



TOWN OF LEDYARD
CONNECTICUT
TOWN COUNCIL

Chairman Gary St. Vil

MINUTES
LEDYARD TOWN COUNCIL – REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 2026; 7:00 PM
HYBRID FORMAT
VIDEO CONFERENCE VIA ZOOM

- I. CALL TO ORDER – Chairman St. Vil called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Council Chambers, Town Hall Annex Building.

Chairman St. Vil welcomed all to the Hybrid Meeting. He stated for the members of the Town Council and the Public who were participating via video conference that the remote meeting information was available on the Agenda that was posted on the Town’s Website – Granicus-Legistar Meeting Portal.

- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

- III. ROLL CALL –

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Location
William Barnes	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
April Brunelle	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
Jessica Buhle	Town Councilor	Present	Remote
Carmen Garcia-Irizarry	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
Ty (Earl) Lamb	Town Councilor	Excused	
Adrienne Parad	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
Tim Ryan	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
Gary St. Vil	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
James Thompson	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person

- IV. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS/PRESENTATIONS

- **2026 Black History Month Award Presentation**

Chairman St. Vil stated before the Town Council begins its regular business this evening they were going to take a few minutes to recognize the winners of Ledyard’s *2026 Black History Month Student Essay and Poster Contest*. He explained that each year the Town Council sponsors this contest to give students an opportunity to reflect on the significance of Black History Month. He noted that this year's theme was: “*From History to Responsibility, The Legacy We Carry, The Future We Create*”. He stated they received thoughtful essays and creative poster submissions from students across their schools. He thanked all of the students who participated, as well as the teachers, and parents who supported them. He also recognized his fellow Judges Town Councilor Garcia-Irizarry, and Ledyard Police Sergeant Michael McKinney, who reviewed the submissions and helped to select the winners. He gave a *Special Thank You* to former Town Council Chairman Naomi Rodriguez who generously sponsored the Awards for this year’s contest.

Chairman St. Vil continued by welcoming the students who participated in the 2026 Black History Essay & Poster Activity Contest and their families to tonight’s Town Council Meeting; and he asked the Judges to join him in presenting the Awards. He stated before he announced the Winners he wanted to Congratulate the Students, noting of all the things he does during the year that this was one of his most favorite, because it gives him hope that their future was going to be much better than their present. He thanked the Students for their effort to write such awesome essays and to create such great posters.

Sergeant Michael McKinney stated this was the fifth-year the Black History Month Activity Contest was held; and he thanked all of the students for their hard work, and for giving him hope and a positive reason to do police work.

Chairman St. Vil announced the Contest Winners presenting each with a 2026 Black History Month contest Certificate and Prizes as follows:

Poster Contest

- **Grades K-2**
 - ✓ 1st Place - Joseph Pray (2nd Grade - Gales Ferry School - Mrs. Zawacki)
- **Grades 3-5**
 - ✓ 1st Place - Amelia K. (3rd Grade - Gallup Hill School - Mrs. Bridger)
 - 2nd Place (Tie)**
 - ✓ Riley Mann (4th Grade - Juliet Long School - Mrs. McNabney)
 - ✓ Ethan Lary (5th Grade Juliet Long School – Mrs. Tedder)
 - 3rd Place (Tie)**
 - ✓ Nora Pearce (3rd Grade - Juliet Long School- Mrs. Knowles)
 - ✓ Paisley Douglas (3rd Grade - Juliet Long School - Mrs. Pacheco)

Essay Contest

- **High School Essay Contest**
 - ✓ 1st Place - Kylie Witherill (12th Grade)
 - ✓ 2nd Place (Tie) - Addison LaCosse (10th Grade)
 - ✓ 2nd Place (Tie) - Alexander Schlieper (Ledyard High School)
 - ✓ 3rd Place - Gabrielle Rader (12th Grade)
- **Middle School Essay Contest**
 - ✓ 1st Place - Ava Howell (7th Grade)
 - ✓ 2nd Place - Erik Bengtson (7th Grade)
 - ✓ 3rd Place - Kaelyn Law (7th Grade)

V. RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS

Mr. Steve Munger, 12 Nutmeg Drive, Gales Ferry, stated that he liked to talk about Local Issues that affect Ledyard. However, he stated at the Town Council's February 11, 2026 meeting several members of the Town Council addressed Federal issues. He stated before he addressed the issues that arose at the February 11, 2026 Town Council Meeting that he wanted to thank their US Troops that were deployed to Iran, and pray for their safety.

Mr. Munger continued by addressing the following issues were raised at the Town Council's February 11, 2026 meeting: (1) Immigration & Customs Enforcement (ICE) – Mr. Munger stated some people do not like ICE, but that he liked ICE for various reasons. He stated the current Presidential Administration was not the only Administration that has done deportations; (2) ICE Agents were not Cops - Mr. Munger stated that he agreed that ICE Agents were not Cops, however, he stated that they were all Law Enforcement Agents and they have different rules; (3) ICE Agent Training – Mr. Munger stated 85% of the ICE Agents had previous Law Enforcement experience and 35% had previous Military Experience, noting that they already knew how to shoot a gun and how to handle stressful situations; (4) Sitting during the Pledge of Allegiance - Mr. Munger stated that he disapproved of Councilor Brunelle and Councilor Thompson sitting during the Pledge of Allegiance, not because they had a right to do so, but as Elected Officials that they accepted a responsibility. He stated he does not know why they chose to stand-up for the Pledge of Allegiance since the February 11, 2026 Town Council meeting, but he appreciated that they chose to change their mind. He stated if they were protesting a local issue such as the budget, because it affected Ledyard, that they may have been able to get away with their protest. He stated he was not aware of one person in the Town of Ledyard who has been harassed, arrested, or put in jail by ICE Agents; (5) Public Comments – Mr. Munger stated during the *Public Comment* portion of the February 11, 2026 meeting that a Resident turned his comments to the audience, and Chairman St. Vil did not stop the resident, stating that everyone was allowed to speak. However, Mr. Munger stated during the February 25, 2026 Town Council meeting that Chairman St. Vil stopped him during his comments, stating that he could not say what he was saying about a kid of a Council Member. He stated had Chairman St. Vil allowed him to finish his comments he would have heard that he was going to be positive at the end. He asked that Chairman St. Vil be fair to everybody; and that he not interrupt him during Public Comment unless he was

cursing; or acting like a fool. He asked that if he was wrong, that they see him at another time; noting that he would be more than happy to say that he was wrong.

Mr. Brandon Sabbag, 16 Nutmeg Drive, Gales Ferry, addressed the Public Act 24-46 “*An Act Establishing a Property Tax Exemption for Veterans Who Have a Service-Connected Permanent and Total Disability Rating*” (Veterans Tax Exemption); which was only one of the 1,400 State Unfunded Mandates that were being placed on cities and towns across the State. He stated that he spent today in Hartford, noting that last night Ledyard’s State Delegation supported Raised Bill #5407 which would reimburse Municipalities 100% for the loss of taxes provided by Public Act #24-46. He stated in talking with some high ranking State Senate and House Members that there was a good chance that Raised House Bill #5407 “*An Act Concerning State Reimbursement to Municipalities for Revenue Lost Due to the Property Tax Exemption for Veterans with a One Hundred Percent Permanent and Total Disability Rating*” would be approved. He stated the details regarding Raised Bill #5407 were available on the Connecticut Assembly website. He noted this year was a Short Legislative Session; and should be completed sometime in May, therefore, he suggested the Town Council not act on any modifications to Public Act #24-46; noting that if Raised House Bill gets approved that Municipalities would be 100% reimbursed; and the Town could provide the maximum 100% Tax Exemption benefit to their 100% Permanently and Totally Disabled Veterans.

Mr. Ryan Landry, 5 Kerrie Court, Gales Ferry, Veterans Representative for Ledyard, noted at the Finance Committee’s March 4, 2026 meeting they had a good conversation regarding Public Act #24-46 “*An Act Establishing a Property Tax Exemption for Veterans Who Have a Service-Connected Permanent and Total Disability Rating*” (Veterans Tax Exemption); with resident veterans. He stated because their comments were well received; and they felt heard; the veterans did not pack the room again this evening.

Mr. Landry continued by addressing Raised House Bill #5407 “*An Act Concerning State Reimbursement to Municipalities for Revenue Lost Due to the Property Tax Exemption for Veterans with a One Hundred Percent Permanent and Total Disability Rating*”; and he stated once Raised Bill #5407 passes that that they needed to discuss the option that was included in Public Act #24-46 to extend the 100% Tax Exemption to their Veterans that have a Total Disability Individual Unemployability Rating (TDIU). He stated the reason this was important was because the VA-TDIU Rating would completely cap their employment ability. He stated extending the 100% Tax Exemption to the residents of Ledyard that have a VA-TDIU Rating was important for the longevity for their families. He stated as Leaders of the Community that they could control the “*Weather*” in terms of climate and temperature of the community noting that based on the Facebook Comments that the Finance Committee’s March 4, 2026 was done well. He stated to his Veteran Brothers, Sisters, and members of the Community that they too were Leaders and also control the “*Weather*”. He stated having open communication was the key and that other communities were taking notice on how Ledyard was were conducting themselves in a good way to move forward.

Mr. Jeff Ellingberger, 2 Village Drive, Ledyard, stated that *Permanent & Totally Disability* and *TDIU Disability* were two totally different things; explaining that *TDIU Disability* was for those who truly cannot work, and the Government would take care of them. He addressed comments regarding Veterans with Permanent and Totally Disability who were working and earning six figures having a 100% Disability Rating, noting that when these individuals came back from their Military Service they were broken. He stated they sent perfectly good men and women off and they did not come back the same. He stated there was a big difference between *Disabled* and *SSI Disabled*. He stated that he would yield his remaining time to Ledyard’s Veteran Representative Ryan Landry.

Mr. Ryan Landry, 5 Kerrie Court, Gales Ferry, Veterans Representative for Ledyard, noted there was a misconception between *Total Disability Individual Unemployability*; and *Permanently and Totally Disabled*. TDIU He explained that those with TDIU cannot work anymore at any Disability Rating. He went on to explain a *Permanently and Totally Disabled Rating* was the Veterans Administration (VA) recognizing that the injuries seen and unseen were not going to improve. He stated they receive Compensation for the injuries and service they provided to their country; and a Pension was for when they retire. He stated this language was in the Public Act, noting that they needed to have a better understanding of the wording;

and they needed to have an open discussion to make a good, educated decision moving forward.

Ms. Kate DiPalma-Herb, 20 August Meadows, Ledyard, thanked the Finance Committee for listening and for their thoughtful considerations of the residents comments during the Finance Committee's March 4, 2026 meeting. She stated she wanted to reiterate the following comment: *Although some Disabled Veterans were able to continue to earn an income, that the income was temporary.* She stated for those with 100% Permanently and Totally Disabled Ratings that the VA has determined that their disabilities were permanent, meaning that they have tried treatments and everything that they can, and they were not going to get any better. She stated there were costs to being a Disabled Veteran, noting just like any other person facing medical issues, noting there were trips to the Emergency Room, medications, having to pay for services they would normally have done themselves before their service connected disabilities impacted their life. She stated there was a cost to being a disabled veteran that goes on forever. She thanked the Town Council's thoughtful consideration of all of the comments people have made, noting that she trusted them to make the right choice for the Veterans of their community.

Mr. Jason Fancher, 18 Cedar Ridge Road, Gales Ferry, stated he served 23-years in the US Navy, with five deployments, two campaigns, and 28-missile down range. He talked about the 21- injuries he sustained during his active duty, noting that he has had the surgery and physical therapy, stating that ten of his disabilities were not going to get any better, and the that they would probably degrade. He explained that each injury had a different Disability Rating noting that combined he received a 100% Permanently and Total Disabled Rating. He stated that it was easy to say; *"We Love Our Veterans; We Take Care of Our Veterans"*, *We Want Veterans in their Community*"; but when the rubber meets the road the first thing the town does was to put those dollars back onto their Disabled Veterans, stating that it was wrong. He stated that he did not like to feel like a Campaign Slogan. He stated if the proposed Median Home Value Cap goes into effect for the Veterans 100% Tax Exemption Program that it would make up about \$200,000 of the lost tax revenue. He stated that he would also like to teleport their Police, and First Responders into the Tax Exempt Program. He stated in the grand scheme of the Town's total \$70,000,000 budget that they were talking about pennies.

Councilor Ryan addressed Mr. Fancher's comment regarding the difference between the 100% tax exemption and the Median House Value Cap. He stated that based on the information the Tax Assessor provided the total loss of tax revenue dedicated to the dwellings and the land associated would be about \$860,000. He stated if the Median Home Value was to go into effect, the dwelling would be exempt from property tax, but they would still pay taxes on the land; and the loss to tax revenue would be about \$166,000, based on the number of Disabled Veterans that qualified for the Tax Exemption Program to-date. He stated the changes in the loss of tax revenue would change by increments depending on whether or not the town modified the program to exempt 2-acres of land with the dwelling.

Mr. Anthony Faieta, 13 Clark Lane, Gales Ferry, stated he was present this evening to address Public Act #24-46; the Optional Provisions; and subsequent Amendments. He noted that recently the Town of Southington faced the same decision that Ledyard was discussing; and he explained that Southington decided to expand the Disabled Property Tax Exemption to include 2-acres of land, without imposing a Cap on the Value. He stated the Town of Southington called it the *"Right Thing to Do"* recognizing the opportunity to support those that have sacrificed for their country. He acknowledged and applauded the Town Council's support for the pending State Legislation Raised House Bill #5407, noting that they were all in agreement that providing full state reimbursement to municipalities for this tax exemption program was the right solution for their town's finances. He urged the Town Council to align their actions with this shared goal. He stated it would be contradictory to Ledyard's Official Position to now impose a Median Home Value Cap, when they were all advocating the state level solution, which would make the Median Home Value Cap unnecessary. He respectfully asked that the Town Council postpone any consideration on the Modification to Cap Public Act #24-46; until the State Legislation was passed, and hopefully Raised House Bill #5407 goes into law. He stated for Disabled Veterans like himself the 100% Tax Exemption was not

a hand-out, noting that it was a lifeline that would fundamentally change their ability to build a stable life after military service. He stated during his 21-years of active duty, his family was required to move every three-years. He stated they never had the chance to fully set down roots. He stated this Disabled Veterans Tax Exemption would make it financially possible for his family to remain in a wonderful town such as Ledyard. He stated it would allow him to provide his two children with something that he could not while on active duty, a permanent home. He stated for the first time they were creating lifelong friendships and have become woven into the fabric of this community. He stated this tax exemption was what keeps his family here, contributing to their town, their schools and their local economy. He stated capping the Tax Exemption Program to the Median Home Value could force families like his to seek affordability elsewhere. He asked the Town Council to wait for the resolution of Raised House Bill #4607; and to follow the compassionate example of Southington, and recognize the true value of this Tax Exemption was in the stable committed families it allows to flourish in their community. Thank you for your time.

Ms. Deborah Edwards, 30 Bluff Road - West, Gales Ferry, attending remotely, via Zoom, stated that she supported the proposed "*Town of Ledyard Resolution Supporting House Bill #5407*" *An Act Concerning State Reimbursement To Municipalities For Revenue Lost Due To The Property Tax Exemption For Veterans With A One Hundred Percent Permanent And Total Disability Rating*" that was on tonight's Agenda; which would support the State's full reimbursement of the Tax Exemption provided in Public Act #24-46. She stated although things looked positive in Hartford with regard to Raised House Bill #5407; that she would still like to see the Town Council approve the proposed Resolution and to send it to Hartford. She stated that she believed that they should support their Veterans, however, she stated that it should be borne by everybody in the State. She noted as mentioned this evening, Ledyard had a strong military community, which puts an extra heavy tax burden on the people who live in town. She commented if the State of Connecticut wanted to do these kinds of tax exemption programs that the State should spread that responsibility across the entire State and let everyone share in that kind of support for their military. Thank you.

Chairman St. Vil thanked the Residents for their comments.

VI. COMMITTEE COMMISSION AND BOARD REPORTS – None.

VII. COMMENTS OF TOWN COUNCILORS

Councilor Buhle, attending remotely noted the following: (1) Fiscal Year 2026- 2027 Budget – Councilor Buhle stated the Finance Committee was well into the Budget Process, noting that they held Budget Work Sessions on March 5, 9, and would be meeting again tomorrow March 12, 2026; (2) Sustainable CT – Councilor Buhle stated today she, Town Staff, and some Sustainable CT Ad Hoc Committee Members attended a "Equity Training" which was very enlightening. She noted the Sustainable CT Ad Hoc Committee was working toward obtaining a Sustainable CT Certification by August, 2026.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry commented on the following: (1) 2026 Black History Month Essay and Poster Contest – Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated this year was the first time she served as a Judge; noting that the experience was motivating; (2) Ledyard Festival of Bands was held on March 5, 2026 and included all of the Schools' Band Programs. Councilor Garcia-Irizarry noted that Middle School Instrumental Music Teacher Mrs. Allinson worked magic especially with the kids that were just learning to play an instrument, noting that she was able to make them sound amazing; (3) CIAC State Open Gymnastics – Councilor Garcia-Irizarry Congratulated Ledyard High School Sophomore Alyssa McLeod for taking first place in both the uneven bars and floor exercise, and for winning the New England All Around in Gymnastics; (4) 2026 CIAC Class M Boys High School State Wrestling Championship – Councilor Garcia-Irizarry Congratulated Ledyard High School Sophomore Lukas Boxley for winning his second straight New England Wrestling Championship at March 7 – 8, 2026 Meet, noting that he was also named the Outstanding Wrestler at the Connecticut State Open earlier in the season. She noted that Lukas did not lose one match this season; (5) CICA Girls Wrestling Championship – Councilor Garcia-Irizarry Congratulated Ledyard High School junior Brooklyn Hepburn for winning her Division at the New England Championship that was held on February 28, 2026; following her ECC Title in the State Championship. She

noted that Brooklyn was coached by her father T.J. Hepburn; (6) Public Comments – Councilor Garcia-Irizarry thanked everyone for speaking during the Public Comment portion of the Town Council Meetings. She noted as she stated at the March 4, 2026 Finance Committee meeting that she appreciated hearing the perspectives and experiences of others, not only from their Disabled Veterans, but from others who have Disabilities that they do not see. She stated that they all need to have more compassion and empathy, and put themselves in other people shoes; (7) Annual Budget Preparation Process – Councilor Garcia-Irizarry noted as Councilor Buhle mentioned earlier this evening the Finance Committee would be holding their last Budget Work Session tomorrow. She encouraged residents to attend the meetings because it would give them an understanding of how the budget works, noting that they review each department’s budget line-by-line and the Department Heads explain the reason for the requested funding.

Councilor Parad commented on the following: (1) Invention Convention at the Gallup Hill School – Councilor Parad stated that this year was the Gallup Hill School’s Invention Convention and that it was also her first year serving as a Judge. She stated it was a great experience noting that the Fourth and Fifth Graders were smart, they were thinking of great ideas, and it was wonderful to see them working through the process of failure and how to get back on the horse again; (2) Ledyard Education Advancement Foundation (LEAF) – Gary Atkinson Imagine Scholarship Fund - Councilor Parad noted to-date they have received five and the cycle had not been closed off yet. She stated that LEAF was trying to fund at least \$10,000 in grant programs; (b) Golf Fundraiser Ticket Sales – Councilor Parad stated the Ticket Sales have not been too good. She noted to enter the contest folks could purchase a \$10.00 Raffle Ticket to win \$600.00 foursome into the Greater Ledyard Open. She stated that this also goes along with the LEARN Scholarship; (c) Pi Day – Councilor Parad announced on Saturday March 26, 2026 all of the Pizza Restaurants in town would be donating 10% of all sales to LEAF. She encouraged residents to support their local businesses, noting by doing so they would be supporting their town’s education; (3) Federal Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) – Councilor Parad stated Physicians use the Guidance of these Committees to determine which vaccines were recommended for each patient and at what time. The Federal Government gutted the ACIP; all the Scientists were fired and replaced with Cronies. She stated many of the Medical Societies were stepping in to give unbiased and scientific information to the Doctors, noting that they were following along with the American Academy of Family Physicians and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Councilor Parad went on to note that the US Preventative Services Council Task Force (USPSTF) which was a Committee made-up of Doctors from different fields was also gutted. She stated that the USPSTF make recommendations to Primary Care Physicians about preventative services that should be done for patients depending on their age, risk factors, etc. She noted Mammograms as an example, stating at one time they said Mammograms should be done starting at age 40; then they changed to age 50; and then they went back to age 40 again, explaining that these changes in the age recommendations were because the literature and techniques continuously change with better equipment and technology, etc. She explained that Mammograms used to be 2-D Images, meaning one picture from the front and one picture from the side. However, she stated with technology they could now take the pictures in 3-D, and they could catch more things. She stated the same was true for Prostate Cancer, noting that the science was continuously changing. She stated it was disheartening to see these things happening at the Federal Level; (4) Veterans – Councilor Parad thanked the Veterans for coming out to speak. She stated that she was part of the Veteran Community, noting that she had a 90% Disability Rating. She stated although she did not give as much as many other Veterans, that she wanted to make sure they received what they needed.

Councilor Barnes commented on the following: (1) Day Light Savings – Councilor Barnes stated with the extra hour of daylight and the snow melting people seem to generally be in a good mood; (2) Annual Budget Preparation - Councilor Barnes stated by all indications the Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget Preparations seemed to be moving in a positive direction. He stated that he was hopeful the proposed Budget would pass at the First Referendum; (3) Raised House Bill #5407 – Councilor Barnes stated he fully supported the Bill and the Disabled Veterans. He shared a personal story about his 100% Permanently and Totally Disability from his Military Service in the Marines. He stated that they were long overdue for

readjusting or calibrating tax exemptions that were provided to Veterans with lesser Disability Ratings. He noted as an example for someone who had a 90% Permanently and Totally Disability Rating would qualify for a \$3,500 reduction in their property value assessment. He stated at the current mil rate that it would be about \$100.00 per year. He stated that he thought they could do more. He stated they had something in-front of them with Public Act #24-46 and Raise House Bill #5407. However, he stated once they completed their work that they had an opportunity to reset values that were set around World War II, stating that they were not keeping up with inflation. He stated that he hoped the State Legislature would pass Raise House Bill #5407 noting that it would be a great relief to the town and to all the Veterans who came out to speak on the issue.

Councilor Brunelle commented on the following: (1) March is Woman's History Month – Councilor Brunelle stated the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion would hold its Second *Linda C. Davis Ledyard Woman of the Year Award*. She stated that the Committee was accepting Nominations from now until the end of the March at: ABru@ledyardct.org. She noted that folks could submit one Nomination per person and that they need to write why they were nominating the person; (2) St. Patrick's Day – March 17, 2026- Councilor Brunelle asked people to party responsibly and to look out for their partners.

Councilor Thompson commented on the following: (1) Public Comments – Councilor Thompson thanked all those who show-up and participate at Town Council Meetings and for speaking. He noted in an episode of West Wing, Actor Martin Sheen in his role as President, stated, “*Decisions were made by those who show-up*”. Councilor Thompson stated it was profoundly important when residents show-up and share their opinions, and tell them what was mattered to them, noting that it was important for the way government runs. He thanked the Veterans for their comments, and for their service to their country, noting that he appreciated and supported them; (2) Deer Strikes – Councilor Thompson stated that he lived in the Highlands and the deer were congregating in the middle of the road. He urged motorists to be careful.

Councilor Ryan commented on the following: (1) Public Attendance – Councilor Ryan stated that he appreciated everyone's attendance at the Town Council Meetings and at their Sub Committee meetings, noting that tonight's turnout was a little smaller than the turnout at the March 4, 2026 Finance Committee Meeting; (2) Local Issues – Councilor Ryan stated that he agreed with Mr. Munger's comments this evening that the Town Council should stay focused on the local issues affecting Ledyard and/or within the State of Connecticut. He stated he would not comment on Federal Issues; unless it was regarding Federal Funding to Ledyard; (3) Veterans Tax Exemption Public Act #24 -46 – Councilor Ryan noted as he stated at the Finance Committee's March 4, 2026 Meeting he did not support any movement on the proposed Ordinance to provide a Median House Value Cap on the Veteran's Tax Exemption Program, until they see what happens in Hartford with Raised House Bill #5407 which would reimburse Municipalities 100% for the loss of taxes as a result of Public Act #24-46. He stated last night they had a Joint Committee Vote, noting that Raised House Bill #5407 was not through the process yet, but that it was a good sign because there was bipartisan support for the House Bill. He stated Raised House Bill #5407 now needed to go through the House and the Senate. He stated that he hoped that it would go through quickly because the Town was in their Annual Budget Process and it would be good to have some clarity on the expected State Revenues. He stated when it comes time to act on the proposed Ordinance that he would propose that the Finance Committee have a Work Session with Ledyard's Veteran Representative Ryan Landry, because he would be able to provide some insight on things they should consider; (4) Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Annual Budget Process – Councilor Ryan stated they were in a better starting point than they were last year at this point in the budget process. He noted the March 5th and 9th Budget Work Sessions stating that the General Government Department Heads' have come in with very tight budgets which were about a 2.35% increase. He stated the last Budget Work Session was scheduled for tomorrow, noting that the Finance Committee would use the rest of March to make adjustments to the proposed Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget before presenting the proposed budget to the residents. He stated per the Town Charter they had to hold a Public Hearing no later than the fourth Monday in April, and the Annual Town Meeting was required to be on the third Monday in May, with the

Referendum on the Voting Machines the following day (May 18 & 19, 2026); (5) Budget Work Session Schedule – Councilor Ryan noted the Town Council received an email from a Resident asking the reason the Budget Work Sessions were not held after the work day. He stated that he has also asked the same question in the past, noting that the Department Heads they rely on to explain their budgets can attend the Budget Work Sessions during their workday. He stated to have the Department Heads attend the Budget Work Sessions after hours would involve overtime, etc. He stated as Civil Servants the Finance Committee was doing their best to accommodate the Town Staff. He stated that he did not know if the resident was attending tonight’s meeting, noting that he planned to follow-up with the Mayor on this question. Councilor Buhle noted as Finance Committee Chairman, she respond to Ms. Phillips question regarding the Budget Work Session schedule. It was noted that Ms. Phillips was attending tonight’s meeting via Zoom; (6) St. Patrick’s Day – Councilor Ryan noted as Councilor Brunelle mentioned earlier, he also hoped everyone would be careful; and would conduct themselves responsibly, and stay safe; (7) Road Safety – Councilor Ryan noted with the warmer weather folks were getting out on the roadways with motorcycles, bicycles, walking, etc. He urged motorist to keep their eye out for others on the roadways.

Chairman St. Vil commented on the following: (1) United States of America – Chairman St. Vil stated: *“There is no Country like the United States of America”*. He stated when he was growing up this was what his Dad would tell him. He went on to note as a kid that he would see his Dad being discriminated because he of the color of his skin; and yet his Dad would say *“There is no Country like the United States of America”*. Chairman St. Vil stated because his Dad believed this to be true; that his Dad and his Mother did not teach him their native languages of French noting his Dad was from Hati; and his Mother did not teach him Spanish. He stated the reason they did not teach him their native languages was because *“There is no Country like the United States of America”*. He stated when he challenged his Dad asking how he could say: *“There is no Country like the United States of America”* when people were not treating his Dad fairly. He noted his Dad’s response was *“There was so much good in the worst of us; and so much bad in the best of us”*. He stated what his Dad was trying to teach him was that you cannot judge a book by its cover; don’t think that by a single interaction, or a set phrases, that he could know the experiences that Joe or Johnney went through, because hid did not; and by doing so he would limit himself and his opportunities. Chairman St. Vil stated he has gone through life never having seen his Dad’s native land, or going to the house his Dad grew up in, noting he has gone through life being American. He stated that his Dad brainwashed him telling him that he was *American* and that he was no different than anyone else in this country. Chairman St. Vil stated because of this he has had a great life. He stated he has built nuclear powered submarines; he worked on components that go into nuclear powered submarines, he worked on reactors, and he was currently building airplanes. He stated he raised three beautiful, wonderful kids that were out on their own and contributing to society. He stated what a blessed life he has had; and how right his Dad was; *“There is no Country like the United States of America”*. He stated as 50-year old man he has come to realize that the ability to have the experiences he has had; and the ability cease life in the way he has been able to, was because of the contributions from other people that have given things that he could never give. He stated because of their Veterans like those who were sitting on this Town Council, and were in tonight’s audience, that he was able to have a great and incredible life. He stated that all this has enabled him to serve as Chairman of this Town Council, and pontificate, but when you turn on the news, there were people who were getting bombs dropped on them left and right. He stated there were people right now who were in harms way, and they were not having conversations like the conversations they were having in this Chamber this evening. He stated the difference between what he has experienced and those who were in harm’s way, was the people he described this evening, and it was their Veterans who have put themselves in harm’s way, that take the fight to them, so that he could have the rights, and the ability to live the life that he lives. He stated that he wanted to say, *“Thank you”*, looking at each of the Veterans in the Chambers, Chairman St. Vil repeatedly said, *“Thank you”*; *“Thank you”*, *“Thank you”*, thanking each one; (2) Mr. Munger’s comments – Chairman St. Vil stated in his role on the Town Council that he tries to be methodical because he values this position and the responsibility, noting that it was precious to him. He noted Mr. Munger’s comment earlier this evening (V. Residents and Property Owners see above) in which Mr. Munger alluded to him not handling this role as precious as he should have. He stated he would like to have a Zoom call with Mr. Munger so that they

could watch the video of the February 25, 2026 meeting together and to listen what was said; and talk through it together. He stated that maybe he handled the situation wrong, and maybe he owed Mr. Munger an apology. He stated that he would like for them to have an open dialogue and to handle things like adults, to find a common ground to move forward; and that maybe they would agree to disagree.

VIII. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

MOTION to approve the Regular Minutes of February 25, 2026:
Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Garcia-Irizarry

VOTE: 8 – 0 Approved and so declared

IX. COMMUNICATIONS

Chairman St. Vil noted that a Communications List has been provided on the meeting portal for tonight's meeting, and he noted there were referrals were listed.

X. FISCAL YEAR 2026/2027 BUDGET UPDATE

Chairman St. Vil stated that he has included "*Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Update*" as a Standing Item on the Agenda, because he wanted the Annual Budget Process to have the focus it deserved, and to keep residents up-to-date. He stated this Agenda Item included the following:

- ❖ ***Outline of the Budget Process with key dates for Residents*** – Chairman St. Vil stated that this was an Informational Item.

Chairman St. Vil stated the following two items were for discussion, and consideration for the Town Council to vote on. He continued by presenting the following:

1. ***Connecticut Education Cost Sharing (ECS) Draft Letter*** – Chairman St. Vil stated the ECS Funding was the primary way the State helps to fund Public Education in their communities. He stated the ECS Formula has not been updated in a meaningful way since 2013. Meanwhile the cost to provide education has continued to rise with inflation, and with Unfunded State Mandates; leaving towns like Ledyard to make up the difference; and that pressure falls onto local property taxpayers. He stated the purpose of the draft letter was to tell their Legislative Delegation that the Ledyard Town Council supports efforts to modernize the ECS Formula so State Education Funding would better reflect today's costs and gives municipalities a fair shot at balancing their budgets. He stated that Councilor Garcia-Irizarry brought this idea forward, noting that it was a good way for them to make sure that Ledyard's voice was part of the broader conversation in Hartford.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated many of the School Programs depend on the ECS Funding, noting as Chairman St. Vil mentioned the ECS Funding has not been updated since 2013. She explained had they updated ECS Formula appropriately to follow inflation during the past 13-years that they would have had \$900 million more. She also noted the State Revenues have significantly increased; and therefore, it was time for the State to correct the ECS Formula. She stated everyone in Public Education should receive the same level of education, noting that it should not be dependent on municipalities property taxes; because some municipalities do not have the Grand List resources that other municipalities have. She stated the State was mandated to provide equal education to everyone of its residents.

Councilor Ryan stated he agreed with the sending the proposed ***Connecticut Education Cost Sharing (ECS) Letter*** as presented in the draft this evening. He stated the ECS Formula was complicated, and he explained the *foundation amount*, which was the base amount that each municipality received for each student has not changed. He stated there were some additions to the *foundation amount* that have changed over the last 13-years which was based on a mix of ratios such as student demographics and other things. However, he stated the *foundation amount* (base amount) which was about \$11,000 per student has not changed; and it was time for that to be updated, noting that it would help every municipality. He stated as with Raised House Bill #5407 (Reimburse Municipalities for Veteran Tax Exemption) updating the ECS

Formula would help allow them to deal with the many State Unfunded Mandates especially for education. He stated that he supported sending the proposed **Connecticut Education Cost Sharing (ECS) Letter** as written. He suggested in addition to State Senator Cathy Osten and Representative Howard, that the letter also be addressed to **Representatives Lanoue, and Pemberton**.

Councilor Buhle stated that she supported sending the proposed **Connecticut Education Cost Sharing (ECS) Letter** as written. She commented on the message they make when the Letter comes from Chairman St. Vil on behalf of the Town's Legislative Body. She stated as Councilor Garica-Irizarry mentioned, had the ECS Formula kept up with inflation, that it would have been \$900 million higher for the 169 towns across the state. She also noted during that same timeframe the State has Annually been collecting \$8 Billion more in revenue than the amount they were collecting in 2013, when they last updated the ECS Formula. She stated this was a situation where the State was not adjusting the ECS Formula and each town having to adjust and pick-up the inflationary costs.

Councilor Parad questioned whether other towns were also sending similar letters; and if not whether they may be inclined to join Ledyard and also send letters to their State Delegation to support updating the ECS Formula. Councilor Garica-Irizarry stated she did not know whether other towns were sending similar letters regarding the need to update the ECS Formula. She explained this idea came from Councilor Ryan's suggestion to send his proposed Resolution regarding the *financial burden the "public benefit" charges on electric bills* to their State Delegation last year. Councilor Brunelle stated that State Representative Nick Menapace (37th District, serving East Lyme, Salem, and Montville) has done a series of short videos about the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) Formula, therefore, he has been talking about the ECS Formula in Hartford. Councilor Ryan stated that he did not see why other towns would not want to join Ledyard on this initiative, noting that he would support sending the letter to neighboring municipalities to make them aware of what Ledyard was doing

Chairman St. Vil stated in talking with State Senator Cathy Osten about the outdated ECS Formula and the need for the State to keep up with inflation, that she stated the Town Council had a responsibility to advocate for the town.



TOWN OF LEDYARD CONNECTICUT

Chairman Gary St. Vil

741 Colonel Ledyard Highway
Ledyard, Connecticut 06339-1551
(860) 464-3203
towncouncil@ledyardct.org

March XX, 2026

DRAFT: ~~3/10/2026~~ 3/11/2026

Senator Cathy Osten
Representative Gregory Howard
Representative Larry Pemberton
Representative Brian Lanoue
Legislative Office Building
300 Capitol Avenue; Room 2700
Hartford, Connecticut 06106-1591

Dear Senator Osten and Representatives Howard, **Lanoue, and Pemberton**:

On behalf of the Ledyard Town Council, I write to express our strong support for legislative efforts to modernize and strengthen Connecticut's Education Cost Sharing (ECS) formula.

Public education is one of the most important investments we make in our communities. However, the ECS foundation amount has not been meaningfully updated since 2013. During that time, inflation and rising operational costs have significantly increased the true cost of educating students. Municipal leaders and policy organizations estimate that if ECS funding had simply kept pace with inflation, the State of Connecticut would be investing roughly \$900 million more annually in public education than it does today.

Because the ECS formula has not kept pace with economic realities, the financial burden has increasingly shifted onto municipalities and local property taxpayers. As a result, towns like Ledyard are placed in the difficult position of balancing responsible fiscal stewardship with our obligation to support strong schools. Local governments have limited revenue options, and property taxes can only sustain so much of the growing cost of public education.

In Ledyard, education represents the largest portion of our municipal budget. Our community strongly values the quality of our schools and the opportunities they provide for our students but maintaining that standard while keeping property taxes affordable for residents becomes increasingly difficult when state education funding does not reflect current economic realities.

This issue has become a recurring challenge for municipalities across Connecticut. Each year, Boards of Education must develop budgets to meet student needs, while municipal leaders must simultaneously ensure that local taxes remain affordable for residents. When state funding formulas fail to reflect current economic conditions, it creates unnecessary tension in the local budget process and places additional pressure on municipal taxpayers.

The Ledyard Town Council believes that modernizing the ECS formula is an important step toward restoring balance to Connecticut's education funding system. Adjusting the ECS foundation to better reflect current costs, and ensuring the formula remains responsive to inflation over time, would provide municipalities with greater predictability and stability in the budget process while continuing to support high-quality public education.

We respectfully urge the General Assembly to continue pursuing reforms that strengthen the ECS program and ensure that state education funding reflects the true cost of educating Connecticut's students.

We welcome the opportunity to work collaboratively with the legislature to modernize the ECS formula so that municipalities can provide high-quality education without over-reliance on local property taxes.

Thank you for your continued service to the residents of Ledyard and the State of Connecticut.

Sincerely,
Gary St. Vil
Town Council Chairman

cc: Senator Martin Looney, President Pro Tempore, Connecticut State Senate
Representative Matthew Ritter, Speaker of the House
Senator Doug McCrory, Co-Chair, Education Committee
Representative Jennifer Leeper, Co-Chair, Education Committee
Representative Nick Gauthier
Mayor Fred Allyn III, Town of Ledyard
Jennifer Reguin, Chair, Ledyard Board of Education
Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM)

- ❖ MOTION to approve the proposed letter regarding Connecticut Education Cost Sharing (ECS) Letter to support legislative efforts to modernize and strengthen Connecticut's Education Cost Sharing (ECS) formula, as discussed and updated in the March 11, 2026 draft.
Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Parad
Discussion: See above.

VOTE: 8 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT:	APPROVED 8 – 0
MOVER:	Tim Ryan, Town Councilor.
SECONDER:	Adrienne Parad, Town Councilor
AYES:	Barnes, Brunelle, Buhle, Garcia-Irizarry, Parad, Ryan, St. Vil, Thompson
EXCUSED:	Lamb

2. Discuss Draft Resolution Supporting House Bill #5407 *"An Act Concerning State Reimbursement To Municipalities For Revenue Lost Due To The Property Tax Exemption For Veterans With A One Hundred Percent Permanent And Total Disability Rating"*.

Chairman St. Vil noted the comments and discussion regarding Public Act #24-46 *"Providing a 100% Tax Exemption for Permanently and Totally Disabled Veterans"* that occurred at the Finance Committee's March 4, 2026 meeting and again this evening. He stated in accordance with Raised House Bill #5407 the State would reimburse Municipalities for the revenue lost due to the property tax exemption for veterans with a 100% Permanent and Total Disability Rating. He stated the proposed *"Town of Ledyard Resolution Supporting House Bill #5407 'An Act Concerning State Reimbursement To Municipalities For Revenue Lost Due To The Property Tax Exemption For Veterans With A One Hundred Percent Permanent And Total Disability Rating'"* was drafted to express the Town's support for the Legislation to approve Raised House Bill #5407.

Councilor Ryan stated that he supported the proposed Resolution, and he suggested they include the following language to strengthen the urgency for the State Legislation to act expeditiously on Raised House Bill #5407 relative to Municipal Budgets:

"WHEREAS, the Town of Ledyard is required, by charter, to hold a public hearing on the municipal budget prior to the last Monday in April, develop and file said budget with accurate revenue projects with the Town Clerk by the first Monday in May, and subsequently adopt a final municipal budget by the fourth Monday in June;"

Councilor Ryan suggested the language he proposed (above) be inserted into the draft Resolution as the last *"Whereas"* before the first *"Now, Therefore, Be it Resolved"*.

Councilor Parad stated the first *"Now, Therefore, Be it Resolved"* included the following sentence and she asked Councilor Ryan whether it satisfied his concern for urgency: *"...urges the Connecticut General Assembly to pass this legislation during the current legislative session."*

Councilor Ryan stated that he did not know when the Legislation Session ended noting Ledyard's Annual Budget Process.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry noted that the State Legislative Session was scheduled to end on May 6, 2026; and she stated even if the Legislature approved Raised House Bill #5407 on May 1st, it was still too late for Ledyard's Budget Process. She noted that Ledyard needed to present its first draft of the Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget at a Public Hearing no later than the fourth Monday in April; and they had to file their final draft of the proposed Budget with the Town Clerk's Office on the first Monday in May (May 4, 2026), which would be the Budget that was presented to the voters at the Annual Town Meeting on third Monday in May (May 18, 2026) that would adjourn to the Referendum the following day (Tuesday- May 19, 2026).

Councilor Buhle stated she agreed with the comments regarding the urgency for the State Legislature to act on Raised House Bill #5407; and the Town's Annual Budget Process; noting if the State was going to reimburse the Town for the loss of \$700,000 in tax revenue that it would make a big difference. However, she stated the town does not set the Mil Rate until sometime in June; explaining that the Townspeople would be voting on the expenditures that was created based on the needs of the town. She stated should State announce that they were going to reimburse Municipalities for the loss of tax revenue provided by the Permanently and Totally Disabled Veterans Program that it was not going to change their expenditure budget. She stated that she appreciated the language in the accompanying cover letter, however, she stated that it was not going to change the State's timeline or course of action, noting that they were going to vote on Raised House Bill #5407 when they were going to vote on it; and that the Town would know those results by May 6, 2026. She stated the

Town was asking that the State Legislature address Raised House Bill #5407 in this Legislative Session.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated that they were going to create an expenditure budget based on their expected revenues. Therefore, she stated they may cut a program based on their expected revenues, explaining that they would have to make their decisions based on what they knew was certain.

Councilor Ryan stated including the language to provide the sense of urgency was not necessarily because he thought that it would change how the State Legislature moved, but that it was something that the Town Council could hold up to their residents and say that when they sent this Resolution to their Legislators, for their support, that they stated it was an urgent need, and that they were holding their Legislators accountable for acting in accordance with the town's needs, because they were elected by Ledyard residents to support their community.

Councilor Brunelle stated that the proposed Resolution should include that acting on Raised House Bill #4607 was an urgent need for their community.

Councilor Barnes stated that he also agreed that the proposed Resolution should include that acting on Raised House Bill #4607 was an urgent need for their community. He stated although Councilor Buhle's comments were right, noting that she understood the State's process, that if the State Legislature moved forward on Raised House Bill #5407 before Ledyard's Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget Public Hearing, that was planned for Monday, April 20, 2026, that it would be great to be able to share that news with their residents. He suggested in asking their State Legislators to act with a sense of urgency that they also ask that they reach a resolution prior to April 20, 2026.

Councilor Buhle stated that she was going to ask that they move the Public Hearing from April 20, 2026 to April 21, 2026 noting that per Chapter VII, Section 5; they were required to have the Public Hearing before the last Monday in April; which for this year would be April 27, 2026. She stated that she did not see the harm in including a date in the proposed Resolution; however, she did not think it was going to change the timeline of State Legislature. Councilor Barnes stated: "*You can't have a dream come true, if you don't first have a dream.*" Councilor Buhle questioned whether that was a Walt Disney quote? Councilor Barnes stated the quote was from US General Dunford.

The Town Council agreed to update the Resolution Cover Letter to be addressed to the following: Senator Osten and Representatives Howard, *Lanoué, and Pemberton* as a "*friendly amendment*":

- ❖ MOTION to adopt a proposed Res#003-2026/Mar xx "*Resolution Supporting House Bill #5407 "An Act Concerning State Reimbursement To Municipalities For Revenue Lost Due To The Property Tax Exemption For Veterans With A One Hundred Percent Permanent And Total Disability Rating"*"; as presented in the ~~March 7, 2026~~ draft; and updated on March 11, 2026 to include the following language to be the last "*Whereas*" before the first "*Now, Therefore, Be it Resolved*" as discussed at the March 11, 2026 meeting:

"WHEREAS, the Town of Ledyard is required, by charter, to hold a public hearing on the municipal budget prior to the last Monday in April, develop and file said budget with accurate revenue projects with the Town Clerk by the first Monday in May, and subsequently adopt a final municipal budget by the fourth Monday in June;"

DRAFT: 3/7/2026 3/11/2026
Res: 003-2026/Mar XX

TOWN OF LEDYARD
RESOLUTION SUPPORTING HOUSE BILL #5407
"AN ACT CONCERNING STATE REIMBURSEMENT TO MUNICIPALITIES FOR REVENUE LOST DUE TO THE PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION FOR VETERANS WITH A ONE HUNDRED PERCENT PERMANENT AND TOTAL DISABILITY RATING".

WHEREAS, the Town of Ledyard proudly supports the men and women who have served in the United States Armed Forces and recognizes the extraordinary sacrifices made by veterans who have sustained service-connected permanent and total disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Ledyard strongly supports the property tax exemption established by Public Act 24-46 and believes that veterans who have sustained permanent and total service-connected disabilities deserve meaningful recognition for their sacrifices; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Ledyard is proud to be home to many active-duty service members, veterans, and military families due to our proximity to Naval Submarine Base New London and other regional military installations; and

WHEREAS, Public Act 24-46, implemented on October 1, 2024, established a property tax exemption for veterans who have been determined by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to have a 100% permanent and total service-connected disability; and

WHEREAS, the fiscal impact of this exemption is currently borne entirely by municipalities, resulting in a reduction in local property tax revenue and placing additional financial pressure on municipal budgets and local taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, Raised House Bill #5407, “*An Act Concerning State Reimbursement to Municipalities for Revenue Lost Due to the Property Tax Exemption for Veterans with a One Hundred Percent Permanent and Total Disability Rating,*” proposes to establish a mechanism for the full reimbursement of municipalities for the revenue losses attributable to this exemption; and

WHEREAS, providing state reimbursement would ensure that the cost of honoring Connecticut’s most severely disabled veterans is shared equitably across the State of Connecticut rather than borne solely by the municipalities in which those veterans reside; *and*

WHEREAS, the Town of Ledyard is required, by charter, to hold a public hearing on the municipal budget prior to the last Monday in April, develop and file said budget with accurate revenue projects with the Town Clerk by the first Monday in May, and subsequently adopt a final municipal budget by the fourth Monday in June;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Ledyard Town Council hereby expresses its strong support for Raised House Bill #5407 and respectfully urges the Connecticut General Assembly to pass this legislation during the current legislative session.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Ledyard Town Council calls upon the Governor of the State of Connecticut and the Connecticut General Assembly to work collaboratively with municipalities to ensure that programs designed to support disabled veterans are funded in a fair and sustainable manner.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Council expresses its appreciation to the members of Connecticut’s Veterans and Military Affairs Committee for their continued work on behalf of Connecticut’s veteran community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town Council Clerk is directed to transmit a copy of this resolution to Governor Ned Lamont, Senator Martin Looney, President Pro Tempore of the Senate, Speaker of the House Matt Ritter, Senator Cathy Osten, Senator Martha Marx, Senator Anthony Nolan, Representative Brian Lanoue, Representative Greg Howard, Representative Larry Pemberton, the Connecticut General Assembly Veterans’ Affairs Committee, and the Connecticut General Assembly Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee to convey the Town of Ledyard’s position on this matter.

Adopted by the Ledyard Town Council on: _____

Fred Allyn, III, Mayor

Gary St. Vil, Chairman

Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Garcia-Irizarry

Discussion: See above.

VOTE: 8 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT:	APPROVED 8 – 0
MOVER:	Tim Ryan, Town Councilor.
SECONDER:	Carmen Garcia-Irizarry, Town Councilor
AYES:	Barnes, Brunelle, Buhle, Garcia-Irizarry, Parad, Ryan, St. Vil, Thompson
EXCUSED:	Lamb

- ❖ MOTION to approve the Veterans Tax Relief Cover Letter to accompany the “*Resolution Supporting House Bill #5407 "An Act Concerning State Reimbursement To Municipalities For Revenue Lost Due To The Property Tax Exemption For Veterans With A One Hundred Percent Permanent And Total Disability Rating"*” to include Representatives Lanoue and Pemberton in the Address line, as updated on March 11, 2026 (see above discussion regarding the Resolution):



TOWN OF LEDYARD CONNECTICUT

741 Colonel Ledyard Highway
Ledyard, Connecticut 06339-1551
(860) 464-3203
towncouncil@ledyardct.org

March xx, 2026

DRAFT 3/11/2026

Senator Martin Looney, President of the Senate
Legislative Office Building
300 Capitol Avenue; Room 3300
Hartford, Connecticut 06106-1591

Senator Cathy Osten
Legislative Office Building
300 Capitol Avenue; Room 2700
Hartford, Connecticut 06106-1591

Dear Senator Looney, Senator Osten, and Representatives Howard, ***Pemberton, and Lanoue:***

On behalf of the Ledyard Town Council, we write to transmit Resolution #003-2026/Mar 11(a), adopted by the Ledyard Town Council, expressing our support for Raised House Bill #5407, “*An Act Concerning State Reimbursement to Municipalities for Revenue Lost Due to the Property Tax Exemption for Veterans with a One Hundred Percent Permanent and Total Disability Rating.*”

The Town of Ledyard proudly supports the men and women who have served in the United States Armed Forces and especially those veterans who have sustained permanent and total service-connected disabilities in defense of our nation. Public Act #24-46 represents an important recognition of those sacrifices, and our community strongly supports the intent of the exemption established under that legislation.

As a neighboring community to Naval Submarine Base New London and other regional military installations, Ledyard is home to many active-duty service members, veterans, and military families who contribute greatly to the fabric of our town. We remain deeply committed to supporting those who have served our country.

At the same time, the fiscal impact of this exemption is currently borne entirely by municipalities. As the number of qualifying veterans increases, the resulting loss of local property tax revenue places increasing pressure on municipal budgets and local taxpayers.

Raised House Bill #5407 provides a responsible and balanced solution by establishing a mechanism for the full reimbursement of municipalities for revenue losses attributable to the exemption. This approach ensures that Connecticut’s commitment to its most severely disabled veterans remains strong while also ensuring that the cost of that commitment is shared equitably across the state.

The Ledyard Town Council respectfully urges the Connecticut General Assembly to support Raised House Bill #5407 during the current legislative session.

Should you have any questions or wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Fred Allyn, III, Mayor

Gary St. Vil, Chairman

cc: Senator Anthony Nolan
Senator Martha Marx

Representative Greg Howard
Representative Larry Pemberton
Representative Brian Lanoue
Courtney Cullinan, Chief of Staff
Members of the Veterans and Military Affairs Committee

Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Brunelle

Discussion: See above.

VOTE: 8 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT:	APPROVED 8 – 0
MOVER:	Tim Ryan, Town Councilor.
SECONDER:	April Brunelle, Town Councilor
AYES:	Barnes, Brunelle, Buhle, Garcia-Irizarry, Parad, Ryan, St. Vil, Thompson
EXCUSED:	Lamb

X. COUNCIL SUB COMMITTEE, LIAISON REPORTS

Administration Committee

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated the Administration Committee met earlier this evening they addressed the following. (1) Proposed “*Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission*” - Councilor Garcia-Irizarry noted the Committee made some final minor adjustments to the Ordinance in preparation for the March 25, 2026 Public Hearing; (2) Finalized updates to the Res#001-202/Feb 22 “*Resolution Establishing Administrator Department Head Benefits*” which Human Resources Christine Dias would review with the Department Heads, before the Administration Committee moves the proposal forward to the Town Council; (3) Approved to forward a proposed “*Resolution Establishing An Ad Hoc Committee to Evaluate The Separation of the Planning Commission & Zoning Commission*”; (4) Proposed Amendments to Ordinance #300-029 (rev. 2) “*An Ordinance Regarding Control of Alcoholic Beverages at Town of Ledyard Facilities*”; and (5) Addressed a number of New Appointments and Reappointments to the town’s committees/commissions/boards that would be presented at the Town Council’s March 25, 2026 meeting.

Community Relations Committee for Diversity Equity & Inclusion

Councilor Brunelle stated the Committee’s next meeting has been scheduled for March 18, 2026. She noted the Committee finished up their Black History Month Program and would be

working on the Linda C. Davis Woman of the Year Award, noting that March was Woman’s History Month. She stated those wishing to nominate someone should send their entrees to her at ABru@ledyardct.org, noting that they need to include a paragraph supporting the reason for their nomination.

Finance Committee

Councilor Buhle reported on the following: (1) Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget Work Sessions were continuing noting that the Finance Committee met with Department Heads on March 5 & March 9, 2026, and that their last Budget Work Session with Department Heads was scheduled for tomorrow March 12, 2026. She stated that the Finance Committee would then work to prepare a draft budget for the Town Council to consider to forward to the residents for comment at the April 21, 2026 Public Hearing; and (2) 2027 Federal Congressionally Spending Grant Funding Applications were due on April 6, 2026. Councilor Buhle stated during the Budget Work Sessions some ideas for this Grant Funding were discussed, noting that one of the ideas for the use of the funding was the purchase/update of the Body Worn and In-Car Camera Equipment for the Police Department.

Chairman St. Vil stated there was the potential for Ledyard to seek a \$10,000 State Grant to support Youth Activities. He stated that he planned to contact Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Director Scott Johnson, Jr., to see if there were any programs that could benefit from the infusion of funding; and he asked if anyone was aware of youth programs that could benefit from this Grant Opportunity to let him know.

Land Use/Planning/Public Works Committee

Councilor Thompson stated the LUPPW Committee had a short meeting on March 2, 2026 noting that they discussed the following: (1) Blight Reports – Councilor Thompson noted that

the LUPPW Committee agreed to remove the Blight Report Updates from their Agendas going forward. He explained that overseeing Blighted Properties was a function of the Land Use Department; (2) Spicer Homestead Ruins Historic Preservation – Councilor Thompson noted the Historic District Commission has been working to prepare the required reports; and (3) Lease for the Clark Farm Property – Councilor Thompson stated that the LUPPW Committee incorporated some changes to the Clark Farm property, noting that it has been suggested the Clark Farm be used to grow something that was low maintenance and was not invasive. He noted the draft Lease was now being reviewed by the Mayor.

Chairman St. Vil noted during his meeting with Mayor Allyn, III, earlier today that he mentioned that the Agricultural Commission suggested some language for the Clark Farm Lease. Councilor Thompson explained that the draft Clark Farm Lease that was forwarded to the Mayor included the Agricultural Commission’s suggested language.

Liaison Reports

Beautification Committee

Councilor Brunelle noted that the Beautification Committee met on March 3, 2026 and discussed the following: (1) Earth Day Events scheduled for April which may include things such as: Trash to Treasure Contest; and Fill the Dumpster Day. Councilor Brunelle stated the Beautification Committee was requesting ideas for Earth Day, noting that residents could vote for suggested ideas or submit their own ideas on-line.

Ledyard Farmers Market Committee

Councilor Brunelle stated the Farmers Market met on March 4, 2026 and discussed the following: (1) Vendor Applications; (2) Creating more space at the Market to provide room for all the Vendors interested in participating in the Market this summer.

Board of Education

Councilor Barnes reported on the following: (1) State Grant Reimbursement for School Projects - Councilor Barnes noted at the Finance Committee’s March 4, 2026 meeting Mayor Allyn, III shared concerns that the State Grant Funding for Board of Education Projects occasionally does not in as timely as they want. He explained that the bills come-in and the town pays the bills, without the having the received the State Grant Reimbursement. Councilor Barnes stated in a conversation with School Superintendent Jason Hartling that he

indicated that the Board of Education cannot make the State pay any faster than how they pay; but that the Board of Education was committed to watching the State Grant Reimbursements as closely as they can. He stated that Mr. Hartling and Finance Director Ken Knight were prepared to respond to any questions regarding the State Grant Reimbursement; and (2) Request for Proposals (RFP) *Facilities Assessment Study for the High School* – Councilor Barnes noted on Monday, March 2, 2026 School Superintendent Jason Hartling issued the RFP for the Facilities Condition Assessment Study for the High School. He explained that the Assessment Study would provide guidance such as not to replace the windows if they were going to do something different.

Permanent Municipal Building Committee

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated the PMBC met on March 9, 2026 reviewed and approved a number of invoices for payment – Councilor Garcia-Irizarry explained that the PMBC did not move forward on the STV Invoices because they wanted to look at the Projects’ budget to make sure the Projects’ have not gone over budget.

XI. MAYOR’S REPORT

Mayor Allyn was unable to attend due to another commitment. Councilor Brunelle read his Report as follows: (1) Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget – The Mayor’s proposed Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget in the combined total amount of \$73,810,669; an increase of \$3,434,407; or 4.88% over the current year’s (fy 25/26) budget was submitted on Monday, March 2, 2026 in accordance with the Chapter VII; Section 3. The Budget Increase Breakdowns, exclusive of

the Healthcare Expenses and Capital Expenses were as follows: (a) +2.35% General Government; (b) +3.63% Board of Education (c) +13.5% Healthcare Expenses (Combined Board of Education and General Government). This would require +0.89 mil increase bringing the Mil Rate to the adjusted 26.67; and included using 1-mil from Mil Rate Stabilization Fund. The Town has budgeted using funding from this non-tax revenue fund (Mil Rate Stabilization Fund) for each of the past four years but have not had to use this funding, primarily because the revenues came in higher than projected each of those fiscal years. Some State Revenues and some Local Revenues (Land Use Permit Revenues) were difficult to project. Also Interest Income Revenue was directly dependent upon the Federal Funds Rate, which may be subject to change as many as eight times per year, based on the national economic picture. For that reason, the Mayor's Office always errs on the side of caution with interest income. This year, Healthcare was being presented as a separate line because the Town has little to no control over this necessary expense. Ledyard was part of a smaller pool of 12-towns that have better than average claims ratings, however, insurance was still extremely expensive. In the following Fiscal Year 2027/2028 the Capital Budget would also be presented as a separate budget for fairness and transparency; as the Capital Budget was a town-wide scope; (2) Winter Operations Budget (fy 25/26) – The Public Works Over-Time (O/T) expenses were impacted again this weekend with 7 crew members called-in for overnight hours on March 4, 2026 due to flash freezing, post rain. The roads were treated in advance, but the rain negated much of the salt treatment. Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin has updated the Spending Chart and trajectory which would be shared with the Town Council. This year they were tracking close to Fiscal Year 2014/2015, which was Ledyard's most expensive winter in the last 10-fiscal years. The Town was able to get salt from the Providence Port, as the town's salt supply neared depletion, but the salt was "dirty" and they were not inclined to purchase salt from Providence again because there were numerous scraps of tarp in the loads that clogged their spreaders; (3) Mohegan Pequot Bridge – Mayor Allyn attended a meeting with the Mohegan Tribe on March 4, 2026. The adjacent communities were working towards a long-term solution for Mohegan Pequot Bridge because the bridge was inadequate for the redevelopment of the former Norwich State Hospital Property as well as the influx of Electric Boat/General Dynamics Employees; (4) Pequot Fund – Mayor Allyn submitted Written Testimony in support of Senate Bill #388 which would effectively return the Mashantucket Pequot - Mohegan Fund to its original formula to distribute 85% of the funds received to the Municipalities. Over time the Municipal Allocation has been eroded to the point where it eventually flipped to about only 20% being distributed Municipalities, with the State retaining 80%. That was not the intent of the Pequot Fund when it was established.

Councilor Ryan addressed the Mayor's Report regarding the proposed Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget relative to the value of a mil; and the use of the Mil Rate Stabilization Fund. He stated after the 2025 Property Revaluation the Equalized Mil Rate was reduced from the current 37.14 to 25.78 mils, keeping all things equal. He stated that one-mil was now valued at: \$1,854,535, and he stated since he has been serving on the Town Council that this was largest amount they have allocated from the Mil Rate Stabilization Fund; explaining to provide some perspective that \$1,854,535 was about half the value of the Mil Rate Stabilization Fund Balance.

Questions to the Mayor: - None.

XII. OLD BUSINESS

1. Continued discussion and possible action on the Town Council's "Goals Letter"

Chairman St. Vil noted that he met with Mayor Allyn, III, earlier today. He stated that he needed to add the Mayor's comments as well as the Councilors' comments from their February 25, 2026 meeting. He stated that he hoped to have the letter ready for the Town Council's review at their March 25, 2025 meeting.

RESULT: CONTINUED

Next Meeting 3/25/2026 :7:00 p.m.

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

Finance Committee

- 1. MOTION to adopt a proposed “Resolution Authorizing The Abatement Delinquent Property Taxes For The Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc., ” as presented in the draft dated January 15, 2026.

Res. 003-2026/Mar xx (b)

A RESOLUTION
AUTHORIZING THE ABATEMENT
DELINQUENT PROPERTY TAXES
FOR THE AVALONIA LAND CONSERVANCY, INC.

WHEREAS: Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc., paid \$1,120.72 for property taxes on October 27, 2025 at the time of purchase; and have been billed \$3,098.96 for property taxes due on January 1,2026; and

WHEREAS: Avalonia Land Conservancy is a non-profit Organization; and

WHEREAS: The Town of Ledyard has granted Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc., tax-exempt status pursuant to Connecticut General Statute §12-81b; 12-81dd;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the delinquent property taxes, including interest late fees billed to Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc., for property located at 154 Stoddards, Wharf Road, Gales Ferry, Connecticut are to be abated.

Adopted by the Ledyard Town Council on: _____

Gary St. Vil, Chairman

The Resolution was the mechanism to waive or write off the taxes that were already due.

Connecticut General Statutes 12-81dd enables conservation properties to be tax exempt with the adoption of an Ordinance by the Municipalities Legislative Body (Town Council).

At the time when Avalonia Land Conservancy acquired property located at 154 Stoddards Wharf Road, Gales Ferry on October 27, 2025 it was a taxable property. Therefore, Avalonia Land Conservancy paid \$1,120.72 in taxes at the closing.

Since the process to remove the property from the tax roll did not occur when the property was purchased by Avalonia Land Conservancy they received a tax bill. Once taxes were due, the Tax Assessor could not waive them without Town Council authorization.

Moved by Councilor Garcia-Irizarry, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: Councilor Ryan explained that at the time Avalonia Land Conservancy acquired the property located at 154 Stoddards Wharf Road, Gales Ferry, on October 27, 2025 it was a taxable property; and Avalonia Land Conservancy paid \$1,120.72 in property taxes at the closing. He noted in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes 12-81dd conservation properties were tax exempt with the adoption of an Ordinance by the Municipalities Legislative Body; which the Town Council adopted at their February 25, 2026 meeting. However, he stated that once the tax bills were generated the Tax Assessor could not waive or abate the taxes that were already paid or due; without a Resolution from the Town Council. Therefore, he stated the proposed Resolution was mechanism to facilitate the abatement of taxes for the transfer of land to Avalonia Land Conservancy for the taxes they previously paid.

VOTE: 8 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT:	APPROVED 8 – 0
MOVER:	Carmen Garcia-Irizarry, Town Councilor.
SECONDER:	Tim Ryan, Town Councilor
AYES:	Barnes, Brunelle, Buhle, Garcia-Irizarry, Parad, Ryan, St. Vil, Thompson
EXCUSED:	Lamb

2. MOTION to appropriate \$229,000 to Account #21020103-57300-G0017(Dispatch - New Equipment) and authorize the expenditure of up to \$229,000 based on federal grant funding awarded for “*Police Dispatch System Replacement*”

This funding was received through the 2026 Congressionally Directed Spending initiative, to replace the Ledyard Dispatch Emergency Communications CAD/RMS System.

Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Garcia-Irizarry

Discussion: Police Chief John Rich, attending remotely via Zoom, noted that he reviewed the purchase of the Dispatch System Replacement in-detail at the Finance Committee’s March 4, 2026 meeting. He stated this would replace the system and software that generated the Police and Dispatch Records and tracked all of their Calls. He stated the new software was more robust and would be a significant update from their current 20+ year old system. He stated that he provided cost estimates to the Finance Committee and that he appreciated the Town Council’s support and the partnership of Councilor Buhle in moving this Congressionally Directed Spending Grant forward.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry explained the Police Department included funding in their Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to replace the *Police Dispatch System* over a two-year period; with some funding being allocated in Fiscal Year 2024/2025 and some funding in Fiscal Year 2025/2026. However, she stated the town has received \$229,000 from the Federal Congressionally Directed Spending Grant; and that no tax dollars would be used to replace this important system and software. She stated they were thankful for the work that Councilor Buhle and Chief Rich did to secure this Grant Funding.

VOTE: 8 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT:	APPROVED 8 – 0
MOVER:	Tim Ryan, Town Councilor.
SECONDER:	Carmen Garcia-Irizarry, Town Councilor
AYES:	Barnes, Brunelle, Buhle, Garcia-Irizarry, Parad, Ryan, St. Vil, Thompson
EXCUSED:	Lamb

3. MOTION to approve a bid waiver to Daniels Equipment Co, Inc of Auburn NH for the purchase of commercial laundry equipment and services.

Moved by Councilor Garcia-Irizarry, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: Ledyard Center Fire Chief Jon Mann attending remotely via Zoom, stated as discussed at the Finance Committee’s March 4, 2026 meeting, the Fire Department already had a Turn-Out Gear Washer and they were looking to purchase a Turn-Out Gear Dyer from the same vendor to help save on service and maintenance costs for these two pieces of equipment. He stated in addition to the Turn-Out Geer that the Dryer could also be used to dry their hoses.

Councilor Ryan explained that they try not to be in the habit of granting Bid Waivers, because they like to have competitive bidding for items. However, he stated in researching the cost of the Turn-Out Gear Dryer that the requested bid waiver was roughly equivalent to the costs they found in their research. He also noted as Chief Mann mentioned, by having the similarity in terms of the equipment manufacture that it would help with future maintenance costs.

VOTE: 8 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT:	APPROVED 8 – 0
MOVER:	Carmen Garcia-Irizarry, Town Councilor.
SECONDER:	Tim Ryan, Town Councilor
AYES:	Barnes, Brunelle, Buhle, Garcia-Irizarry, Parad, Ryan, St. Vil, Thompson
EXCUSED:	Lamb

4. MOTION to authorize overspending Account #10110205-53615 (Town Attorney) through June 30, 2026.

Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Garcia-Irizarry

Discussion: Councilor Buhle stated during the year the town had the need to work with the Town Attorney more than they traditionally have done. She stated they incurred legal fees for Lead Abatement Issues at the Nathan Lester House, and for the drafting of the “*Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission*”. Therefore, she stated the legal fees for this current year have exceeded the amount that was budgeted; and they needed to authorize overspending the Legal Fees Account, noting when legal advice was needed that it was not optional, and they need to pay the Town Attorney.

Councilor Ryan stated at the Finance Committee’s March 4, 2026 meeting Mayor Allyn, III, stated the two major expenses associated with this request to overspend the Legal Fees Account were: (1) the Drafting of the “*Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission*”; and (2) Lead Abatement Issues at the Nathan Lester House. Councilor Ryan stated he asked the Mayor for a breakdown of the Legal Fees; and that he looked forward to receiving the information.

Chairman St. Vil noted when the Town Council discussed overspending the Winter Operations Budget that Councilor Barnes asked for regular reporting of the status of the Winter Operations Budget as they moved through the remainder of the fiscal year. Chairman St. Vil questioned whether the Finance Committee asked the Mayor to provide something similar for the Legal Fees Budget. He suggested they leverage Councilor Barnes’ agreement to monitor the Winter Operations Budget and the Legal Fees Budget, noting that he did not see any other constraints through June 30, 2026.

Councilor Buhle stated when they were authorizing overspending Budgeted Accounts that it made sense for them to know what they were agreeing to; and to monitor those expenses. She stated that they have a responsibility to seek legal advice for the town when needed. Therefore, she stated that she did not want to see the town in a situation in which they could not seek the guidance of the Town Attorney when it made sense to do so. However, she stated that it was important for the Town Council to know whether they were going over the budgeted amount by \$500 or whether it was significantly more than that. She stated that she agreed with Councilor Barnes’ previous concerns about not overspending without know the amount they were authorizing the amount to be over spent. Therefore, she stated that she would commit to providing monthly email updates regarding the Legal Fees Account for the remainder of this fiscal year (fy 25/26) .

Councilor Ryan stated the first year he served on the Town Council that he asked the same questions about authorizing the overspending of accounts, and he specially noted his concerns regarding overspending the Legal Fees Account without knowing the amount they were authorizing. However, he noted the explanation he received was one that he has repeated since, explaining that it was more of a strategic approach in which they did not want to tip their hand on how much they were willing spend. He noted as an example, that it made sense to include a dollar amount when they authorize overspending an account to repair a fire truck, because they knew what that cost was going to be. However, he stated for legal fees if they agree to overspend their legal fees by \$20,000, as an example, that there may be entities that might want to take advantage of that; which was one of the reasons he asked for the breakdown of the legal fees to-date, noting that they may be able to project where those issues were in the process. He stated they were never going to be able to predict what legal matters may be coming down the road, however, they did not want to be in a position where they could not fund the attorney, stating that they needed to protect the town and its liability.

Chairman St. Vil stated if 80% of the legal fees were for the drafting of the “*Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission*” that he would want to know that so they could work to regulate the behavior. He stated without the breakdown of the legal fees that they were flying blind, noting that he was also looking forward to seeing the data that Councilor Ryan requested, from a management perspective.

VOTE: 8 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT:	APPROVED 8 – 0
MOVER:	Tim Ryan, Town Councilor.
SECONDER:	Carmen Garcia-Irizarry, Town Councilor
AYES:	Barnes, Brunelle, Buhle, Garcia-Irizarry, Parad, Ryan, St. Vil, Thompson
EXCUSED:	Lamb

XV. ADJOURNMENT

VOTE: Councilor Garcia-Irizarry moved to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Thompson
8 - 0 Approved and so declared. The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Transcribed by Roxanne M. Maher
Administrative Assistant to the Town Council

I, Gary St. Vil Chairman of the Ledyard Town Council,
hereby certify that the above and foregoing is a true and
correct copy of the minutes of the Regular Town Council
Meeting held on March 11, 2026.

Gary St. Vil Chairman