



Town of Ridgefield

Form of Government Committee Unapproved Meeting Minutes

Public Hearing and Special
Meeting of June 14, 2025
Draft FINAL

1. Call to Order

The Form of Government Committee meeting convened at 10:25AM on Saturday, June 14, 2025 in the Town Hall Main Conference Room.

Members present: : Jonathan Seem, Michael Rettger, Todd Zagorec, Dennis Tracey, Robert Hendrick, Rachel Sondheimer, Steve Zemo (via Zoom)

Members absent, , Laurie Christiansen, Charles Robbins

2. Public Hearing

Mr. Zagorec began the public hearing with a presentation providing background on the purpose and work of the committee, and summarizing the work, findings, and recommendations of the committee as outlined in the committee's draft report.

Following the presentation, Mr. Zagorec invited the members of the public present at the meeting to provide comment on the committee's draft report.

Andrea Beebe, Main Street, stated she was in favor of the recommendations concerning changes to the conduct of Town Meetings. She also asked if the cost of the proposed town administrator would be offset by a reduction in the salary of the First Selectperson. [Committee members responded that was not the expectation or the recommendation of the committee, as interviews with towns that have implemented the position with a reduction in the First Selectperson salary found the time commitment of the First Selectperson did not change significantly and the reduction caused problems finding people willing to run for the office.]

Maureen Kozlark, Selectperson, commented that finding people to run for town elected positions has been a challenge in general, not necessarily related to the compensation level. She noted several boards such as Board of Education and the Planning and Zoning Board where the chair is uncompensated but commits significant time to their town duties.

Sean Connelly, Selectperson, noted that if the town were to implement a town administrator position, it would be important to set and communicate expectations as to time commitment and compensation for the First Selectperson position.

Coco Barron, Prospect Ridge, commented that the lack of having a broadcast channel available for town meetings affects the ability for some residents to be aware of Board of Selectperson's meetings and other town events. She also offered comments regarding practices and procedures of the Housing Authority at the Congregate Housing facility.

Andrea Beebe indicated she supported the idea of having regularly scheduled Town Meetings. She asked for clarification of the split of duties between the proposed town administrator position and that of the current town controller. [Committee members responded that the town administrator position, if established, would not be expected to change the role and scope of the controller, other than possibly in terms of reporting relationships depending on how the town choose to structure its internal staff organization, as discussed in the town administrator portion of the report.] Ms. Beebe suggested adding a graphic reporting structure exhibit to the report to clarify the expected structure in this regard.

Marilyn Carroll, Keeler Drive, asked questions to clarify that the proposed town administrator position would be defined by and decided by the entire Board of Selectpersons. [Committee members confirmed that was the expectation of the committee's recommendation.]

Mr. Connelly questioned how the proposed regularly scheduled Town Meetings as proposed would differ in operation from Board of Selectpersons meetings, which have a regular schedule and provide a period for public comment. [Committee members responded that the intent of the Town Meeting suggestion would be to provide a more regular schedule for the timing of possible votes and could also facilitate a community dialog when votes were not scheduled by having an agenda of discussion topic published in advance. The suggestion was not intended to detract from or change the format of the existing BOS meeting.]

Ms. Barron offered comments about the level of rents for some units in the Housing Authority apartments and the effect on the residents who sometimes need to leave as a result.

Ms. Beebe asked if the committee considered proposing that the Board of Selectpersons be elected by geographic district in town. [Committee members responded that this was not a proposal that received specific consideration, but that comments from towns having Representative Town Meetings where there was such geographic representation indicated potential concerns with such a model. The committee felt that retaining the full Town Meeting was a preferred way to provide all voters of the town a way to represent their interests.]

Public comment having concluded,

Motion by Mr. Rettger to adjourn the Public Hearing portion of the meeting at 11:55AM.
Seconded by Mr. Seem. All in favor.

Following completion of the Public Hearing, the Special Meeting of the Form of Government Committee convened at 12:00PM. Mr. Zemo left the meeting at this point.

3. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

4. Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes of the June 2, 2025 meeting by Mr. Hendrick. Seconded by Mr. Tracey. All in favor.

5. Work Plan

Mr. Zagorec reported that he has invited the regular moderators of the Town Meeting to attend the committee's next meeting to provide comment on the committee's recommendations for Town Meeting changes, should they wish to do so.

The members discussed their thoughts on the comments received at the public hearing. It was agreed to update the report with the organization chart graphic suggested, which Mr. Rettger offered to prepare before the upcoming Monday meeting. The members discussed if it would be possible to approve the final version of the report at the Monday meeting if it was felt no significant changes were needed based on Public Hearing comment. Members agreed this was an option, but this decision should wait on the next hearing and also on the number of members in attendance at Monday's meeting.

6. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 12:10 PM by Mr. Zagorec. Seconded by Mr. Rettger. All in favor.

Submitted by
Michael Rettger