



TOWN OF LEDYARD  
CONNECTICUT  
TOWN COUNCIL  
HYBRID FORMAT

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Chairman S. Naomi Rodriguez

MINUTES  
FINANCE COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING

Wednesday, October 16, 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	6:30 pm
Tim Ryan	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	6:30 pm
Tony Saccone	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	6:30 pm
S. Naomi Rodriguez	Town Council Chairman	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	6:30 pm
Fred Allyn, III	Mayor	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	6:30 pm
Matthew Bonin	Finance Director	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	6:30 pm
Elizabeth Burdick	Land Use Director/Town Planner	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	6:30 pm
Steve Masalin	Public Works Director/Town Engineer	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	6:30 pm
Joe de la Cruz	Community Speaks Out	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	5:35 pm
Mike Doyle	Community Speaks Out	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	5:35 pm
Dennis Main	Avalonia Land Conservancy	Present	Remote	5:00 pm	5:05 pm
Roxanne Maher	Administrative Assistant	Present	Remote	5:00 pm	6:30 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 October 2, 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 reported the following: (1) Annual Audit-Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2024 – Mr. Bonin noted that CliftonLarsonAllen, LLP were at the Town Hall on October 9, 2024 and have begun their Audit work; (2) American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding – Mr. Bonin stated the US Treasury issued updated guidance

yesterday, noting that he would be reviewing the documentation. He went on to note that the Treasury did not provide an extension regarding the December 31, 2024 Deadline for Municipalities to have the ARPA Funding committed; and that he did not believe that the updated guidance would change anything for Ledyard.

Councilor Saccone noted recently (within the last few weeks) the State released ARPA Funding, therefore, he stated that he hoped that the December 31, 2024 ARPA Deadline would be extended because of the short window of time to commit the funding from the State. Mr. Bonin stated there was no change to the December 31, 2024 deadline.

## VII. FINANCIAL REPORTS

Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated that he provided an updated American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Projects Spreadsheet for discussion this evening.

Mr. Bonin noted that he would provide the Budget versus Actual Revenue and Expenditure Reports for the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 at the Finance Committee's November 6, 2024 Meeting.

**RESULT: DISCUSSED**

**Next Meeting: 11/6/2024; 5:00 p.m.**

## III. OLD BUSINESS

1. Continued discussion regarding potential uses for the funding received from the National Opioid Settlement Payments.
  - Review, discuss and possible action regarding “*Community Speaks Out*” Proposal to provide Outreach Programs regarding Opioid Prevention and Recovery Coach Programs in Ledyard.

Councilor Saccone thanked Mr. de la Cruz and Mr. Doyle for attending tonight's Finance Committee; and he invited them to present their proposal in the amount of \$10,000.

Mr. Joe de la Cruz, Community Speaks Out President, stated that Community Speaks Out was a Non-Profit Organization that was founded to bring awareness to the use of opioid and other illicit drugs and to help save lives in local communities through education, the distribution of Naloxone, drug tests, recovery coach services, and sober living facilities to help those overcome addiction.

Mr. de la Cruz provided data regarding Community Speaks Out presence in Ledyard noting the following:

- In 2023 Ledyard had 22 overdoses; and Community Speaks Out helped 16 clients who had Ledyard addresses.

- In 2024 – to date 10 Ledyard Residents have participated in Community Speaks Out two-week Sober Living Program. Mr. de la Cruz explained for privacy that their Organization does not pry into their clients background, noting many with an addiction disease were guarded. However, he stated their Organization does try to find out what school they attended, noting that these 10 clients may have attended school in Ledyard, but may not necessarily be living in Ledyard at this time.

Mr. de la Cruz went on to explain during the Sober Living Program that clients attend Community Speaks Out functions such as holiday events, dances, bowling, etc., noting that these types of events and social interaction were more relaxed than a “Meeting”. He noted last week they had 72 clients participate in their bowling event. He stated they also help clients seek jobs etc.

The Finance Committee reviewed and discussed Community Speaks Out \$10,000 proposal as follows:

- ***School Presentations \$1,000*** - Mr. de la Cruz stated that Community Speaks Out has not yet contacted Ledyard Public Schools. He explained that most of the speakers that talk with the students were people that Community Speaks Out works with; or may have been a student from that school. He stated they were typically people who still looked like the students who were in the classroom, noting that the kids really listen to someone who was 21-years old, who recently got out of rehab. He stated because they speak the same language as the kids their message was impactful.
- ***Awareness Events in the Community, Community Education and resources including Naloxone, and distributions of drug tests \$1,000*** - Mr. de la Cruz stated that this work and resources would be focused on the schools, noting that was where they believed they were most effective. However, he stated that Community Speaks Out would also attend events in the community, such as the Fair, Farmers Market, etc., explaining that their Organization would have a table to talk with people and/ or provide resources. He stated the \$1,000 was for the materials, noting that they were all volunteers and that this \$1,000 would provide 1 or 2 community events. He stated that sometimes they also have guest speakers at community events.
- ***Financial Recovery Assistance to include Sober Living, Basic Needs, Recovery Activities and Recovery Coach Services \$8,000*** – Mr. de la Cruz explained that the Sober Living Program cost about \$55,000 annually, however, he stated all their numbers were not in for this year. He stated the \$8,000 in their proposal, was probably low, noting it was based on the number of clients that were from Ledyard stating it cost about \$300 to house a client for two weeks. He stated that this funding also provided *Basic Needs* - clean clothes, underwear, socks, etc. He stated that Community Speaks Out was still trying to track the cost of all the services they provide, noting that they were all volunteers, and that they do not get paid. He stated Groton gave Community Speaks Out their entire \$152,000 Opioid Settlement Funding for this year, explaining that the Organization’s vision was to purchase a property Groton to build a Recreation Center where folks could come in, explaining that it would not be an environment that was like a structured meeting. He stated the facility would be available to anyone, noting that Groton did not put a stipulation on the use of the funds, stating that Groton has seen their Organization’s work. He stated the funding they received from Groton has been put into the Community

Speaks Out Building Fund and that the funding they receive from other Municipalities would be used to try to take care of the clients they were already working with in that community.

- ***Number of Clients Annually*** - Based on the formula of \$55,000 per year at \$300 per client the number of clients that participate in the Community Speaks Out Sober Living Program was about 180 clients per year. Based on Community Speaks Out Sober data for this year 10 clients from Ledyard would be \$3,000. However, there could be more clients from Ledyard, based on Mr. de la Cruz's explanation that they do not always know where their clients were from. Mr. de la Cruz explained that they could have a client that was recently released from a Hartford Correctional Institution. However, he stated that Community Speaks Out would have no idea of where they were originally from, noting that they may have graduated from Ledyard, New London, or East Lyme, stating that the last address they have for that client was the Hartford Correctional Institution. He stated that it was hard to quantify all the expenses because they have not kept perfect track of the cost of the services they provide. He stated Community Speaks Out goal for this year was to keep better track of who they were helping, etc. so that they could provide better data to the Municipalities.
- ***Quarterly Reports*** – Mr. de la Cruz stated that the \$10,000 proposal was for one year and that Community Speaks Out would provide periodic reports and a final report on how the funding was used.
- ***Reach Community Members*** – Mr de la Cruz stated Community Speaks Out advertises their programs and services. He stated the Police Departments were aware of their Organization and that word of mouth was a great resource. He went on to state when a Municipality makes a decision to provide funding to an Organization to provide addiction/recovery services/programs that parents were more apt to reach out to that Organization should they feel their child needed help. He encouraged the town to put this information on their website or anywhere they thought it would be seen.
- ***Proposal Disclaimer*** – *“Community Speaks Out is a non-profit 501©3 Organization that has no paid employees. We are a volunteer board of Directors and rely on volunteers within the community. We pay for some outside services such as a recovery coach, which is not covered by insurance. We also pay a stipend to people in recovery to speak to students about the dangers of substance use.”*

Mr. de la Cruz stated Community Speaks Out pays people in recovery to speak to students, noting that some will need time off from work to speak at a school during the day. However, he stated some Guest Speakers were professional speakers and charged for their speaking services. The fees would be paid using the funding that was included in this proposal. Councilor Ryan stated that the \$1,000 would provide 2-3 speakers for the Ledyard School System. Mr. de la Cruz stated that was correct., noting that sometimes they have 2 or 3 speakers at one presentation.

Mayor Allyn, III, stated that he liked the \$10,000 proposal Community Speaks Out submitted. However, he suggested because Community Speaks Out has not yet contacted Ledyard Public School that they make the following revisions to the proposal:

- Remove \$1,000 for the School Presentations - Fee for Guest Speakers.
- Remove \$1,000 for the Awareness Events in Community for community education and resources including Naloxone and drug test distribution.
- Add \$2,000 to the \$8,000 for Financial Recovery Assistance to include Sober Living, Basic Needs, Recovery Activities and Recovery Coach Services (Total: \$10,000).

Mayor Allyn stated after Community Speaks Out talks with Ledyard Public Schools; and if the Board of Education agreed to have their Organization in the schools, that they could come back with an Amendment to the Proposal, noting that he fully supported all the programs they were proposing, stating that they were all important. Mr. de la Cruz stated even if they removed the funding for the school programs that Community Speaks Out would still provide those services. He stated the reason they included the School Presentations and Awareness Events; Naloxone, and Drug Tests was to show that there were costs associated with those services. He stated that the best way to slow this epidemic down was to start in the schools. He stated every year Community Speaks Out send letters to all the schools to let them know the programs and services they offer. However, he stated they have not talked with the Ledyard Board of Education yet. He also noted that since Covid-19 it has been more challenging to get speakers in the schools. He stated after Community Speaks Out gives a presentation to the students during the school day, that they would also give a presentation in the evening to the parents, at which the speakers were parents who tell their story. He stated sometime the parent turn-out was low, however, he stated the parents who attend the presentation were the ones that needed it, stating that they showed up for a reason.

Chairman Rodriguez stated in speaking to School Superintendent Mr. Jason Hartling that he stated for anyone to come into the schools to give a presentation that they would need to contact his office, not the School Principal. She suggested Community Speaks Out email Mr. Hartling.

Chairman Rodriguez noted before receiving Community Speaks Out's proposal today, that they had provided three different proposals that were retracted. She noted that those proposals included services from Mr. Mike Doyle, who had a separate Organization. Mr. Doyle explained in the previous proposals that they had grouped the services he would provide with the services that Community Speaks Out would provide. He stated his company *Connecticut Recovery Support Center* provided Outreach Recovery Coaching as well as Opioid Education and Narcan Training. Chairman Rodriguez suggested Mr. Doyle resubmit his proposal at a later time.

Councilor Saccone stated that Community Speaks Out has appealed to Town Council a few times, noting that they attended the Town Council's September 11, 2024 meeting and Finance Committee's September 18, 2024 meeting. He stated that their \$10,000 proposal was appropriate for the services they would be providing and that he supported the request.

MOTION to recommend the Town Council accept the Community Speaks Out proposal dated October 16, 2024 in the amount of \$10,000 for the use of the National Opioid Settlement Funding received by the Town of Ledyard with the following changes:

- Remove \$1,000 for the School Presentations - Fee for Guest Speakers.
- Remove \$1,000 for the Awareness Events in Community for community education and resources including Naloxone and drug test distribution.
- Add \$2,000 to the \$8,000 for Financial Recovery Assistance to include Sober Living, Basic Needs, Recovery Activities and Recovery Coach Services (Total: \$10,000).

### Community Speaks Out

2024-2025 OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDING PROPOSAL FOR LEDYARD, CT



SERVICES	BUDGET
<del>School Presentations fee is for guest speakers</del>	<del>\$1,000.00</del>
<del>Awareness Events in Community community education and resources including naloxone and drug tests distribution</del>	<del>\$1,000.00</del>
Financial Recovery assistance to include Sober Living, Basic Needs, Recovery Activities and Recovery Coach Services	\$8,000.00 <b>+\$2,000.00</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$10,000.00</b>

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Saccone

Discussion: Councilor Ryan questioned the current balance of the Opioid Settlement Fund. Finance Director Matthew Bonin noted the current balance was approximately \$120,000.

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

**RESULT: APPROVE TO RECOMMEND 3 – 0**  
**MOVER:** Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor  
**SECONDER:** Tony Saccone, Town Councilor  
**AYES:** Jessica Buhle, Tim Ryan, Tony Saccone

The Finance Committee thanked Community Speaks Out for attending tonight’s meeting.

Mr. de la Cruz and Mr. Doyle left the meeting at 5:35 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 reviewed with Finance Director Matthew Bonin, and Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin the following ARPA Projects:

- ***Erickson Park Improvements \$55,000*** – Councilor Saccone noted that Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin provided Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Director Scott Johnson, Jr., with all the information on how to proceed with the paving material and paving work using the State Bid Contract. Therefore, he stated that he hoped Mr. Johnson would move forward in getting the work done soon. Mayor Allyn, III, noted if they do not have a contract in-place on the Erickson Park Project by November 6, 2024 that he would recommend cutting the project to reallocate the funds to other projects because he did not want to risk losing the ARPA Funding.
- ***LED Message Sign in Ledyard Center \$35,000*** – Councilor Saccone questioned whether the final invoices for the installation of the sign in Ledyard Center have been received and whether there would be any funds remaining from this project that could be used toward other projects. Mayor Allyn, III, stated there would probably be a couple thousand dollars remaining from this project. He noted that they would have the final numbers for the LED Message Signs for the Finance Committee’s November 6, 2024 meeting. Councilor Buhle stated she was happy to see the “Early Voting” information on the message signs.
- ***Housing Rehabilitation Program \$100,000*** – Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated because the ARPA Funding was committed to the Program that it was “*Obligated*”.
- ***Phase I Sewer Projects \$1,200,000*** – Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin stated that there was still some uncertainty regarding the final cost of Phase I and Phase III of the Sewer Line Extension Project. However, he stated based on the numbers he had in hand and with adding an assumed buffer that there would be about \$250,000 that would be available to be reallocated to other projects. He stated the \$250,000 balance took into consideration the \$150,000 that was being put toward the balance of the Phase I Sewer Line Extension, and also took into account the \$67,000 deficit that had to be made up. He stated these numbers were based on the accounting of what has been spent with additional authorizations that were encumbered for the Sewer Extension Project and the Multi-Use Pathway.

Mr. Masalin went on to note at tomorrow’s regular biweekly meeting with the staff of Gerber Construction and Weston and Sampon Engineers that he would be looking to get further definitive values for Phase I. He stated that hopefully those values would not be much more beyond the \$150,000 that he has earmarked.

Mr. Masalin stated that he was aware that there were other ARPA Projects that the Finance Committee was looking to close out that may also release some funding, noting that there were a lot of moving parts within the ARPA Projects List.

Councilor Ryan noted that later this evening they would be discussing Phase III of the Sewer Line Extension Project. He stated the numbers that were included for Phase III add up to \$821,000 and he questioned whether this was the total budget for Phase III, noting that \$121,000 has already been encumbered or spent on Phase III. Mr. Masalin provided an overview of the Phase III ARPA allocation noting that \$950,000 was earmarked, \$122,100 committed, leaving a balance of \$827,900; of which they were looking to spend \$821,000, noting that Phase III would be within the \$920,000 ARPA allocation, leaving a nominal \$13,000 for contingency.

Councilor Buhle questioned in the event there was some ARPA Funding remaining by the time they get to December, whether they could allocate additional funds toward the Parks & Recreation Scholarship Program or the Housing Rehabilitation Program, etc. Mayor Allyn, III, stated that there were some things that they could do should there be some ARPA funding.

- MOTION to recommend the Town Council grant a bid waiver to Goman & York Property Advisors, LLC in the amount of \$72,500 to conduct the Route 12 Corridor Study, due to receiving fewer than the required three bids in response to RFQ/RFP #2025-01 ( Corridor Study along Route 12) in accordance with Ordinance #200-001 (rev. 1) "*An Ordinance for Purchasing*".

In addition, transfer and appropriate \$22,500 from American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to the Route 12 Corridor Study for a total amount of \$72,500. Source of ARPA funding transfer to be determined.

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: Mayor Allyn, III, stated on July 8, 2024 the Economic Development Commission solicited a Request for Qualifications/Request for Proposals (RFQ/RFP #2025-01) to seek qualified consulting firms to conduct a comprehensive Corridor Study along Route 12 in Gales Ferry. However, he stated the Town only received two bids, noting that the low bid came in higher than the \$50,000 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding that was allocated for this project. He addressed the importance of proceeding with the Route 12 Corridor Study, explaining that it would allow the town to prepare shovel ready projects putting the town in a better position for when Small Town Economic Assistance Grants (STEAP) Funding or other grant opportunities becomes available.

Councilor Saccone noted in reviewing the ARPA Projects spreadsheet that they already had an \$88,000 deficit in the ARPA Account.

Land Use Director/Town Planner Elizabeth Burdick provided some background noting this Route 12 Corridor Study would serve as an update to the Study that was completed in 2012; and would also provide an economic analysis. She explained that the purpose of the study was to analyze and assess the current conditions, identify potential improvement and investment opportunities and any challenges that was preventing them from occurring, and to provide actionable recommendations for the enhancement/improvement of the corridor. She stated that this Corridor Study would



also involve engineering and cost estimates for those improvements. Therefore, she stated as Mayor Allyn mentioned, that Ledyard would have design and cost estimates for improvements to Route 12 for when grant opportunities such as Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP) become available. She noted that the Multi-Use Pathway from the High School to Ledyard Center was being paid through a LOTICIP Grant.

Ms. Burdick stated \$50,000 of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding was allocated for the Corridor Study; however, she noted the Town received the following two proposals at the August 15, 2024 Bid Opening: (1) Goman & York Property Advisors, LLC \$ 76,150; and (2) Colliers Engineering & Design \$119,940.

Ms. Burdick stated that Goman & York was the lowest qualified bidder, noting that the proposal also offered the following alternative pricing options:

1. Eliminate the engineering work; reducing the bid by \$7,500; and
2. Utilizing its Data Analyst Team (vs. Senior Planners) and further reducing the bid by \$3,650.

Ms. Burdick explained they could reduce the bid by \$3,650 by utilizing the Data Analysis Team instead of using their Senior Planner. However she recommended that the town keep the services (\$7,500) for the subcontractor Freeman Companies to complete the engineering work, including the actual designs and cost estimates. She stated by completing the engineering work, the Town would have a cost estimate of work for improvements should grant funds become available to fund the cost of the improvements. She stated the total costs after the \$3,650 reduction was \$72,500.

Councilor Saccone noted the number of car accidents on Route 12, and he questioned whether the Corridor Study would propose things such as a center turning lane to help prevent cars from being hit from behind when trying to turn off of Route 12. Ms. Burdick explained one of the purposes of including the \$7,500 for the engineering work in the Route 12 Corridor Study was to provide recommendations. She went on to note that Route 12 was a State Road, and therefore, the Town would be required to obtain the State Department of Transportation (DOT) permission to make any changes to Route 12.

Councilor Ryan noted pages 4, 5, and 6 of the proposal attached to the agenda packet on the meeting portal were blank. Ms. Burdick provided a spreadsheet showing the cost breakdown for the Corridor Study, which included the hourly fees, etc. She stated that they would not be able to bring the cost down to \$50,000 and have a Study that they could use.

Councilor Ryan questioned the funding plan to make up the \$22,000 balance if ARPA Funding was not available. Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin stated that he has been tracking the ARPA Funding relative to the Ledyard Center Sewer Extension Project, noting that the numbers were still fluid. However, he stated for the

\$22,000 that he thought ARPA Funding could still remain as an option; but that he would leave that decision to the Mayor. Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated if ARPA Funding was not an option for the \$22,000 that funding could be used from the Undesignated Fund.

Councilor Ryan stated that he was in favor of projects that they had in-hand that could spend the ARPA Funding. He stated there were still a few questions, such as Erickson Park that would bring their overall ARPA Projects budget back in-line.

Councilor Buhle stated by having the Route 12 Corridor Study completed that the Town would be in a better position to apply for and receive grants funding through opportunities such as the STEAP Program, and the LOTCIP Program. However, she stated these grant opportunities cannot be used for studies; which was the reason it was important for the town to proceed with the Route 12 Corridor Study.

**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. MOTION to recommend the Town Council approve a Budget Letter of Directive to the Mayor and Board of Education for the preparation of the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget, as presented in the draft dated October 16, 2024.

Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Buhle

Discussion: The Finance Committee noted that they did not have any comments regarding the draft letter as presented.

Mayor Allyn stated he reviewed the letter and that he was pleased to see that they were maintaining fiscal guardrails. He stated that he was also pleased that letter addressed Public Act 24-46 “*An Act Establishing a Property Tax Exemption for Veterans Who Have a Service-Connected Permanent and Total Disability Rating*”, noting that the current projection for this program would provide a loss in tax revenues of about \$515,000, which would result in a .42 mil tax increase.

Chairman Rodriguez noted Senator Osten’s attendance at the Town Council’s October 9, 2024 meeting stating that there seemed to be some discrepancy between the numbers the State was projecting, and the numbers that local Tax Assessor Officers were projecting. Mayor Allyn stated Tax Assessors across the State watched the video from the Town Council’s October 9, 2024 meeting and that they were confident that they were applying the new law properly. However, he stated the real concern was that the State was saying between Ledyard and Gales Ferry combined there were only 19 Permanently and Totally Disabled Veterans, when 105 Veterans have already come into the Tax Assessor’s Office with the Veterans Administration Certificate verifying that they were Permanently and Totally Disabled.

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

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

**MOVER:** Tim Ryan, Town Councilor  
**SECONDER:** Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor  
**AYES:** Jessica Buhle, Tim Ryan, Tony Saccone

3. Continued discussion regarding upcoming potential Grant Opportunities.

Councilor Buhle noted the “*Community Investment Fund 2023 – Round 6*”: Applications were due December 15, 2024. However, she stated at this time she did not believe that Ledyard had any projects that were applicable. However, she stated because the town was moving forward with studies such as the Route 12 Corridor Study that she wanted to make sure they had a Plan for when grant opportunities open up. She noted that Ledyard has taken advantage of grant opportunities in the past such as the Multi-Use Pathway, and that she wanted to make sure the town would be prepared going forward.

Land Use Director/Town Planner Elizabeth Burdick noted the amount of work that was involved with applying for, receiving and administering Grants.

**RESULT: CONTINUED**

**Next Meeting: 11/6/2024; 5:00 p.m.**

4. Any other Old Business proper to come before the Committee.- None.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

1. MOTION to recommend the Town Council authorize overspending account 10110205-53615 Town Attorney through June 30, 2025.

Moved by Councilor Saccone, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: Mayor Allyn, III, explained between the expended and encumbered amounts that the Legal Fees Account had a current balance of about \$5.00. He stated this was primarily due to the lead hazard issue at the Historic Nathan Lester House, explaining that there was a lot of legal work involved in this matter.

Councilor Ryan stated in years past he has questioned overspending the Legal Fees Account. However, he explained that it was difficult to predict what their legal fees were going to be; and therefore, a legal budget was set for optics. He stated nearly every Town Council has approved overspending the Legal Fees Account.

Mayor Allyn explained that it was difficult to predict how many times the town was going to be sued by residents or non-residents for things such as car accidents, etc. He stated each situation required some legal work before it was sent off to their insurance provider Connecticut Interlocal Risk Management Agency (CIRMA).

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

**RESULT: APPROVE TO RECOMMEND 3 – 0**  
**MOVER:** Tony Saccone, Town Councilor  
**SECONDER:** Tim Ryan, Town Councilor  
**AYES:** Jessica Buhle, Tim Ryan, Tony Saccone

2. MOTION to recommend the Town Council authorize the Town to proceed with construction services and resident inspection and construction engineering services for Phase III sewer line installation per Gerber Construction, Inc. proposal; and Weston & Sampson Engineers, Inc. proposal respectively.

Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Buhle

Discussion: Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin noted during the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Project Update discussion earlier this evening (see above - Old Business Item #2). He stated the proposals were within the balance of ARPA funds previously earmarked for Phase III of the Sewer Main Installation Project. He stated that he has been working closely with Gerber Construction, Inc., noting that their \$737,852 proposal for Phase III Construction was attached to the Agenda on the meeting portal. He stated that he was requesting authorization of up to \$750,000 at this point to cover contingency. He continued to note Weston & Sampson Engineers, Inc., \$71,000 proposal; stating that the aggregate of these values with the previously authorized design engineering (\$122,100) falls within the total amount presently earmarked for Phase III Sewer Main Replacement (\$950,000). He stated these costs included a small Contingency and that they were hopeful that the overruns would be significantly lower proportionally than Phase I because they would be co-locating the new larger sewer pipe in the same location of the existing pipe, and therefore, the trenching work should not involve any rock removal, etc.

Mr. Masalin went on to explain because of the uncertainty about obtaining a good number for the cost of the Odor Control Equipment they took it out of the project. He stated that currently there was not an Odor Control System but because this Sewer System was going to be handling much more volume that an Odor Control System would be necessary. He stated the plan was to repurpose the former Pump Station at the Highlands (across from Pennywise Store) as an Odor Control System. However, he stated because the Engineer believed that this was going to be necessary that the current proposal included funding to install the piping necessary to plug and play at a later time. He stated that he would be back with further information to discuss the following: (1) Costs that may be earmarked within another ARPA discussion; (2) Balance regarding Phase I; (3) Order Control Equipment; and (4) Other alternatives that they may need to absorb the ARPA balances.

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

**RESULT: APPROVE TO RECOMMEND 3 – 0**  
**MOVER:** Tim Ryan, Town Councilor  
**SECONDER:** Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor  
**AYES:** Jessica Buhle, Tim Ryan, Tony Saccone

3. MOTION to recommend the Town Council transfer the Board of Education Capital Fund for Non-Bonded Board of Education Capital Items back to the Town's Capital Nonrecurring Fund (CNR Fund 210).

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: Chairman Rodriguez provided some background noting the Town Council's February 28, 2024 action to set-up a new, stand alone, Board of Education Capital Fund for Non-Bonded Board of Education Capital Items, to reside outside of the Town's Capital Nonrecurring Fund (CNR Fund 210) was done to streamline the process for the Board of Education to open purchase orders through the Munis Financial System and to pay invoices. She stated that it should be explicitly noted that this action did not in any way change the town's budgetary process regarding revenues that were received outside of the Annual Budget, as approved by our taxpayers each year, or usurp the Town Charter. She noted the allocation of revenues and expenditure that were outside of the approved budget required Town Council authorization.

Chairman Rodriguez provided the Finance Committee the following Sections from the Town Charter:

- Chapter VII; Finance and Taxation; Section 5 "Duties of the Town Council on the Budget" Paragraph 10 (page 31) stated:

*"For the purposes of the General Statutes, **the Town Council shall be deemed to be the budget making authority and the legislative body of the Town and shall have all the powers and duties contained therein for the creation of a "Reserve Fund for Capital and Non-Recurring Expenditures, and shall have the power to select the independent public accountant as provided in this Charter."***

- Chapter VII; Finance and Taxation; Section 9 "Financial Powers" Paragraph 1 (page 33) stated:

***Any resolution making a non-budgeted appropriation of less than one (1) percent of the current tax levy shall become effective after approval by the Town Council,** provided that the Director of Finance certifies that there are available unappropriated general fund resources in excess of the proposed appropriation.*

- Chapter VII; Finance and Taxation; Section 13 "Expenditures and Accounting" Paragraph 5 (page 35) stated:

*"The several departments, commissions, officers, and boards of the Town shall not involve the Town in any obligation to spend money for any purpose in **excess of the amount appropriated for each designated line item until the matter has been approved by the Town Council,** and each order drawn upon the Treasurer shall state the department, commission, board, or officer and the appropriate line item against which it is to be charged."*

Chairman Rodriguez went on to note that she along with Mayor Allyn, III, met with School Superintendent Hartling on September 23, 2024. She stated during their meeting she asked Mr. Hartling about his July 15, 2024 letter in which he requested the transfer of **additional revenues** received for Fiscal Year 2023/2024 from the Agricultural Science Technology Education (ASTE) Grant Program and the Impact Aid Program to be passed through to the Board of Education's Capital Non-Recurring Accounts; and that she questioned the reason a list outlining a Spending Plan was not provided, noting in previous years the Board of Education attached a list of how the funding would be spent in their letters to former Town Council Chairman Dombrowski and Chairman Davis. She stated that Mr. Hartling said that the Town Council's February 28, 2024 action gave the power to the Board of Education to do what they wanted to do with the additional ASTE Funding and the additional Impact Aid Funding regardless of the Town Council. Chairman Rodriguez stated that she responded to Mr. Hartling stating that he misunderstood; and that per the Town Charter the Town Council was the Budget Making Authority and the Legislative Body of the Town; and therefore, they had the last say regarding funding that was received outside of the approved annual budget. She stated that Mr. Hartling did not agree with her position.

Chairman Rodriguez asked Finance Director Matthew Bonin whether the Town Council's February 28, 2024 action has streamlined the process and made it easier. Mr. Bonin stated that it was easier for him.

Chairman Rodriguez went on to note that she called a Board of Education Member to discuss the matter, however, they said it was up to the School Superintendent or Chairman Anthony Favry. She stated because there was a misunderstanding on the part of the Board of Education regarding the Town Council's February 28, 2024 action that the Town Council may want to take another look at the action or to undo the action, so that there was no misunderstanding by Superintendent Hartling and the Board of Education. She stated the Town Charter was clear regarding this authority and regarding other things; however, there continues to be a misunderstanding.

Councilor Ryan stated that he agreed with Chairman Rodriguez's assessment of the Town Charter. However, he stated that he had an issue with going back to undo the Town Council's February 28, 2024 action; because it was done to make things more efficient for both the Town and the Board of Education. He suggested rather than undo their February 28, 2024 action that the Town Council clarify the action. He noted that he provided a Motion to clarify for the Finance Committee to review this evening as follows:

MOTION to clarify the action taken by the Town Council at their 2/28/24 meeting with respect to Agenda Item 11, to reinforce that the reason for moving the Board of Education's capital lines outside of the Town's Capital Nonrecurring Fund was to make the process of using appropriated funds more efficient, and create a smoother workflow for both the Town and the Board of Education.

Further, it is noted that this motion, nor any action taken by Town Council or its committees, cannot, under any circumstances circumvent the Town Charter, which states that the Town Council shall be deemed to be the budget making authority and the legislative body of the Town, and as such, is empowered to adopt a town-wide budget - inclusive of expected revenues and expenses for all departments and line items - for

presentation at the annual town meeting and approval at the annual town referendum. Additionally, the Town Charter requires that no department of the town shall spend money for any purpose in excess of the amount appropriated for each line item – including CNR accounts - until the matter has been approved by the Town Council. Accordingly, if additional revenue is received by the town within the fiscal year that is beyond the amount expected within the adopted budget, it must be appropriated for expenditure by the Town Council.

Councilor Ryan stated that the proposed Motion to clarify was exceeding clear, noting that it talked about additional revenues. He stated that he would be comfortable with sending the Motion noted above and the Town Council’s February 28, 2024 Minutes to the School Superintendent.

Chairman Rodriguez stated although she agreed with Councilor Ryan’s proposed “clarification” motion that she believed that the misunderstanding would continue for years; and that it would be directed toward the Town Council’s February 28, 2024 action and today. She stated they have tried having the Board of Education’s Non-Bonded Capital Accounts reside on their side of the ledger, noting from Finance Director Matthew Bonin point of view it was working. However, she stated from the School Superintendent and the Board of Education’s point of view that the Town Council gave their Budget Making Authority regarding additional appropriations to and expenditures from the Non-Bonded Capital Accounts to the Board of Education. She stated that the Board of Education’s misunderstanding of how additional revenues and expenditures was purposeful. Therefore, she stated that it would be cleaner and clearer for all governing bodies to move forward with the original motion that was included on tonight's agenda.

Councilor Saccone stated that he liked both the original motion and Councilor Ryan’s clarification motion. He suggested the Motion include more language from the Town Charter along with the page references of 31, 33, & 35 to eliminate any confusion. He went on to state the current arrangement for the Board of Education’s Non-Bonded Capital Accounts to reside on their side of the ledger was working for the Town’s Finance Director, noting that was the reason the February 28, 2024 action was done. He stated that he did not get out of work on time this evening noting that he only had five-minutes to make a decision that was going to last 15, 20 or 30 years. Therefore, he suggested the Finance Committee Table tonight’s Motion. He also asked that Chairman Rodriguez and Councilor Ryan revisit their Motions to include language referencing the Town Charter pages 31, 33, & 35 and that the Motion specifically state that the Town Council was the authority to spend funds.

Councilor Ryan stated although he did not disagree with including the Town Charter page numbers, that he did not think that the page numbers would change the strength of the Motion. He stated the proposed language in his clarifying Motion included the same language from the Town Charter that Chairman Rodriguez read during her comments this evening, stating that those Town Charter Sections were referenced in the proposed Motion in a narrative form. He stated that he would be happy to amend the proposed clarifying Motion to include the Town Charter page numbers.

Councilor Buhle stated in reflecting on the Finance Committee’s February 21, 2024 Minutes that the following Motion was made not only to make things easier for Finance Director Matthew Bonin, but also because there were issues with the Board of Education’s invoices not being submitted correctly, or on time, and because there were differences between the Town’s Purchasing Ordinance and the Board of Education’s Purchasing Policy, etc.:

*“MOTION to recommend the Town Council set-up a new, stand alone, Board of Education Capital Fund for Non-Bonded Board of Education Capital Items to reside outside of the Town’s Capital Nonrecurring Fund (CNR Fund 210).”*

Councilor Buhle went on to state that there were a number of reasons the Board of Education’s Non-Bonded Capital Accounts were moved outside of the Town’s Fund, noting that she did not want them to lose sight of those reasons. She stated at the end of the day the Town Charter stated was the governing document and that the Town Council was the *Budget Making Authority*; and that **“Departments and Boards shall not spend money for any purpose *in excess of the amount appropriated for each designated line item until the matter has been approved by the Town Council*”.**

Councilor Ryan stated regardless of the reasons the Town Council moved the Board of Education’s Non-Bonded Capital Accounts outside of the Town’s Fund, that what really mattered was that any actions they take as a Committee or as the Town Council would not subvert the Town Charter. He commented that he believed that they were all in agreement with that. Therefore, he stated that it was a matter of getting the right words in the Motion to make sure it was very clear.

Councilor Buhle also noted at the Finance Committee’s February 21, 2024 meeting that Councilor Ryan asked with moving the Board of Education’s Non-Bonded Capital Accounts outside of the Town’s Fund, whether there would be the same level of visibility; and that Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated that they would have the same level of visibility.

MOTION to Table the

MOTION to recommend the Town Council transfer the Board of Education Capital Fund for Non-Bonded Board of Education Capital Items back to the Town’s Capital Nonrecurring Fund (CNR Fund 210).

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Saccone

**VOTE: 2 – 1 Approved to Table (Ryan not in favor)**

<b>RESULT: APPROVE TO TABLE 2 – 1</b>	
<b>MOVER:</b>	Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor
<b>SECONDER:</b>	Tony Saccone, Town Councilor
<b>AYES:</b>	Jessica Buhle, Tony Saccone
<b>NAYES:</b>	Tim Ryan



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

X. ADJOURNMENT

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

**VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared,** the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony Saccone, Sr.  
Committee Chairman  
Finance Committee