn't been released yet. She added that Rudy Marconi spoke at the session and clearly described the challenges in Ridgefield that would be created by this affordable housing bill. Julie Kushner stated that no decisions have been reached yet. Ceci Maher added that she has spoken with several fire chiefs, and the topic of single egress is a huge concern for them. They are against only one egress. It isn't part of the housing bill, but it is in front of the Regs Review Committee. Geoffrey Morris asked for a summary of the bill. Ms. Berger-Gervalo stated that Housing Bill 5002 addresses affordable

housing at the state level and had passed both chambers, but the governor vetoed it referring to items in the bill that negatively impact towns like Ridgefield such as no parking requirement for buildings with less than 25 units and the fair share mandate. Rudy Marconi added that another item in the proposed bill negatively impacting Ridgefield was that apartment buildings could use the first story for residential units which would be a detriment to the downtown area. Sean Connelly asked how they protect the interests of Ridgefield. They responded that appointing Rudy Marconi to the COG helps Ridgefield at the regional level. Ms. Maher added that she balances Ridgefield interests with the other seven towns and cities she represents. Ms. Constantine added that while she opposed the bill, she negotiated in favor of certain changes.

Rudy Marconi asked about the sale of Aquarion to the Regional Water Authority which isn't sitting well with many of the towns serviced by Aquarion water. He stated that the debt service will drastically affect rates and the board of directors is mostly Regional Water Authority representatives. Transparency is lacking. Ms. Kushner responded that these four opposed the sale but there is no definitive information being disseminated. Ms. Berger-Gervalo added that there is a fully appointed board on Pura now so it should be heard in session soon but there is no date set yet.

Ms. Ceci Maher reported that she proposed a bill that will be heard in session next week if the governor calls it. It's regarding children's behavioral health. It will bring the service age from 21 to 26 to coincide with family medical insurance plans. It includes urgent care, Icap, intensive in-home counseling, and other items. Sean Connelly asked if the bill will require a similar change in the transition program to service youth up to age 26 but she responded that the proposed bill doesn't require that change to the transition program.

Ms. Berger-Gervalo added that next week they will also address increasing state funding of public programs such as SNAP, WIC, and childcare. The governor has the discretion as to what is funded.

Rudy Marconi asked if municipalities will have to pick up the funding slack left by the federal cuts. Ms. Kushner replied that shifting financial responsibility to municipalities hasn't been proposed. She said there are rainy day reserves and this is the time to use them.

Rudy Marconi asked for updates on transportation. Ms. Berger-Gervalo reported some changes to the towing regulations to stop predatory towing. E-bike road safety was also addressed but they will be looking at moped safety. Rudy Marconi asked if there is any discussion to limit street traffic. Ms. Berger-Gervalo replied that Connecticut was designed for vehicle traffic not public transportation so it's been very difficult to craft solutions for the traffic congestion.

Rudy Marconi asked Ms. Constantine for any updates regarding the Finance Committee. She stated that the last two months have been discussing impacts from the federal budget cuts. Connecticut sends \$50 billion to the federal government and gets back \$10 billion that's at risk. The committee is looking to move funding to fill gaps left by the federal cuts with as little impact to Connecticut taxpayers. However, the rainy-day fund was intended for true emergencies not

manufactured ones. She also reported about energy and technology; wind and solar project funding was pulled. But they are looking at advancing battery storage technology.

Ms. Maher reported that the Children's Committee is looking at the Department of Children and Families and Child Advocates and OCA.

Sean Connelly reminded the representatives that any state decisions will greatly impact Ridgefield and he asks that any opportunity for a Ridgefield voice at any conversation be shared with them. Maureen Kozlark added that a one size plan will not fit all the Ridgefield and similar towns the same way as it will fit in the larger cities of the state.

Rudy Marconi asked about any economic developments in the state. Ms. Maher responded that there is a rise of biotech in New Haven. She cautioned that it's difficult to accommodate new businesses without housing for their employees. She also suggested building housing along the railways to keep those employees off the commuter roadways.

Rudy Marconi asked about healthcare control being transferred to municipalities to negotiate for themselves with local hospitals. The opposition to any healthcare solutions has been the insurance industry.

3. Eversource easement

Rudy Marconi reported that a permanent easement following the road is needed at the A School. Eversource already installed the lines but is requesting the easement after the fact. A public hearing on November 19 and town meeting on December 10 are required.

Geoffrey Morris motioned to hold the public hearing on November 19 and the town meeting on December 10 to discuss and vote on the Eversource permanent easement to maintain the underground lines. Sean Connelly seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

4. Ridgefield 250 Committee and community at large

Pam Jones reported that the first event on July 4th was a huge success with about 1400 people attending Keeler Tavern. The celebration will be at Ballard Park. She described ideas for a Liberty Ball with vendors and appetizers at a cost of \$125 per person. There will be a Contra band and dancing. They are exploring a section of Gilbert Street for food trucks. They are exploring collaborations with ECDC and sponsorships. Event merchandise is being sold. There is strong community involvement.

5. Appointments and Reappointments

a. Compassionate Ridgefield Committee Appointments

Rudy Marconi serves as Ex-Officio and to avoid potential conflicts of interest, abstained. Geoffrey Morris' spouse is a candidate, so he also recused himself. Five of seven committee candidates introduced themselves to the BOS.

- Martha Evans Morris stated that she would like to continue her work serving the community to provide the foundation of compassion in a municipal government where differences of opinion are welcome.

- Jennifer Tejada appreciates serving with a group where compassion is the priority while sharing different perspectives.
- Carol Mahlstedt is a founding member and wants to promote respect and tolerance for all people and positions on different issues.
- Shelly Fisher feels strongly about helping address subtle issues that may hinder compassion and patience with each other.
- Ezra Zimmerman believes promoting compassion is important and this platform allows Ridgefield to formally address many issues across the different demographics.
- Maureen Kozlark thanked the candidates for their service to this committee. No appointments can be made because there is no BOS quorum. Rudy Marconi will confirm with legal counsel if the committee can meet without being appointed.

b. Agenda addition

Rudy Marconi explained that a resolution to replace the current director of Department of Public Health is needed because the current director will be retiring.

Maureen Kozlark motioned to add the resolution to the agenda as item 9. Geoffrey Morris seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

6. Economic and Community Development Committee-Bob Knight and Kay Gelfman presented;

- a. Annual Report** – The committee provided a written report and summarized key points. There has been an increase in interest in the four business districts of Ridgefield. They’ve also focused on the entrepreneurial ecosystem; how to encourage remote workers to live in Ridgefield or home businesses to move from basements to storefronts. The Tiger Shark Tank has been very popular and led to business growth and even investor/business owner relationships. Rudy Marconi commented that the Connecticut Sales Use Tax is 10% that suppliers pay and is causing businesses to leave the state. The ECDC is looking for such issues to advocate on behalf of the local businesses. Another such issue is healthcare. Connecticut’s first cultural district has become a major economic hub for Ridgefield. The Film Location Group has a website available for any interest in filming in Ridgefield. Downtown beautification is still in progress. Broadband fiber is now an option in parts of Ridgefield. The committee is collaborating with other committees and boards.
- b. Nadia Elizabeth Blair – ECDC Committee Appointment** – She is a New Englander who spent 15 years in Texas until the pandemic. The move back to Connecticut was with the intention to live and raise their family in Ridgefield. She wants to promote the town with all businesses and be welcoming to outside businesses. There are many underutilized resources to help the business community. She sees business potential in several commercial areas.

Sean Connelly motioned to appoint Nadia Elizabeth Blair to the ECDC. Maureen Kozlark seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

7. Veterans Exemption – 100% Veterans Disability

Scott Smith, 13 Turkey Ridge Court, explained that there is a veteran exemption that is currently applied only to the value of the house but not the other improvements such as a detached garage or the actual land value. Rudy Marconi will ask the town assessor to report to the BOS to answer their questions. They will discuss Connecticut General Statutes, subsection (4) of section 12-2b. No action was taken.

8. Acceptance of Open Space on Pound Street

The Conservation Committee voted to recommend approval of a trade to preserve the acquired acreage as Open Space.

Sean Connelly motioned to schedule a public hearing for November 19 and a town meeting for December 10 to hear and vote on this item. Geoffrey Morris seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

9. Appointment of Jennifer Zbell as Director of Public Health

Maureen Kozlark motioned to appoint Jen Zbell as Director of Public Health. Sean Connelly seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

10. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- a. Special Meeting – October 22, 2025

Maureen Kozlark motioned to approve the special meeting minutes of October 22, 2025 as presented. Sean Connelly seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

- b. Regular Meeting – October 22, 2025

Sean Connelly asked that Public Comment be separated by bullets. Geoffrey Morris requested that page 2, item b, be corrected to read “Mr. Sanders said that he prints and keeps...” Maureen Kozlark requested a correction further down the page at item 3a, to add “...was not well received at first, by some.” Also, the HR director name should be corrected throughout to be Fernandez not Hernandez. Sean Connelly asked to confirm the motion makers for items 2 and 3. He also suggested correction of the top item f to state 25 years not 26 years. One more correction is needed in the Selectpersons Report where a parcel on New Street is mentioned. It should state New-Pound Street.

Sean Connelly motioned to approve the minutes of the October 22, 2025 meeting as amended. Geoffrey Morris seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

11. Selectpersons Report

Rudy Marconi asked the BOS for a motion to add Senior Tax Committee Report to the agenda for the November 19 public hearing.

Geoffrey Morris motioned to add the Senior Tax Credit Committee Report to the November 19 public hearing. Maureen Kozlark seconded. Motion carried 4-0.

Bond sale completed for \$17,450,000, interest of 3.24%. It was reduced by the amount to purchase 217 Danbury Road property because the property isn't ready for sale.

Ridgefield received a triple A rating from S&P.

The town is actively involved with 145 High Ridge. Rudy Marconi met with DEEP and learned there will be an extensive clean up. The item will have to be discussed further in executive session.

The BOS discussed holding meetings to listen to the public's ideas for the Public Safety building and possibly establishing a listening/civilian committee.

Maureen Kozlark motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:37pm. Geoffrey Morris seconded. Motion carried 4-0.