



TOWN OF LEDYARD
CONNECTICUT
TOWN COUNCIL
HYBRID FORMAT

741 Colonel Ledyard Highway
Ledyard, CT 06339

860 464-3203
Roxanne Maher

Chairman Kevin J. Dombrowski

MINUTES
FINANCE COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING

Wednesday, March 21, 2023

5:00 PM

Annex Meeting Room - Video Conference

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

Councilor Saums 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
Andra Ingalls	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	6:46 pm
Tim Ryan	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	6:46 pm
Bill Saums	Town Councilor	Present	Remote	5:00 pm	6:46 pm
Mary McGrattan	Town Councilor	Present	Remote	5:00 pm	6:46 pm
Gary Paul	Town Councilor	Present	Remote	5:00 pm	6:46 pm
S. Naomi Rodriguez	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	6:00 pm
Fred Allyn, III	Mayor	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	6:46 pm
Matt Bonin	Finance Director	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	6:46 pm
Don Steinhoff	Administrator of Human Resources	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	6:11 pm
Steve Holyfield	Administrator Emergency Services	Present	Remote	5:00 pm	5:18 pm
Penny Newbury	The Arc of Eastern Connecticut	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	5:36 pm
Roxanne Maher	Administrative Assistant	Present	Remote	5:00 pm	6:46 pm

- III. RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS COMMENTS - None.

- IV. PRESENTATIONS/INFORMATIONAL ITEMS – None.

- IV. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

MOTION to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of March 1, 2023
Moved by Councilor Ingalls, seconded by Councilor Ryan

VOTE: 3 – 0 Approved and so declared

V. FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated he provided an updated spreadsheet regarding the American Rescue Plan Act Projects for discussion later this evening.

VI. FINANCIAL REPORTS – None.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

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 the status of the ARPA Funded Projects as noted below:

Total ARPA Allocation: 4,327,093.49										
Request Title	Department	Approval Process	Date	ARPA Funds Appropriated	ARPA Funds Expended FY'22	ARPA Funds Expended FY'23	Total ARPA Funds Expended	ARPA Funds Remaining	Status	Notes
Sewer Line Extension Phase I	WPCA	Town Council Action	04/27/22	1,200,000.00	-	85,200.00	85,200.00	1,114,800.00	In Progress	need to verify - all Sewer Feasibility expenses
Sewer Line Extension Phase III	WPCA	Budget Referendum	05/17/22	950,000.00	-	-	-	950,000.00	Not Started	
Funding for youth mental health clinicians	Youth Services	Budget Referendum	05/17/22	190,000.00	-	4,661.75	4,661.75	185,338.25	In Progress	
Skid Mounted Sewer Pumps	WPCA	Town Council Action	04/27/22	175,000.00	2,234.60	113,943.80	116,178.40	58,821.60	In Progress	
Ledyard Up/Down Sawmill	Historic Districts	Budget Referendum	05/17/22	125,000.00	-	3,000.00	3,000.00	122,000.00	In Progress	
Road Restoration Fund	Public Works	Budget Referendum	05/17/22	114,885.00	-	114,885.00	114,885.00	-	Completed	
Housing Rehab Grant - additional funding	Land Use / Planning	Town Council Action	12/08/21	100,000.00	-	5,913.90	5,913.90	94,086.10	In Progress	
Emergency Services Building HVAC system replacement	Public Works	Town Council Action	02/08/23	200,000.00	-	95,000.00	95,000.00	105,000.00	In Progress	
Park & Rec / Senior Center HVAC system replacement	Public Works	Town Council Action	02/08/23	155,000.00	-	74,943.58	74,943.58	80,056.42	In Progress	
Town Hall HVAC system replacement	Public Works	Town Council Action	04/13/22	80,000.00	-	67,728.06	67,728.06	12,271.94	In Progress	
Town Green Upgrade Project	Public Works	Town Council Action	02/09/22	75,000.00	49,154.50	25,845.50	75,000.00	-	Completed	

Replace Dispatch Stations (2) in EOC	Emergency Management	Budget Referendum	05/17/22	75,000.00	3,854.38	56,632.60	60,486.98	14,513.02	Completed	
Playscape Replacement at 13 Winthrop, Gales Ferry	Park & Rec	Budget Referendum	05/17/22	60,000.00	-	27,296.00	27,296.00	32,704.00	In Progress	
Erickson Park Enhancements	Park & Rec	Budget Referendum	05/17/22	55,000.00	-	-	-	55,000.00	Not Started	
Concrete Floor - Pole Barn	Public Works	Town Council Action	12/08/21	100,000.00	-	100,000.00	100,000.00	-	Completed	
Police Radio Interoperability	Police	Budget Referendum	05/17/22	46,125.00	-	-	-	46,125.00	Not Started	
Ledge Light Health District - support COVID initiatives	Finance	Town Council Action	01/26/22	43,270.00	-	43,270.00	43,270.00	-	Completed	
Nathan Lester House repairs	Historic Districts	Budget Referendum	05/17/22	40,000.00	-	7,449.00	7,449.00	32,551.00	In Progress	
LED Sign Panel, Gales Ferry	Mayors office	Budget Referendum	05/17/22	35,000.00	-	-	-	35,000.00	In Progress	Bid awarded
LED Sign Panel, Ledyard Center	Mayors Office	Budget Referendum	05/17/22	35,000.00	-	-	-	35,000.00	In Progress	Bid awarded
Sidewalk Infill in Ledyard Center	Public Works	Budget Referendum	05/17/22	35,000.00	-	-	-	35,000.00	Not Started	
Add Sidewalks in Gales Ferry	ON HOLD	Budget Referendum	05/17/22	35,000.00	-	-	-	35,000.00	Not Started	
Replace Food Pantry Roof	Mayors office	Budget Referendum	05/17/22	25,000.00	-	8,700.00	8,700.00	16,300.00	Completed	
Exterior Doors (TH and Annex) w/ Electronic Locking Systems	Public Works	Budget Referendum	05/17/22	23,000.00	-	-	-	23,000.00	Not Started	
Electric Vehicle charging stations	Mayors Office	Budget Referendum	05/17/22	20,000.00	-	-	-	20,000.00	Not Started	
Vinyl Re-siding of Food Pantry	Mayors office	Budget Referendum	05/17/22	17,500.00	-	-	-	17,500.00	Not Started	
Gales Ferry Corridor Study	Land Use / Planning	Budget Referendum	05/17/22	15,000.00	-	-	-	15,000.00	Not Started	
TVCCA - Commissary project	Finance	Town Council Action	12/08/21	15,000.00	-	15,000.00	15,000.00	-	Completed	
Solar Charging Stations	Mayors office	Budget Referendum	05/17/22	12,000.00	-	5,496.00	5,496.00	6,504.00	In Progress	Units purchased - awaiting install
Added ClearGov Modules	MIS	Budget Referendum	05/17/22	10,500.00	-	10,500.00	10,500.00	-	Completed	
Parks and Rec Summer Scholarships	Parks and Recreation	Budget Referendum	05/17/22	10,000.00	2,087.50	-	2,087.50	7,912.50	In Progress	
Homeless Hospitality Center of New London	Finance	Budget Referendum	05/17/22	10,000.00	-	10,000.00	10,000.00	-	Completed	
Replace Firehouse software	AES	Budget Referendum	05/17/22	8,000.00	-	8,000.00	8,000.00	-	Completed	

Automated Doors - Senior Center	Public Works	Budget Referendum	05/17/22	5,000.00	-	-	-	5,000.00	Not Started	
Replace brackets on streetlight poles	Public Works	Town Council Action	04/27/22	2,520.00	2,476.84	43.16	2,520.00	-	Completed	
Install WI-FI in Food Pantry	MIS	Budget Referendum	05/17/22	2,500.00	2,640.76	-	2,640.76	(140.76)	Completed	
Balance of funding for Owl Pro	MIS	Town Council Action	12/08/21	831.00	831.00	-	831.00	-	Completed	
TOTALS		Total Committed		4,101,131.00						
		Total Expended			63,279.58	883,508.35	946,787.93			
		Total Uncommitted		225,962.49						
								-	Committed Remaining	
								225,962.49	Uncommitted Balance	
								-	Completed to be reallocated	
								3,154,343.07	proof	
original approval was \$55,000 - additional \$45,000 approved by Town Council 10/12/22										

RESULT: CONTINUED **Next Meeting: 04/05/2023 5:00 p.m.**

VII. NEW BUSINESS

- MOTION to recommend the Town Council authorize the Mayor to submit a grant through the FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program in the amount of \$298,210.52 with the local matching amount of \$14,200.52 for the acquisition of new portable and mobile radios for the fire departments.
 Moved by Councilor Ingalls, seconded by Councilor Ryan
 Discussion: Councilor Saums provided some background stating last year Ledyard applied for this FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program to obtain funding to purchase new portable and mobile radios for the fire departments that would bring town’s radios up to same system as the State’s Radio System, which would allow them to communicate with surrounding towns as well as the State. He stated the local match of \$14,200.52 would come from the LVES Fund (formerly Fund 24), noting that this funding was previously set-a-side for this type of use. He stated if the town’s grant application does not get approved that they could continue to apply each year until they are awarded the grant funding.

Administrator of Emergency Services Steve Holyfield stated this was the third year he has applied for FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant to purchase radio equipment. He stated feedback from FEMA indicated that Ledyard's Grant Application was well written, and they received the maximum number of points to be approved. However, he explained the reason Ledyard's Grant Application has not been approved was because the age of the other municipalities' radios that they were competing with were older than Ledyard's radios. He stated FEMA has encouraged him to continue to apply for the Grant. He stated their local match of \$14,200.52 has already been transferred from the LVES Fund to a Capital Non-Recurring (CNR) to purchase the radios when they do finally receive the FEMA Grant.

VOTE:

3 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: RECOMMEND TO APPROVE 3 – 0

MOVER: Andra Ingalls, Town Councilor

SECONDER: Bill Saums, Town Councilor

AYES: Ingalls, Ryan, Saums

2. MOTION to recommend the Town Council authorize the Mayor to submit a grant request through the FEMA Assistance to Firefighter's Grant program in the amount of \$97,585.00 and a town matching amount of \$4,646.90 for the purpose of acquiring a new Breathing Air Compressor and Cascade System for the Ledyard Fire Company.

Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Ingalls

Discussion: Councilor Saums provided some background stating that the town has applied for this FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant in years past to purchase a Breathing Air Compressor and Cascade System for the Ledyard Center Fire Department. However, he stated because they did not receive the grant last year that the Fire Department was looking to reapply this year.

Councilor Saums went on to explain that the Breathing Air Compressor and Cascade System was the equipment the Fire Departments used to refill their oxygen cylinders. He stated currently the Gales Ferry Fire Department has Breathing Air Compressor and Cascade System, however, the Ledyard Center Fire Department does not. Therefore, he stated Ledyard had to transport their empty oxygen cylinders to Gales Ferry to fill them. He stated this involved a considerable amount of time, effort, and money. Therefore, he stated the Ledyard Center Fire Department was looking to apply for a FEMA Assistance to Firefighter's Grant program in the amount of \$97,585.00 with a local match in the of \$4,646.90 to purchase a Breathing Air Compressor and Cascade System for the Ledyard Center Fire Department. He stated for a local match of \$4,656.90 to purchase \$100,000 piece of equipment was a good deal for the town.

Administrator of Emergency Services Steve Holyfield explained that the Ledyard Center Fire Department had a Cascade System on their Rescue Truck, which was a device that had multiple cylinders of air that had different pressures in them. He stated, as Councilor Saums explained, the Ledyard Center Fire Department had to transport their Cascade System to the Gales Ferry Fire Department to fill their cylinders, noting that this took the paid Firefighters out of Ledyard Center for about one-hour. He stated one of his

goals was to not have one of the career Firefighters tied up at another Fire Station to fill cylinders, so that if there was a call that they could be deployed from the location of where they should be deployed from. He stated that keeping the paid Ledyard Center Firefighters on the Ledyard side of town made sense in terms of safety. He explained the long-term Apparatus Replacement Schedule does not replace the Rescue Truck once the truck was retired from the fleet. Therefore, he stated they had concerns with how they would transport the cylinders to Gales Ferry to fill them without the Rescue Truck. He stated that he also had concerns about asking volunteers who have already given 2 – 3 hours of their own time training until 9:00 p.m. or 10:00 p.m. to bring the equipment to the Gales Ferry Fire Station, noting that this could be a problem both for access the Gales Ferry Fire Department building and because of the transport and time constraints. He stated the volunteers were already in Ledyard Center participating in a 2 - 3-hour training in the evening at their own cost, and spending time away from their family. Therefore, he stated it would be a good investment to have the Breathing Air Compressor and Cascade System at the Ledyard Center Fire Department.

Mr. Holyfield went on to address last year’s FEMA Grant Application to purchase the Breathing Air Compressor and Cascade System for the Ledyard Center Fire Department. He stated although Ledyard’s Application was not approved last year that the feedback from FEMA said that the Application was well written, and they received maximum points. However, he stated the reason they were not approved was based on their call volume. He explained that these FEMA Firefighter Grants were a competitive process and that if another town/fire department had a higher call volume than Ledyard, that their Grant Application would be approved before Ledyard’s application.

Councilor Ingalls questioned the funding source for the required \$4,646.90 local match. Mr. Holyfield stated that Ledyard Center Fire Chief Jon Mann included the \$4,646.90 required for the town’s local match to purchase the Breathing Air Compressor and Cascade System in the Fire Department’s New Equipment Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

VOTE: 3 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: RECOMMEND TO APPROVE 3 – 0
MOVER: Tim Ryan, Town Councilor
SECONDER: Andra Ingalls, Town Councilor
AYES: Ingalls, Ryan, Saums

The Finance Committee agreed to move up The Arc of Eastern Connecticut’s Neighborhood Assistance Act Program Project request (previously items #5 & #6) to their next items of business and to renumber the remaining agenda items accordingly.

3. MOTION to recommend the Town Council approve the following proposed project to be eligible for Neighborhood Assistance Act (NAA) tax credits.
 - The ARC of Eastern Connecticut County to replace windows at the Group Residence located at 1671 Center Groton Road, Ledyard estimated cost \$26,872.00.

Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Ingalls

Discussion: Councilor Saums noted that Arc of Eastern Connecticut Penny Newbury, Director of Grants and Communications, was present this evening and he deferred to Ms. Newbury to present her organization's request.

The Arc of Eastern Connecticut Penny Newbury, Director of Grants and Communications, stated that The ARC of Eastern Connecticut, was a 501(c) non-profit organization that serves to advocate and support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities across the entire region. She stated that ARC was seeking support from the Town of Ledyard to apply for the 2023 Neighborhood Assistance Act Program to support a project in the amount of \$26,872.00 to replace the windows at their group residence located at 1671 Center Groton Road, Ledyard, which provided round the clock support to six clients with intellectual and developmental disabilities, noting that some have limited mobility and/or were older.

Ms. Newbury went on to explain that the State Department of Revenue Services in conjunction with large corporations in the State of Connecticut developed a Neighborhood Assistance Act (NAA) which provides a tax credit to businesses that make donations to nonprofits for projects approved by their local governments. She stated the Town approved this window replacement project for The ARC of Eastern Connecticut last year, however, the timing was very close to the deadline and that the project was not eligible for the application by the time all of the paperwork was completed. Therefore, she stated that they were getting an earlier start this year, noting that they have already identified a couple of potential partners for their window replacement project. She stated the total project cost was 31,872 with The ARC of Eastern Connecticut contributing \$5,000 to the project, noting that the NAA credit request was for \$26,872; and that there was no cost to the town. She concluded by explaining for The ARC to be eligible for the NAA Program that the Town was required to hold a Public Hearing regarding the proposed project.

The Finance Committee stated that they appreciated the work that The ARC of Eastern Connecticut provided to the region.

VOTE: 3 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: RECOMMEND TO APPROVE 3 – 0

MOVER: Tim Ryan, Town Councilor

SECONDER: Andra Ingalls, Town Councilor

AYES: Ingalls, Ryan, Saums

4. MOTION to recommend the Town Council set a Hybrid (In-Person & Video Conference) Public Hearing date for April 12, 2023 at 6:15 p.m. to be held in the Council Chambers, 741 Colonel Ledyard Highway, to receive comments and recommendations regarding the following proposed project to be eligible for Neighborhood Assistance Act (NAA) tax credits.

- The ARC of Eastern Connecticut to replace windows at the Group Residence located at 1671 Center Groton Road, Ledyard estimated cost \$26,872.00.

Moved by Councilor Ingalls, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: Councilor Ingalls noted as discussed in item #3 above, the only involvement for the town was to vet the project and to conduct Public Hearing for the agency to be eligible to participate in the NAA program.

Councilor Ingalls went on to note the second half of this motion was to change the time of the Public Hearing that the Town Council had previously set to receive comments on the proposed revisions to Ordinance #100-016 (rev 1) “*An Ordinance Combining Parks And Recreation Commission and Senior Citizens Commission for the Town of Ledyard*” so that they could publish one Legal Notice for both the NAA Program and the Ordinance to save money for the cost the legal ad.

VOTE: 3 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: RECOMMEND TO APPROVE 3 – 0

MOVER: Andra Ingalls, Town Councilor

SECONDER: Bill Saums, Town Councilor

AYES: Ingalls, Ryan, Saums

5. MOTION to recommend the Town Council approve a tax refund in the amount of \$9,075.43 exceeding \$2,400.00 in accordance with tax collector departmental procedures.

Marshall Retail Group - Tanger Outlet c/c adjustment - \$9,075.43.

Moved by Councilor Ingalls, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: Councilor Saums stated in accordance with policies established for the Tax Collection Department, refunds to taxpayer exceeding \$2,400 are to be approved by the Town Council.

The reason for the refund was because after the Marshall Retail Group paid the taxes owed for the year (2018) they went out of business. Therefore, a refund plus the interest accrued was owed to them.

VOTE: 3 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: RECOMMEND TO APPROVE 3 – 0

MOVER: Andra Ingalls, Town Councilor

SECONDER: Bill Saums, Town Councilor

AYES: Ingalls, Ryan, Saums

6. MOTION to recommend the Town Council authorize the expenditure of up to \$25,000 from Account # 21090305-58920 (Acquisition of Open Space) for the demolition, waste fees, well abandonment and septic abandonment at 334 Colonel Ledyard Highway.

In addition, upon the sale of property at 332 Colonel Ledyard Highway, authorize the appropriation of the same expended amount back to Account #21090305-58920 (Acquisition of Open Space).

The aforementioned to be done in preparation of transfer of ownership to Avalonia Land Conservancy for parking for the Founder’s Preserve.

Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Ingalls

Discussion: Councilor Saums provided some background noting that during the past three years the Town has acquired the following properties:

- 332 Colonel Ledyard Highway thru a Foreclosure (approximately 96.52+/- acres- Founders Preserve); and
- 334 Colonel Ledyard Highway thru a Blight Lien deed in lieu of foreclosure (January 25, 2023)

Councilor Saums explained at a Special Town Meeting held on October 29, 2020 the townspeople approved to convey the transfer town-owned property located at 332 Colonel Ledyard Highway, Ledyard, approximately 96.52 +/- acres (Founders Preserve) to the Avalonia Land Conservancy to remain open to the public for passive recreation and to be protected in perpetuity under the Conservancy's care. However, he stated to date the property transfer has not taken place because there was not adequate access to the Founders Preserve property (332 Colonel Ledyard Highway) due in part to a boundary line adjustment made by the prior developer of the so-called "*Founders Preserve*", noting that the property was partially landlocked.

Mayor Allyn, III, explained that the town would be working to return the property boundary lines for 334 Colonel Ledyard Highway back to the original property lines, which would return a portion of the property where the detached two car garage currently sits back to the property located at 332 Colonel Ledyard. He stated by separating 334 Colonel Ledyard Highway from the Founders Preserve and conveying 332 Colonel Ledyard Highway to Avalonia Land Conservancy that Avalonia would gain access to the property and enough space for a parking area for about 12 cars. However, he stated that Avalonia Land Conservancy cannot accept a property with a structure; and therefore, the town would demolish the house, noting that the structure was unsafe and had rotted floor joists, and that they would also remove the associated structures prior to the conveyance of the property. He stated once the boundary lines were returned to their original property lines (as shown in the last map dated October 2002), the town planned to sell the property located at 332 Colonel Ledyard Highway to recover some of the back taxes that were lost on both Colonel Ledyard Highway properties: 332 (foreclosure) & 334 (blight lien and taxes) and to reimburse the Open Space Fund.

Mayor Allyn went on to explain that 334 Colonel Ledyard Highway was a blighted property. He stated in accordance with Ordinance #300-012 (rev.1) "*An Ordinance Concerning Blight and Public Nuisance for the Town of Ledyard*" the Town filed Blight Liens on the property five separate times. He stated four times the property owner paid the Blight Liens, however, he stated when the town filed the fifth Blight Lien the property owner offered the town the deed in lieu of foreclosure on January 25, 2023. He stated the current bill for 334 Colonel Ledyard Highway was as follows: Blight Lien \$1,200 & one year of taxes which was approximately \$5,000. He stated the town expected that the sale of 334 Colonel Ledyard Highway would generate more than the \$6,200 owed, plus some of the money that was owed for the Founders Preserve.

Mayor Allyn continued by explaining that the Founders Preserve was a subdivision on paper only, that was foreclosed on when the real-estate market crashed in 2008, explaining that although there were tax bills associated with the 24-26 lots, that there was never any

infrastructure that the town had to care for. He stated this was a good opportunity in terms of gaining access to the Founders Preserve that would work for Avalonia Land Conservancy, and its visitors, as well as the surrounding neighbors and area.

VOTE: 3 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: RECOMMEND TO APPROVE 3 – 0

MOVER: Tim Ryan, Town Councilor

SECONDER: Andra Ingalls, Town Councilor

AYES: Ingalls, Ryan, Saums

7. Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Proposed Budget

Councilor Saums stated based on their work to-date that the proposed Fiscal Year 2023/2024 stands as follows:

- Total Budget \$65,476,753 comprised of:
- General Government Budget of: \$29,568,385
- Board of Education of: \$35,908,368

The Finance Committee discussed their Budget Work Sessions with the Department Heads that were held on March 9, 13, & 20, 2023 and potential additional adjustments to the proposed Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget in preparation to present a preliminary budget to residents at the Public Hearing in April, per the Town Charter.

Councilor Saums noted that Councilor McGrattan, Liaison to the Library Commission, contacted him earlier today regarding the Library's current year's (Fiscal Year 2022/2023) budget. He stated at their March 20, 2023 meeting the Library Commission noted that their Operating Account #10150101-56100 only had an unencumbered balance of \$2.37, noting that they still had three months remaining for this year. He stated in reviewing the budget history that they have been reducing the Library's Operating budget over the past few years. He stated in speaking with Library Director Jennifer Smith that she indicated that the Library had some additional expenses this year. He noted that Ms. Smith stated that the Library planned to use funding from a non-taxpayer source for the remainder of this year, should they need to.

The Finance Committee noted that they met with the Library yesterday to review their proposed Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget; and they questioned the reason this year's operations account shortfall was not brought up during the Budget Work Session.

Councilor Ingalls expressed concern about increasing a budget line for next fiscal year without knowing the reason the Operating Account has already been exhausted for this year. Councilor Saums stated that they could leave the Library's Operating Account #10150101-56100 as proposed for now and make an adjustment after the April 17, 2023 Public Hearing if they receive more information. Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated that he spoke with Library Director Jennifer Smith this morning about submitting a request with the justification to the Finance Committee to over expend the Library's Operating Account #10150101-56100 to finish out this fiscal year (2022/2023).

Mayor Allyn addressed the Library's use of non-tax dollars stating that they used funding from the *Friends of the Library* to purchase a copier for the Bill Library about ten years ago. He stated the copier was now at the end of its useful life and the Commission was wondering where they were going to get \$10,000 - \$15,000 to purchase a new copier. He stated that a Commission should not be involved with things like the copier noting that the town was currently leasing seven copiers (approximate cost \$200 per month/per copier) and that the town could add two more copiers to their lease (one for the Bill Library and one for the Gales Ferry Library). He stated the copier leases include service, toner replacement, and other supplies, etc., the copiers were network and so Ricco knows the copy count and they automatically send the toner, etc., noting that currently the Library had to purchase their toner cartridges which cost about \$200 per toner. He stated Executive Assistant Kristen Chapman has contacted Ricco to inquire about the cost to add two more copiers (one for Bill Library and one for the Gales Ferry Library). He stated although the Library Commission has not yet agreed for the town to lease the copiers that he hoped the Commission would understand the value of having a leased machine. He suggested the Finance Committee consider including funding to lease two more copiers for the Library in the upcoming Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget.

Councilor Ingalls questioned what the Library charged for the public to make copies. Mayor Allyn stated that he would ask the Library what they charged for copies for the for the next Finance Committee.

Councilor Ryan stated that it was hard to find any questionable areas in the proposed Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget. However, he stated that he would have liked to see the Education budget increase more in-line with the General Government's budget increase, noting that the Board of Education's increase was nearly twice the amount of the General Government's budget increase. He noted the Board of Education's Contingency Plan, should budget reductions be required, and he stated that 73.8% was Salary & Wages, which meant that 22% or \$9 million of the Board of Education's budget was "Other". Therefore, he stated that perhaps there was some flexibility in the Board of Education's \$9 million "Other" category where they could make some adjustments without cutting staff. He stated that he realized that the Town Council cannot get into that level of granularity, however, he stated perhaps it could happen as a discussion. He again stated that he would have liked to see the Education budget increase more in-line with the General Government's budget increase.

Councilor Ryan went on to comment that he had concerns regarding some of the Revenues, specifically the following:

- ***Nursing Revenue*** – Councilor Ryan stated the Nursing revenue had a \$200,000 drop and he questioned the reason for the significant decrease. Mayor Allyn explained that over the past several years the Nursing Revenues have been struggling, not from the lack of effort, but for the simple fact that Yale New Haven Health and Hartford Health were in Southeastern Connecticut's Market and they were gobbling up the market share. He stated the Nursing Department was seeing revenues erode quickly, noting that their revenues that were projected to be \$800,000 for the current fiscal

year, were tracking significantly lower than the amount budgeted, noting that the revenues received to date were \$357,005. He stated that he and Finance Director Matthew Bonin have been reviewing the Nursing Revenue History as well as tracking the current year's revenue, noting that the revenue has been declining since 2016.

- ***Non-Resident Tuition and Agri-Science Tuition*** - Councilor Ryan stated these two revenue lines had a precipitous drop (\$123,000 decrease). Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated according to the Board of Education these two revenue lines were difficult to project because of students coming-in or out of the programs. He stated last year the Board of Education's revenue in these two categories fell short of the projections. Councilor Ryan stated that there must be a reason for the drop in these two revenues; and he stated that he would have liked to hear the reasoning from the Board of Education as to why the revenues dropped. Mayor Allyn noted that he would be meeting with Superintendent of Schools Jason Hartling tomorrow and that he would ask about these two revenues.
- ***Building Department Revenues*** - Mayor Allyn stated the Building Department's revenues were coming in higher than budgeted for the current year (Fiscal Year 2022/2023). He stated although he increased the projected revenues for the Building Department in the proposed Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget that he did not go as high as they expected to collect for this current year (Fiscal Year 2022/2023). He also stated they were looking to revise the Building Department's fee schedule.

The Finance Committee discussed expenditures as follows:

- ***Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)*** - Councilor Ryan addressed the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) which included \$1.6 million to be paid by the taxpayers noting that this was \$600,000 more than the current fiscal year. He stated the CIP may be an area of the budget where they could find some savings, noting that the other parts of budget were dictated by contractual agreements. He went on to state that during the budget process and throughout the year they have discussed the Capital Reserve Fund allocations for the Fire Apparatus Replacement Schedule, Road Restoration, Public Works Large Trucks Reserve/Replacement Schedule, noting that smaller amounts of money were budgeted over multiple years so that when it was time to replace the equipment the funding was available.

Councilor Ryan went on to note the proposed Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Capital Improvement Plan included \$265,000 for Classroom Upgrades and the High School Science Labs Upgrades. He suggested, as the Mayor has done with the General Government's Capital Reserve Funds for the replacement of large equipment and other expenses, that they consider reducing the funding for the classroom upgrades and budget a smaller amount over a couple of years, rather than fund the entire classroom upgrade projects in one year. He stated perhaps that they could do a percentage reduction on all projects where it was feasible, to lower the CIP increase to about half of the current \$1.6 million, stating that by doing this they would lower the tax burden for residents.

Councilor Saums addressed the Classroom Upgrades explaining that they have been working to upgrade the High School Bathrooms and Classrooms for the past ten years. He stated the CIP has included funding for the Classroom and Science Upgrades for 2024, 2025, & 2026. Mayor Allyn stated the High School Bathrooms were original to the building which was constructed in 1965.

Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated Board of Education used funds that were already in the Capital Reserve Account for the Classroom Upgrades noting for the current fiscal year (2022/2023) taxpayer funding was not used for these projects. However, he stated because the Board of Education’s Capital Reserve Fund was becoming depleted that taxpayer funding would be required for the Classroom Upgrades/Science Lab Upgrades in the upcoming Fiscal Year 2023/2024 CIP Budget.

- **Healthcare Costs** - Finance Director Matthew Bonin explained because the healthcare premium would not be set until mid to late April the proposed budget has planned for an 8% increase as recommended by the town’s healthcare consultant. He went on to explain that Administrator of Human Resources Don Steinhoff has been talking with an Insurance Group who was handling a consortium of towns who previously left the State’s 2.0 Partnership Healthcare Plan because of the increased costs to the State’s Plan. He stated if the Healthcare Consortium Plan could provide a comparable insurance plan to what Ledyard currently had, that the town may be able to join their Healthcare Consortium which would be about a 4% - 5% increase in healthcare costs for the town. He stated this would provide a savings of about \$250,000.

The Finance Committee agreed by consensus to the following Budget Adjustments:

Account #	Title	Proposed	New Amount	Adjustment	Notes
10112151-51610	MIS Director	\$78,014	\$67,922	(\$10,092)	With the retirement of MIS Director Regina Brulotte that the starting salary and gross wage was reduced.
10114301-58110	Land Use Training/ Meeting/Dues/Subscriptions	\$3,000	\$1,000	(\$1,000)	Per Land Use Director -Training could be reduced by \$1,000; Building Official would bring his Code Books.
(New Account)	Capital Improvement Plan			\$10,000	Conduct Aerial Fly Over - The State of Connecticut conducts an aerial fly over every six-years. The Town would like to conduct an aerial fly over halfway thru the State’s six-year cycle. The town was trying to have an updated aerial fly over of all the parcels in town every three-years. \$10,000 was added to the CIP for Fiscal Year 2023/2024 and that the town would allocate \$10,000 again in Fiscal Year 2024/2025 for the aerial fly over.

- MOTION to adopt a proposed Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget in the amount of \$65,517,156 comprised of:
 - General Government: \$29,608,788
 - Board of Education: \$35,908,368

Moved by Councilor Saums, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: Councilor Saums explained that in accordance Chapter VII; Section 5 of the Town Charter they would be approving a *preliminary budget*, to present to the townspeople at the Public Hearing. He stated after the Public Hearing the Finance Committee would review the comments received and other new information regarding expenses and make budget adjustments in preparation for the townspeople to vote on the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget in May.

Finance Director Matthew Bonin noted the proposed Fiscal Year Budget at \$65,517,156 was a 3.16% increase over the current year’s budget. He went on to provide the breakdown as follows:

- General Government: \$29,608,788 (2.26% increase over the current year)
- Board of Education: \$35,908,368 (3.92% increase over the current year)

Mayor Allyn stated based on the municipal budget increases in Southeastern Connecticut that Ledyard’s proposed Fiscal Year 2023/2024 was likely one of the lowest budget increases. He noted the budget increases for surrounding towns such as Preston were looking at a 9.8% in increase for their education budget and that other towns like Waterford, East Lyme and Stonington were looking at 8%+ budget increases. He concluded by stating that the proposed Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget would require a 1.09 mil increase.

VOTE: 3 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: RECOMMEND TO APPROVE 3 – 0

MOVER: Bill Saums, Town Councilor

SECONDER: Tim Ryan, Town Councilor

AYES: Ingalls, Ryan, Saums

8. MOTION to recommend the Town Council set a Hybrid Format (Video Conference and In-Person) Public Hearing date to be held on April 17, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. to be held in the *Council Chambers*, 741 Colonel Ledyard Highway, to receive comments and recommendations regarding a proposed Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget.

Moved by Councilor Ingalls, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: Councilor Saums stated in accordance Chapter VII; Section 5 of the Town Charter the Town Council was required to prepare/approve a *preliminary budget*, which they just did this evening; and conduct a Public Hearing on or before the last Monday of April; at which the public would have the opportunity to review the proposed Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget and provide comments and recommendations.

VOTE: 3 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: RECOMMEND TO APPROVE 3 – 0

MOVER: Andra Ingalls, Town Councilor
SECONDER: Bill Saums, Town Councilor
AYES: Ingalls, Ryan, Saums

9. MOTION to recommend the Town Council set the Annual Town Meeting to be a Hybrid Format (Video Conference & In-Person) regarding the proposed Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget on May 15, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. to be held in the **Council Chambers**, 741 Colonel Ledyard Highway and to adjourn to a Referendum to be held on May 16, 2023 between the hours of 6:00 a.m. 8:00 p.m.

In addition, should the referendum fail, the subsequent Referenda will be held between the hours of 12:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.; in accordance with Chapter VII, Section 6 of the Town Charter.

Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Ingalls

Discussion: Councilor Saums stated that in accordance Chapter VII; Section 6 of the Town Charter that the Annual Town Meeting for the consideration of the Budget shall be held on the third Monday of May; and that the vote of the Town Meeting on the Annual Budget shall be adjourned to a vote on the voting machines the day following the Town Meeting.

Councilor Saums noted that this year both the Public Hearing and Annual Town Meeting will be held in the **Council Chambers**. He stated in years past these two important meetings were held in the High School Auditorium. However, he because of the amount of work involved to set up for the audio, video, remote meeting (zoom) etc. that they have decided to hold the meetings in the Council Chambers this year where the technology was already in place to conduct a Hybrid Meeting. He stated given the attendance in years past that they believe the Council Chambers was more suited for the number of people who attend and would provide a better recording for both audio and video.

VOTE: 3 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: RECOMMEND TO APPROVE 3 – 0

MOVER: Tim Ryan, Town Councilor
SECONDER: Andra Ingalls, Town Councilor
AYES: Ingalls, Ryan, Saums

10. MOTION to recommend the Town Council adopt a proposed Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Water Operations Budget in the amount \$1,518,724.32.

Moved by Councilor Saums, seconded by Councilor Ingalls

Discussion: Councilor Saums stated in accordance with Section 4 of Ordinance #400-001 “*An Ordinance Establishing a Water Pollution Control Authority*” which states: “*The WPCA shall provide, by the fourth Monday in April, a budget of estimated revenues, expenditures and capital improvements for the ensuing fiscal year for inclusion as an appendix in the Town annual budget. **The Town Council shall approve***”

the water system budget". He went on to explain that although the Town Council was also interested in the proposed Sewer Operations Budget that the Town Council was only required to approve the WPCA Annual Water Operations.

Councilor Saums went on to note as the Town Council's Liaison to the WPCA that he attended their meetings and that the WPCA proposed Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Water Operations in the amount of \$1,518,724.32 was a balanced budget with no increase over the current Fiscal Year 2022/2023 Budget. He stated the WPCA was setting money aside for capital and infrastructure maintenance and improvements, noting that their funds were increasing along with their customers. He stated the WPCA has done an excellent job in putting together a balanced budget and in running their Department, noting as an Enterprise Fund that they could not make money and they could not lose money.

VOTE: 3 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: RECOMMEND TO APPROVE 3 – 0
MOVER: Bill Saums, Town Councilor
SECONDER: Andra Ingalls, Town Councilor
AYES: Ingalls, Ryan, Saums

IX. ADJOURNMENT

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

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared, the meeting was adjourned at 6:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

William D. Saums
Committee Chairman
Finance Committee