Town of Ridgefield
Public Safety Facilities Committee
Minutes
UNAPPROVED
August 20, 2026 at 7PM
ANNEX, Large conference room, 66 Prospect Street, Ridgefield, CT

Please note – these minutes are not verbatim.

Committee Members Present: Pamela Dunaway (arrived during Public Comment at 7:03pm), Denis Graves, Wally Martinez (via telephone), Adam Safir, Stephen Scalzo, Ed Tyrrell
Committee Members Absent: David Brickley
Presenters in Attendance: Fire Chief Pambianci

Wally Martinez called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

1. **Public Comment –** Chuck Hancock, 480 North Street, shared that he feels that the revised police department square footage would allow for an appropriate reconstruction of the police department on the current lot. It has infrastructure and proximity to the cellular tower. He stated the he has an agreement from the Historical Committee to engage with the design to ensure it meets any historic site requirements. He believes the cost of renting temporary structures at his estimate of $3million is reasonable. He tasked the Acting Chair, Adam Safir, to personally ensure that this scenario is fully explored, vetted, and assessed professionally before options are presented to the Board of Selectpersons. If it isn't, he and the group of concerned citizens he represents, will go on record at the August 31 special meeting of the BOS to oppose any recommendation from this committee. Adam Safir thanked Mr. Hancock for expressing his perspective and responded that 76 East Ridge Road, the current police department site, has been explored thoroughly as one option. But he recognizes the need to communicate the research and vetting of the lot. Wally Martinez asked Mr. Hancock to share the names of the fellow community members he represents. He shared them via text and Adam Safir read them into the record; Marty Hanshy, John Katz, Sue Manning, Wendy Pola, Joe Ternula, C. Zimo. Then Wally Martinez asked if the agreement with the historical commission he referenced is legally binding and who the parties in the agreement are. Mr. Hancock explained that he had a telephone conversation with Dan O'Brien who verbally agreed to assist with the redesign of the police department on the neighboring

lot. Wally Martinez explained that a conversation with a party who doesn't represent this committee or the BOS is not legally binding. He added that this lot has several limitations and restrictions that make the use of this lot for a reconstruction more costly than other options which are much more cost efficient. Pamela Dunaway added that while Mr. Hancock considered his suggestion in 2005, she has been working with current police department needs which add up to a minimum required lot size of 2.25 acres. The current lot is just not large enough to accommodate current needs or even growth needs of the future. Mr. Hancock responded that Bill Coffin said the needed square footage, whatever it is, would fit on that lot.

After the motion below, Ed Tyrrell commented that at the February 19 meeting, Mr. Hancock was given the ample opportunity to present his group's thoughts. After an hour-long presentation, the committee asked him what his requirement is for this project and he responded that nothing above $50 million. Ed Tyrrell said he has spent six months working to achieve that requirement and it's not fair to the committee that he is now moving the target.

Steve Scalzo motioned to recommend the study be completed to assess the viability of the current police department lot to be used for the new police department. No second. Ed Tyrrell made the same motion and added approval up to $10,000 for the study. Denis Graves seconded Ed Tyrrell's motion. Motion passed 5-1(Dunaway abstained, Brickley absent).

Ralph Money, 120 Prospect Street, stated that he appreciated David Brickley's presentation last week. He added that he understands that it's critical that the recommended path forward will require buy-in, comfort, and support of police and fire leadership. He requested that each tiger team provide the level of support and comfort for each proposal from each chief. He also asked if this committee will recommend to the BOS that the special meeting on August 31 welcome public comment. This committee has no control over the BOS agenda and the request should be made to the first selectperson. Adam Safir responded that all work is done in the open and all discussions with the chiefs has been open as well.

2. **Update on Tiger Team Proposals –** Ed Tyrrell reported that his tiger team proposal remains unchanged, any proposal must stay within $50 million. He feels the BOS charged this committee to independently research alternatives. He added that the chiefs didn't reduce their needed square footage at their first presentation. Adam Safir responded that after much back and forth with the architects and the chiefs, the chiefs have come

to agreement with the various tiger teams. Pamela Dunaway reported no material changes to her proposal adding that both chiefs have gone through her combination facility proposal to confirm that the proposed lot, the Schlumberger site, and the proposed square footage would meet operational needs. Steve Scalzo and Wally Martinez stated that their two-building focused proposal is unchanged. The chiefs have been very cooperative and patient. Adam Safir spoke at length with the two chiefs. He feels that the town would benefit most from two separate facilities but recognizes that now is not the time. He is preparing to put forth priorities that he feels should be included in any joint facility; safety, location, and risk management.

3. **Volunteer Fire Chief Interview –** Chief Pambianci shared that there are 52 members. They moved into the current facility in 1909. In 2025, they responded to 412 calls. This year they have responded to 344 calls with a year-end estimated at 500 calls. He explained their personnel structure and overview of all apparatus. All firefighting apparatus are owned and maintained by the town. All calls are directed through dispatch and the response matrix determines if volunteers are coordinated to assist the career firefighters. The station is staffed during storms or other weather-related incidents. Volunteer firefighters also staff apparatus as needed during town events. He addressed operational issues such as parking. They don't have adequate parking, decontamination, or gear storage. They also have inadequate apparatus parking. They must shuffle apparatus, often during busy traffic hours, to get the proper apparatus to a call. This causes a delay in responding. Pamela Dunaway asked for the work each role performs. Chief Pambianci explained the different tasks performed by the different staff. The full staff are on site twice a week for training that could be classroom or skill-building. He expects the department to continue to grow.

4. **Straw Poll of Tiger Team Proposals –** Wally Martinez and Steve Scalzo presented for committee vote their Option D at the new site; a combined facility at a confidential site, 46,000 square feet total, common areas for both police and fire, 7 bays for fire, 25,000 square feet for police with a sally port, for an estimated total of $50 million. New information came today that the chiefs have not seen. The committee support for this proposal is 5 yes, Dunaway no. Wally Martinez and Steve Scalzo also presented last week Option B for separate facilities; fire at the new confidential site and police at the Old Quarry Road site, 49,500 square feet, $59 million, both properties have room for growth, volunteer and career firefighters would be in the same building. The committee support for this proposal is 4 no, Dunaway yes, Safir conditional yes. Ed Tyrrell and Denis Graves presented a proposal to cap any proposal at $50 million. They recognize it is not a proposal for a solution but a parameter that is satisfied by another proposal which they support therefore, they withdrew their proposal. Pamela Dunaway proposed a combination facility at the Quarry Ridge site with a smaller footprint than the failed

referendum. All the chiefs support the 46,500 square footage. The total cost is $61 million. The committee support for this proposal is 5 no, Dunaway yes.

5. **Discussion RE: BOS Special Meeting Aug 31 –** Adam Safir suggested the committee prepare a power point. Pamela Dunaway suggested a criteria list by which to measure each proposal. She also suggested creating a list of pending questions for each proposal. Wally Martinez added that it could be in the form of a majority and minority report. Adam Safir stated that he supports the suggestions and would like to include the outside experts consulted as well as identify the committee's internal expertise in the field. David Brickley will share his comments on all the proposals and the committee may change their votes.

6. **General Discussion** – The committee discussed the use of artificial intelligence to draft the minority and majority reports.

7. **Adoption of meeting minutes –** ***Steve Scalzo motioned to approve the August 13, 2026 meeting minutes as presented. Denis Graves seconded. The motion carried 6-0 (Brickley absent).***

8. **Move to Executive Session for Update on Acquisition of Privately Owned Real Property –** ***Ed Tyrrell motioned to go into Executive Session to discuss any updates on the privately owned real property. Denis Graves seconded. Motion carried 6-0 (Brickley absent).***

9. **Return from Executive Session** – The committee returned to the open meeting but no vote was taken on the subject discussed in Executive Session.

10. **Adjournment** – ***Ed Tyrrell motioned to adjourn the Public Safety Facilities Commission meeting at 9:18 PM. Adam Safir seconded. Motion carried 6-0 (Brickley absent).***

Respectfully submitted by,
Etna Monsalve