



**Town of Ridgefield
Public Safety Facilities Committee
Minutes
APPROVED**

June 11, 2026 at 7PM

ANNEX, Large conference room, 66 Prospect Street, Ridgefield, CT

Please note – these minutes are not verbatim.

Committee Members Present: David Brickley, Pamela Dunaway, Wally Martinez, Adam Safir, Stephen Scalzo, Ed Tyrrell (arrived at 7:18p)

Committee Members Absent: Denis Graves

Presenters in Attendance: Fire Chief Duckworth, Public Works Director Jake Muller, Ridgefield Selectperson Geoffrey Morris, KBA

Wally Martinez called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

1. Public Comment –

Kirk Carr, 62 Prospect Ridge, stated that given the time and effort this committee is devoting to finding a public safety solution, he considers that the analysis of alternatives has been illusive. He submitted an FOIA request for a comparison of all the alternatives. But he didn't receive such a document with all the criteria by which each solution was judged. He encourages this committee to ensure there are criteria prioritized and used to determine the viability of each scenario. He is worried that the June 30 deadline is fast approaching to provide several options to the BOS but has not heard a list of criteria. Wally Martinez summarized the committee's charge and on-going efforts. He explained that the committee continues to welcome all public comments and suggestions. They will be reporting to the BOS on June 30. They have an executive session after this meeting to discuss privately owned real property that may potentially meet the needs.

Adam Safir shared that the group has an operational model that addresses the comments made in Public Comment. They will be discussing it with the Fire and Police Departments.

Pamela Dunaway added that the June 30 meeting is not a deadline but rather a check-in and if more time is needed, it will be given.

Adam Safir added that there are criteria to evaluate each scenario to be considered.

Wally Martinez concluded public comment reminding the public that there is very little viable private property.

2. Needs Working Group presents Fire Dept needs

Adam Safir began by stating that their group discussion will include comments from the Fire Department Chief Duckworth. The discussion framework includes such topics as sites that are close to areas where responses are needed, site size that will accommodate the needed facility including a buildable area that would meet Planning and Zoning requirements, configuration that allows rapid response and code compliance. The chief addressed each of these points at detailed length. Chief Duckworth said that the Ridgefield periphery is the most difficult to access not because of traffic, but more so due to the accessibility of the roads. Standard FDA1720 applies to combination career and volunteer fire departments but FDA 1710 also applies due to the unique nature of Ridgefield, with an urban core in a rural town. Then Chief Duckworth also provided an analysis of call data. He also described turnout time and poor flow in the current facilities. There is no parking for volunteers. There is delay within the current structure for onsite firefighters to get to the apparatus. There is also insufficient parking and turnaround space for all the apparatuses. There is also a parking stacking issue which causes the first-in apparatus to be trapped by later-in apparatuses. They all have to back out and turn around to allow the first-in apparatus to respond to a call. The other issue is upon returning from a call, they must make several 90 degree turns to face outward again in preparation for the next call. Another complex issue is the maintenance of fire turnout gear. There are also challenges to EMS response times created by station positioning and station flow. The facilities have critical operational needs including decompression/de-stimulation/isolation room for the firefighters. Another need is training space. To attend trainings, the department must run on less than the optimal number of firefighters. If they can train on-site, they can interrupt training to respond to calls. Administration also requires proper space and flow for effective and efficient management.

Wally Martinez asked Chief Duckworth to address the CEMSEARS, Connecticut EMS Response Data. Chief Duckworth stated that Ridgefield response time average is almost 1.5 minutes faster than the state average. He also commented that design and flow will be up to the chief. The deciding factor will be the voter. Wally Martinez added that the footprint created by 9 apparatus bays for a combined career and volunteer department would be enormous. He asked that the fire chiefs consider whether a building with 6

bays to house 5 career apparatuses and 1 volunteer apparatus would suffice to meet the critical need. Then he summarized all the specific facilities needs such as parking, bunk rooms, locker rooms, and a gym. He shared specific examples of inefficiencies affecting response times and firefighter health. Steve Scalzo asked about parking inefficiencies. Ed Tyrrell asked for a total cost of the 32,000 square foot structure that would meet all the listed needs. He explained that the voters have been clear that they will not approve anything over \$60 million. Therefore, creative designs must be sought to achieve voter support. Chief Duckworth stated that their wants are to meet basic needs to protect the mental and physical health of the firefighters.

Wally Martinez called a Chair's Timeout to ask for a motion to table items 3,4,5, and 9 to the next meeting. ***Steve Scalzo motioned to table items 3,4,5, and 9 to the next meeting. David Brickley Seconded. The motion carried 6-0 (Denis Graves Absent).***

The Needs Working Group continued their discussion by inviting Geoffrey Morris, Jake Muller, Director of Public Works, and the KBA representatives. First, they addressed needs for the apparatus bay including industry standards and OSHA regulations. They also spoke about building flow such as placing dormitories near the bays for fastest departures on calls. Then they mentioned building for the future but Wally Martinez suggested building a facility that's expansion-ready, fit for purpose. Next, they addressed the process of value engineering and space optimization. Then Jake Muller added that any parcel considered will have Planning and Zoning requirements, but also, in Ridgefield, will likely be near a wetland. Any parcel near a wetland will have additional building restrictions. Geoffrey Morris added that Planning and Zoning should not limit creative ideas. David Brickley asked KBA and Mr. Muller if there are buildings they didn't previously consider for renovation that might be candidates for consideration. Pamela Dunaway asked Geoffrey Morris if at some point, the BOS can proceed with some solution without voter support. He responded that the BOS only has authority to approve costly repairs and 'band-aids.'

3. **Tiger Team Updates** – Tabled.
4. **Timeline Discussion for Tiger Team Presentations and Public Engagement** – Tabled.
5. **General Timeline Discussion for committee charge completion** – Tabled.
6. **Next Agenda Items** – Items 3,4,5, and 9 as tabled tonight. Any others will be communicated to Mr. Tyrrell.

- 7. Amend April 2, 2026 minutes – Ed Tyrrell motioned to amend the April 2, 2026 meeting minutes from the first paragraph to the second paragraph. Pamela Dunaway seconded. Motion carried 6-0 (Denis Graves absent).**
- 8. Adoption of meeting minutes – Ed Tyrrell motioned to approve the May 14, 2026 meeting minutes as amended. Steve Scalzo seconded. The motion carried 6-0 (Denis Graves).**
- 9. Adjourn to Executive Session to discuss privately owned real property – Tabled.**

Adam Safir motioned to adjourn the Public Safety Facilities Commission meeting at 9:07 PM. David Brickley seconded. Motion carried 6-0 (Denis Graves).

Respectfully submitted by,
Etna Monsalve