



TOWN OF LEDYARD
CONNECTICUT
TOWN COUNCIL

Chairman S. Naomi Rodriguez

MINUTES
LEDYARD TOWN COUNCIL – REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2024; 7:00 PM
HYBRID FORMAT
VIDEO CONFERENCE VIA ZOOM

- I. CALL TO ORDER – Chairman Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 7:06 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 –

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Location
April Brunelle	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
Jessica Buhle	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
Carmen Garcia-Irizarry	Town Councilor	Excused	
Kevin Dombrowski	Town Councilor	Excused	
Gary Paul	Town Councilor	Remote	In-Person
S. Naomi Rodriguez	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
Tim Ryan	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
Tony Saccone	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
Gary St. Vil	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person

- IV. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS/PRESENTATIONS – None.

- V. RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS

Mrs. Karen Parkinson, 55 Rose Hill Road, Ledyard, Retired Licensed Clinical Social Worker, attending remotely, noted that she was present this evening to ask the Town Council to table and not to take any action on the proposed Amendments to Ordinance #100-011 (rev 2) “An Ordinance Establishing a Social Services Board for the Town of Ledyard” which was Item #2 on tonight’s agenda.

Mrs. Parkinson stated the proposed Ordinance amendments would remove all references to servicing our youth by the present Youth and Social Service Board. She stated that she would encourage the Town Council to consider that the Youth and Social Services Board, as it presently stands, as an essential tool for the Youth of Ledyard. She stated the Board may need some assistance to become more active and vocal in addressing the needs of the youth in our community. She stated that there needed to be a “needs assessment” of the status of our youth before assuming that all needs can be met by the School Based Health Clinics.

Mrs. Parkinson went on to state that most School Based Health Clinics serve only students enrolled in the local school system. She stated they do not serve the dropouts, the home schooled, the students enrolled in magnet schools, foster children not enrolled, to name a few. She stated the School Based Health Clinics serve children during school hours, noting that they do not provide evenings hours enabling working parents to be involved. She stated the School Based Health Clinics do not provide educational programs, drug awareness programs, after hours grief counseling, mentoring programs, parent education programs, early childhood programs, or new mother assistance programs, noting that the List goes on.

Mrs. Parkinson stated the State's funding for School Based Health Clinics was not permanent. She stated they could be assured that should funds shrink, Ledyard would be the last in line for state funding, as the focus would be on inner city "deprived" communities. She stated that the State already made a decision not to provide School Based Health Clinics services at the Juliet W. Long, and the Gales Ferry School for this school year. However, she stated the town allocated American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding to pay for Mental Health Clinicians for one year; however, she questioned, then what would happen.

Ms. Parkinson went on to state that it was true that the youth services in Ledyard had shrunk to only doing direct clinical service by our last Director. However, she stated that does not justify throwing out the potential to rebuild a more comprehensive service. She stated that there were grants and monies to be found to do some of the programs she mentioned this evening. She stated within the Community of Ledyard they had a wealth of professional mental health individuals, retired and currently working, that could be engaged as a "Task Force"; or to form a committee to review, evaluate, and conduct a needs assessment, to make recommendations to the Town Council.

Mrs. Parkinson concluded her remarks by noting that neighboring communities were all maintaining some form of "youth services." She noted that Preston has incorporated their youth services into their Parks and Recreation Department; Groton has a combined Social Services and Parks and Recreation Department; Montville has Youth Services, and that East Lyme recently began a Youth Services Department. She stated it was very perplexing that Ledyard wanted to abandon our Youth. She thanked the Town Council for listening to her concerns, stating that she was available to assist with the programs she mentioned this evening.

Mrs. Parkinson continued by noting that she wanted to read Mr. Markos Samos's September 24, 2024 email, noting that he could not attend tonight's Town Council meeting as follows:

From: Markos Samos <markwsamos@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 24, 2024 4:38 PM
To: Town Council Group <TownCouncil@ledyardct.org>; Naomi Rodriguez <NaomiR@ledyardct.org>
Subject: Youth Services

Dear Chairperson Rodriquez,

I am writing this letter to request the Town not remove youth service from Social Services.

I understand that the Board of Education has established a School Based Health Program, and it is a welcome addition to support town youth. Unfortunately, this program does not provide service during summer vacation and school holidays, nor does it provide family services.

The town has a responsibility to provide services to youth and their families. Most towns in CT see town services for youth as a part of a continuum of care and even more so needed now with depression, suicide and substance abuse issues on the rise. It is not prudent for the town to abandon its youth.

Both my wife and I have worked in the mental health field and are aware that there are families who would rather seek services from the town instead of the school or other community providers.

--

*Thank You
Markos Samos
33 Robin Hood Drive
Gales Ferry
860-287-7554
Markwsamos@gmail.com*

VI. COMMITTEE COMMISSION AND BOARD REPORTS – None.

VII. COMMENTS OF TOWN COUNCILORS

Councilor Brunelle stated with the upcoming November 5, 2024 Election communities would start to see political signs pop-up. She stated signs that were on private property, were private property. She stated even if someone does not approve of a particular sign that they could not take the sign off someone's lawn, noting that it would be a crime to do so.

Chairman Rodriguez stated the Senior Prom that was held at the Ledyard Senior Center on Friday, September 13, 2024 was a huge success. She thanked Director Scott Johnson, Jr. and his staff, Matt Cicchese and Courtney Sizer, for all their hard work. She thanked all the volunteers who were on the Organizational Committee for decorating and getting sponsors, especially Carol, Gary and the whole Schneider family, as well as Elaine and Oliver Jones, and Gehlinde Lehner. She gave a *Special Thank You* to the Navy servicemen, noting they were the life of the party. She stated as the Seniors arrived at the Senior Center, the Naval men raised their arms and made an arch for them all to walk under. She stated that everyone was laughing, smiling, and dancing, noting the attendees ranged from age 1 -90 years old. She stated that she wanted to thank Councilor Buhle for being the Photographer, and Councilor Brunelle for her outstanding and beautiful Balloon Creations that seemed to light up to the music. She stated that it was a great event, and she again gave kudos to Director Scott Johnson and his Team.

Councilor Saccone stated that he continues to be involved at the Groton-New London Submarine Base. He noted that the Gales Ferry Fire Department has three volunteer members that were stationed on the Delaware Submarine, noting that two were Navy Chiefs and one was the Commanding Officer (CO) of the Delaware. He stated the Gales Ferry Fire Department was proud to have these naval officers as part of their Volunteer Department.

Councilor Buhle noted Chairman Rodriguez's comments regarding the Senior Prom that was held at the Ledyard Senior Center, noting the evening was great fun!

Councilor Buhle congratulated all the Navy's New Chiefs that will be pinned on Friday, September 27, 2024. She stated it was a huge accomplishment, noting that Ledyard most likely has dozens within their community. She stated that she was proud to be part of the Navy Community.

VIII. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

MOTION to approve the following:

Public Hearing Minutes of September 11, 2024

Regular Meeting Minutes of September 11, 2024

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor St. Vil

VOTE: 7 – 0 Approved and so declared

IX. COMMUNICATIONS

Chairman Rodriguez stated a Communications List has been provided on the meeting portal for tonight's meeting, and she noted referrals were listed.

COMMUNICATIONS LISTING FOR SEPTEMBER 25, 2024

INCOMING CORRESPONDENCE

1. Ms. Andrews email dated 9/12/2024 re: Illegal Dumping Ordinance
2. Mayor Memo dated 9/12/2024 re: Out of Country 9/26/2024 – 10/4/2024
3. Ms. Ribe ltr dated 9/13/2024 re: Governance Training Program
4. Ms. Forthergill email dated 9/14/2024 re: Ethics Commission
5. Ms. Franzone email dated 9/14/2024 re: Ethics Commission
6. Ms. Wilkinson email dated 9/14/2024 re: Ethics Commission

7. Mr. Samos email dated 9/14/2024 re: Ethics Commission
8. Ms. Roberts-Pierson email dated 9/15/2024 re: Application Quarry- Mount Decatur (former Dow-Styrenics Property) Route 12
9. Ms. Roberts-Pierson email dated 9/16/2024 re: Application Quarry- Mount Decatur (former Dow-Styrenics Property) Route 12
10. Mr. Hosey email dated 9/22/2024 re: Ordinance #100-015 Permanent Municipal Building Cmt (PMBC) Proposed Amendments
11. PMBC Action ltr 9/18/2024 re: Action ltr Mtg 9/16/2024
12. Retirement Board ltr 9/19/2024 re: Action ltr Mtg 9/17/2024
13. DTC Appointment Application dated 9/21/2024 re: Hellekson – Library Commission
14. DTC Appointment Application dated 9/21/2024 re: Harwood – Planning & Zoning Commission
15. RTC Appointment Application dated 9/11/2024 re: Thorne Library Commission
16. Land Use Director/Town Planner ltr dated 9/17/2024 re: Training Compliance Report to the Town Council - Planning & Zoning Commission & Inland Wetland & Watercourses Commission
17. Agricultural Commission-DTC ltr dated 9/24/2024 re: Reappointment Endorsements
18. Library Commission-DTC ltr dated 9/24/2024 re: Reappointment Endorsements
19. Historic District Commission-DTC ltr dated 9/24/2024 re: Reappointment Endorsements
20. Inland Wetland & Watercourses Commission-DTC-RTC- ltr dated 9/24/2024 re: Reappointment Endorsements
21. Planning & Zoning Commission-DTC ltr dated 9/24/2024 re: Reappointment Endorsements
22. Mr. Samos email dated 9/24/2024 re: Proposed Amendments- Ordinance #100-011 (rev 1) Social Services Board
23. Ms. Parkinson email dated 9/25/2024 re: Proposed Amendments- Ordinance #100-011 (rev 1) Social Services Board

OUT GOING CORRESPONDENCE

1. Admin Asst ltr to Mayor dated 9/12/2024 re: Action ltr. Town Council Regular Meeting of September 11, 2024.
2. LTC ltr to Cronin dated 9/19/2024 re: Thank you for Service – Library Commission
3. Admin Asst Memo to Farmers’ Mkt Cmt dated 9/23/2024 re: Meeting Schedule 2025 Calendar Year

NOTICE OF AGENDAS

1. Public Safety Agenda 9/16/2024
2. Historic District Commission Agenda 9/16/2024
3. Library Commission Agenda 9/16/2024
4. Retirement Board Agenda 9/17/2024
5. Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Agenda 9/17/20/2024
6. Agricultural Commission Agenda 9/17/2024
7. Zoning Board of Appeals Agenda 9/18/2024 – Cancelled
8. Water Pollution Control Authority Agenda 9/24/2024
9. Finance Cmt Agenda 9/18/2024
10. Community Rel Cmt for DEI Agenda 9/18/2024
11. Town Council Agenda 9/25/2024

MINUTES

1. Public Safety Minutes 6/17/2024
2. Retirement Board Minutes 8/20/2024
3. Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Minutes 8//20/2024
4. Agricultural Commission Minutes 8/20/2024
5. Historic District Commission Minutes 8/20/2024
6. Library Commission Minutes 6/17/2024
7. Water Pollution Control Authority Minutes 8/27/2024
8. Finance Cmt Minutes 9/4//2024

9. Finance Cmt Sp. Agenda 8/14/2024
10. Community Rel Cmt for DEI Minutes 8/21/2024
11. Town Council Public Hearing Minutes 9/11/2024
12. Town Council Minutes 9/11/2024

REFERRALS

Administration Committee

1. DTC Appointment Application dated 9/21/2024 re: Hellekson – Library Commission
2. DTC Appointment Application dated 9/21/2024 re: Harwood – Planning & Zoning Commission
3. RTC Appointment Application dated 9/11/2024 re: Thorne Library Commission
4. Agricultural Commission-DTC ltr dated 9/24/2024 re: Reappointment Endorsements
5. Library Commission-DTC ltr dated 9/24/2024 re: Reappointment Endorsements
6. Historic District Commission-DTC ltr dated 9/24/2024 re: Reappointment Endorsements
7. Inland Wetland & Watercourses Commission-DTC-RTC- ltr dated 9/24/2024 re: Reappointment Endorsements
8. Planning & Zoning Commission-DTC ltr dated 9/24/2024 re: Reappointment Endorsements

X. COUNCIL SUB COMMITTEE, LIAISON REPORTS

Administration Committee

Councilor Brunelle stated the Administration Committee met on September 11, 2024 and have several items on tonight's agenda.

Community Relations Committee for Diversity Equity & Inclusion

Councilor Brunelle stated the Community Relations Committee met on September 18, 2024 and talked with resident Beth Ribe about working to disseminate more information to the community. She stated that she has posted a new video on-line to help residents navigate the town's website to access meeting agendas and minutes.

Finance Committee

Councilor Saccone stated the Finance Committee met on September 18, 2024 and they had two items on tonight's agenda.

Land Use/Planning/Public Works Committee

Councilor St. Vil stated that he did not have anything new to report since Councilor Buhle's Report at the Town Council's September 11, 2024 meeting. He stated the next LUPPW Committee meeting was scheduled for Monday, October 7, 2024.

Permanent Municipal Building Committee

Councilor Brunelle stated the next PMBC Meeting was scheduled for October 7, 2024.

Water Pollution Control Authority

Councilor Brunelle stated she attended the WPCA's September 24, 2024 meeting via Zoom; and she noted that they discussed the possibility to include a "Relief Fund" in the upcoming Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget to help ratepayers who may have had a leak; or some other unfortunate issue with their water.

Public Safety Commission

Councilor Saccone stated the Public Safety Commission met on September 16, 2024 noting that they hoped to receive a Radio Grant to upgrade the Dispatch Center. He stated that he reminded the Administrator of Emergency Services and both Fire Departments that the town may have some American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) remaining from completed projects that could be redirected to other projects. He stated that both Fire Departments have submitted their project list to the Mayor's Office, noting that the Mayor was working on an overall town list of potential projects for the use of any remaining ARPA Funding.

Gales Ferry Fire Department

Councilor Saccone stated that the Gales Ferry Fire Department was still using an emergency back-up Generator, noting that they were continuing to obtain quotes from vendors to replace their old generator that failed.

Planning & Zoning Commission

Councilor St. Vil stated the Planning & Zoning Commission will continue their Public Hearing regarding the Application for the former Dow Chemical/Styrenics Site in Gales Ferry on Thursday, September 26, 2024. The Public Hearing will be held at 6:00 p.m. at the Ledyard Middle School, 1860 Route 12, Gales Ferry. He noted that the Public Hearing would be in a Hybrid Format providing both in-person and remote participation via Zoom.

Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission

Councilor St. Vil stated the IWWC will be meeting on Tuesday, October 1, 2024; and he noted their Agenda would include proposed text amendments to their statutes. He stated there has been some community feedback regarding statutes and what they allow. He stated this would be an opportunity for the residents to have their voices heard regarding the proposed text amendments.

XI. MAYOR'S REPORT

Chairman Rodriguez stated in Mayor Allyn's III, absence that he provided the following Report: (1) Radio Committee Meeting – September 16, 2024 – Mayor Allyn attended the meeting. The Emergency Communications Dispatch Center was still waiting for the State to program Ledyard's radios. Once the radios were programmed the town would have the use of the new frequency band; (2) Retirement Board Meeting – Mayor Allyn attended the Board's September 17, 2024; meeting (3) Emergency Narcan Kit Boxes – Mayor Allyn attended the Ledyard Prevention Coalition September 17, 2024 meeting at which they discussed issues with the non-climate-controlled Emergency Narcan Kit Boxes. The State Legislature was working on a solution. In the meantime, Emergency Narcan Kits would be available at both the Bill Library and Gales Ferry Library, both the Ledyard Center and Gales Ferry Fire Departments, and at the Police Department. The Department of Emergency Management & Homeland Security (DEMHS) has offered Ledyard's Emergency Services 100 doses of Narcan free of charge. The town will pick up the Narcan in Hartford this coming week; (4) Housing Rehabilitation Revolving Loan Program – The Bid Opening was held on September 19, 2024. The town received multiple bids, and two projects were moving forward; (5) National Opioid Settlement Funds – The Town completed its Annual Report regarding their use of their Opioid Settlement Funds for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023. To date the town has received \$147,003.591 and has invested \$36,100 through the Ledyard Prevention Coalition. Other options to distribute the funds could include *Community Speaks Out*, *Ledyard Prevention Coalition*; and *SERAC*; (6) Public Act 24-46 "An Act Establishing a Property Tax Exemption for Veterans Who Have a Service-Connected Permanent and Total Disability Rating" would become effective on October 1, 2024. An update from Assessor's Office indicated that based on the number of pending *Veteran Fully Disabled Tax Abatements* that Ledyard will see a loss of tax revenue in the amount of over \$400,000 with more time for qualifying residents to apply. This would be a huge hole in Ledyard's budget; and the State does not appear to have any interest to help cap this program; (7) Bill Library New Circulation Desk – At their November 8, 2023 Meeting the Town Council authorized the Town to submit the American Library Association Application to obtain "Round II" of the - *Libraries Transforming Communities: Accessible Small and Rural Communities* Grant in the amount of \$20,000 to purchase a new circulation and reference desk for the Bill Library. The new circulation desk was designed to meet ADA requirements and better serve individuals with disabilities. Mayor Allyn thanked Library Director Jennifer Smith for securing this grant opportunity.

Chairman Rodriguez continued by noting that Mayor Allyn asked that she also read his responses to Mr. George Hosey's September 16, 2024 email regarding the proposed amendments to Ordinance #100-015 "An Ordinance Establishing a Permanent Municipal Building Committee for the Town of Ledyard" as follows:

- ✓ Mr. Hosey's Question:
Who is the "firing authority" for an owner's representative?

Mayor's Response:

Per the Town Charter; Chapter V, Section 2; The Mayor is hiring and firing authority.

- ✓ Mr. Hosey's Question:

In the unlikely event an owner's representative performs or behaves in a manner warranting termination of their employment with the town, who makes that decision – the PMBC, the Town Council, or the Mayor?

Mayor's Response:

If there was dissatisfaction with an owner's representative that a recommendation would come from the PMBC to remove owner's representative; and the Mayor would act on their recommendation, within the confines of the owner's representative contract.

- ✓ Mr. Hosey's question:

What is the basis of the \$500k number? Why not \$250k; \$1M; \$2M? What is the statistical or historical significance of \$500k?

Mayor's Response:

The given figure is based on more typical project costs of today and what is deemed a "significant investment" of funds.

- ✓ Mr. Hosey's Question:

The proposed revision defines a quorum as a majority of regular members. This is fine. It also states that temporary members may vote only on matters concerning the project for which they have been appointed. This is also fine.

However, the ordinance leaves unanswered whether a quorum of regular members can vote on matters concerning temporary projects, such as schools, if neither of the temporary members appointed for that project are present. Is it the intention of the Council that regular members may vote on questions concerning the temporary projects without a temporary member present? If so, this section is also fine as-is. If not, then this section requires additional verbiage.

Mayor's Response:

The proposal is that a quorum of *regular* members can and shall act on ALL PMBC matters, including special projects. The intent here is to keep business moving and limit the need for special meetings. The preference is for those appointed as special members to make every effort to attend.

XII. OLD BUSINESS – None.

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

Administration Committee

1. MOTION to approve a proposed "Town of Ledyard Digital Sign Use Policy" as presented in the draft dated September 4, 2024.

DRAFT: 9/4/2024

Policy #2024-XXX

Town of Ledyard
Digital Sign Use Policy

1. POLICY STATEMENT

The Town of Ledyard is committed to providing residents and visitors with accurate and appropriate information through the use of digital signage. The digital signs shall be used to disseminate information about town sponsored events, special town meetings, referendums and other public messages from the municipality.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to the design, approval and content management of municipally owned and/or operated outdoor digital signs located in the Town of Ledyard.

3. PURPOSE

- (a) This policy facilitates effective digital communication tools for community messaging
- (b) The policy provides direction for the appropriate use of digital signage in the municipality
- (c) This policy defines who may submit requests for messaging on digital municipal signs

4. POLICY

The Town of Ledyard's digital sign conveys information to the public as a representative of the municipality, and therefore will be operated in a manner that represents the Town of Ledyard positively. Total content will be limited to a maximum of 10 slides displayed at any one time with a maximum exposure of 10 seconds per slide. The Town offers no guarantee with the respect to the appearance of any messages on the digital sign, exact color matches or the length of time that the message will be displayed. Appearance of messages is subject to constraints of priorities, as well as electronic limitations. All content must adhere to the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation Highway Signing Guidelines.

The following system of hierarchy shall be utilized in selecting messages to be posted:

- (a) Emergency Messages – in the event of an emergency, the Town reserves the right to suspend all messages and use signage for emergency purposes only
- (b) Messages from the Town of Ledyard
- (c) Town sponsored events
- (d) Community events hosted and/or sponsored by a non-profit organization located within the Town of Ledyard

The following messages shall not be permitted to be posted on the digital sign:

- (a) Political or religious messages, promotion or advertising
- (b) Private sector messages, whether from an individual, group, organization or business
- (c) Events and/or functions open only to members of an organization

5. SUBMITTING A REQUEST

Subject to availability, the digital signs may be used by a non-profit registered in the Town of Ledyard to announce events or special programs on a first come, first serve basis. Requests to utilize municipal digital signage must be submitted to the Mayor's Office using the town-provided request form. All requests must be submitted at least (1) week prior to the requested posting date. Messages will be posted for a maximum of (2) weeks prior to the event, depending on availability, and approval by the Mayor.

6. RESPONSIBILITY

The Mayor's Office will be responsible for design and management of all digital content. The Mayor's Office may designate representatives from Town Departments to create content. The Mayor's Office shall ensure all information, photos, and designs submitted for posting meet a professional standard consistent with the Town of Ledyard. The Mayor shall have the authority and sole discretion to deny use of the sign based upon availability or to groups whose mission or purpose is deemed to be offensive or against the best interest of the town.

*Gales Ferry Volunteer Fire Company may designate a representative(s) to add and update fire company related content to the "GFFC Playlist".

7. EFFECTIVE DATE

The “Town of Ledyard Digital Sign Use Policy” shall become effective upon adoption.

Adopted by the Ledyard Town Council on: _____ 2024

S. Naomi Rodriguez, Chairman

**TOWN OF LEDYARD
DIGITAL SIGN USE RESERVATION FORM**

If there is availability, the digital signs may be used by a non-profit registered in the Town of Ledyard to announce events or special programs on a first come, first serve basis. All requests must be submitted at least (1) week prior to the requested posting date. Messages will be posted for a maximum of (2) weeks depending on availability, and approval by the Mayor.

Today’s Date: _____

Organization Name: _____

Organizations Address: _____

Contact Name: _____

Contact Email: _____

Name of Event: _____

Date(s) of Event: _____

Hours of Event: _____

Description of Event (Please briefly describe the event)

Please email the completed form to mayoral.asst@ledyardct.org along with any images related to the event. Acceptance of a request does not guarantee that the announcement will appear on either sign as the Town reserves the right to use of the signs for emergency purposes.

Moved by Councilor Brunelle, seconded by Councilor Saccone
Discussion: Councilor Saccone noted the Policy was straight forward.
7– 0 Approved and so declared

VOTE:

RESULT:	APPROVED 7 - 0
MOVER:	April Brunelle, Town Councilor
SECONDER:	Tony Saccone, Town Councilor
AYES:	Brunelle, Buhle, Paul, Rodriguez, Ryan, Saccone, St. Vil
EXCUSED:	Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry

2. MOTION to adopt a proposed amendments to Ordinance #100-011 “*An Ordinance Establishing Social Services Board For the Town of Ledyard*” as presented in the draft dated June 4, 2024.

DRAFT: 6/4/2024

Ordinance #100-011 (*rev. 2*)

AN ORDINANCE
ESTABLISHING A ~~YOUTH &~~ SOCIAL SERVICES BOARD
FOR THE TOWN OF LEDYARD

Be it ordained by the Town Council of the Town of Ledyard:

Section 1. Authority

Pursuant to ~~Chapter 164, Section 10-19m of~~ the General Statutes of the State of Connecticut, and Chapter IV, Section 9 of the Charter of the Town of Ledyard, there is hereby established a ~~Youth and~~ Social Services Board for the Town of Ledyard.

Section 2. Purpose

The Board shall be responsible for providing outreach and ~~community education;~~ *program direction in the delivery of human services* to meet the needs of ~~youth,~~ families and individuals in the Town of Ledyard.

Section 3. Duties

The Board will be responsible for receiving and reviewing ~~Youth and~~ Social Services Program reports to identify issues and trends and make recommendations. The Board shall perform community outreach and seek potential partnerships for the ~~Youth and~~ Social Services Program. The Board shall distribute ~~Youth and~~ Social Services Program materials to the community and work to identify ~~youth,~~ families and individuals in need.

Section 4. Fiscal Responsibilities

The Board shall annually review the ~~Youth and~~ Social Services Program budget and make recommendations as necessary prior to submission to the Mayor’s Office.

The Board shall make recommendations and promote fundraising efforts for Social Service Programs.

Section 5. ~~Youth and~~ Social Services Board Membership

The ~~Youth and~~ Social Services Board shall be composed of not less than seven (7) members appointed by the Mayor, who *shall be electors of the Town of Ledyard.* ~~Said appointees shall all be Ledyard electors, and include at least one representative from the school system, police, a private youth serving agency, a youth currently under the age of twenty-one (21) and a Community-at-large member.~~

The Board shall annually elect a Chairman and Recording Secretary from its membership. Regular meetings shall be held per the by-laws of the ~~Youth and~~ Social Services Board. Special meetings may be called by a majority of the members of the Board.

Membership on any other Board, Commission, or Committee of the Town of Ledyard shall not preclude membership on the ~~Youth and~~ Social Services Board.

In making the original appointments under this ordinance, the Mayor shall designate (3) member to serve for three (3) years; 2 members to serve for two (2) years members; two (2) members to serve for one (1) year. Thereafter members shall commence to serve their terms immediately upon appointment and shall serve until their successor has qualified or they have been reappointed or removed by the Mayor.

Any member of the Board who is absent from three (3) consecutive regular meetings and any intervening duly called special meetings shall be considered to have resigned from the Board. The vacancy shall be filled as herein before provided. Additionally, the Board may vote to waive the requirements of this section in each case where illness or other extenuating circumstances make it impossible for a member to meet the attendance requirements of this action.

It shall be the responsibility of the Chairman of the Board to notify the Mayor when a member has not properly performed his/her duties.

Section 6. *Implementation*

Within two weeks after the adoption date of this ordinance, all current members of the Youth & Social Services Board for the Town of Ledyard shall indicate to the chairman their desire to serve on the Social Services Board.

The chairman shall thereafter report to the Mayor the desires of their members. In addition, the chairman shall make recommendations to the Mayor regarding present members to serve on the Social Services Board.

The Mayor shall appoint members to the Social Services Board no later than the 90 days from the effective date of the Ordinance.

Section 7. Severability

If any section, or part of a section, of this Ordinance shall be held by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such holding shall not be deemed to invalidate the remaining provisions hereof.

Section 8. Effective Date

In accordance with the Town Charter this ordinance shall become effective on the twenty-first (21st) day after such publication following its final passage.

Amended and Adopted by the Town Council on: _____

Approved / Disapproved on: _____

S. Naomi Rodriguez, Chairman

Fred B. Allyn, III., Mayor

Published on:

Effective Date:

Patricia A. Riley, Town Clerk

Revision: *Ordinance #47 "An Ordinance Establishing Youth Services for the Town of Ledyard"* Adopted: April 17, 1990; Amended and Adopted: on February 14, 2001; Effective: February 15, 2001. Amended and Renumbered on September 25, 2019; Effective: October 23, 2019. *Amended and Renamed on XXX; Effective: XXX*

History:

The Twenty-fourth Town Council (2017-2019) Ordinance Update Initiative: Renumbered Ordinance #47 “Amendment to Ordinance #47 An Ordinance Establishing Youth Services for the Town of Ledyard” to Ordinance #100-011.

2019: Removed from Ordinance “An Ordinance Amending” per Town Attorney, the History paragraphs indicates that the Ordinance was “amended”. Section 4 “Youth Advisory Committee” added language regarding attendance and filling vacancies to be consistent with ordinances establishing committees. Added Section 5 “Severability” to be consistent with Town Ordinance format. Added Section 6 “Effective Date” to be consistent with Town Ordinance format.

2020: Title: Added “& Social Services”.

Section 1 Authority: Removed “an amendment to ordinance #47- Per Town Attorney this language was not needed, as the “History” paragraphs indicates that the document was amended.

Section 2 Purpose: Removed “This agency shall be responsible for providing opportunities and programs for positive youth development as well as evaluating, planning, coordinating, and implementing services for youth referred to it by schools, police, juvenile courts, local youth serving agencies, parents and self-referrals by youth” and replaced it with the following: “.*This Board shall be responsible for providing outreach and community education to meet the needs of youth, families and individuals in the Town of Ledyard.*”.

Section 3 Duties: Removed: “The Youth Services of the Town of Ledyard shall be responsible for establishing the overall policy and program direction of youth services. This agency of the Town of Ledyard may provide, but shall not be limited to the delivery of, the following services: individual and family counseling; parent training and group therapy; crisis intervention; drug and alcohol awareness and prevention programs; dial-a-teen job placement; court advocacy; information and referral; and outreach programs to insure participation and planning by the entire community for the development of youth services. Such services shall be designed to meet the needs of youth by collaborating with other systems and agencies such as the justice system and schools as well as by the provision of opportunities for positive youth development”. Replaced it with “*This Board will be responsible for receiving and reviewing Youth and Social Services Program reports to identify issues and trends and make recommendations. The Board shall perform community outreach and seek potential partnerships for the Youth and Social Services Program. The Board shall distribute Youth and Social Services Program materials to the community and work to identify youth, families and individuals in need.*”

Added New Section 4 “Fiscal responsibilities”. Former Section 4 became Section 5. Updated Section Title deleting “Advisory” and adding “*and Social Services Membership*”. Removed “As part of Youth Services, a youth advisory” and replaced it with “*The Youth and Social Services Board shall be*”. Removed; “shall be”. Changed Term from two (2) year to “*three (3) year*”. Added; “*all be Ledyard electors, and*”. Removed “public health nursing agency and”. Added “*and a community-at-large member*”. Removed: “and provided further that one-third of the total membership shall consist of members who earn less than 50 percent of their wages or livelihood by delivering services to youths and their families, and who manifest an interest in youth services”. Added: “*The Board shall annually elect a Chairman and Recording Secretary from its membership. Regular meetings shall be held per the by-laws of the Youth and Social Services Board. Special meetings may be called by a majority of the members of the Board. Membership on any other Board, Commission, or Committee of the Town of Ledyard shall not preclude membership on the Youth and Social Services Board.*”

The word “Department” was replaced with “Program” throughout the document.

The word “Committee” was replaced with “Board” throughout the document to be consistent with the Town Charter.

2024: Ordinance #100-011 “An Ordinance Establishing a Youth & Social Services Board for the Town of Ledyard” amended to remove ~~and Youth~~ throughout the document.

Section 1: “authority” Removed ~~Chapter 164, Section 10-19m of.~~ and updated Chapter IV, Section 9.

Section 2: “Purpose” Paragraph 1 Removed ~~community education;~~—Also added program direction in the delivery of human services.

Section 4: “Fiscal Responsibilities” Paragraph 2 added The Board shall make recommendations and promote fundraising efforts for Social Service Programs.

Section 5: “Social Services Board Membership”

Paragraph 1 Replaced ~~Said appointees shall all be Ledyard electors, and include at least one representative from the school system, police, a private youth-serving agency, a youth currently under the age of twenty-one (21) and a Community-at-large member. with shall be electors of the Town of Ledyard.~~

Paragraph 4 Added the following language: In making the original appointments under this ordinance, the Mayor shall designate (3) member to serve for three (3) years; 2 members to serve for two (2) years members; two (2) members to serve for one (1) year. Thereafter members; Also removed ~~shall commence to serve their terms immediately upon appointment and.~~

Section 6: “Implementation” Added paragraphs 1-3.

Moved by Councilor Brunelle, seconded by Councilor Buhle

Discussion: Chairman Rodriguez invited Director of School Nursing and Municipal Agent for the Town Ms. Karen Goetchius to give a presentation.

Ms. Karen Goetchius, 15 Hermitage Drive, Gales Ferry, stated prior to taking on the role of Director of Youth Services, that she served as the Administrator of the Ledyard Visiting Nurse Association (LVNA) for 18-years and worked in town for 30-years.

Ms. Goetchius explained that the Mayor asked her to step-in as the Director of Youth Services because of accountability and productivity issues. She stated during the 9-months she worked in this role that she hired a Consultant, who was a licensed Clinical Social Worker, who found that the Department had documentation issues, which left the town open for liability. She stated based on her findings the Consultant resigned noting in her letter that the town was liable going forward. Ms. Goetchius went on to explain the cost to properly operate a Youth Services Mental Health Department would be about \$250,000, noting that they would have to have an administrator, a counselor, new software, etc. She stated for these reasons, and others, that a decision was made to dissolve the Youth Services Department, explaining that there were other Agencies available that provide Mental Health Counseling.

Ms. Goetchius continued by addressing some concerns that were expressed, those being that there were not enough children being seen for mental health services. She stated during the summer the town had a Mental Health Clinician available through the American Rescue Plan

Act (ARPA) funding that had been allocated for this purpose. However, she stated the Clinician did not receive one referral over the summer, and since school has been back in-session for about one month, she still has not received any referrals. Ms. Goetchius also noted that she was in the Nurses Offices at the schools every day and that she sees that students were getting counseling services, noting that some schools were busier than others.

Councilor Saccone requested clarification, stating that the Youth in their town through age 17 could still use the mental health services through the school system. Ms. Goetchius stated mental health counselors were in the schools and that they were hiring additional counselors. She stated that the town also had the counselor who was being paid with the ARPA Funding noting that she would be available for another two-years, and that she would also provide services during the evening for the families, who had children involved in counseling.

Chairman Rodriguez questioned whether the town could have hired someone for the Youth Services Department. Ms. Goetchius explained to hire a counselor that the Town would have to hire an Administrator to oversee the work that was being done, which would include reviewing charts, documentation, students' goals, when they were achieved, how long do they keep them on, etc. She stated without this type of oversight the town would be open to liabilities. She stated the cost to operate the Youth Services Department would be \$250,000; noting that the Town Council chose not to fund the Department in the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget.

Chairman Rodriguez requested clarification, noting that the Mayor took the Youth Services Department out of the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget; and subsequently, the Town Council approved the budget, which did not include the Youth Services Department. Ms. Goetchius stated Chairman Rodriguez's understanding was correct.

Councilor Paul noted that during Residents Comments (Section V – see above) that Mrs. Parkinson mentioned the children who were homeschooled; etc., and therefore, he questioned where those children would get mental health services. He stated he understands the town budget process, and the other financial aspects. However, he stated every day when he opens the newspaper, that he sees mental health crisis all over the place, which was a concern. He stated during his time in serving on the Town Council that he has advocated for the mental health. He stated just because they currently do not have any referrals, or people were not using the services offered, does not mean that the services were not going to be used. Ms. Goetchius stated in this day and age that there was help available for everyone, noting that there were other Agencies where people can obtain services. Councilor Paul stated that he did not want to see Ledyard drop the ball. He stated that they should be looking at what was done wrong and how they could make it right.

Mayor's Executive Assistant/Social Services Coordinator Ms. Kristen Chapman stated during the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget Work Sessions Ms. Goetchius gave a thorough presentation regarding the Youth Services Department and the direction the town was going relative to the mental health and the services/programs provided by School Based Health Clinics. She stated the town made the decision not to fund the Youth Services Department as part of the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget, noting at this point in time the Town currently does not have a Youth Services Department.

Ms. Chapman continued by explaining tonight's request to approve the proposed Amendments to Ordinance #100-011 "*An Ordinance Establishing Social Services Board For the Town of Ledyard*" was an administrative formality to update the Ordinance to remove the references to the Youth Services, which would allow the town to move forward with the appointment of a Social Services Board. She explained Chapter VI; of the Town Charter provides for a Social Services Board; and therefore, they need to have an Ordinance establishing the Board for her to work under. She stated that she handles all aspects of Social Services for the town, in addition to being the Mayor's Executive Assistant. She stated that she was going into her busiest time of year with the upcoming holidays; and that she needed to have a Social Services Board to assist with fundraising efforts and many other activities, which include collections for Thanksgiving and Holiday Food Baskets, Holiday Gifts for Families, etc. She stated the Social Services Department does not have a town budget

explaining that they rely solely on donations. She stated last summer because they ran out of money, they had to close the Parks & Recreation Scholarship Applications that provided funding to assist families with sending their kids to summer camp. Therefore, she stated that she needed to have an Ordinance to allow her to do her Social Services work for everyone in town.

Councilor Ryan stated that he appreciated Ms. Chapman bringing the conversation back to the task at hand, which was to amend Ordinance #100-011 "*An Ordinance Establishing Social Services Board For the Town of Ledyard*". He stated as far as the Youth Services Department, that the ship has sailed, explaining that it was not funded through the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget, noting that they could reconsider it in the upcoming Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget cycle. Therefore, he stated that the Town Council needed to give Ms. Chapman the tools she needed to continue to do the good work she was doing for the town.

He stated the proposed Ordinance Amendments that were presented at the September 11, 2024 Public Hearing; and were in front of the Town Council this evening, would give Ms. Chapman the tools she needed to allow her to continue to provide help to all residents, including youth, families, elderly, etc. He stated the proposed Ordinance Amendments do not preclude providing assistance to anyone in Ledyard, or to help residents find needed assistance.

Councilor St. Vil reviewed the process in which a decision was made not to fund the Youth Services Department, that included identifying the lack of adequate records, etc. He stated that this would lead him to believe that there was some utilization of the program. He went on to mention that there have not been any referrals for the mental health services, which indicated to him that there must have been some type of structure within the schools that provided a mechanism for teachers, students, and families to engage in those services. He stated that he understood the proposed Ordinance Amendments was a formality; however, he questioned as part of this formality to remove the references to Youth Services, whether there was a means to ensure that there was a new mechanism to access services; or whether this was going to be an afterthought.

Ms. Chapman and Ms. Goetchius responded to Councilor St. Vil as follows:

- **Youth Services** – Ms. Chapman explained the Town’s Youth Services Department only provided counseling. She stated the availability of their services was advertised in nearly every edition of the Events Magazine and in newsletters, etc.
- **Child and Family Agency** – Ms. Chapman stated the Child and Family Agency has been in the schools for one year, noting that they have absorbed all the cases that once resided at the Town level. She stated two years ago the town was the only means for youth and students to receive counseling services. She stated that families were brought in as needed. She stated it was her understanding that the Child and Family Agency would hold family sessions as well.
- **Mechanism to inform teachers, students and parents that mental health services were available be through the schools** - Ms. Goetchius stated the School Nurses tell everyone in school that mental health services were available through the schools. She also noted that School Superintendent Hartling and Mayor Allyn, III, met earlier this week to discuss getting the word out to parents. She noted that everyone was also aware that Clinician Pat Frost was available for mental health services, noting that she worked in the schools for the last three months of the school year. Ms. Goetchius also stated that she was in the Nurses Offices at the schools every day and that she sees a lot of counseling going on.

Ms. Chapman stated that she was a town resident, and she noted since the new school year started that all the newsletters have provided a Form for parents to register their child for the Child and Family Agency. She stated that the newsletters inform parents that the Child and Family Agency provided: mental health services, nurse practitioners; they will conduct physicals, and they could make appointments, etc. She stated at the *Back to School Night* that Child and Family Agency were in attendance and Flyers regarding their programs were available.

Councilor Buhle noted that she wanted to respond to Mr. Samos’ September 24, 2024 email (Section V – Residents Comments) especially his comment that the School Based Health Clinic was not available during the school summer vacation. Councilor Buhle stated the School Based Health Clinic was available to students during the summer vacation, noting they offered both Group Programs and Individual Therapy.

Councilor Buhle stated that while she understood Councilor Ryan’s comments that the Youth Services Department was not funded in the Town’s Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget; and that they could reconsider it during their preparations for the upcoming Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget, however, she commented that it would be very expensive to reestablish the Department.

Councilor Buhle also noted Mrs. Parkinson's comments (Section V. Residents Comments) stating that Ledyard has already seen the State cut funding to Ledyard for the School Based Health Clinic. She stated for the current school year the State did not provide funding to support the Child and Family Agency Program for two of their elementary schools. However, she stated the town was able to bridge that gap by allocating \$90,888 of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding to provide mental health services for this school year; which was in addition to the ARPA funding that was being used to hire Clinician that took on the cases from the former Youth Services Department. Therefore, she asked for Ms. Goetchius' opinion regarding the following:

- ***Would it be more economical for the town to fund the mental health services through the Child and Family Agency; rather than start their own program from the ground up in the future.***

Ms. Goetchius stated that it would be more cost effective to fund the program through the Child and Family Agency.

- ***How they would proceed should they find that providing mental health services to 24 students was not enough.***

Councilor Buhle stated the Town Council allocated \$90,888 of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding to provide mental health services at the Juliet W. Long School and Gales Ferry School through the Child and Family Agency, because she had heard that there were children on a wait list for mental health services at those schools. She stated with the ARPA Funding and the additional clinicians that they have expanded the number of students receiving services from 9 to 24. Therefore, she questioned how they would proceed should they find that providing mental health services to 24 students was not enough.

Ms. Goetchius stated that they would do Group Activities.

- ***At what point do they hire a Clinician that would see younger students.***

Councilor Buhle addressed the Clinician who was hired using the American Rescue Plan Act Funding, to take on the cases from the former Youth Services Department, noting that the Clinician was not comfortable with providing mental health services to the elementary school students. Therefore, she questioned at what point do they hire a Clinician that would see younger students.

Ms. Goetchius stated the Board of Education would need to be involved in this conversation, explaining that the Board of Education has Social Workers and that they were hiring a Clinical Supervisor, noting that the position was still vacant.

Ms. Goetchius went on to explain that in addition to having policies and procedures in-place that the Child and Family Agency also had the oversight that was needed for the counselors, noting that this was what the Town's Youth Services Department was lacking. Ms. Chapman stated the other towns that provide Youth Services have full Departments explaining that it was not a department of one person. She stated the Child and Family Agency has oversight and collaboration, noting that it was not one person making all the decisions.

- ***Should Youth Services be separate from Social Services***

Councilor Buhle noted Mrs. Parkinson's comments from earlier (V Residents Comments) this evening regarding neighboring towns such as East Lyme and Montville who have a Youth Services Department. She stated that Ledyard was growing and that they would see needs that they have not seen in the past. Therefore, she stated the town should not end a program because they did not have enough people using the mental health services, but instead they should make the program better. She questioned whether Ms. Goetchius would recommend Ledyard have a Youth Services Department that was separate from the Social Services Department.

Ms. Goetchius stated that she could not respond to Councilor Buhle's question without conducting some research. She stated when the town closed the Ledyard Visiting Nurses Association (LVNA) that it was a monetary decision, explaining that residents were getting their home care services elsewhere (other Agencies/Organizations). She stated that the same was true for mental health services, explaining that services were available elsewhere, noting in this case, the decision was based on quality issues.

Chairman Rodriguez stated that she forwarded Mr. Samos' September 24, email to the Mayor Ms. Goetchius and Ms. Chapman. She read Mayor Allyn's responses to the questions Mr. Samos raised as follows:

“From: Fred Allyn, III <mayor@ledyardct.org>
Sent: Wednesday, September 25, 2024 11:01 AM
To: Naomi Rodriguez <NaomiR@ledyardct.org>
Cc: Kristen Chapman <mayoral.asst@ledyardct.org>; Karen Goetchius <nurse.director@ledyardct.org>
Subject: RE: Youth Services

Chairman,

Please also understand the following:

- 1. When youth services was a department in Town Hall (comprised of one individual), services ceased mid-May and resumed in September. No services were provided in the summer.*
- 2. No services were rendered during the holidays. A message on the phone stated, “If you are experiencing a mental health emergency, please hang up the phone and call 911”.*
- 3. Youth services never provided family services, nor was the LCSW equipped to handle family care services.*
- 4. The Board of Ed has an LCSW position posted that has been open for nearly a year. LCSW's are in short supply and those that exist often have private practices, some with sliding scales to allow residents with varied income levels to receive counseling.*
- 5. I'm disappointed to read the writers statement the town has “abandon its youth”. I can only attribute this to lack of knowledge.*

We discussed this many times prior to, during, and after the budget process and the “why”. We can once again discuss the “why” as you require.

*Best,
Fred”*

Councilor Paul noted Councilor Buhle's and Councilor Ryan's comments this evening, and he stated that these were questions that the town would need to continue to ask each year, noting that Youth Services could be brought back in some shape or form should the need arise. However, he stated they needed to have an Ordinance to establish a Social Services Board to allow Ms. Chapman to continue to do her work.

Chairman Rodriguez stated they have discussed the Youth Services Department quite a lot; and that they should continue to discuss a Youth Services Department every year. She stated they may find they need it; or they may find that they do not need it, stating that it would depend on the circumstances, mentioning that there were housing developments being proposed in town. However, she stated that she also understood that they needed to have the Social Services Board up and running for Ms. Chapman to continue to do her work.

Councilor Ryan stated just to be clear, the proposed Ordinance Amendments do not preclude Ms. Chapman from providing help year-round to anyone who needed it, that being youth, families, individuals, or otherwise. He stated they would continue to review the needs of the town; and if a need arises the Town Council could make accommodations in the middle of the budget cycle, as they have done in the past. Therefore, he stated he had no doubt that they

would work to fulfill a need should one arise, whether that be for youth services or something else, due to other developments, etc. He stated that this Town Council or future Town Councils, and Board of Educations should be willing to listen, and budget appropriately. He stated as they have seen from the empirical evidence the draw was currently not there based on the budget they had in-place and the services they were providing with a Department of one. He stated providing these Ordinance Amendments were approved this evening, the town would be able to move forward and get the funding needed to provide more effective services to meet their residents' current needs.

Ms. Chapman stated no taxpayer dollars are allocated for Social Services. She stated in past years they had a \$3,500 budget to pay for the electricity at the Linda C. Davis Food Pantry. However, she stated because the Town Green, where the Food Pantry was located, was under the Parks & Recreation Commission that those funds were moved to their budget because it was too cumbersome to try to figure out the portion of the Eversource Bill that was for the Food Pantry. She stated all the work that she does for the residents was based on fundraisers, donations and grant funding. Therefore, she stated that she needed an active Social Services Board to help with these activities. She stated last summer, because they ran out of money (used \$10,000) they had to close the Parks & Recreation Scholarship Applications that helps families send their kids to summer camp, noting that she did not like having to do that. She stated prior to her joining Ledyard that the Scholarship Program was not advertised and that she has been working to get the word out with the hope of receiving enough funding through donations so that she would not have to close the Summer Camp Scholarship Application Program this year. She stated that she continues to see more people join the Food Pantry, more backpacks and school supplies being requested, and the numbers were not trending downward. Therefore, she stated that she needed a Social Services Board.

Councilor Ryan stated the proposed Ordinance Amendments would enable Ms. Chapman to get the funding to help residents, individuals, youth, and families with social services. He stated by not adopting the proposed Ordinance Amendments would preclude the town from that mission.

Councilor St. Vil questioned how removing the references to Youth Services would help the Social Services Board. Chairman Rodriguez stated as a Youth Services Board the composition of the members was specifically defined to be eligible for grant funding. She noted the composition required the following members:

- Representative from the school system
- Police Officer
- Private youth-serving agency
- Youth currently under the age of twenty-one (21)
- Community-at-large member.

Chairman Rodriguez continued to explain that the Social Services Board would not have to meet that composition, noting that the volunteers could be 7 electors of the community, making it easier to fill the Board. She also noted that she attended many of the Youth and Social Services Board Meetings noting that most often they would not have a quorum.

Ms. Chapman stated the new Social Services Board could help her fundraise and apply for grant funding. She stated currently she was the only person working on Social Services matters, noting that this was not her only responsibility, stating that she was the Mayor's Executive Assistant and that she also supported other Committees and Boards.

VOTE: 7- 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT:	APPROVED 7 - 0
MOVER:	April Brunelle, Town Councilor
SECONDER:	Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor
AYES:	Brunelle, Buhle, Paul, Rodriguez, Ryan, Saccone, St. Vil
EXCUSED:	Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry

The Town Council thanked Ms. Goetchius and Ms. Chapman for attending tonight's meeting.

Ms. Goetchius and Ms. Chapman left the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

3. MOTION to adopt a proposed “*An Ordinance Providing Tax Relief For Gold Star Families in the Town of Ledyard*” as presented in the draft dated May 14, 2024.

DRAFT: 5/14/2024

Ordinance #200-XXX

AN ORDINANCE
PROVIDING TAX RELIEF FOR GOLD STAR FAMILIES
IN THE TOWN OF LEDYARD

Be it ordained by the Town Council of the Town of Ledyard

Section 1: Authority

Pursuant to the authority of P.A. 17-65 enacted on October 1, 2017 “*An Act Concerning Municipal Option Property Tax Exemption for Gold Star Parents or Spouses*” there is hereby established “*An Ordinance Providing Tax Relief for Gold Star Families In the Town of Ledyard*”.

Section 2: Purpose

To provide an exemption from property tax for property that is owned by a parent whose child was killed in action, or by the surviving spouse of a person who was killed in action, while performing active military duty with the Armed Forces, as such term is defined in Subsection (a) of Section 27-103 of the Connecticut General Statutes, as amended.

Section 3: Eligibility for Exemption

To be eligible any parent or surviving spouse of a service member killed in action while performing active military duty the following conditions must be met:

- (a) Application: Completed application shall be filed with the office of the Tax Assessor.
- (b) Residency: Persons qualified for a benefit under this Ordinance is a parent or surviving spouse who own real property located in the Town of Ledyard, or who are liable for the payment of taxes thereon under Section 12-48 of the General Statutes, and occupy the property as his or her principal residence at least 183 days of each year; and the time the application is made, and at all times during which the parent or surviving spouse is receiving an exemption pursuant to this Ordinance, the parent or surviving spouse shall be living in the Town of Ledyard.
- (c) Qualifying Income: The parent's or surviving spouse's total adjusted gross income, as determined for purposes of the federal income tax, plus any other income not included in such adjusted gross income, shall not exceed the sum of the maximum qualifying income for individuals if unmarried, or jointly with spouse if married, as set forth in Section 12-811 of the Connecticut General Statutes.
- (d) Surviving Spouses: The surviving spouse must have been legally married to the person who was killed in action at the time of such person's death, in accordance with Title 46b; Chapter 815E, of the Connecticut General Statutes, as amended.
- (e) Parents: If both parents of any such child killed in action while performing active military duty with the Armed Forces are domiciled together, only one such parent shall be entitled to the exemption from property tax provided for under this section.

If both parents of any such child killed in action while performing active military service with the Armed Forces are not domiciled together, both parents shall be eligible to receive the exemption provided for under this section.

Section 4: Amount of Exemption; Certified List

- (1) The exemption of property shall be in an amount of up-to \$20,000, or 10% of the assessed value of the property owned by the surviving spouse or the parent(s) of a child who was killed in action.
- (2) The exemption provided under this Ordinance shall be in addition to any exemption to which an eligible parent or surviving spouse may be entitled under Section 12-81 of the Connecticut General Statutes, as amended.

No such eligible parent(s) or surviving spouse entitled to exemption under Section 12-81 or 12-8 lg of the Connecticut General Statutes and this section shall receive more than one such exemption.

- (3) The Assessor shall annually make a certified list of all such parents or surviving spouses who are found to be entitled to an exemption, which list shall be filed in the office of the Town Clerk in the Town of Ledyard.

Section 5: Application Procedure and Requirements.

- (1) Any parent whose child was killed in action or the surviving spouse of a person who was killed in action (the "applicant") submitting a claim for an exemption of property tax under this Ordinance shall submit an application, on a form prepared by the Tax Assessor, to the Tax Assessor's Office not later than October 1st (the "application").

The application shall include a copy of the two recorded affidavits described in Subsection 2(a)(b) of this Section, and the applicant's federal income tax return, or in the event such a return is not filed, such evidence related to income, as may be required by the Tax Assessor, for the entire calendar year ending immediately prior to the October 1st in which the application for exemption is made.

- (2) The applicant shall also file with the office of the Town Clerk at least two affidavits, in such form as approved by the Tax Assessor, of two (2) different disinterested persons stating the following:
 - (a) The deceased child or spouse was killed in action while performing active duty with the Armed Forces, as defined in Section 27-103(a) of the Connecticut General Statutes; and
 - (b) That the applicant is the parent or surviving spouse of the person who was killed in action.
- (3) The affidavits shall be recorded in full in the office of the Town Clerk, free of charge, and such recording shall list the name of such parent or surviving spouse claiming the exemption.

No exemption shall be granted unless the affidavits have been recorded in the office of the Town Clerk; and until the application has been deemed complete by the Assessor's Office.

Section 6: Renewal and Termination of Exemption, Penalties.

- (1) The applicant shall be required to reapply for this exemption on a biennial basis. The failure of the applicant to reapply for this exemption on a biennial basis shall result in the termination of the applicant's exemption.
- (2) When an exemption has been granted, the applicant shall, in the assessment year immediately following the date of approval, be presumed qualified for such exemption.
- (3) On a biennial basis, during the year immediately following the approval of an applicant's exemption, the Tax Assessor may, by August 1st, notify each parent or surviving spouse presumed to be qualified for such exemption in writing, and if any

applicant has income in excess of the maximum allowed under Section 3(b) this Ordinance, such applicant shall notify the Assessor on or before the next October 1st and shall be denied the exemption for the assessment year immediately following and for any subsequent year until such applicant has reapplied and again qualified for such exemption.

The failure of the Assessor's Office to send such notice by August 1st shall waive the requirements of this Section for that assessment year, and the applicants presumed to be qualified for the exemption shall continue to receive an exemption for such assessment year.

- (4) Any notice under this section shall be deemed effective if it was mailed by regular mail to the applicant's last known address on file in the office of the Tax Collector.
- (5) If at any time it is determined that the applicant has obtained the exemption set forth in this Ordinance improperly, or was based on any misrepresentation or fraud, then upon discovery of such fact by the office of the Tax Assessor, the exemption shall be terminated immediately and the applicant shall make payment to the Town of Ledyard in the full amount of the property tax loss related to such exemption improperly taken within 30- days of such written demand from the Town of Ledyard.

Section 7. Severability

If any section, or part of a section, of this Ordinance shall be held by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such holding shall not be deemed to invalidate the remaining provisions hereof.

Section 8. Effective Date

In accordance with the Town Charter this ordinance shall become effective on the twenty-first (21st) day after such publication following its final passage.

Adopted by the Town Council on: _____

S. Naomi Rodriguez, Chairman

Approved / Disapproved on: _____

Fred B. Allyn, III., Mayor

Published on:

Effective Date:

Patricia A. Riley, Town Clerk

History: The State of Connecticut adopted Public Act #17-65 “An Act Concerning a Municipal Option Property Tax Exemption for Gold Star Parents or Spouses” in 2017. To provide families who lost a child or spouse in action while in the line of duty with some tax relief the Town Council adopted the “An Ordinance Providing Tax Relief for Gold Star Families In the Town of Ledyard” on: _____

Moved by Councilor Brunelle, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: None. (Public Hearing was held on September 11, 2024).

VOTE: 7- 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT:	APPROVED 7 - 0
MOVER:	April Brunelle, Town Councilor
SECONDER:	Tim Ryan, Town Councilor
AYES:	Brunelle, Buhle, Paul, Rodriguez, Ryan, Saccone, St. Vil
EXCUSED:	Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry

4. MOTION to set a Hybrid (In-Person & Video Conference) Public Hearing date on October 23, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. to be held in the Council Chambers, 741 Colonel Ledyard Highway, to receive comments and recommendations regarding proposed Amendments to Ordinance #100-015 (rev.1) “*An Ordinance Establishing a Permanent Municipal Building Committee for the Town of Ledyard*” as presented in the draft dated September 11, 2024.

Moved by Councilor Brunelle, seconded by Councilor Buhle

Discussion: None.

VOTE: 7– 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT:	APPROVED 7 - 0
MOVER:	April Brunelle, Town Councilor
SECONDER:	Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor
AYES:	Brunelle, Buhle, Paul, Rodriguez, Ryan, Saccone, St. Vil
EXCUSED:	Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry

5. MOTION to appoint Ms. Cynthia Wright (D) 6 Laurel Leaf Drive, Gales Ferry to the Library Commission to complete a two (2) year term ending November 7, 2025 filling a vacancy left by Mr. Cronin.

Moved by Councilor Brunelle, seconded by Councilor St. Vil

Discussion: None.

VOTE: 7– 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT:	APPROVED 7 - 0
MOVER:	April Brunelle, Town Councilor
SECONDER:	Gary St. Vil, Town Councilor
AYES:	Brunelle, Buhle, Paul, Rodriguez, Ryan, Saccone, St. Vil
EXCUSED:	Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry

Finance Committee

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

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: None.

VOTE: 7– 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT:	APPROVED 7 - 0
MOVER:	Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor
SECONDER:	Tim Ryan Town Councilor
AYES:	Brunelle, Buhle, Paul, Rodriguez, Ryan, Saccone, St. Vil
EXCUSED:	Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry

7. MOTION to appropriate the Connecticut Secretary of the State Early Voting Grant in the amount of \$4,063.07 to Account# 21010301-56100-G0015 entitled “Registrar - Operating Expenses - Misc. Grants”.

In addition, authorize the Registrar of Voters to expend the Early Voting Grant to pay for expenses associated with Early Voting provisions in accordance with Public Act 24-81.

Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Buhle

Discussion: Deputy Registrar Patricia Carman Frost stated Ledyard was eligible to received grant funding in the amount of \$4,063.07 from the Secretary of the State’s Office to help with the early voting for the 2024 Presidential Election. She stated the Grant Application required them to provide a list of the expenses that the funding would be used for and to obtain Town Council approval. She stated that the Grant Application was due by Monday, September 30, 2024. She stated the Registrars have been working to set up a permanent early voting location in the Lower Level of the Town Hall and that this funding would be used to purchase equipment for that purpose long-term.

Councilor Saccone questioned the date of the Secretary of State’s letter regarding the Early Voting Grant Funding. Ms. Frost stated the letter was dated August 31, 2024; however, she stated that the Registrars only work Monday and Thursday. She also noted that they had some trainings to attend and that she has taken on this role after Registrar Claudia Sweeny retired earlier this summer. Therefore, she stated because she was new that it took her some time to figure out the process and what had to be done. Councilor Saccone asked that the Registrars submit the Grant Application tomorrow to meet the September 30, 2024 deadline Ms. Frost stated that they would be sending the Grant Application to the Secretary of State’s Office tomorrow.

VOTE: 7– 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT:	APPROVED 7 - 0
MOVER:	Tim Ryan, Town Councilor
SECONDER:	Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor
AYES:	Brunelle, Buhle, Paul, Rodriguez, Ryan, Saccone, St. Vil
EXCUSED:	Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry

The Town Council thanked the Registrars Ms. Frost, Ms. Mann, and Ms. Johnson for attending tonight’s meeting.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Buhle moved to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Paul.

VOTE: 7 - 0 Approved and so declared. The meeting adjourned at 7:55 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 September 25, 2024.

S. Naomi Rodriguez, Chairman

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