



# TOWN OF LEDYARD

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Ledyard, Connecticut 06339-1551  
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## Town Council Meeting Minutes

Chairman S. Naomi  
Rodriguez

### Regular Meeting

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Wednesday, January 10, 2024

7:00 PM

Town Hall Council Chambers

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WORKING DRAFT

**In-Person: Council Chambers Town Hall Annex**

**Remote: Information noted below:**

**Join Zoom Meeting from your Computer, Smart Phone or Tablet:**

**<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89041845753?pwd=FM97w5K0KOyLZU9gUJuStB6QRffjDM.1>**

**Audio Only: Telephone: +1 646 558 8656; Meeting ID: 890 4184 5753; Passcode: 352757**

#### I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Council Chambers, Town Hall Annex Building.

Chairman Rodriguez welcomed all to the Hybrid Meeting. She 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

**Present:** Councilor April Brunelle  
Councilor Jessica Buhle  
Councilor Kevin Dombrowski  
Councilor Carmen Garcia-Irizarry  
Councilor Gary Paul  
Chairman S. Naomi Rodriguez  
Councilor Tim Ryan  
Councilor Tony Saccone  
Councilor Gary St. Vil

#### IV. PRESENTATIONS

None.

V. RESIDENT & PROPERTY OWNERS (COMMENTS LIMITED TO THREE (3) MINUTES)

Ms. Sheri Fernandez, 60 Kings Highway, Gales Ferry, Kings Corner Manor Senior Citizens Housing Facility, stated when she attended the Town Council's December 12, 2023 meeting she requested an addendum to the Kings Corner Manor Lease to reinstate the Smoking Area, based on the Kings Corner Manor Senior Citizens Housing Facility being a subsidized public housing facility, which was therefore owned by State. She stated the Housing Authority had no legal right to force the tenants off the property to smoke. She stated she has not had a response to her request in four-weeks, noting that the Housing Authority cancelled their December and January meetings. Therefore, she was present this evening to request the Lease Addendum be made available to the Tenants immediately, noting that six-months was long enough to illegally be forced off the property

VI. COMMITTEE COMMISSION AND BOARD REPORTS

Committee to Review the Budget Process Final Report dated October 31, 2023.

Councilor Ryan, Chairman of the Committee to Review the Budget Process, was formed last year by the Town Council as a successor to the 2016 Committee to Transform the Budget. He stated the assignment of the 2023 Committee was to audit, track the status of what had been accomplished since the 2016 Report, and to review services. He stated the Committee decided to break their work out into the following four Working Group:

- a) **Working Group A** - Services and Funding - Mandatory Services/Programs and Cost Per User/Cost Per Capita; for potential savings and efficiency.
- b) **Working Group B** - Operations, Buildings, Grounds, Purchasing, and Staffing. Review operations for consolidation opportunities.
- c) **Working Group C** - Guidance for Negotiation and Execution of Contracts.
- d) **Working Group D** -Budget Format Development and Communication.

Councilor Ryan noted the Committee's Membership was comprised of the following: Vice Chairman Mr. Michael Brawner - Board of Education, Ms. Minna DeGaetano - Community Member at Large; Mr. Kevin Dombrowski Town Council Chairman. Mr. Terry Jones-Community Member at Large; Ms. Joanne Kelley-Board of Education, Recording Secretary Mr. Earl (Ty) Lamb - Community Member at Large; Ms. Beth Ribe -Community Member at Large; Mr. Bill Saums Town Council; and himself. He noted that Mayor Fred Allyn, III, and Superintendent of Schools Jason Hartling were Ex-Officio Members.

Councilor Ryan continued by stating at the Town Council's November 8, 2023 meeting he read into the record the Transmittal Letter dated October 31, 2023 which delivered the Final Report. He stated his letter and the complete 197 page Report, including the

Appendices was available on the Granicus-Legistar Meeting Portal and was attached to tonight's agenda packet on the portal for anyone who would like to read it. He stated this evening he would provide a brief overview of the results of each of the Working Groups.

Councilor Ryan deferred to Mr. Saums and Ms. DeGaetano to present their Reports as follows:

***Working Group A - Services and Funding - Mandatory Services/Programs and Cost Per User/Cost Per Capita; for potential savings and efficiency.***

Mr. Bill Saums, 333 Pumpkin Hill Road, Ledyard, former Town Councilor and Finance Committee Chairman stated *Working Group A* did not recommend anything be cut from the annual budget. He stated for years many Town Council's and many Mayor's have worked to cut the budget and to make it as lean as possible. Therefore, he stated the *2023 Committee to Review the Budget Process - Working Group A* felt that if they were to recommend any further cuts to the budget that they would be cutting programs, which would affect quality of life and the value of services the residents and taxpayers receive. However, he stated the Committee continued to look for other ways to save money, noting that they looked at services such as trash and recycling, which the town has been looking for years, and did not find any savings, stating that trash and recycling was going to cost the town more.

Mr. Saums explained that Ledyard managed its Capital Purchases/Expenses differently than any other town that Finance Director Matthew Bonin was aware of. He stated prior to becoming Ledyard's Finance Director that Mr. Bonin worked for an Auditing Firm and performed audits for many municipalities including Ledyard. Mr. Saums explained that Ledyard sets aside funding on an annual basis to purchase large pieces of equipment such as fire trucks, which cost about \$1 million, as well as public works heavy equipment, etc., so that when those pieces of equipment/apparatus reached the end of its lifecycle the town had the funding available to replace them. He stated other towns were still borrowing (bonding) the funding to make these types of purchases. He stated because Ledyard paid cash to purchase these types of large capital items they have one of the lowest Debt Service Ratios of any town in the State.

Mr. Saums continued to explain that based on Ledyard's Capital Replacement/Funding Schedule for the replacement/purchase of heavy equipment that *Working Group A* decided to look at the benefits of setting aside funding annually for Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) such as the replacement of the school roof projects. He noted the funding that was set aside each year in the bank to purchase large equipment was earning about \$300,000 per year in interest. Therefore, he stated because they knew that the lifecycle of School Roofs were about twenty-five years that *Working Group A* looked at two scenarios using a *Comparison of the Use of Reserve Accounts versus Bonding*. He noted that Ms. Minna DeGaetano created a tool to analyze the cost difference between bonding vs. capital reserve funding for long-term projects; and he deferred to Ms. DeGaetano to demonstrate the two options.

Ms. Minna DeGaetano, 10 Marla Avenue, Ledyard, stated for the examples she would be presenting this evening that she created a model to calculate a hypothetical project costing \$10M to examine different payment options. She noted the examples were regarding projects that were completely funded by taxpayers and projects that were partially

reimbursed by the State of Connecticut.

Ms. DeGaetano noted following:

Assumptions using current estimates:

- 1 mil = \$1,264,000 \*
- Interest on deposits was 3% compounded monthly.
- Short term funding or Bond Anticipation Notes (BAN) would be issued at 7% interest.
- Long term funding or Bonds would be issued at 5.5% interest for a period of 20 years.
- If applicable, State review/approval of the project and release of reimbursement funding would take up-to 10 years creating the need for BAN funding.
- State reimbursement rate was 62% for necessary school projects.
- The need for the project was foreseeable, and the asset had a 20-year economic life. For this example, school roofs hypothetically installed in 2005 need to be replaced in 2025.

\* Mil Rate explanation: The mil rate was calculated by taking the budgeted tax revenue, dividing it by the grand list amount, and multiplying by 1000.  $(\$43M/\$1.263B*1000)=34.56$   
Or, expressed differently, one mil (\$1,264,000 above) was the tax revenue divided by the mil rate.

Grand list: The total amount of real property in Ledyard (homes, cars, businesses, etc. that will be taxed). Assessed values of properties are utilized, which were 70% of the property evaluation.

To figure out what a change in the mill rate would cost you, multiply your property value times .7 or 70%.

**Example:** 70% of a \$142,857 home would be \$100,000. Multiply 100,000 times the mil increase/decrease and divide by 1,000. This would tell you the change in your personal tax burden.  $(100,000 \times 0.5000 \text{ mil} / 1000 = \$50 \text{ increase})$

**Formula:** Property value x .7 x mil rate /1000 = Cost to taxpayer

**Example:** \$450,000 home x .7 x 0.2859 mil increase / 1000 = \$90.06 tax increase

- Option 1:

**Example:** Use of Reserve Account without any Municipal Borrowing

An annual contribution to the reserve account would be made so that the balance in the account was \$10M at the end of the 20-year life of the asset. With 3% interest compounded annually, a deposit of \$361,318 annually would produce a balance of \$10M in 2025, the 20th year. *This represented a 0.2859 mil tax increase burden* for each taxpayer, but this option would avoid the need to borrow or delay projects and it would also avoid the annual payment to service future debt.

Over 20 years the town would have funded \$7.2M and earned \$2.8M interest and would have

the funding to complete the project without relying on any debt funding. Assuming the State would still provide a reimbursement of at 62% for necessary school projects, the town would be able to reinvest the State funds into the Reserve und and the taxpayer's burden for future projects would be much less if not needed at all. This option would ensure that projects were funded with or without any grants or State funding but would require a consistent long-term commitment from the town.

Mr. Saums stated by setting aside money in advance in accordance with a consistent long-term funding plan for known Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) such as roof replacements that it would cost the taxpayers would vary between 0.28 mils to 0.55 mils increase annually, noting that they would have a ten-fold savings. He noted under their current process of Bonding the full cost of the project that the town was paying about \$4 million dollars or 4 mils per year for interest and principle. He stated by having a long-term funding plan that they could lower the mil rate by about 4 mils.

- **Option 2:**

No money being set aside during the life of the asset. When replacement was required, the project must be financed through a combination of short-term financing and municipal bonds.

No money was deposited in a reserve account for the 20-year life of the asset. When the project was approved by the taxpayers, the project would be financed through bonding, and the taxpayers must approve a bond issue for the entire \$10M project cost. Typically, there would be a need for short-term financing or Bond Anticipation Notes (BANs) until the State reviewed the project documentation and released the funding. The State funding would be released to the town in progress payments.

Ms. DeGaetano noted in the example below 8 years of short-term BAN bonding was figured, with progress payments being received every two years.

Mr. Saums noted the State still has not provided the full Grant Reimbursement to the town for the School Improvement/Consolidation Projects (Middle School and Gallup Hill School) that were completed in 2019. Therefore, he stated because of the delay in Grant Reimbursement Funding from the State was costing the town about \$350,000 financing costs which included short-term borrowing (BANs).

Ms. DeGaetano explained that short term financing or BANs were used to finance the start of the \$10M project. From 2025 to 2032, annual payments equaling the 7% interest of the BAN amounts would made. She stated in the example below, the annual payments would be between \$700,000 and \$317,500 based on progress payments of 25% made every two years. At the end of the 8 years, the State would provide the final payment and it would be paid towards the BANs. The remaining BAN amount would be \$3.8M.

**Example:** In 2033, the town issues long-term bonds for \$3.8M and the town begins 20 years of payments at a 5.5% interest rate. Bond payments are \$317,981 annually or a 0.3345 mil tax burden for taxpayers each year until 2053.

Total project costs to taxpayers from 2025 to 2053 would be \$10.7M for BANs and bonds, even with the 62% State funding. The 62% State funding does not cover the \$6.9M in interest cost over that time, and there was no State funding available to add to the reserve fund for future projects. On average, interest alone would be \$127,981 or 40% of the long-term bond annual payment of \$317,981 from 2033 to 2053.

Ms. DeGaetano stated by developing and funding a robust long-term Capital plan that the Town could take advantage of interest vs. paying interest for its taxpayers. She encouraged the Town Council to read the Appendix C in the Committee to Review the Budget Process Report. She stated that she would be willing to do a workshop to demonstrate how to use this Spreadsheet as a tool to assist the town in planning/budgeting for Capital Improvement Projects (CIP).

Councilor Buhle questioned whether the spreadsheet could be adjusted to plan for a project that was coming due in five years. Ms. DeGaetano stated that the spreadsheet could be adjusted to plan for various scenarios. She stated any advanced planning is better than no financial planning.

Councilor Dombrowski stated that there were a number of Capital Improvement Projects that were not surprises such as roof replacements, or the replacement of the artificial turf at the High School Football Field, etc. He stated the town has not been setting funding aside for the larger Capital Improvement Projects, such as the new Police Facility that was constructed in \_\_\_\_\_. He stated the town talked about the new Police Facility for many years, however, they did not set funding aside annually to plan for it, noting that entire construction project was bonded, noting that there was no State Grant Reimbursement available for the Police Facility. He stated had the town set funding aside to construct the new Police Facility that they would have saved money with regard to the interest payments.

Mayor Allyn, III, stated the town was currently using this exact model for the Replacement Schedule for large equipment, such as the fire trucks and public works equipment as Mr. Saums and many others have mentioned this evening. Therefore, he stated they could begin to include the Annual Budget Capital Improvement Projects (CIP), noting that the CIP Spreadsheet would show how much funding was coming from the tax levy, bonding, grants, etc. when it was presented to the taxpayers.

Mr. Saums thanked Ms. DeGaetano for her participation on the *Committee to Review the Budget Process* noting that her financial skills in developing the model to calculate project costs using different payment options was a significant contribution to their work and Report.

Councilor Ryan thanked Mr. Saums and Ms. DeGaetano for their Report and he continued by giving a brief overview of the remaining three Working Groups as follows:

***Working Group B - Operations, Buildings, Grounds, Purchasing, and Staffing. Review***

***operations for consolidation opportunities.***

Councilor Ryan stated Working Group B recommended the following three areas should be further explored for sharing and/or privatization: (1) Office Supplies and General Purchasing - Councilor Ryan explained that the thought was that there may be some saving by bulk purchasing supplies that were used by both the General government and the Board of Education); (2) Human Resources and Finance Staffing - Councilor Ryan stated although there were a number of differences between how the General Government and Board of Education work, the thought was that there were also a number of commonalities that included some types of joint oversight; (3) Information Technology (Privatization for the Town). Councilor Ryan noted that the Board of Education was currently privatizing their Information Technology Support.

***Working Group C - Negotiations and Execution on Contracts Process for Execution***

Councilor Ryan stated with regard to the negotiation and execution of contracts, *Working Group C* recommended tightening up Policies and Procedures for both the General Government and Board of Education; and strengthening controls over contracts, in the following areas.

- (1) Develop a policy for negotiating collective bargaining agreements requiring that specific representation be present during negotiations. The Town and Board of Education *shall* be represented by an Attorney.
- (2) Amend Purchasing policies to include the following:
  - (a) Clearly defined policy for Competitive Bid process;
  - (b) Requirements for requesting and approving a Bid Waiver;
  - (c) Requirements governing the use of Attorneys for both the General Government and the Board of Education.

***Working Group D - Budget Format Development and Communication.***

Councilor Ryan stated in general *Working Group D* did not identify a lot of changes to the overall budget presentation. He stated there was some documentation on Board of Education's website that were thought to be good additions to the Budget Booklet Handout for the Public Hearing and Annual Town Meeting. He stated *Working Group D* did not find any reason to separate the General Government and the Board of Education's Budgets in presenting them to the townspeople for a vote; and that they did not recommend any changes to the Budget Preparation Timeline.

Councilor Ryan noted *Working Group D* reviewed the many ways the General Government and Board of Education communicates with its residents regarding the budget, which included the following:

- ✓ Town and Board of Education Websites;
- ✓ Meeting Portals;
- ✓ Quarterly Events Magazine that were delivered to every household;
- ✓ Legal Notices published in the newspaper;

- ✓ Legal Notices published on the front page of the Town's website;
- ✓ **Notify Me** tab available on the town's website that will notify residents of all meetings and events.

Councilor Ryan stated *Working Group D* discussed other potential options that could be used to communicate with residents, which included physical signage in key locations. He stated there would be digital signage boards in two locations in town soon. One sign will be located by the Gales Ferry Fire Department on Route 12 in Gales Ferry and the other sign would be located in Ledyard Center which were both highly traffic areas. He stated they also discussed the use of social media more effectively.

Councilor Ryan stated for tracking purposes the *Committee to Review the Budget Process* suggested these items be included on the Agenda for the Joint Finance Committees of Town Council and Board of Education. He stated that this was a high-level summary of the work that was done by the Committee; and he offered to meet with anyone who would like to discuss the Committee's Report and Recommendations. He stated the initiative involved a lot of work, time, and effort spent both at the meetings and outside of the meetings by the Committee Members, Mayor Allyn, III, Superintendent of Schools Mr. Hartling and Administrative Assistant Roxanne Maher. He concluded by stating the Final Report was available on tonight's Agenda and that he was available to meet with any citizen who would like a more detailed review of the Report.

Chairman Rodriguez opened the floor for questions or comments from the Town Council.

Councilor Paul thanked the Committee to Review the Budget Process for their awesome work.

Chairman Rodriguez thanked Councilor Ryan for presenting the *Committee to Review the Budget Process Final Report dated October 31, 2023*; and she also acknowledged and thanked the Committee Members for their work as follows:

- ✓ Former Town Council Chairman Kevin Dombrowski
- ✓ Former Town Council Finance Committee Chairman Bill Saums
- ✓ Councilor Tim Ryan, Committee Chairman
- ✓ Board of Education Member Michael Brawner, Committee Vice Chairman
- ✓ Community Member at Large Minna DeGaetano, was present this evening
- ✓ Terry Jones Community Member at Large, former Town Council Chairman
- ✓ Board of Education Member Joanne Kelley, was present this evening
- ✓ Community Member at Large Earl (Ty) Lamb, Recording Secretary, was present this evening
- ✓ Community Member at Large Beth Ribe

**Ex-Officio Members:**

- ✓ Mayor Fred Allyn, III
- ✓ Superintendent of Schools Jason Hartling



Chairman Rodriguez thanked them all for their service to the town.

#### VII. COMMENTS OF TOWN COUNCILORS

Councilor Brunelle stated that she attended the Planning & Zoning Commission's December 21, 2023 Public Hearing that was held at the Ledyard Middle School. She stated the Public Hearing was held in a Hybrid Format and that she attended remotely via Zoom. She stated although the residents comments were very impassioned, that she was impressed with how polite and professional everyone who was attending in person, noting that it was a long meeting.

Chairman Rodriguez reported on the following: (1) National Law Enforcement Day - January 9, 2024 was National Law Enforcement Day. Chairman Rodriguez stated on behalf of the Town Council that she wanted to thank the Ledyard Police Department for all that they do to keep their residents safe and for their service, noting that they do so much for our community. Town; (2) Ledyard High School Martin Luther King Day Concert - January 15, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

Councilor Saccone stated on January 1, 2024 he was involved in a motor vehicle accident with a motorcyclist. He stated he was impressed with how the town's Volunteer First Responders came together, with professionalism, keeping the public safe and away from the accident itself on Route 12. He noted that these volunteers were always out there assisting the residents, day-in and day-out; mid-night; 2:00 am in the morning, water emergencies, etc. He stated that he wanted to publicly thank all of their Volunteer First Responders for the great job they did in assisting the motorcycle driver who was in serious condition, and in assisting one of their own

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry addressed the *Committee to Review the Budget Process Final Report* that was presented earlier this evening. She stated that she read the Report noting that it was very enlightening, noting that she appreciated the work that they did. She stated that she often hears residents say that they do not know where their tax dollars were going, and she encouraged residents to read the report, noting that it would tell them where their money was going, noting that Ledyard's budget was very lean. She continued by stating that she also hears residents complain that they did not know that there was a budget vote or other votes. She stated that she has seen the big Budget Baner sign in front of the Gales Ferry School on Route 12 and in Ledyard Center on Route 117. She suggested the town work to figure out ways to keep residents informed noting that there were some residents such as Senior Citizens and others who do not have access to social media or they do not drive. She stated the digital signage that would be installed soon would be a good addition.

#### VIII. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION to approve the following:

- Special Meeting Minutes of December 13, 2023
- Public Hearing Minutes of December 13, 2023

- Regular Meeting Minutes of December 13, 2023

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Saccone

VOTE: 9 - 0 Approved and so declared

**RESULT:** APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

## IX. COMMUNICATIONS

Communications List - January 10, 2024

Chairman Rodriguez stated a Communications List has been provided on the meeting portal for tonight's meeting and she noted no referral listed.

## X. REFERRALS

## XI. COUNCIL SUB COMMITTEE, LIAISON REPORTS

This was ..to the Town Council due back on 1/24/2024

**RESULT:** .

### 1. Administration Committee

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated the Administration Committee met earlier this evening and addressed the following: (1) Appointments to the Planning & Zoning Commission and the Ledyard Farmers' Market Committee; and (2) Reviewed and forwarded to the Finance Committee a proposed "*An Ordinance Establishing a Farmers Market for the Town of Ledyard*".

**RESULT:** .

### 2. Community Relations Committee

Councilor Brunelle stated the Community Relations Committee held their Organizational Meeting on December 20, 2023 that was followed by their Regular Meeting that same evening. She noted the Committee set their 2024 Meeting schedule for the third Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. and also agreed to continue to work in the following: (1) Black History Month; (2) Develop a schedule to host Informational Forums; and (3) Communication with residents. She noted the Committee's next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, January 17, 2024 at 6:30 p.m.

**RESULT:** .

### 3. Finance Committee

Councilor Saccone stated the Finance Committee met on January 3, 2024 and in addition to the items on tonight's Agenda the Committee discussed the following: (1) Fiscal Year Audit Ending June 30, 2023 - Councilor Saccone stated Auditor's CliftonLarsonAllen, LLC have provided the completed Annual Audit Report which was distributed to the Town Council

earlier this week. He stated the Auditors would present the Final Report at the Finance Committee’s February 7, 2024 meeting; (2) American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding Project List - Councilor Saccone stated the Committee reviewed the most recent update regarding the status of the ARPA Projects List. He noted the number of projects completed had not changed since the last Report. He stated the Committee also discussed the importance of having a plan to reallocate funds remaining from completed project that have come in under budget, otherwise they would have to be returned to the US Treasury. He stated a potential project that was discussed was the replacement of the Guiderails on Sandy Hollow Road; (3) Public Act No.21-58 “*An Act Concerning Solid Waste Management*” in accordance with “*Resolution Regarding Revenues Received from Beverage Container Surcharges*”- Councilor Saccone stated the Finance Committee continued to discuss the Surcharge Revenues the Town has been and would continue to receive from the State and discussed a potential plan to implement a Town-wide Clean-up Program working with the Ledyard Beautification Committee and Non-Profit Organizations as one of the uses for the funding. He stated the Committee also discussed developing a *Rubric* to prioritize the use of the funds. He stated to-date the Town had a balance in the Surcharge Beverage Account in the amount of \$48,000\_ and that it would continue to grow.

**RESULT:** .

4. Land Use/Planning/Public Works Committee

Councilor St. Vil stated the LUPPW Committee met on January 8, 2024 and discussed the following on-going topics: (1) Effectiveness of Ordinance #300-012 (rev 1) 300-012 “*An Ordinance Concerning Blight and Public Nuisance for the Town of Ledyard*”. Councilor St. Vil noted that the Committee found that Ordinance was effective; (2) Spicer Homestead Ruins- Historic Preservation - Councilor St. Vil stated Historic District Commission Member Earl (Ty) Lamb reported that the Commission concurred to proactively develop a Plan to seek a Historic Designation from the State. He stated the LUPPW Committee and the Historic District Commission agreed on the following: (a) Develop a *Roles and Responsibilities Document* that they would work to draft and agree on; (b) The Historic District Commission would develop a *Plan of Action- Milestone Road Map* for moving forward. Councilor St. Vil stated the LUPPW Committee would continue to discuss this topic.

**RESULT:** .

Liaison Reports

This was ..to the Town Council due back on 1/24/2024

**RESULT:** .

5. Planning & Zoning Commission

Councilor St. Vil noted the Planning & Zoning Commission held two Public Hearings regarding a Petition for work on the former Dow Chemical/Styrenics Site on Route 12 in Gales Ferry. He noted the residents were impassioned in their opinions, yet they were respectful. He stated a subsequent Public Hearing would be held at the Ledyard Middle School on January 11, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. Councilor St. Vil stated as being a past member of the Planning & Zoning Commission that he had confidence that the Commission

would review the facts equitability and take the residents views into consideration.

**RESULT:** .

**6. Board of Education**

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated the Board of Education met on December 19, 2023 and discussed the following: (1) Substitute Teachers - Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated residents expressed concerns regarding the need to combine classrooms at the Gallup Hill School due to the lack of substitute teachers. She noted a resident stated that substitute teachers were paid \$100.00 per day, which was less than minimum wage if they were working eight hours each day; (2) Magnet School Students - Residents expressed support to allow Magnet School Students to participation in extra curriculum activities, beyond sports; (3) Spotlight Kids - Superintendent of Schools Jason Hartling would include funding in the upcoming Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget to restore the Spotlight Kids; (4) Kindergarten School Age - Children will need to be five-years old by September 1st to enter kindergarten. In years past the children had to be five years old by January 1st of the school year; (5) Unified Arts Music Course was approved for the High School; and would be implemented during the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget; (6) Study Skills Course was approved for the Middle School; (7) Kindergarten thru Grade Three Screening Test Results for the 2022-2023 School Year showed the number of students that were performing were at the benchmark or above increased by the end of the school year compared to results of the previous year; (8) Extracurricular Activities Policy #6145.1 was not approved; (9) New Covid Guidelines - The Medical Advisory reported the that Covid Pandemic Requirements (quarantine) have now become Accommodations. Students and Staff were advised to consult with their Primary Physicians and to leave decisions to their Guardians and their medical health advisors. The Medical Advisor reported that most Health Care Providers were treating and managing COVID like other prevalent viral respiratory infections, including influenza and RSV. Students with fever or significant symptoms would continue to be excluded from school as with other viral respiratory infections.

**RESULT:** .

**XII. REPORT OF THE MAYOR:**

Mayor Allyn, III, reported on the following: (1) High School Civics in Action - Mayor Allyn stated he participated in the Civic in Action Program at the High School, as Chairman Rodriguez did. He stated the kids had some great topics this year, noting that they enjoyed interacting with the students; (2) Nursing Clerical Assistant Jean Dutton retired after twenty-seven years at the end of December, 2023. Mayor Allyn stated the Ledyard Visiting Nurse Agency discontinued it operations on June 30, 2023. However, he stated Ms. Dutton stayed on staff to assist with close out Department. He stated Ms. Dutton would be moving to Florida; (3) Motor Vehicle Accident on January 1, 2024 - Mayor Allyn joined Councilor Saccone in thanking both the Gales Ferry Fire Department and the Ledyard Center Fire Department for their quick response to an accident involving a motorcyclist and Fire Chief Saccone on Route 12. He stated the driver of the motorcycle

was fortunate that Chief Saccone was able to get out of his vehicle and was immediately able to administer first aide. He thanked Chief Saccone for his efforts as well; (4) Norwich Chamber Economic Summit December 19, 2023 - Mayor Allyn stated the Norwich Chamber was meeting with the Leaders of several towns to address the resources the towns currently had available, along with the town's needs, challenges and opportunities. The next meeting would be held in about two-months; (5) Southeastern Connecticut Council of Government (SCCOG) Annual Meeting - Mayor Allyn stated he attended the Annual Meeting in December, 2023. He noted at their Annual Meeting SCCOG makes changes to the Leadership Team, noting that he would no longer be serving on the SCCOG Executive Board; (6) Nathan Lester House Revenues - Mayor Allyn stated they recently completed the filming of a movie titled "*The Fox Sisters*". He stated the film was about three Hydesville, New York sisters from the mid 1800's who claimed to be *mediums*, noting that they interacted with ghosts or spirits. He stated these sisters were believed to be the front runners to birth of spiritualism. He thanked Historic District Commission Member Doug Kelley for his time and efforts in coordinating and working with the film crews, etc., who were on-site for about a week. He stated the use of the Nathan Lester House for the movie generated some revenue for the Nathan Lester House which would be used for maintenance and upkeep of the historic home; (7) Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) Legislative Committee January 9, 2024 Meeting - Mayor Allyn stated he attended the meeting noting that CCM finalized its Legislative Agenda regarding the issues they would like to see the State Legislature address. He noted that CCM as well as Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCOG) and the Council of Small Towns (COST) would all be lobbying the State Legislature in the upcoming Session to have the issues that affect their communities be addressed; (8) Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCOG) Solid Waste Committee and Legislative Committee Meeting - Mayor Allyn stated due the heavy rain, wind, flooding, and power outages in Norwich that the Solid Waste Committee's final meeting and Legislative Committee Meeting which would have been held today was rescheduled to next week; (9) Department of Defense (DOD) Meeting - Mayor Allyn stated he along with Leaders from New London and Groton met with six DOD Officials earlier today at the New London - Groton US Naval Subbase to discuss the following: (a) Growth of General Dynamics/Electric Boat (ED); (b) Columbia Class Submarine; and (c) Community Growth that the DOD foresees for the area. He stated noted although the Columbia Class submarines would not be birthed at the Groton Subbase; there would be significant growth in the area and that the DOD has offered to assist the town's needs relative to things such as public utilities, etc.; (10) Southeastern CT Enterprise Region (seCTer) - Mayor Allyn explained that seCTer serves as the region's designated private, non-profit Economic Development Organization and that they worked to provide services and resources to stimulate and support economic development and diversification within Southeastern Connecticut. He stated that he completed his orientation as a Board Member, and that he attended the seCTer meeting earlier today, (11) Connecticut Interlocal Risk Management Agency (CIRMA) - Mayor Allyn that Ledyard obtains its insurance through CIRMA. He explained in years past when there were not a lot of insurance claims the member towns would receive a dividend check, which was great, because the town would add those funds to their Undesignated Fund. However, he stated because CIRMA had a \$10 million policy payout this year that the towns would not be

receiving a dividend check; (12) Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget Preparation - Mayor Allyn stated Staff were preparing their draft budgets for the upcoming year. He stated Town Department Budgets were due to his Office by January 16, 2024 and that the Board of Education's proposed was due to his Office by February 26, 2024. He stated the town was transitioning back from ClearGov to the Excel Spreadsheet format though the Munis Financial System. He the budget format would provide the three prior budget years, the year-to-date numbers, and the Mayor's proposed budget all in one format. He stated he would assemble the Board of Education's proposed budget along with his proposed budget to deliver to the Town Council on March 4, 2024 (first Monday in March); in accordance with Chapter VII, of the Town Charter. He stated at that point the budget would become the Town Council's budget to work with.

### Questions to the Mayor

Councilor Saccone noted that although he did not have a question for Mayor Allyn, that he wanted to commend the Emergency Dispatchers for their actions related to the motor vehicle accident that involved a motorcyclist on January 1, 2024. He explained the process when an Emergency-911-Call comes in. He stated when he called in the accident on his walkie-talkie the Dispatch occurred instantaneously. He thanked Dispatchers Whaley and Wadecki for an outstanding job.

### **RESULT:** .

### XIII. OLD BUSINESS

### XIV. NEW BUSINESS

#### Administration Committee

1. MOTION to appoint Ms. Jessica Cobb (D) 7 Whipoorwill Drive, Gales Ferry, as a Regular Member of the Planning & Zoning Commission to complete a three (3) year term ending October 31, 2026 filling a vacancy left by Mr. St. Vil.

Moved by Councilor Garcia-Irizarry, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: None.

**VOTE: 9 - 0 Approved and so declared**

**RESULT:** APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

**MOVER:** Carmen Garcia-Irizarry

**SECONDER:** Tim Ryan

**AYE:** 9 Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Paul, Rodriguez, Ryan, Saccone, and St. Vil

2. MOTION to appoint Ms. Minna DeGaetano, (D) 10 Marla Avenue, Ledyard, as an Alternate Member to the Retirement Board as an Alternate Member to Retirement Board for a three year

term ending August 26, 2026.

Moved by Councilor Garcia-Irizarry, seconded by Councilor Dombrowski

Discussion: None.

**VOTE: 9 - 0 Approved and so declared**

**RESULT:** APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

**MOVER:** Carmen Garcia-Irizarry

**SECONDER:** Kevin Dombrowski

**AYE:** 9 Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Paul, Rodriguez, Ryan, Saccone, and St. Vil

Finance Committee

3. MOTION to authorize overspending account 10110205-53610 Specialty Approved Counsel through June, 30, 2023.

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: Councilor Ryan stated although they have been working to increase the legal expenses budget each year, that almost every budget cycle the Town Council has been requested to authorize overspending the Specialty Approved Counsel Account because of unforeseen circumstances or because of legal matters that were carried over from a previous year. He stated this authorization to over expend was routinely done, and he explained that each year they try to recalibrate the new budget Specialty Approved Counsel Account so that it was closer to their actual expense.

Mayor Allyn, III explained the reason for the request to over expend the Specialty Approved Counsel Account this year was to address a lawsuit regarding a land use matter. He stated the town had to hire Specialty Counsel to litigate the matter. He noted that the town does not know when lawsuits were going to arise or how much money would be needed.

**VOTE: 9 - 0 Approved and so declared**

**RESULT:** APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

**MOVER:** Jessica Buhle

**SECONDER:** Tim Ryan

**AYE:** 9 Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Paul, Rodriguez, Ryan, Saccone, and St. Vil

4. MOTION to appropriate the Connecticut Secretary of the State Early Voting Grant in the amount of \$10,500 to Account# 21010301-56100-G0015 entitled "Registrar - Operating Expenses - Misc. Grants".

In addition, authorize the Registrar of Voters to expend the Early Voting Grant in the amount of \$10,500 to pay for expenses associated with Early Voting provisions in accordance with Public Act 23-5.

Moved by Councilor Saccone, seconded by Councilor Buhle

Discussion: Registrar of Voters Claudia Sweeney stated that she and Registrar Diana Mann attended the Finance Committee's January 3, 2024 meeting to review the Early Voting process and the costs associated which were mostly for staff and for some equipment that would be needed. She stated the Secretary of State would giving each town \$10,500 to start and implement the new Early Voting provisions as required by Public Act 23-5.

Councilor Ryan stated the cost to facilitate Early Voting was going to be about \$30,000 for Ledyard. He stated the \$10,5000 Grant funding was welcome, however, he stated that it would only cover about one-third of the town's cost. He stated the during the Finance Committee meeting that Councilor Buhle suggested looking at other ways that could streamline the costs of Early Voting to reduce costs. However, he stated this would be a learning process as the town worked its way through the Early Voting requirements.

Councilor Buhle noted during the Finance Committee meeting that Registrar Ms. Sweeny explained that this coming year would be more costly because it was a Presidential Election year; and because they may need to also have Primary Elections this year as well. She stated during an ordinary year that the Early Voting expenses should not be as high.

Councilor Ryan noted that it was uncertain as to whether the Early Voting Grant was a one-time grant or whether the Secretary of State would provide funding to the municipalities going forward. Ms. Sweeney noted that the State could decide to change the number of hours/days required for Early Voting in the Public Act.

Councilor Ryan noted that during the Finance Committee meeting that the Registrar indicated that beginning with their proposed Fiscal Year 2024/2025 budget and going forward that they would include funding for the Early Voting based on the type of election year.

**VOTE: 9 - 0 Approved and so declared**

**RESULT:** APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

**MOVER:** Tony Saccone

**SECONDER:** Jessica Buhle

**AYE:** 9 Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Paul, Rodriguez, Ryan, Saccone, and St. Vil

5. MOTION to approve the Master Municipal Agreement for Construction Projects between the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Town of Ledyard.

Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Buhle

Discussion: Mayor Allyn, III, explained that every ten years the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) required Municipalities to sign a new Master Municipal Agreement for Construction (MMAC) Projects between the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) and Municipalities. He stated Ledyard received the 130-page Agreement in late December, 2023, noting that they need to have it signed and back to the State by January 21, 2024. He stated the document identified all the terms that Municipalities had to follow when they accepted either Federal or State dollars for construction projects. He stated the revised ten-year term MMAC identified the procurement process, for both municipally advertised construction projects, as well as projects advertised by the CTDOT



on behalf of municipalities.

Councilor Ryan noted that there were no substantive changes to the Master Municipal Agreement. Mayor Allyn went on to note that the updated MMAC included standard terms, conditions, and contracting “boiler plate” language that should generally govern all municipal construction projects involving the CTDOT, which were undertaken throughout the ten-year term and addressed things such as Title Six in that they would not be discriminatory in their hiring of sub-contractors, as well as reporting and auditing requirements, etc.

**VOTE: 9 - 0 Approved and so declared**

**RESULT:** APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

**MOVER:** Tim Ryan

**SECONDER:** Jessica Buhle

**AYE:** 9 Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Paul, Rodriguez, Ryan, Saccone, and St. Vil

**6. MOTION** to appropriate the proceeds in the amount of \$260,895 from the sale of 332 Colonel Ledyard Highway to the following Accounts:

- \$95,500.00 to Account #21040111-58240 (Building Renovations - Public Works)
- \$110,000.00 to Account #21040101-57315 (Pooled Vehicles - Public Works)
- \$3,193.85 to Account #10110203-56900 (Other Supplies - Administrative Support)
- \$2,201.15 to Account #10110201-58790 (Contingency - Mayor’s Office)
- \$50,000.00 to CNR Account #21090305-68290 (Open Space)

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: Mayor Allyn, III, provided some background stating that 332 Colonel Ledyard Highway was part of a larger property explaining in 2007 a Developer purchased the 96 ± acre Founders Preserve Property along with some other small adjacent properties. He stated in working to make a residential sub-division the Developer changed the original boundary lines, which put the detached garage that belonged to the house at 332 Colonel Ledyard Highway into the Founders Preserve property. However, he stated the Developer never moved forward with the planned sub-division; and because the Developer did not pay the taxes on the properties, which was about \$277,000, the Town foreclosed on the properties.

Mayor Allyn went on to explain that because there was a title issue when the town acquired 332 Colonel Ledyard Highway property thru the foreclosure, the town could not sell property at that time, and so they rented-out the home out of necessity for nearly five years. He stated Avalonia Land Conservancy paid for the A2 Survey of the property, which resolved the title and property located at 332 Colonel Ledyard Highway boundary issues, which put the detached garage back on the property with the house. He stated once the property boundaries were corrected the Town held a Public Hearing and at a Special Town Meeting that was held on September 27, 2023 the Townspeople approved to sell 332 Colonel Ledyard Highway to Leonard D. Sherman for Two Hundred and Eighty Thousand Dollars (\$280,000).

Mayor Allyn continued by noting the Real Estate Closing was held at the end of November, 2023 and after expenses the proceeds of the sale was \$260,895. He reviewed the allocation of

the \$260,895 as follows:

- **\$95,500.00 to Account #21040111-58240 (Building Renovations - Public Works)**  
Mayor Allyn noted Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin oversees t his Account which was used for maintenance projects for all town buildings except the school facilities.
- **\$110,000.00 to Account #21040101-57315 (Pooled Vehicles - Public Works)**  
Mayor Allyn stated the town recently lost seven of their pooled vehicles within a matter of a couple of months, noting that the vehicles had high milage, structural issues and were not safe for the road. He explained in years past the Town was able to purchase used State vehicles with low mileage directly from their assets that had been retired to surplus for a very low cost (between \$1,000 - \$1,500). However, he stated because the State changed to a third-party auction site to sell their surplus vehicles the town now had to purchase used vehicles at a higher cost.

Councilor Saccone questioned whether the town planned to sell the old vehicles on GovDeals.com. Mayor Allyn stated that they would be selling the vehicles using the on-line GovDeals.com auction site.

- **\$3,193.85 to Account #10110203-56900 (Other Supplies - Administrative Support)**  
Mayor Allyn stated these funds would be used to purchase filing cabinets and other items required for the Tax Collectors Office.
- **\$2,201.15 to Account #10110201-58790 (Contingency - Mayor's Office)**  
Mayor Allyn explained that 334 Colonel Ledyard Highway had been a blighted property for many years. He stated the last time the town placed a Blight Lien (4th blight lien) on the property to pay a third party to clean up the property (mow grass, etc.) that the owner offered the town the deed in lieu of foreclosure, because he did not want to pay the lien. He stated after acquiring the property the town obtained a Demolition Permit for the house that had been condemned by the Building Department. He stated the structure had a small amount of asbestos in the roofing mastic which was removed; and they obtained a Permit to Abandon the Well from Ledge Light Health District, which involved filling the well with gravel. He stated these expenses totaled \$2,201.15 and were paid from the Mayor's Office Contingency Budget. Therefore, he stated this allocation was to reimburse the Account.
- **\$50,000 to CNR Account #21090305-68290 (Open Space)**  
Mayor Allyn stated the Open Space Account had a balance of about \$360,000. He stated because the town would be involved with a co-share with Avalonia Land Conservancy to acquire a parcel on Stoddards Wharf Road that putting some funding in the Open Space Account would be a good use of the funds. He stated open space acquisition was good for the town and its residents.

**VOTE: 9 - 0 Approved and so declared**

**RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED**

**MOVER: Jessica Buhle**

**SECONDER:** Tim Ryan

**AYE:** 9 Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Paul, Rodriguez, Ryan, Saccone, and St. Vil

XV. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Buhle moved to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Paul

**VOTE: 9- 0 Approved and so declared.** The meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

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

I, S. Naomi Rodriguez, 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 January 10, 2024.

\_\_\_\_\_  
S. Naomi Rodriguez, Chairman

**DISCLAIMER:**

Although we try to be timely and accurate these are not official records of the Town.

The Town Council's Official Agenda and final Minutes will be on file in the Town Clerk's Office.