

MEMORANDUM

To: Ridgefield Board of Selectpersons / Fire Commission

CC: Ridgefield Board of Police Commissioners
Ridgefield Public Safety Facilities Committee

From: Kirk Carr

Date: June 8, 2026

RE: Public Safety Facilities Committee Process and June 30 Milestone

After two unsuccessful referenda, Ridgefield will benefit from demonstrating “what” solution best meets Ridgefield’s needs, and “why,” **before** deciding “where” it should be located.

The original RFP and the Committee’s charge both begin by stipulating a comprehensive review of alternatives. Has the site analysis effectively become a substitute for the comprehensive evaluation of operational alternatives contemplated by both the original RFP and the Committee’s charge?

After two unsuccessful referenda, is it reasonable to expect a different result by repeating that approach?

The recent voter survey’s clearest finding was that while voters generally acknowledge the need to address public safety facilities, they remain unconvinced about which solution best balances public safety, cost, and long-term value. That finding emphasizes that process and sequence matter.

For that reason, a structured evaluation of major alternatives **before** sorting through site selection is essential. Such an evaluation could compare alternatives against common criteria such as public safety performance, response times and coverage, capital and operating costs, scalability, operational resilience, implementation risk, and public acceptability. After 135 days, is it premature to expect the Committee to have established the criteria by which operational alternatives will be evaluated?

Ridgefield has already invested in a substantial response-time and incident analysis through JB Consulting. That existing data may be leveraged to efficiently evaluate service-delivery and deployment alternatives through a Community Risk Assessment and Standards of Cover (CRA/SOC) framework or similar methodology. Such an analysis could provide the objective metrics needed to compare alternatives and their operational tradeoffs.

A better milestone for June 30, ahead of site selection, should be a careful, fact-based analysis of which operational options best fit Ridgefield’s characteristics, risks, and public safety requirements. That is the first step in both the original RFP and the Committee’s charge. It logically precedes site selection and should not be displaced by it.

With just two and a half weeks remaining before the June 30 milestone, and mindful of both the Board’s regular meeting on June 10 and the Committee’s scheduled meeting on June 11, asking these questions is neither premature nor an exercise in micromanagement. Given the Board’s dual responsibilities as both the Town’s governing body and its Fire Commission, ensuring that the process remains faithful to its charge is not interference; it is oversight.