



Town of Ridgefield
Board of Selectpersons Meeting
Minutes
APPROVED
February 4, 2026 at 6:30pm
Town Hall – Large Conference Room, 400 Main Street, Ridgefield, CT

Please note – these minutes are not verbatim.

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

Absent: None

Rudy Marconi called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

1. Public Comment

2. Sustainable CT Silver Award – Ben Oko, Vincent Giordano

Dr. Oko reported that Ridgefield was recognized as a sustainable town by Sustainable CT, a non-profit organization that recognizes towns that are healthy, wealthy, and wise. He introduced Vincent Giordano, a member of RACE (Ridgefield Action Committee for the Environment). He explained that with Gillian Lewis' support, they submitted the Sustainable CT application. The voluntary certification lists actions or attributes of a town, such as thriving economy, land and natural resource stewardship, vibrant cultural centers, clean transportation, affordable and workforce housing, renewable and energy efficiency, recycling and materials management, and resiliency planning. These earn points that accumulate to reach one of three levels, gold, silver, or bronze. There is also a Climate Leadership award. Ridgefield achieved Bronze recognition in 2018, 2021, and 2024. Ridgefield and 17 other towns, out of 139 participants, reached Silver level recognition in 2025. The following groups are recognized for their contribution to this achievement; Affordable Housing Committee, Arts Council, Chamber of Commerce, Commission on Aging, CERT (Community Emergency Response Team), Conservation Commission, ECDC (Economic Community Development Commission), Energy Taskforce, Ridgefield Community Gardens, Historical Society, Housatonic Resource Recovery Authority, Pollinator Pathway, Recycling Center, Ridgefield Action Committee for the Environment, Ridgefield Library, Tree Committee, and several town departments.

Mr. Giordano referenced a handout that lists Ridgefield and four other towns; Bethel, Fairfield, Weston, and Westport. The table compares these factors of the five towns; heat pumps, electric

vehicles, solar panels, and greenhouse gas emissions tons per capita. Ridgefield is above the state average in many of these. RACE is pursuing the gold award by asking the community to focus on areas of improvement; home energy use, transportation, waste, yard and garden, consumer power and advocacy.

Dr. Oko shared that residents can use the Sustainable CT resources to add to their sustainability efforts by going to the website and finding support for their own interests.

Rudy Marconi commented that this endeavor has actually saved money for the town. Dwayne Escola is the unsung hero who led the way to acquiring solar panels at no cost to the town. Thank you also to the Energy Taskforce for their steadfast dedication to maintain focus on this priority.

3. Appointments and Reappointments

a. Gillian Lewis – Director of Emergency Management

Rudy Marconi explained the important contributions of several people contributing to Ridgefield's emergency preparedness. Gillian Lewis was nominated to fulfill the administrative coordination of different stakeholders. Ms. Lewis described her work with the Local Emergency Operations Plan two years ago.

Human Resources Director, Laurie Fernandez, reported that Ms. Lewis handles the town communications system, emergency alerts, and town employee alerts. She has undergone much of the necessary trainings and certifications. She has been available 24/7 for town communication needs.

Sean Connelly asked why Ms. Lewis is interested in this role. She explained that she has already been doing much of the work and has been involved in different drills. She enjoys supporting the town's emergency management efforts.

Geoffrey Morris motioned to appoint Gillian Lewis as Director of Emergency Management/Public Communications Administrator. Sean Connelly seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

b. Anna Ciamporcero – Ridgefield Arts Council

Ms. Ciamporcero introduced herself sharing that she has worked in the arts a long time. When she and her husband decided to leave New York, they looked for a town that had a robust arts culture. They were excited to discover Ridgefield. She is a full-time mother now and wants to contribute to the vibrant arts culture of her new home. Geoffrey Morris asked what she would bring. She explained that she has a graphic design background and theatre production experience. Maureen Kozlark asked what else brought them to Ridgefield. Ms. Ciamporcero explained that they wanted a town that felt like a town not just a bedroom community of New York. Sean Connelly asked if she has any fresh ideas for the council. She explained that she doesn't have the full scope of opportunities yet but she really appreciates that the Arts Council has talent that can support other local organizations. Arts Council Co-chair, Jennifer Dineen, stated that they

are all excited to welcome Ms. Ciamporcero. They've had three resignations, and new community members on the council are welcome.

Sean Connelly motioned to appoint Anna Ciamporcero to the Ridgefield Arts Council. Maureen Kozlark seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

c. Tommy McCarthy – Conservation Commission

Mr. McCarthy introduced himself sharing a summary of his background. He grew up in Ridgefield and received a degree in environmental science. He works at Woodcock Nature Center and cherishes the Ridgefield Nature Preserves. He works in community engagement and wants to bring that expertise to the Conservation Commission. Barbara Manners asked if he will be involved with trail maintenance and conservation. Maureen Kozlark asked if he has any time constraints. He responded that he is looking forward to trail work this summer and he enjoys spending his free time outdoors and is looking forward to volunteer work outdoors. He has the UCONN Master Gardener certification and is excited to put it to good use for the town's benefit. Geoffrey Morris asked how he could increase trail use. Mr. McCarthy responded that guided walks to lesser-known trails introduce people to those areas. Community science events also introduce kids to the trails and preserves.

Maureen Kozlark motioned to appoint Tommy McCarthy to the Conservation Commission. Barbara Manners seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

4. Form of Government – Town Administrator

Rudy Marconi shared a draft job description for the role of first selectperson. He also asked the BOS if they'd like to meet with Jon Zagrodsky, First Selectperson of Darien, to hear how his experience with a town administrator has been. Rudy Marconi reminded the BOS that a decision about a town administrator should be made in time to adjust the budget draft being finalized at the end of February. The BOS is exploring funding the position for a half year starting January 1, 2027 instead a full year term starting July 1, 2026. Geoffrey Morris shared that he believes the town would benefit from having an administrator because it would give the town government continuity beyond the tenure of the first selectperson. Barbara Manners shared that she'd like to hear from Darien's first selectperson before forming an opinion. She believes that the knowledge of the first selectperson can't be duplicated by a town administrator from the beginning of the role and the longevity of a hired town administrator isn't guaranteed. She agrees that Rudy Marconi does need assistance to free him up for more involvement in Hartford. Sean Connelly added that another consideration for Ridgefield is the town government's size. Once the government structure reaches a certain point, the support staff is needed and justifiable. Rudy Marconi summarized with examples of projects that fall on him without notice and take him away from daily first selectperson duties. Maureen Kozlark added that she supports the need for a town CEO or administrator, or other appropriate title, but wants the BOS to make the distinction between the role having decision-making authority or being subordinate to the first selectperson. The BOS agrees that a transition period is needed for the new role to assimilate all pertinent knowledge. Rudy Marconi will schedule the meeting with Mr. Zagrodsky.

Mike Gelormino, 126 Ledges Road - shared public comment stating he hears the BOS describing a chief of staff versus CEO roles. He feels the BOS has to decide on one or the other before they

can talk budget item. The BOS clarified that they've been discussing this item for several meetings and today's discussion was to decide about a meeting with another town selectperson.

5. Approval of Meeting Minutes

a. January 17, 2026 BOS Special Meeting

Geoffrey Morris motioned to approve the minutes from the January 17, 2026 Board of Selectpersons Special Meeting as presented. Maureen Kozlark seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

b. January 21, 2026 BOS Meeting

Maureen Kozlark and Geoffrey Morris submitted corrections.

Geoffrey Morris motioned to approve the minutes from the January 21, 2026 Board of Selectpersons Meeting, as amended. Maureen Kozlark seconded. Motion carried 4-0-1 (Manners abstained).

c. January 27, 2026 BOS Budget Meeting

Sean Connelly and Maureen Kozlark submitted corrections.

Sean Connelly motioned to approve the minutes from the January 27, 2026 Board of Selectpersons Budget Meeting, as amended. Geoffrey Morris seconded. Motion carried 5-0.

6. Selectpersons Report

Mr. Marconi reported that he met with Finance Director, Kevin Redmond, and Senior Tax Credit Committee Chair, Gary Roman. The budget draft was adjusted to include Senior Tax Credit Committee scenarios approved by the BOS; item 1, item 2 with a means test, and the last item is deferment up to \$100,000. The current senior tax benefits incurred have increased from \$1,980,000 to \$2,127,000 due to increased participation. Therefore, any changes will increase it further. The BOS will consider changes in 2027 as follows; Senior tax credit of \$200 with a means test of \$85,000, the estimated cost is \$100,000. The BOS clarified that in the second year, the credit will increase by an additional \$200 at an estimated cost of another \$100,000 to a total credit of \$400 and estimated cost of \$200,000. The state mandated Veteran Exemption remains the same. Mr. Marconi met with Jane to clarify the source of these credits. The Board of Education budget is not impacted but the mill rate is impacted. While the town is generous overall, the changes will benefit the people who need help.

Mr. Connelly shared that the BOE met and discussed the BOE budget proposed. They shared questions and concerns and posted them on their website.

Mr. Marconi shared that working on capital has been challenging because the BOS added to it but he hasn't been able to trim it down too much.

Mr. Marconi reported that the blight issue at 29 Lakeview is finally resolved. After \$150,000 cost to address it, the property is deeded to the town. The BOS will have to discuss what to do with the property.

Mr. Marconi noted that the Department of Homeland Security graded the town's Cyber Infrastructure Security at an A.

Mr. Marconi reminded the BOS that certain town ordinances require updating in the town's charter which requires a town meeting; (one town one vote), allow alternates on the Pension Committee, and other items to be coordinated with Town Clerk, Wendy Lionetti.

Mr. Marconi reported the work involved in coordinating materials required due to a FOIA inquiry. Mr. Morris asked that the FOIA costs be reported at the next meeting.

Mr. Morris asked for an explanation about minority representation on committees. Mr. Marconi explained that a party cannot have all members affiliated with the same party. But all members could be unaffiliated.

Sean Connelly motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:32pm. Maureen Kozlark seconded. Motion carried 5-0.