

Ridgefield Housing Authority

25 Gilbert St.

Ridgefield, CT 06877

Approved RHA Minutes for Special Meeting of March 25, 2026

Wednesday, March 25, 2026 - 6:30

**In person at the Ballard Green
Community Room**

Commissioners Present: Vincent Liscio (VL), Derick Schirm (DS), Ed Baird (EB) arrived 6:35pm, Maree Macpherson (MM), Indra Sen (IS) - all present at the Ballard Community Room

REM: Wade Rockwood (WR), Monica Stromwall (MS), Wesley Robinson (WR2)

Residents: Nancy Higgins, Sandra Clements, Krisann Benson, John Burke, Barbara Beaulieu

Guest: Eric Berkley

A motion to approve RHA Meeting Minutes from February 18, 2026, with no changes, was made by Mr. Schirm and seconded by Ms. Macpherson, Mr. Liscio abstained, all remaining Board present approved.

A motion to approve the Management Report was made by Mr. Schirm and seconded by Ms. Macpherson, all Board present approved.

A motion to approve the Financial Report was made by Mr. Schirm and seconded by Ms. Macpherson, all Board present approved.

A motion to approve the Tenant Commissioner Report was made by Mr. Schirm and seconded by Mr. Sen, all Board present approved.

A motion to approve CNA amount of \$158,650 for CT Stucco to repair Tower Facing at Congregate, was made by Mr. Schirm and seconded by Ms. Macpherson, all Board present approved.

A motion to approve movement of monies (\$25K) for Solar to the 501c3 was made by Mr. Schirm and seconded by Mr. Sen, all Board present approved.

A motion to approve donation of \$500 to Firefighters was made by Mr. Schirm and seconded by Mr. Baird, Mr. Sen abstained from voting, all other Board Members present approved.

A motion was made to adjourn the RHA meeting, which was made by Mr. Schirm, and seconded by Mr. Baird, all Board present approved.

Mr. Liscio called the meeting to order at 6:30pm by reading the Mission Statement and then requesting the approval of Minutes from the meeting on February 18, 2026.

Management Report

Property Management met with Finance VP, Marilyn Correa, to review and update the 2026 capital needs projects for Ballard Green and Congregate. As part of this review, the boiler replacement budget was increased to \$49,200, and a camera installation project was added for the community building to support safety and long-term capital planning. Mr. Rockwood attached a chart describing each need that he seeks approval for and that is listed below:

Ballard Green proposed 2026 capex (highlights): gutter guards; 6 boiler replacements (increased from 3 after consulting Doug); \$43k unit renovations (floors, kitchen appliances); \$25k commercial carpet upgrades (community room, hallway, library, office); \$5,200 laundry room drainage fix; exterior camera to monitor garden beds; ~\$3k tree work; \$2,700 weeding/mulching. Total cited ~\$131k.

Congregate proposed 2026 capex (highlights): \$8k additional paving; ~\$29k unit renovations/appliances (about 10 units left to fully upgrade); \$175k Congregate refacing-(already conceptually approved prior year); normal \$2,400 hot water heater allowance; \$3,500 gazebo roof; tree work including ~\$3,800 already spent to remove a large fallen birch plus \$2,500 pruning; \$15k to add AC to 2nd-floor common areas.

Mr. Sen confirmed that, based on current reserves, about \$360k of capital work represents ~17% of reserves and is within a sub-20% threshold he considers prudent.

Rent Recertifications & Potential Increases: Mr. Rockwood described intensive manual recertification work at Ballard and Congregate (90+ recerts) that must be completed and signed by mid-May to allow the now-required 45-day notice before July 1, effective dates. He explained for new commissioners how rent structures work at Ballard (subsidized, 30% of income, base rent mainly impacts state subsidy), Congregate (base rent + service, similar 30% framework), and Meadows/General (state-set maxes and percentage caps, historically using a 5.8% cap last year). Management is awaiting the state's 2026 cap guidance; last year's increase was 5.8%. Indra expects a lower figure this year but declined to speculate. Wade emphasized that in the past the absence of increases at Meadows/General contributed to financial distress, so RHA is now committed to staying current with state-allowed adjustments while respecting caps.

Occupancy, Delinquencies & Legal Latest stated snapshot: overall occupancy at 98.7%, with 4 current vacancies and 1 upcoming. Delinquencies rose from \$14k in January to \$22,545 in February; over-90-day balances increased

modestly from \$1,913 to \$2,407. Mr. Rockwood explained most of the jump is tied to a single unit already in legal; 5 residents are on court-stipulated payment plans; 1 notice to quit has been served; 1 new case went to legal for non-responsiveness. All 90+ day accounts are either on payment plans or in legal process.

Wade to execute the congregate EIFS/refacing contract with CT Stucco for \$158,650 and coordinate a detailed schedule, ensuring late-spring start and resident communication. Wade & Monica perform additional unannounced spot checks of congregate meals and continue direct resident feedback collection; address any recurring quality or variety issues with the food vendor. Recycling Infrastructure Gap: Loss of one Congregate recycling container has led to overflow of trash bins with recyclables, Wade to proceed with small 2026 capital projects under his spending authority (e.g., gutters, drainage, cameras, minor tree work) and prepare a consolidated capital needs package for formal April board approval. -RHA budget: forward capital plan that fully incorporates Meadows' mid-year capital work. Pending State Rent Cap Guidance: Rent increase planning for Ballard, Congregate, Meadows, and General cannot be finalized until the state issues 2026 cap figures.

Resident Services & Programming: Monica reported extensive March activity: care coordination, medical/behavioral health coordination, transportation, wellness checks, and frequent social/wellness programs across sites. Highlights included: "Know Your Numbers" health events; exercise programs; National Charity League intergenerational events; movie matinees sparking dialogue; multiple therapy dogs; virtual travel series; holiday events; Aldrich senior tours; "Birthday Blessings" boxes for isolated residents; comedy hour; a custodial documentation app (multi-language) to better track apartment conditions and potential referral needs. Partnerships with Nuvance (advance directives, mental health), mobile food pantry, energy assistance enrollment, Alzheimer's Association, Woodcock Nature Center, Earth Day activities, and a gerontologist talk were outlined. Board praised Monica's work as a core reason RHA chose the current management model.

Financial Report

January 2026 (Latest stated snapshot) Indra gave a high-level primer on balance sheet, income statement, and cash flow interactions. For January 2026: equity increased as debt was paid down; revenues exceeded expenses, generating a surplus; cash increased slightly from December, so liquidity is stable. Budget vs. actual January revenue: actual \$199,800 vs. budget \$198,100 (figures cited in discussion). No revenue “red flags” surfaced (no ~30–40% swings). Expense review used Paul’s threshold that line items with >\$5k or material percentage variance must be explained (e.g., timing of insurance payments, payroll days). Mr. Sen stressed the need to view maintenance vs. capital improvements over a 5–10-year horizon, given construction inflation (~10%) versus relatively lower interest earnings, and to align capital planning with RHA’s strong but not unlimited reserves (~80% of operating budget). He plans to link Meadows’ July–June cycle with RHA’s calendar-year view for a coherent 2026–2027 capital plan. Congregate EIFS / Refacing Vendor Selection Wade summarized responses to the congregate EIFS/ exterior repair RFP: bids received from CMSA (\$356k), CT Stucco (\$158,650), Marco Construction (\$246k), and Malder (\$125k). ~~3 of 8~~ After reviewing scope, methods, and qualifications, management recommended CT Stucco: not the lowest bid, but proposed a comprehensive Sto Strike Defense system with a 15-year limited warranty and extensive EIFS experience. References (including a Stamford project) were strong. Scope includes full tower EIFS removal/replacement, power-washing all EIFS surfaces, patching/repairs, and resealing; appearance will be matched to existing color as closely as possible. Board unanimously approved awarding the project to CT Stucco for \$158,650. Mr. Sen will deal with-Complex Budget Coordination Across Different Fiscal Years: Meadows runs on a July/June cycle while RHA budgets January–December. Finance/Management team to review the current \$95 utility allowance considering recent winter bills and upcoming DHFA 2026 guidance and bring any recommended adjustments to the board.

Tenant Commissioner

Food Service, Landscaping, Recycling Marie raised concerns about one particularly poor congregated meal (reheated meat), lack of on-site chef presence that day, and perceived menu repetition (chicken). Mr. Rockwood

and Ms. Stromwall reported generally strong resident feedback, cited a temporary propane/stove pressure issue that had forced off-site cooking, and confirmed that the stove has since been serviced and that they have already spoken to the vendor about menu variety. They committed additional unannounced spot checks. Ms. Macpherson requested that dead apple trees be replaced with new, smaller fruit trees and asked that Congregate budgets include funds for new plantings and a day of professional gardening support; Wade confirmed outdoor planting budgets exist and can cover this. She also noted a missing recycling bin at Congregate; Mr. Rockwood will follow up with the hauler. Meeting Time & Location Flexibility Marie raised that evening meetings are hard on residents (darkness, dinner timing) and on management commuting long distances. She suggested daytime meetings (e.g., 4–5 pm) and periodic meetings at Prospect Ridge to encourage resident attendance. The board is open to adjusting time and location but must confirm FOIA/notice rules with the Town Clerk. They will poll residents at Ballard and Congregate on preferred times and formats (in-person, call-in, Zoom) and check commissioners' availability before proposing a new schedule.

Old Business

CNA Needs

Tower Facing – 4 bids were presented and the chosen vendor is CT Stucco, who provided the most comprehensive and technically appropriate solution. Their proposed scope includes removal and replacement of the existing EIFS system on the tower using the Sto Strike Defense system, which carries a 15-year limited warranty. Additional work includes power washing all existing EIFS surfaces on the Congregate building, repairing and patching damaged areas, restoring EIFS systems, and applying a new sealant to ensure building envelope integrity. The anticipated project remains late spring 2026, pending contract execution. Mr. Rockwood will keep Board informed.

Gazebo Roof Replacement at Congregate – the removal and replacement of the existing gazebo roof at Congregate will be completed as a 2026 spring-summer maintenance project.

Heating Units – We have requested \$49,200 in the 2026 budget, which will allow for six heating unit upgrades per year at Ballard Green. Once the budget is approved, they can move forward with replacements.

Unit Refurbishments/Renovations – Progress continues at both locations; however, due to inclement weather experienced throughout February, including a major snowstorm on the 22 and 23, with two feet of snow, scheduling was impacted. Timelines are being closely monitored.

Solar Project – Phasing, Invoicing & 501(c)(3) Funding PurePoint's latest schedule: construction projected to begin in early Q2 2026, with panel delivery within weeks. Panels will be stored in two marked parking spots by the office under camera coverage and posted signage. PurePoint restructured billing from 2 to 3 phases, corresponding to three system groups; remaining total owed was cited as \$692,459. An initial \$25,000 procurement invoice was received, aligned with the new schedule of values. Plan remains to fund solar through the RHA-affiliated 501(c)(3) so that entity can receive the rebate and manage the asset, but Indra flagged open questions about gift vs. loan treatment, documentation, and legal/IRS compliance. Board approved transferring \$25,000 from RHA to the 501(c)(3), contingent on accountant Jason's and counsel's confirmation that the structure is compliant; if later found non-compliant, funds may need to be recharacterized or transferred back.

Alternative High School Building – Capital Needs & Sphere - Indra and Derek have been exploring Sphere's potential use of the former alternative high school building. They identified a gap: no capital needs assessment currently exists for that building; the superintendent's office appears not to have one either. Wade and Doug previously did a general walkthrough and found conditions reasonable, but a more thorough HVAC/boiler/roof/structure assessment is needed to understand future capital exposure and how it interacts with lease terms (e.g., who pays for major systems, length of lease). Plan is to coordinate with town facilities, attempt to leverage town resources for assessment if feasible, and otherwise consider commissioning independent study.

Web Site- no update activity currently.

Maintenance Facility - no update activity currently.

2026 Budget Update – Mr. Sen commented on this during his Financial Report and throughout meeting as questions were raised.

Recap of Selectpersons Board Meeting – Mr. Liscio gave a report about the recent meeting. The Selectpersons seemed very pleased and impressed by the presentation relating RHA’s continuing successes of the past few years and congratulated the Board, Management company, past and current Commissioners.

New Business

Ashley Dougherty - Letter and Proposal – Shared with legal for guidance and as of this date, there has been no response. Will not discuss until response has been received.

Safe at Home Technology Demo Eric Berkley presented the “Home Sight” system: a TV-mounted communication and monitoring box with simple remote, HIPAA-compliant. The system can: log vitals; show motion and temperature patterns; support scheduled prompts and daily tasks; and enable approved family/caregiver video calls. Wade and Monica emphasized this is voluntary and envisioned primarily as a family/caregiver tool for higher-risk residents (e.g., dementia, fall risk), not an RHA surveillance system. Monica & Wade to identify a small pilot group of residents/families who may benefit from the Safe at Home “Home Sight” system and explore interest, costs, and potential volume pricing with Eric Berkley.

Donations to Public Safety Wade proposed that RHA make periodic donations to local public safety entities in recognition of frequent support to residents. A specific appeal from the Ridgefield Firefighters Association (union local) was discussed; Monica noted association programs directly benefit residents (e.g., wellness checks). Mr. Sen disclosed a conflict as a Ridgefield volunteer firefighter and abstained from voting. Board approved a \$500 donation to the

Ridgefield Firefighters Association. Future support for police/social services will be considered separately at a regular meeting.

Public Session

Nancy Higgins – spoke of cars turning around when dropping off students and could this be made safer.

Krisann Benson spoke of the possibility that there was Marijuana usage in smoke areas. Also, asked about Letter and Proposal.

John Burke – Commented on Utility bills much higher and could the Board consider raising the Utility allowance for this year.

Barbara Beaulieu – concerned about residents' safety with potential new tenant moving onto grounds.

Meeting adjourned at 9:25pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by Patricia Harney, Recording Secretary.

2026, at 630pm

Next RHA Meeting on April 15,

Room

Ballard Green Community