



**TOWN OF LEDYARD**  
CONNECTICUT  
TOWN COUNCIL  
HYBRID FORMAT

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Ledyard, CT 06339

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860 464-3203  
Roxanne Maher  
Administrative Assistant

Chairman S. Naomi Rodriguez

**MINUTES**  
**FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
**REGULAR MEETING**

Wednesday, September 18, 2024

5:30 PM

Annex Meeting Room - Video Conference

**DRAFT**

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** - The Meeting was called to order by Committee Chairman Councilor Saccone at 5:00 p.m. at the Council Chambers Town Hall Annex Building.

Councilor Saccone welcomed all to the Hybrid Meeting. He stated for the Town Council Finance Committee and members of 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. **ROLL CALL**

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Location	Arrived	Departed
Jessica Buhle	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	5:54 pm
Tim Ryan	Town Councilor	Present	Remote	5:00 pm	5:54 pm
Tony Saccone	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	5:54 pm
S. Naomi Rodriguez	Town Council Chairman	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	5:54 pm
April Brunelle	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	
Fred Allyn, III	Mayor	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	5:54 pm
Matthew Bonin	Finance Director	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	5:54 pm
Joe de la Curz	Community Speaks Out	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	5:19 pm
Mike Doyle	Community Speaks Out	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	5:19 pm
Roxanne Maher	Administrative Assistant	Present	Remote	5:00 pm	5:54 pm

- III. **RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS COMMENTS** – None.

- IV. **PRESENTATIONS/INFORMATIONAL ITEMS** – None.

- V. **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES**

MOTION to approve the Finance Committee Meeting Minutes of September 4, 2024  
Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Ryan

**VOTE: 3 – 0 Approved and so declared**

- VI. **FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated Auditors CliftonLarsonAllen, LLP., were scheduled to begin their work on the Annual Audit for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2024, noting that they would be at the Town Hall on October 7, 2024. He stated the Finance Department has been continuing their work on year-end adjustments in preparation for the Audit work.

## VII. FINANCIAL REPORTS

Finance Director Matthew Bonin noted he provided an updated report regarding the status of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Projects, which was attached to the Agenda on the Meeting Portal.

**RESULT: DISCUSSED**

**Next Meeting: 10/02/2024; 5:00 p.m.**

## III. OLD BUSINESS

1. Continued discussion regarding potential uses for the funding received from the National Opioid Settlement Payments.

Councilor Buhle questioned the current balance of the National Opioid Settlement Account. Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated to-date the town has received a total of \$147,000. He noted at their September 27, 2023 the Town Council approved to distribute \$36,100 to Ledyard Light Health District/Ledyard Prevention Coalition, leaving an Account Balance of about \$110,000.

Mayor Allyn, III, stated some of the allowed opioid remediation uses of the National Opioid Settlement funding included education to focus groups to discourage and prevent opioid use; co-responder models to address opioid use, and disorder related 9-1-1 Calls. He noted that *Community Speaks Out* gave a presentation at the Town Council September 11, 2024 Meeting. He stated Ledyard would continue to receive funding from the National Opioid Settlement through 2037, stating that *Community Speaks Out* could be one of multiple options that the town could choose to distribute these funds too, explaining that Ledyard needed to continue to get these funds out into the community.

Mayor Allyn continued by addressing the Emergency Narcan Kits that were installed at the Town Green in Ledyard Center and at the Community Center (Library) in Gales Ferry. He stated the self-serve Emergency Narcan Kits had to be removed because of a glitch. He noted the State Legislature has been working to enable the Kits to go back in-place, however, the piece of the Legislation would not be approved until sometime in January-February, 2025. He stated in the meantime Narcan was available in Ledyard at the Police Department, both the Ledyard Center and Gales Ferry Fire Departments, both the Bill Library and Gales Ferry Library, noting that the town facilities were only open during regular business hours.

Mayor Allyn went on to state the State Department of Emergency Management Security (DEMS) would be providing Narcan to municipalities for no cost. He stated Ledyard would be receiving 80-doses of Narcan, which would be kept at the Fire Departments. He stated towns were required to pick up the medication in Hartford.

Mayor Allyn noted that *Community Speaks Out* was present this evening.

- *Community Speaks Out Recovery Coach Program and Services* as a potential Organization to allocate funding received through the National Opioid Settlement Payments to support programs in Ledyard.

Mr. Mike Doyle, *Community Speaks Out* Representative, addressed the distribution of Narcan through the State Department of Emergency Management Services (DEMS). He stated the Narcan needed to be stored in temperature/climate control boxes. He stated the non-climate control boxes cost about \$300.00; versus the climate control boxes which cost about \$5,000.00. He stated *Community Speaks Out* noted that one solution would be to work with stores that were open 24/7 to see if they would allow Emergency Narcan Kits in their store. He stated in Norwich about 5-6 stores have agreed to allow them to install an Emergency Narcan Kit Box.

The Finance Committee discussed with *Community Speaks Out* the following:

- ***What Schools was Community Speaks Out currently working with:***

Mr. Doyle stated that *Community Speaks Out* has visited Grasso Tech in Groton, Lyman Memorial High School in Lebanon, Stonington High School, and Ellis Technical High School in Danielson. He also noted that they have been working with Norwich Public Schools, and will be visiting their schools soon.

- ***Services/Programs:***

Mr. Doyle noted the services *Community Speaks Out* included Narcan Training, Opioid Education, Follow-up with overdose cases, *Recovery Coach Program*, and programs such as Bullying Prevention at the Middle School and High School.

Mr. Doyle stated that he would be talking with students in Stonington and that he would also be scheduling a program to talk with the parents as well to help them understand what to look for, etc.

- ***Follow Up Program – Privacy Issues:***

Mr. Doyle noted that he reviewed the Overdose Map for Ledyard and Gales Ferry explaining that *Community Speaks Out* would work with first responders to visit those who experienced an overdose to start a conversation with them and their family.

Chairman Rodriguez questioned whether a Police Department or other First Responders have refused to provide the information to *Community Speaks Out* because of privacy issues. Mr. Doyle explained when the Police Department responds to a call that it was a matter of public record. He explained that *Community Speaks Out* sign Non-Disclosure Agreements, stating that their Organization would not give information out. He stated their Organization has responded to calls with the Police, and that they have not has any issues.

Mr. Doyle went on to explain when an Ambulance Service transports an overdose patient to the hospital, it could fall under the protected health information. However, he stated if *Community Speaks Out* had an Agreement with the town, as they currently do in

Norwich, that their program/services (follow-up visit) would become part of the town's initiative. He stated *Community Speaks Out* has been responding to calls with the City of Norwich's First Responders and conducting follow-up visits for the past 4 -5 years, noting that they have not had a problem. He stated they were working to implement the same type of program in Groton as well.

- ***Wrap Around Program:***

Mr. Joe de la Cruz addressed *Community Speaks Out's* participation in Groton explaining that some people overdose three times in the same week, noting that the Police Department knows the names of the people who need help; and sometimes they feel that they were not making a difference. However, he stated because *Community Speaks Out* has been able to work with the Police Department and provide them with updates and in some cases positive results on the people they were able to help, that Police Department and/or First Responders feel that they were making a difference.

Mr. de la Cruz stated *Community Speaks Out* has 17 Sober Homes in Groton; 17 Sober Homes in New London; a few Sober Homes in Norwich, and 1 Sober Home in Ledyard.

Mr. Doyle stated that *Community Speaks Out* would be starting to respond to calls with the Groton Police Department, which would allow them to begin to work with the survivor at that point. He stated the earlier they start the relationship with a survivor the better the outcome, explaining that there was a very small window when the survivor was willing to get help.

***Proposal/Plan:***

Councilor Buhle stated that she thought *Community Speaks Out* was a great program, and that she would like to see their full proposal.

Councilor Saccone asked *Community Speaks Out* to submit proposals that would be tailored for the Town of Ledyard for the Finance Committee to review.

Mr. de la Cruz and Mr. Doyle thanked the Finance Committee for the opportunity to address them this evening. They stated that they would prepare and email their proposal regarding the programs and services that *Community Speaks Out* would provide in Ledyard.

The Finance Committee thanked Mr. de la Cruz and Mr. Doyle for attending tonight's meeting.

Mr. de la Cruz and Mr. Doyle left the meeting at 5:19 p.m.

**RESULT: CONTINUE**

**Next Meeting:10/02/2024; 5:00 p.m.**

2. Continued discussion regarding the status and possible changes to Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and Capital Non-Recurring (CNR) Fund based on the *American Rescue Act* Funding (ARPA) and the process to approve ARPA Projects and expend ARPA Funding.

The Finance Committee, Mayor Allyn, III, and Finance Director Matthew Bonin reviewed the status of the *American Rescue Act* Funding (ARPA) Projects noting the following:

- **Options for the Reallocation of ARPA Funding Remaining from Completed Projects:**

Mayor Allyn stated he sent an email asking Department Heads and the Board of Education if they had projects that they could get a contract in-place by the December 31, 2024 ARPA Deadline noting he received responses from the following:

- Administrator of Emergency Services
  - ✓ \$20,000 CPR Devices – Ledyard Center Fire Department
  - ✓ \$20,000 CPR Devices – Gales Ferry Fire Department
- Town Clerk
  - ✓ \$5,500 – American Disability Act (ADA) Counter tops
- Water Pollution Control Authority
  - ✓ \$925,000 to Reline the Sewer Collection System.
  - ✓ \$200,000 to replace the 30-year old pumps and valves (\$200,000).
  - ✓ \$250,000 to replace 30-year old UV System
  - ✓ \$100,000 to replace 30-year old generator and transfer switch
- Ledyard Center Fire Department
- Gales Ferry Fire Department
  - ✓ Remediation of R-21 -Foam Pump – Councilor Saccone stated the Foam was 100% reimbursable from the State Department Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP)
  - ✓ State Digital Portables and Mobiles
  - ✓ New breathing air compressor

Councilor Ryan thanked Mayor Allyn for reviewing the Projects that the department Heads submitted. He stated there were a few projects on the List that could be accomplished in a short turnaround time using some of funds remaining from other completed ARPA Projects.

Chairman Rodriguez questioned whether the Senior Citizens Center or Gales Ferry Fire Department submitted a request for a generator. Mayor Allyn stated that Parks, Recreation & Senior Center has not yet responded to his request. He stated the Gales Ferry Fire Department did not submit a request for a generator. He stated that he would send out a reminder next week to Department Heads.

Mayor Allyn continued by providing an update regarding the following Projects:

- ***Gales Ferry Route 12 Corridor Study \$50,000*** – Mayor Allyn stated the town only received one Bid for the Project, noting that it came in \$25,000 higher than the \$50,000 that was earmarked from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. He stated although they were working to try to reduce the cost that additional funding would be required. Therefore, he stated that he would be requesting additional ARPA Funding be directed to the Roue 12 Corridor Study at the Finance Committee’s October 2, 2024 meeting.
- ***Mental Health Clinicians \$190,000*** – At the Town Council’s August 14, 2024 meeting they approved to allocate \$90,888 to contract with the Child and Family Agency to provide mental health services to the students at the Juliet W. Long School, and Gales Ferry School for one school year. A Subrecipient Agreement was now in-place.

Mayor Allyn explained that the Mental Health Clinicians ARPA balance was about \$75,000. He stated on September 16, 2024 Clinician Pat Frost, who has been providing mental health services at the High School and Middle School, reported that she has not had any clients since May, 2024. He stated because the new school year has just begun, that he discussed with Ms. Frost waiting a couple of weeks to see if any referrals for services come in from the School Administration or Teachers. He stated on November 1, 2024 they would reassess and if needed come to the Finance Committee to discuss revising the Mental Health Clinicians ARPA Budget.

Councilor Buhle suggested the School Principals send an email to parents to inform them that mental health services were available for students, free of charge. She stated although kids were good at masking and pretending that everything was fine; that by not identifying when kids were struggling, and by not providing them with the support they need, that they have the major crisis they were seeing in this country. She stated that she did not want to see the Mental Health Clinician program end, and parents find out after the fact that these mental health services were available to their child. She suggested in addition to an email to parents that perhaps this information be included in the monthly newsletters to let residents know that help was accessible. She also suggested that perhaps Family Counseling be an option to use the ARPA Funding that was earmarked for Mental Health Services.

Mayor Allyn stated during their meeting with Superintendent Hartling on Monday, September 23, 2024; they would recommend that the High School and Middle School Principals send out an email blast regarding the availability of mental health support. He stated although this was under the Board of Education’s purview that they could certainly make a recommendation, because of the funding that was currently available.

Chairman Rodriguez stated that she found it hard to believe that there were no students at the Middle School or High School that needed mental health services. She stated that there seemed to be something wrong there.

Councilor Buhle stated based on the feedback that the Finance Committee received regarding mental health services, which included: (1) The Clinician was not comfortable with administering services to the elementary school age children; (2) The cases that were transferred to Ms. Frost were completed and closed out; and (3) The Clinician has not had any clients since May, 2024; that it may be helpful to find out: (1) Whether the clinician was a good fit for the students; and (2) Was the clinician relatable,

approachable, and easy to talk with. She stated although she understood that they could not follow-up with the students and ask them these questions, that if a student was not comfortable with the clinician, that the student was not going to continue after one or two visits. She questioned whether they should have offered multiple clinicians for a student to find one they could identify with.

Mayor Allyn stated the town solicited per diem clinicians, however, he they did not have success in getting additional clinicians to join them. Therefore, he stated they could not offer a selection of clinicians, when they only had one that came forward. He stated this was a gray area for the General Government because they were trying to step into the Educational realm to provide mental health services for them.

- ***Erickson Park Improvements \$55,000*** – Mayor Allyn stated Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Director Scott Johnson, Jr. was waiting for Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin to return from vacation, because one of the contractors was on the Standing Bid Waiver List. He noted that Mr. Masalin would return to the office on Monday, September 23, 2024; and that he believed they would be able to get this project moving forward.
- ***Sewer Projects*** - Councilor Saccone stated in speaking with Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin that he was confident that the sewer projects would come thru. He stated that Mr. Masalin was their expert in town that deals with contractors, contracts, and funding. Therefore, he stated hopefully they get everything in place to do these projects and spend all of their ARPA Funding.
- ***Phase III- Sewer Extension Project -\$950,000*** – Upgrade the existing sewer line from the High School to Pennywise Lane where it tied into the distribution system High School to Pennywise Lane to the Wastewater Treatment Facility – Mayor Allyn, stated the Contractor has received the design plans and was currently working to provide the an estimate for the construction cost, which was expected within the next 7 – 10 days.

**RESULT: CONTINUED**

**Next Meeting: 10/02/2024; 5:00 p.m.**

2. Any other Old Business proper to come before the Committee.

**Grant Opportunities:**

Councilor Buhle suggested the Finance Committee add to their Agendas a “*Continued discussion regarding upcoming potential Grant Opportunities*”. She addressed the importance to review and work with Departments to prepare Projects that may be eligible for Grant opportunities such as the Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP), noting that the minimum Grant amount has been increased from \$500,000 to \$1 million. She stated although she understood that Governor Lamott has not announced STEAP Grants for this fiscal year, that if the town had projects that were “*shovel ready*” and included in their Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that they would be prepared to submit an Application, when the opportunity becomes available, noting that the Application period was typically open for about 35-days, which was quite short. She also noted by being prepared that they would not have to rush or hold a special meeting to approve to submit the Grant Application before the deadline.

Councilor Buhle went on to state that Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Director Scott Johnson, Jr., has been discussing the need to conduct a Park Study. She also noted that obtaining STEAP funding to improve the Playground and its equipment at the Town Green would not only continue to provide a great space for the Farmers Market, but that it would be an amazing area that would be welcoming for all families.

Mayor Allyn addressed STEAP Grant Applications noting that the Governor would typically announce Grant opportunities around May or June. He stated that he agreed with Councilor Buhle regarding the playground at the Town Green, noting that families use the playground at the Town Green a lot, despite its age. He stated that it may be a good opportunity to install an Inclusive Playscape. He stated that he also agreed that they should have a list of projects that were “*shovel ready*” for when grant programs such as STEAP, become available.

Mayor Allyn went on to note that today they discussed the need to install an elevator at the Town Hall, which would cost about \$900,000. He stated although the Town Hall had ADA Handicap Ramps and ADA Automated Doors, at some point they were going to have to install an elevator to provide better American Disability Act (ADA) accessibility. He stated this would be a good project for grant funding

**RESULT: CONTINUED**

**Next Meeting: 10/02/2024; 5:00 p.m.**

## VIII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Discuss Board of Education Chairman Anthony Favry’s September 10, 2024 email requesting the Town Council conduct a comprehensive infrastructure study to include Ledyard school facilities.

Mayor Fred Allyn, III, stated during the Town Council’s September 11, 2024 meeting he mentioned that the Town had previously conducted two Facilities Studies, noting the most recent Study was the precursor to the School(s) Consolidation/Improvement Project(s) (Middle School and Gallup Hill School) which were completed in 2019. He stated in reviewing the Request for Proposal (RFP) process to conduct the Study that the cost ranged from \$90,000 to \$300,000. Therefore, he suggested if the Town Council wanted to engage in a Facilities Study that it should be included in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) as part of the Annual Budget Process beginning in January, 2025.

Councilor Ryan stated he was under the impression that the Board of Education/Administration kept track of demographics and expected enrollment numbers, etc. He stated that this data would address some of the things the Board of Education was looking for the Infrastructure Study to help the schools with. He noted in Chairman Favry’s September 10, 2024 email that the Board of Education was primarily looking for enrollment numbers and how much the school facilities would need to grow, which would include the number of teachers, etc. He questioned whether the Board of Education was not currently doing those extrapolations and projections.

Chairman Rodriguez noted that she previously served on the Board of Education and that Councilor Ryan was correct, in that the Superintendent of Schools would provide the Board of Education with projected student enrollment numbers and whether the number of students



would increase, etc., in future years. She stated that she did not know if the Board of Education was looking at potential development. However, she stated that the Town Council did not know what farmer was going to sell their property; or who was going to buy the property.

Councilor Ryan noted in Board of Education Chairman Favry's September 10, 2024 email the Board was looking to obtain information regarding where the growth of population would be in town. However, he stated by looking at the locations of certain proposed developments that they could gather which school buildings would be most affected. He went on to state that he did not know if this was something they would look at in school budget numbers. Therefore, he stated that he would like to have a better understanding of what the Board of Education was looking for. He suggested they schedule a joint meeting with the Board of Education to discuss what they would be looking to obtain from the Facilities Study.

Mayor Allyn stated former Superintendent of Schools Dr. Mike Graner engaged with an Firm that conducted a Student Enrollment Study, which provided a 5-year projection. He stated that perhaps the Board of Education should consider updating the Student Enrollment Study.

Chairman Rodriguez noted because Ledyard was a military community that there were a lot of unknowns relative to student enrollment because of military families moving into and moving out of town. She stated although the Board of Education sends out forms to parents to get an idea of the number of families that were being relocated out of town that not everyone responds to the Board of Education's request.

Councilor Buhle addressed the challenge of trying to project student enrollment relative to people moving in an out of town. She provided a scenario of empty nesters, who have raised their family but have continued to live in their 4-bedroom home for many years and were now selling to younger families. She stated the town then sees neighborhoods that did not have kids for many years slowly be filled with kids.

Councilor Buhle continued by stating that she also believed that planning to conduct a Facilities Study should be part of the Annual Budget Process. However, she stated that she would have a hard time budgeting \$100,000; \$200,000 or \$300,000 for a Study to tell them that their schools were not large enough, when she already knows that, noting as an example that a one grade level cannot each lunch at the same time because the Middle School, the Cafeteria was not large enough.

Chairman Rodriguez noted in years past when a family became empty nesters they would look to downsize and sell their home to another young family. However, she stated the most recent trend she has seen was that empty nesters who want to downsize were not selling their homes because it was going to cost them more money to downsize; and therefore, they were choosing to stay in their larger homes.

Councilor Ryan stated that he agreed with Councilor Buhle's practical observations about the size of the schools. However, he stated that he believed that they would need data to help them make decisions on how to build out, etc., for budgetary reasons. He questioned how a Facilities Study would benefit the General Government.

Councilor Saccone stated that they were seeing a lot of growth coming into the town through development. He stated although the history from the School District relative to the ebbs and flows of military families, and baby boomers selling or not selling their homes would not be precise, that the town should budget for a Facilities Study to plan for the future.

Councilor Ryan stated Board of Education Chairman Favry's September 10, 2024 email focused on the proposed new Developments; and therefore, he stated that there had to be some numbers associated with the Developments in terms of livable housing units, that would help with planning purposes.

**RESULT: DISCUSSED** .

2. MOTION to recommend the Town Council approve a tax refund to Hoops & Associates LLC, 19A Thames Street, Groton, Connecticut, in the amount of \$2,523.86.

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: Mayor Allyn, III stated this was a double payment of the property taxes as part of the sale of the property. He noted that both the Mortgage Company paid the taxes and the closing Attorney paid the taxes.

**VOTE: 3 – 0 Approved and so declared**

**RESULT: APPROVE TO RECOMMEND 3 – 0**

**MOVER:** Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor

**SECONDER:** Tim Ryan, Town Councilor

**AYES:** Jessica Buhle, Tim Ryan, Tony Saccone

3. Any other New Business proper to come before the Committee.-None.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Buhle moved the meeting be adjourned, seconded by Councilor Ryan.

**VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared**, the meeting was adjourned at 5:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony Saccone, Sr.  
Committee Chairman  
Finance Committee