



TOWN OF LEDYARD

741 Colonel Ledyard Highway
Ledyard, Connecticut 06339-1551
(860) 464-3203
council@ledyardct.org

Town Council Meeting Minutes

Chairman Gary St. Vil

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, February 25, 2026

7:00 PM

Town Hall Council Chambers

In-Person: Council Chambers Town Hall Annex

Remote: Information noted below:

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

**[https://ledyardct.zoom.us/j/87251764456?
pwd=R7ZagNwsW8KVm13GZJaNK5sJkM3wKv.1](https://ledyardct.zoom.us/j/87251764456?pwd=R7ZagNwsW8KVm13GZJaNK5sJkM3wKv.1)**

Audio Only: Telephone: +1 646 558 8656; Meeting ID: 872 5176 4456; Passcode: 253966

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

Chairman St. Vil welcomed all to the Hybrid Meeting. He stated for the members of the Town Council and the Public who were participating via video conference that the remote meeting information was available on the Agenda that was posted on the Town's Website - Granicus-Legistar Meeting Portal.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL

Present: Town Councilor William Barnes
Town Councilor April Brunelle
Town Councilor Jessica Buhle
Town Councilor Ty Lamb
Town Councilor Adrienne Parad
Chairman Gary St. Vil
Town Councilor Tim Ryan
Town Councilor Carmen Garcia-Irizarry

Excused: Town Councilor James Thompson

IV. PRESENTATIONS

Update on Flock Group DBA Flock Safety License Plate Readers.

Police Chief John Rich thanked the Town Council for the invitation to attend tonight's meeting to provide information regarding the Flock Safety Automated License Plate Readers, noting the recent media coverage regarding the use of Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) Technology.

Chief Rich provided some background noting with seeing how useful the Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) Technology was for surrounding law enforcement agencies to help solve crimes, that the Ledyard Police Department and the Ledyard Emergency Communications Dispatch Center reviewed Flock Safety and another provider. He noted that Flock Safety was the sole provider of this service in their region; and that the Connecticut State Police, Groton Town, Groton City, Mashantucket Police, Norwich Police, and Stonington Police were using Flock Safety. He stated for Ledyard to use the Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) Technology most effectively for crime prevention and investigation, that it was critical for Ledyard to be able to share and receive ALPR data from their local and state law enforcement partners; and therefore, they chose to also use the Flock Safety Automated License Plate Readers Technology.

Chief Rich continued by stating that \$12,000 was included in the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget to purchase and install four Automated License Plate Readers Devices (ALPR) on the State roadways in Ledyard, noting that two ALPR were installed on Route 12 in Gales Ferry, one was on Route 117 in Ledyard Center, and one was on Route 214 near the Iron Street section; noting that the equipment set-up and the installation was completed in November, 2025. He explained the License Plate Readers were cameras that watch the traffic and make images of the license plates; and stored the images in the data system for 30-days; which was currently the retention period the system was set at. He provided the following examples of how the License Plate Readers would be used:

- Track Stolen Vehicles - Chief Rich explained that law enforcement had the ability to match the records with the Department of Motor Vehicles records and the on-line processing system to track stolen cars. He stated when a vehicle has been reported stolen that the Police Departments would receive an alert from the License Plate Reader System if the vehicle has passed by.
- Investigative Resource - Chief Rich stated the License Plate Readers were also helpful as an investigative resource if a vehicle has been involved in a crime. He stated that Police Officers could obtain a printout of the description and conduct a query of the vehicles that went by the License Plate Reader to see if there were any vehicles that matched the description, included the license plate.
- Locate Missing or Endangered People - Chief Rich stated that the License Plate Readers were also helpful in Amber Alerts, Silver Alerts, or a Person associated with a Protective Order.
- Track Stolen Vehicles - Chief Rich explained that law enforcement had the ability to match the records with the Department of Motor Vehicles records and the on-line processing system to track stolen cars. He stated when a vehicle has been reported stolen that the Police Departments would receive an alert from the License Plate Readers if the vehicle has passed by.

Chief Rich provided a few examples of how the Automated License Plate Reader Technology was being used throughout the nation. He noted one example that occurred in 2021, which was long before Ledyard began their Automated License Plate Reader program, there was a violent murder in Ledyard. He stated during the course of the investigation they had information that the

individual fled the state within the first couple of days; and the description of the vehicle the individual had access to. He stated with that information the Ledyard Police Department engaged both the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) and US Marshal Services and had an Arrest Warrant within the first 48-hours. He stated using the technology throughout the nation that they were able to track the vehicle which went out to St. Louis, Missouri, where the individual met with some one at a casino and then got into a different vehicle; and traveled to Atlanta, Georgia, where he was located by US Marshal Services. Chief Rich stated that this was just one example of a high impact incident that occurred in a residential neighborhood in their community and how instrumental the License Plate Reader Technology was in apprehending the individual. He stated that was when Ledyard began to have the conversation as to whether they should engage in the Automated License Plate Reader Technology.

Chief Rich went on to explain the License Plate Readers would not be used to:

- Measure Speed
- Automatically send Tickets
- Does not have facial recognition software

Chief Rich noted that the License Plate Readers do not have some of the other misinformation that has been circulating in cyberspace about these devices. He also explained that when a member of Dispatch or the Police Department entered the Flock License Plate Reader data base that they would need their user name and password; and they would also have to include the reason they were making the inquiry/query.

Chief Rich noted the following Alerts Ledyard has received since the ALPR Technology fully went live about six-weeks ago:

- 489 Alerts from the cameras - the following were pertaining to Ledyard:
 - 39 were stolen license plates
 - 27 involved protective orders
 - 26 custom hot list alerts (things that the Ledyard Police was looking for)
 - 15 for people wanted on warrants
 - 8 missing persons
 - 3 stolen vehicles

Chief Rich stated the Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) Technology was been an effective tool for the Police Department and for Public Safety to alert the community if there was a dangerous situation going on in town; such as something within a close proximity to the schools, etc., in which they would ask the schools to do a soft shutdown, until the situation was clear.

Chief Rich stated that he would do his best to address some of the concerns that have been in the media relative to the concerns that the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) has brought up regarding Data Security and Data Retention; and he noted the following:

- ***Security of Automatic License Plate Reader Data***

Chief Rich stated that Ledyard controls their data relative to other Law Enforcement Departments having the ability to view; or to continuously monitor their data. He stated there was a total of 335 Automatic License Plate Reader cameras in the network that Ledyard could query if they wanted to. He stated that each subscriber owned their own data; and would control

where that data could go.

- ***Connecticut Trust Act :***

Chief Rich stated in some cases there was some concern that the Automatic License Plate Reader information/network would be used in a type of enforcement which they do not use as Local Police Officers, or things that were prohibited in Connecticut by the *Trust Act*; specifically *Immigration Enforcement* and those kinds of things. He went on to explain that Flock Security has built in filters for Connecticut Departments where those types of searchers would not land. He stated because Connecticut has the *Trust Act* and other Laws surrounding *Immigration*; Connecticut's data was not visible to be shared for those purposes.

- ***Sharing Data with Federal Agencies:***

Chief Rich stated the Police Department has had various Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Requests from the public; noting that one of the concerns was whether Ledyard was sharing data with any Federal Agencies. He stated for a period of time Ledyard was sharing data with the US Postal Inspector Service, who investigated things such as Mail Fraud; Mail Theft, Wire Fraud; and other things that were larger in scope. He stated there were some cases in which Ledyard has worked with the US Postal Inspector Service in relation to packages being delivered to locations that contained contraband.

Chief Rich stated with the level of sensitivity about sharing data with Federal Agencies, that the Ledyard Police Department decided that they would share data with the US Postal Inspector Service *upon request*; explaining that the Ledyard Police Department modified the settings in their Automatic License Plate Reader (ALPR) System and placed additional controls on their data. Therefore, he stated if the US Postal Inspector Services had a specific situation that was going on in town that the Police Department would help them and share what was needed in the context of an investigation.

- ***Other Protective Rights:***

Chief Rich stated another concern was Reproductive Rights, and he explained that some states have changed their Laws regarding *Reproductive Rights*. He stated in Connecticut the search filter for Reproductive Rights was blocked. He stated that these were some examples that Flock Security has put in place.

- ***Data Retention***

Chief Rich noted the horrific mass shooting that happened on December 13- 15, 2025 at Brown University, in Providence, Rhode Island. He stated from what he knows from the media that it took about three-days into the investigation before they got a description of the vehicle from a witness who made a post on *Reddit*. He stated the Police used the Automatic License Plate Reader Technology and was able to put the vehicle involved within a mile and half of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Professor's Residence where the murder happened. He stated the vehicle then traveled through Massachusetts and ultimately into New Hampshire where the vehicle passed by other ALPR. He stated the vehicle was located on December 18, 2025 and the Police found the shooter deceased.

Chief Rich continued by stating that this was another example of how powerful the Automatic License Plate Reader Technology was. He stated that he was confident that his Staff knew how to use the data responsibly, explaining in running a license plate or someone's criminal history that in addition to using their user name and password that the system also required them to

document the reason a query was being made, noting that there were some safeguards in terms of the data, because it could not be shared with other forums.

Chief Rich stated in response to questions as to whether the Ledyard Police Department would be expanding or adding live cameras; that the answer was “No” not at this time. He stated that they were still evaluating the Program with regard to whether they had their technology deployed in the best possible location to give them the most coverage, etc. He concluded by stating that knowledge was powerful for Officers Safety; and it keeps their Community safe. He stated the Flock Safety Company and the Law Enforcement Agencies were hearing the citizens’ concerns; noting that the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association was working to engage the Police Officers Training Counsel to create a State-wide Model Policy so they would all be using the Automatic License Plate Reader Technology the same way; and there was no deviation throughout the State.

The Town Council and Chief Rich discussed the following: (1) 489 Alerts from the cameras data, but the breakdown (see page 2) only totaled about 100 alerts. Were the remaining false alerts. Chief Rich explained because data was being shared between Departments that some of the alters they were just monitoring; (2) Filters were controlled by Flock Safety and were for search

purposes. Turning on certain filters would prevent access from Law Enforcement Agencies outside of Ledyard; (3) Annual Subscription Fee \$12,000. Ledyard was in the first-year of a two-year Agreement; (4) Safeguards included the person’s User Name, Password, and also included a Multifactor Authentication to make sure the person accessing the system was who they were. The system would document who accessed the system, date/time/subject of search/case number if one has been assigned. The access would be tracked by the device and the log-on credentials (computer). This data would be permanently retained. The Police Offices and the Emergency Dispatch Staff were trained to use the Automatic License Plate Reader Technology; and would be the ones receiving the Alerts; noting they currently do not have the ability to receive mobile alerts yet, but expect that capability would be coming. Chief Rich stated with the Town Council’s support the Police Department was working to upgrade several other systems; (4) Data Retention of the License Plate Image was set for 30-days; (5) Traffic Safety/Speeding/Fatalities - Digital Speed Signs that the town has received through other grant funding, were moved around town. To use camera equipment for enforcement purposes at traffic signals (red lights) that the traffic signals would need to be owned by the municipality, and they would be required to follow specific parameters. All the traffic signals in Ledyard were on State Roads, and were owned by the Department of Transportation (DOT). Should they choose to use a Automated system for traffic enforcement that they would need to provide a Due Process for people to dispute the traffic ticket. Mayor Allyn stated to use an Automated system for traffic enforcement that it would require a Town Council Resolution and possibly an Ordinance; (6) Police Force Multiplier - When the Town Council approved the funding and the bid waiver for the Flock Safety Automatic License Plate Reader Technology the hope was that it would be an effective multiplier for their limited Police force to concentrate enforcement where the Police Officers were actually needed; and when they were needed; (7) Public Concern regarding Data was valid as they move forward with technology in any areas of their life. Pleased that the Police Department has taken a proactive approach to safeguard the data.

Chairman St. Vil stated over the weekend a resident submitted a request regarding the Flock Safety Automatic License Plate Reader Technology, which was forwarded to Chief Rich. He

stated within a few days Chief Rich was present this evening to provide an update and to answer questions. He stated that Chief Rich's level of responsiveness was appreciated by the Town Council

The Town Council thanked Chief Rich for attending tonight's meeting and for his informative update regarding the Automatic License Plate Reader Technology. Chief Rich was invited to come back to give a presentation regarding the *Connecticut Trust Act*. Chief Rich stated that he was always willing to share information that was pertinent to what the Ledyard Police Department was doing. He stated these were complex issues and each one had their own nuances; and that he was happy to share information as it related to the Ledyard Police Department and how they may or may not interface with another Agency.

Board of Education Proposed Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget

Board of Education Chairman Jennifer Reguin thanked the Town Council for the opportunity to present the Board of Education's proposed Fiscal Year 2026/2027 in the amount of \$41,932,335; an increase of \$1,470,093; or 3.63% over the current year's (fy 25/26) budget. She introduced Board of Education Finance Committee Chairman Amanda Veneziano, stating that while she was new to Ledyard's Board of Education that she brings valuable experience from her previous Board service in Hebron; and that Ledyard was fortunate to have her leadership guide their financial discussions. She stated the Board of Education may be a relatively new Team, but that they were a focused Team, noting that they were committed, collaborative, and working together with a shared purpose to support Ledyard's students, staff, and community with clarity and responsibility. She thanked School Superintendent Jason Hartling for his continued work, diligence, and for the countless hours that his Team, their Administrators, Teachers, and Staff invested behind the scenes to support the Annual Budget process. She also thanked the members of the Board of Education for their support, thoughtful questions, and dedication. She stated as she begins each of their Board of Education meetings: *Let's move forward with kindness, respect, and understanding that they all shared the same goal doing what was best for the children and the future of Ledyard*. She deferred to Board of Education Finance Committee Chairman Amanda Veneziano.

Board of Education Finance Committee Chairman Amanda Veneziano stated the Fiscal Year 2026/2027 has been a wonderful Budget Season, noting that Council Liaison Barnes, Councilor Lamb, and Councilor Garcia-Irizarry have attended all of the Board of Education meetings and they have collaboratively provided comments and feedback as they worked to prepare a Education Budget for the School District. Ms. Veneziano stated the Board of Education's goal was to ensure the children had everything they needed to be successful and that this year they also looked at the Education Budget in the context as a whole town to make sure that what they were asking for was truly needed; and they looked at what they could cut, recognizing that everyone was struggling right now.

Ms. Veneziano proceeded by reviewing the attached PowerPoint Presentation.

Ms. Veneziano thanked the Town Council for the opportunity to present the Board of

Education's proposed Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget this evening in the amount of \$41,932,335; an increase of \$1,470,093; or 3.63% over the current year's (fy 25/26) budget. noting that the their budget was on the School District's website at [Ledyard.net](https://www.ledyard.net) <<https://www.ledyard.net/>>; click on the "**Our District**" drop down; select "**Budget**".

Chairman St. Vil thanked Chairman Reguin and Finance Committee Chaiman Veneziano for a great presentation. He stated that the Board of Education's proposed Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget was reflective of the work that School Superintendent Hartling and the Board of Education Members have done.

The Town Council and the Board of Education discussed the following:

- School District Budget Increases were being driven by Special Education Cost (SPED); what structural decisions has Ledyard made to help avoid similar budget instabilities.

School Superintendent Jason Hartling explained since he arrived in Ledyard in 2016 they built and implemented the following programs to reduce the number of outplaced Special Education Students between the ages of Pre-School to age 23 by about 50%; to make sure they had a place within Ledyard's Schools; which has mitigated those costs.

- Resource Program to support students with Math and Reading Disabilities.
- Social Emotional Program to support students with Regulation Issues.
- RISE (*Reaching Independence through Supported Education*) to support students with diverse learning needs, focusing on vocational, social, and life skills; such as autism and other major health impairments.
- Unified Programs to create inclusive school communities. These programs integrate students of all abilities through inclusive sports, youth leadership, and whole-school engagement, to reduce stigma, and build community.

Mr. Hartling stated they had 17 students that were outplaced, and he noted the pressures of the increase in the Tuition and Transportation Costs.

- New Budget Format requested in the Town Council's December 11, 2025 Budget Letter of Directive made the Board of Education much easier to understand; and showed a clear picture of how taxpayers dollars were being spent.
- Area School Board Budgets were seeing increases of 4% or more. The work that Ledyard's Board of Education did to manage their costs and to keep their proposed Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget increase to 3.63% was appreciated.
- Unified Programs - The Students and Parents appreciated the Unified Programs; noting that the kids enjoyed spending time with the other kids.
- Balance Needs with Revenues - The Board of Education worked to balance the School District's needs by looking for areas where adjustments could be made to offset costs.

- Strategic Plan and Capital Improvement Plan; and whether the Board of Education took a break from their Strategic Plan and in funding their Capital Improvement Plan for the upcoming Fiscal Year 2026/2027; and what would those costs be in the out years.

School Superintendent Jason Hartling stated the Board of Education did not take a break in their Strategic Plan, explaining that they were:

- Working toward their District Accreditation.
- Developing a Data Dashboard around student engagement.
- Structural Coaching to continue to build their capacity institutionally around academic rigor in their classrooms.

Mr. Hartling stated if they looked at the “Budget Additions” (Green Slide) they would see every item was aligned with the School District’s Strategic Plan. He went on to state that they balanced the financial piece was their District’s ability to do more, explaining that they were conscience to make sure they were able to fully implement (handle intuitively) every investment that they made. He stated the Strategic Plan was updated and available on their website at : Ledyard.net

- Gifted and Talented Programs - Superintendent Hartling stated although Gifted Programs were included in the District’s Strategic Plan that the Board of Education has not made that financial commitment to add Gifted and Talented Programs per-se, noting that it would require a significant out lay; and they would have to look at their capacity. He noted the significant benefits of developing the Intervention Programs; stating with having the Student Needs Profile at the Research Standard, that they could begin some of the extension classes now move to the Intervention Component.
- Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (STEM) Program - Superintendent Hartling stated that they have brought the *Invention Convention* back to Ledyard; noting that the program would be held in mid-February at the Gallup Hill School and the Gales Ferry School. He stated that last time they held this event was in 2018; which was before the Covid 19 Pandemic.
- High School Facilities Needs Assessment Study \$75,000 - Superintendent Hartling stated the Board of Education allocated the \$75,000 at their February 10, 2026 meeting. He stated that he was reviewing the Request for Proposals (RFP) and planned to release the RFP within the next week or so.
- Does Ledyard’s Infrastructure constrain what they could allocate toward Enrichment Programs

Superintendent Hartling stated that the space pressures they had were different for each school facility. He noted as an example that the High School was constructed in 1963 - 1966, and was designed for 1,250 - 1,500 students. He explained that today’s space profile looked completely different especially as they start to add Specialized Programs. He noted as an

example that they may have a smaller subset of Special Needs Students (13 kids) who may be using three-times the classroom space that a General Education Student would use, because of things such as break-out rooms, etc. He stated they do have pressures on space; and he noted the School Facilities as follows:

- Kindergarten - Grade 5 - Mr. Hartling stated the space was challenging at times, particularly with what they needed to do long-term with Pre-K. However, he stated that he did not think the space would inhibit their ability to do the extension piece.
- Middle School - Mr. Hartling stated the space was incredibly tight, noting that last year they did some classes in the Cafeteria; and that the Band Space was also tight. The size of the Cafeteria was sized for about 152 kids, and therefore, that they cannot fit one grade level in the Cafeteria, which meant that the Middle School was running 4-5 Lunch Waives to accommodate the school population, noting that it created operational havoc.
- High School - Mr. Hartling stated the space at the High School was not inhibiting their ability to add Enrichment Program. However, he stated it was human conditions, such as temperatures, bees flying in the windows that do not have screens, and basic functionality of the building for comfort of the staff and students; more so than with the programs. He stated the Wood Shop, Metal Shop, and Advanced Placement Programs were moving along positively for the kids.
- Transportation Escalation Costs - Superintendent Hartling stated their Bus Contracts were a multi-year contract; that include escalators, noting in the upcoming Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget the Bus Contract included a 4% increase; stating they had three-years left with that contact. He stated the State Legislator was discussing a Mandate for all School Bus Fleets to be Electric by 2030; which would be a significant cost burden, noting that Ledyard does not have the infrastructure to support electric buses at the curb terminal. He encouraged everyone to contact their State Legislators.
- Per Pupil Expenditure and closing the gap. Ledyard had been one of the lowest funded School Districts in the State. Since 2021 when Ledyard was ranked at 160 out of Connecticut's 169 Towns; that each year they have worked to continue to improve that ranking; and were now ranked at 144. The Board of Education's work to close that gap was appreciated. Ledyard was not the lowest ranked town to live-in; it was a fantastic town to live-in; and their students deserve an education that showed that they valued education.
- Agricultural Science Technology Education (ASTE) Actual Grant Revenue for Fiscal Year 2024/2025 was \$1,508,652. For Fiscal Year 2025/2025 the ASTE Grant Revenue was proposed at \$1.4 million. Has Ledyard received all of their ASTE Grant Revenue for the current fiscal year (fy 25/26). Also, the formula for the ASTE Grant Revenue recently changed; and the Board of Education has projected the ASTE Grant Revenue in the proposed Fiscal Year 2026/2027 to be flat. Does the Board of Education anticipate receiving additional ASTE Grant Revenue for next fiscal year (fy 26/27).

Superintendent Hartling explained that the ASTE Grant Revenues were dispersed periodically throughout the year. He noted that it appeared that they were on-track to receive the projected \$1.4 million, as included in the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget. He explained

for the current year (fy 25/26) the State changed the funding stream for Agricultural Science Program explaining they removed them from a Tuition-Based system to relying on State Grant funding; noting that Agri-Science Schools were now prohibited from charging anything over 58%; or had to charge 58% or less for Agri-Science Tuition for out of town students attending Ledyard's Agri-Science Program. He stated that Ledyard does not anticipate receiving additional ASTE Grant Revenue for next fiscal year (fy 26/27), noting that they were actually at-risk. He explained that the Governor's proposed Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget made some revisions to the ASTE Grant Revenue Calculation, explaining that it puts both Magnet School Tuition dollars and the Agri-Science Tuition dollars on their expense side at-risk; and the Governor's new Calculation could change whether the dollars would be in a Grant Form or the Tuition Form. He stated at this point in the process, that they do not know how that was going to shake out. He stated that they would continue to advocate for no disruptive changes in ASTE Grant Revenue Calculation that would cost Ledyard more.

- \$60,000 Variance between the Superintendent's proposed Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget and the Board of Education's adopted Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget - Board of Education Finance Committee Chairman Amanda Veneziano explained the Board of Education added an additional Custodian Position, and offset the cost with a savings of \$20,000 which was a result of a teacher retirement, and the replacement teacher coming in at a lower Salary Step.
- Ledyard Education Advancement Foundation (LEAF) provides grants for a number of initiatives to advance Ledyard Schools. In awarding requested Grants that LEAF will ask the recipient what they would have done with more money (i.e. requested \$500 what they would have done with \$1,000). Therefore, hypothetically, what would be on the Board of Education list if they had an additional \$1 million in their Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget; and whether one of those items would be a Late Bus.

Board of Education Finance Committee Chairman Veneziano noted as Superintendent Hartling explained earlier this evening that in adding something such as the Late Bus that they would need to consider whether they could intuitionally handle it, such as whether the staffing was in-place, was the chain of command was in-place. She stated they could not continue to add to their staff and expect them to pick-up more load. She noted that the Board of Education's proposed Fiscal Year 2026/2027 was on their website, stating that the items listed in the Yellow Section, which were not ranked in a priority order, were the things that would be up next. However, she stated she was not prepared this evening to say what they would add if they had an additional \$1 million. She also stated that they were not prepared to add the items in the Yellow Section, stating that it was not responsible to add them at this time.

- 71.3% of the Board of Education's proposed Fiscal Year 2026/2027 was for Staff Costs; were there any large contracts coming up for renewal during the next three-years that would cause significant budget increases.

Superintendent Hartling stated the first year of new three-year Contract for the Teachers Contract would start in Fiscal Year 2026/2027; and the Administrators Contract was be due

in two-years. He stated the only Bargaining Unit they had this year was their IT Unit which involved five people.

Mr. Hartling went on to state that the biggest cost for all communities was Healthcare Costs; which was not included in the Board of Education's proposed Fiscal Year 2026/2027 proposed Budget conversation. He stated he expected the next two - three budget years for the

Board of Education to look similar to their overall increases in the upcoming Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget. He stated there were some expenses in the Yellow Section that he would be ready to move forward within the next couple of years; especially around the Multi-Tiered Support System (MTSS) Process at the High School. He stated the other big piece at the High School was their Capital Needs.

- Budget Transparency - The proposed Board of Education Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget increase of 3.65% was not representative of the total overall operational cost for the School District. The \$6 million Healthcare Cost for the Board of Education Employees, which was expected to increase by about 10% in the upcoming budget; was not reflected in their proposed Operational Costs because the Healthcare Costs have been carried on the General Government's (Town) side of the budget ledger. Last year during their budget deliberations for the current year's budget (fy 25/26) the discussion was put on the table to move the Board of Education' Employees Healthcare Costs back to the Board of Education's side of the budget ledger for transparency regarding the total School District's operational costs.

Board of Education Finance Committee Chairman Veneziano stated for transparency purposes the Board of Education's proposed Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget included a page toward the end of the Budget Book that showed the "*In-Kind Expenses*" for Board of Education expenses that were recorded on the General Government (Town) side of the budget ledger.

Superintendent Hartling stated all of the "*In-Kind Expenses*" for the Board of Education that were carried on the General Government (Town) side of the budget ledger were factored into the overall School District's Per Pupil Expenditure.

- Capital Needs for the School Facilities was a conversation that they were all going to have to have between the Town Council and the Board of Education.
- Considering Education Budgets in surrounding towns for the upcoming Fiscal Year 2026/2027 were seeing increases of 5%; 7%; and double digit tax impacts; would it be fair to characterize Ledyard's Board of Education's proposed Fiscal Year 2026/2027 in the amount of \$41,932,335; an increase of \$1,470,093; or 3.63% over the current year's (fy 25/26) budget as *Stable, Contractual, and Structurally Controlled rather than Expansionary* .

Board of Education Finance Committee Chairman Veneziano stated that she would say it was *Stable, Contractual, Structurally Controlled; and Expansionary*. She stated that while they worked to expand and add some things that they also worked to keep the budget stable.

The Town Council thanked Board of Education Chairman Reguin, Finance Committee Chairman Veneziano; and Superintendent Hartling for their informative and detailed Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget Presentation this evening. They also expressed their appreciation for the additional work to reformat their Budget by each school and the use of Excel Spreadsheets instead of the Munis Reports, noting that it was more comprehensive and transparent for residents to review and understand how their tax dollars were being spent.

V. COMMENTS OF TOWN COUNCILORS

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry commented on the following: (1) Use of Facebook - Councilor Garcia-Irizarry noted that Facebook provided both bad and the good news, noting that through a Facebook posting she learned that her son was in the newspaper for his wrestling match in 2026 State Championship; (2) Be Thankful - Councilor Garcia-Irizarry noted the importance to appreciate what they each have and to be thankful. She noted when her son was 1-years old he was diagnosed and treated for cancer, stating throughout his life that he has fought for his life with various illnesses and injuries. She stated that he was now in High School and although he was not feeling well on Saturday, February 21, 2026 he insisted on joining his Wrestling Team to compete in 2026 State Championship; because wrestling was a team sport. Ledyard came in third behind the first place winners Waterford, and second place winners Killingly. She stated the new Ledyard High School Wrestling Coach T.J. Hepburn has done a wonderful job with the Team. However, she stated because of her son's exertion at the State

Championship Tournament he was unresponsive on Sunday and he was taken to the hospital by ambulance, where he was treated for three days; noting that he was now back home. She stated that her son has always given 200%; and he has taught her that there was no time to lose; noting that she was thankful that her son was okay, and she was thankful that she was able to be here and to see all of their residents and to listen to what they had to say; (3) Flock Safety Automated License Plate Readers - Councilor Garcia-Irizarry thanked Chief Rich for the informative presentation earlier this evening. She noted that last year her son did an internship with the Ledyard Police Department, stating that he was able to ride with one of the Police Officers in the cruiser. She stated that that experience made him more determined to be a Police Officer. She noted in the fall her son would be attending college to study Criminal Justice, and then he was planning to attend the Police Academy. She also thanked Chief Rich for giving her son the opportunity to participate in the Police Internship, noting that he was smiling each day when she picked him up; (4) United Way of Southeastern Connecticut - Councilor Garcia-Irizarry noted that she was a member of United Woman, which was a Chapter of United Way. She stated United Way owned the Gemma E. Moran Food Bank and Distribution Center located at 374 Bank Street, New London, noting that in addition to collaborating with Food Pantries in the region; they also have a Mobile Food Pantry. She stated the calendar of where the Mobile Food Pantry would be was available on the United Way website, noting the next Mobile Food Pantry was scheduled for Wednesday, March 4, 2026 at 4:30 p.m. in Stonington. She stated anyone who showed up would be helped, no questions asked, noting that they would not be required to show income or anything else.

Councilor Lamb commented on the following: (1) Working Together - Councilor Lamb noted an newspaper article about a democrat and a republican working together which stated *“Our Country has been hijacked by extremists on both sides of the political aisle. Meanwhile we believe there was a very large silent majority of normal folks who can agree on common sense compromises to many of our Nation’s problems”*. Councilor Lamb stated that he would say *“to Ledyard’s problems”*. He stated that he was hopeful that this nine member Town Council could collaborate, work together more, and build trusts as they move forward; (2) Strategic Capital Improvement Plan and Long-Term Planning - Councilor Lamb stated this was very important and he thought that people were starting to buy into this; (3) Ad Hoc Committee to Develop Process for Capital Improvement Building Projects - Councilor Lamb noted at the Town Council’s February 11, 2026 meeting they adopted a *“Resolution to establish an Ad Hoc Committee to develop an end-to- end process and timeline/schedule for assigned Municipal and Board of Education Capital Improvement Projects”*. He stated that the next step was to appoint members to the Committee; (3) Ledyard Fair Initiative - Councilor Lamb stated in early March there would be a Kick-Off Meeting to look at establishing a 501(c) non-profit status and bylaws, noting that this would be a non-partisan effort and an opportunity for the community to come together. He stated that his intention was to be a facilitator, noting that eventually they would have a Ledyard Fair Board. He stated a family on Route 117 that owned a 5-acre parcel was talking about allowing them to grow things like tulips that the public could cut themselves; and make a donation to support the Ledyard Fair. He stated that these types of partnerships would support their efforts; (4) Annual Budget - Councilor Lamb stated that he hoped that they could all come together and get a Town Approved Budget this year.

Councilor Parad commented on the following: (1) 2026 Blizzard - Councilor Parad noted the hard work the Public Works Crews put in to get the roads cleared; and that she appreciated their efforts; (2) Primary Care for All - Councilor Parad stated that Ledyard has a group of volunteers that were working hard to get this long-term initiative off the ground, noting that it was a large undertaking and was going to take some time; (3) United States Surgeon General - Councilor Parad stated at Capitol Hill today, someone was trying to become the United States Surgeon General. She stated that the person seeking the position of the United States Surgeon General was not as qualified as she was noting that she was a Licensed and Board Certified Family Physician. She stated after graduating College she went to Med-School, did a Residency in Family Medicine; and after obtaining her License and Board Certification she practiced Family Medicine; she maintains more than ten active Medical Licenses. She stated although she was not currently seeing physically patients, because she now worked behind a desk and makes a lot of medical determinations; and she consults with Doctors who were ordering medications and she helped them get the right medications. She stated this work does not exempt her from needing to have a medical license. She stated anything that the public may hear about not needing a medical license to serve in a medical capacity and to give medical advice to the Country was not okay in her book.

Councilor Parad continued by stating before those in the medical field started their journey they take a *“Hippocratic Oath”* and she shared her favorite parts of the Oath as follows:

✓ *“I will remember that there is an art to medicine as well as science, and that warmth,*

sympathy, and understanding may outweigh the surgeon's knife or the chemists' drug.

✓ *I will respect the privacy of my patients, for their problems are not disclosed to me that the world may know. Most especially must I tread with the care in matters of life and death. If it is given to me to save a life, all thanks. But it may also be within my power to take a life; this awesome responsibility must be faced with great humbleness and awareness of my own frailty. Above all, I must not play at God.*

✓ *I will remember that I remain a member of society, with special obligations to all my fellow human beings, those sound of mind and body as well as the infirm.*

✓ *If I do not violate this oath, may I enjoy life and art, respected while I live and remembered with affection thereafter. May I always act so as to preserve the finest traditions of my calling and may I long experience the joy of healing those who seek my help."*

Councilor Parad stated that she thought this Oath could extend to everyone in all of their professional endeavors and in their community.

Councilor Buhle provided the following comments: (1) USS South Dakota - Councilor Buhle gave a warm Welcome Home to the USS South Dakota that returned to port in Groton on Friday, February 20, 2026; noting that it was about 22 degrees and raining; and (2) 2026 Blizzard - Councilor Buhle thanked the Public Works Crews and First Responders who worked throughout the entire duration of the storm.

Chairman St. Vil commented on the following (1) 2026 Blizzard - Chairman St. Vil noted that the storm was a significant event. He stated the Department of Public Works along with Public Safety Personnel worked long hours in difficult conditions to keep their road passable and their community safe. He stated snow removal was only noticed when it does not go well, noting for Ledyard it went well, in spite of the challenges, because of effort and professionalism of their crews. He thanked the Public Works Crew for dedication and continued work as clean-up worked continued; (2) Transparency and Communications - Chairman St. Vil stated that there was a suggestion that information was withheld from residents. He stated that he wanted to clarify that was not the case. He stated all correspondence received by the Town Council was in the conduct of public business, remained as a public record in accordance with State Law. He stated the *Twenty-eight Town Council's Rules of Procedure* distinguished between what was published with an Agenda; and what remained available through the Town's Public Records Process. He stated the distinction was about format and organization, not access. He stated at the Town Council's February 11, 2026 meeting when questions arose, they recessed for the members of the Town Council to review the *Rules of Procedure* before proceeding. He stated that it was done in open-session; and was how the process was supposed to work. He stated that disagreement was part of Local Government; but it was important that they distinguish between disagreement over policy and allegations about transparency. He stated maintaining public trust required clarity; and clarity was what he was offering tonight. He stated as they moved through tonight's Agenda that he hoped that they would approach their discussions with the same focus they saw during the 2026 Blizzard response, which was steady, disciplined, and committed to serving the residents of Ledyard.

Councilor Ryan addressed the following: (1) Transparency and Communications - Councilor Ryan stated that he believed Chairman St. Vil's comments were directed at him; and that he

would respectfully disagree. He stated that he disagreed with the “*Twenty-eight Town Council’s Rules of Procedure*” as they were accepted by the majority of the Town Council at their December 1, 2025 Organizational Meeting. He stated that he did not believe that it was full transparency when they do not include all of the public correspondence received on the Communications List on the Agenda. However, he stated that he did agree that the public correspondence was always part of the public record; and that being said that one would need to know that those communications existed to be able to ask for them. He stated if the communications were not listed or announced anywhere the public would not know that they existed unless they went to the Town and created an additional burden on the Town, with its limited resources, to ask for all of the communications that have been given to the Town Council, that may or may not been listed in the Correspondence List on the Agenda. He stated that he respected Chairman St. Vil’s opinion and appreciated it. He stated that he would continue to believe that it was an access issue; (2) 2026 Blizzard - Councilor Ryan stated that Public Works Director Steve Masalin and his Department did a great job. He stated that he was curious to see the new data regarding how the Blizzard impacted the Winter Operations Budget. He stated this storm broke records and that he wanted to mention the community engagement that occurred. He stated that neighbors were helping the less capable and each other shovel out; and that he was sure that the same was happening elsewhere in Ledyard and beyond. He stated the Community Engagement made him proud of his community; and showed the overall good in human nature that does exist; (3) Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget - Councilor Ryan stated that Mayor Allyn, III would be delivering his proposed Fiscal Year 2026/2027 to the Town Council on Monday, March 2, 2026, in accordance with the Town Charter. He stated the Finance Committee’s Budget Work Sessions that would be held on March 5, 9, 12, 2026 were Public Meetings, they would be advertised on the Town’s website. He stated that residents were welcome to attend the Budget Work Sessions noting that the Finance Committee would be reviewing the proposed budget line by line with each Department Head, noting that they were informative. He stated residents could reach out to the Finance Committee Members, Committee Chairman Buhle, Councilor Garcia-Irizarry and himself. He stated the Budget Public Hearing would be held on April 20, 2026; and the Budget Referendum Vote would be held on May 19, 2026. He stated that it was a fast paced process and he encouraged residents to be engaged.

Councilor Brunelle commented on the 2026 Blizzard stating that the residents in the Highlands neighborhood were also out helping the elderly and their neighbors plow and shovel out. She stated that it was nice to know that people were looking out for one another.

Councilor Barnes commented on the following: (1) Board of Education’s proposed Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget and Presentation this evening - Councilor Barnes asked Board of Education Member Brandon Graber to express the Town Council’s appreciation for the work that went into both the Budget Preparation and the PowerPoint Presentation. He stated the way the information was framed was helpful; (2) 2026 Blizzard - Councilor Barnes stated that their Public Works Department was amazing. He stated when a crisis happens they were reminded that people rise to occasion. He stated that he recalled the Blizzard of 1978 when he was six-years old, noting with that snow storm some drifts were over his head; and that this weekend’s Blizzard was just as monumental. He stated that he hoped the Town Council could do something more formal to express and recognize their efforts.

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

Mr. Steve Munger, 12 Nutmeg Drive, Gales Ferry, addressed the following:

- Board of Education's proposed Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget - Mr. Munger stated every year they compare Ledyard's Per Pupil Expenditure to other towns in the State. He stated the reason other communities could spend more on their Education Budget was because they had more businesses and some towns were richer towns. He stated he loved Ledyard, and when businesses were looking to come to Ledyard that they should put their personal disbeliefs aside and look at the potential benefits it may provide, such as increasing the tax base, and the ability to increase the budget and do the things they want for their community.
- 2026 State Wrestling Championship - Mr. Munger stated that he was involved in wrestling for many years; noting that he wrestled until he was in his mid-forties. He stated he coached High School Wrestling when he was stationed in Japan; and he was involved with Ledyard Parks & Recreation Wrestling until Covid-19 Pandemic. He went onto state that he continued to try attend Ledyard High School Wrestling Matches and he commented on the Councilor Garcia-Irizarry's son's improvement from the beginning of the season to the end of the season; noting that he did a great job at the 2026 State Wrestling Championship.
- 2026 Blizzard - Mr. Munger stated the Public Works Department did a great job. He noted that he saw some negative comments such as the snow piles being too high; and he noted that there was no place else to put the snow. He stated that his street seemed to always be the last street that gets plowed; but never complains. He stated 14-years ago during a snow storm that his house burned down because the plows had not gotten to his street, and the Fire Department could not get to his house. He stated that he did not complain because he understood that there were other streets that had to be plowed first. He stated the Public Works Department does a great job.

Ms. Wendy Hellenkenson, 14 - L-Lakeside Drive, Ledyard, stated that he took offense to Councilor Ryan's comments regarding the cost of the Board of Education's Healthcare. She noted that she was a diabetic and a town employee. She stated every time he brings up the \$6 million Healthcare Cost for the Board of Education it was upsetting to her. She stated there was nothing they could do about the healthcare costs, noting that she was not the only person that worked for the town who had a chronic medical condition. Therefore, she urged him to think about that in terms of solutions; and what people with chronic disabilities give back to the town. She stated as a Media Specialist at the Gallup Hill School that she worked hard to make sure the kids were picking out good books at school. She stated that it was upsetting to hear Councilor Ryan repeatably talk about Healthcare.

Councilor Ryan apologized to Ms. Hellekson if there was some miscommunication. He provided clarification stating that he absolutely acknowledged that there was nothing they could do about Healthcare Costs. However, he stated that Healthcare Costs was still a factor in the Board of Education's Total Operational Costs; and they could not ignore that. He stated that was his point. He stated that he was not disparaging paying for Healthcare, noting that it was a necessary expense, full stop. He stated the Healthcare Costs wert not rolled into

the total operational cost for the Board of Education, but was included in the total operational costs for the Town. He stated as Ms. Hellekson said that they could not ignore Healthcare; and it was something that they needed to invest in. However, he stated that they need to consider the Healthcare Cost when the talk about the Board of Education's total operational budget. He stated that he would continue to bring up the cost of Healthcare when it was not transparent. He stated if they were not being upfront on what the total cost to fund their School District then they were not being honest with themselves; and they were not being honest with the public. He stated to be clear they had to fund Healthcare; that he was not arguing that.

VII. COMMITTEE COMMISSION AND BOARD REPORTS

None.

VIII. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Public Hearing Minutes of February 11, 2026
- Regular Meeting Minutes of February 11, 2026

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Garcia-Irizarry

VOTE: 8 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Jessica Buhle

SECONDER: Carmen Garcia-Irizarry

IX. COMMUNICATIONS

Communications List - February 25, 2026

X. REFERALS

XI. COUNCIL SUB COMMITTEE, LIAISON REPORTS

1. Administration Committee Report Fiscal Year 2025/2026

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated the Administration Committee had one item on tonight's Agenda to set a Public Hearing date for the proposed "*Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission*".

RESULT: .

2. Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion – Report- Fiscal Year 2025/2026

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated the Administration Committee had one item on tonight's Agenda to set a Public Hearing date for the proposed "*Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission*".

RESULT: .**3.** Finance Committee Report Fiscal Year 2025/2026

Councilor Buhle announced the Finance Committee's Budget Work Sessions would be held on March 5, 9, 12, 2026 and were all scheduled to begin at 2:00 p.m. She stated the Budget Work Sessions were open to the public, noting they could attend in-person at the Council Chambers, remotely via Zoom; or watch the videos of the Work Sessions at a later time. She stated the Finance Committee did not Rubber Stamp the Mayor's proposed Budget, noting that they meet with all of the Department Heads and to review each of their budgets line by line to learn the ins and outs. She stated the Finance Committee had one item on tonight's agenda.

RESULT: .**4.** LUPPW Committee Report Fiscal Year 2025/2026

Councilor Thompson was not present.

RESULT: .Liaisons

Sustainable CT Ad Hoc Committee - Fiscal Year 2025/2026

Councilor Buhle stated that she was the Town Council Representative on the Sustainable CT ad Hoc Committee. She and the Committee met on February 19, 2026 and they were planning to submit for a Sustainable CT Designation in August, 2026.

RESULT: .

Permanent Municipal Building Committee Report Fiscal Year 2025/2026

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated the PMBC had a Special Meeting on February 18, 2026 via Zoom and addressed the following: (1) Reviewed and approved a number of invoices for payment; and (2) Juliet W. Long School Solar Project - The power has been transferred to the solar panel.

RESULT: .

Agricultural Committee Report Fiscal Year 2025/2026

Councilor Lamb noted the Agricultural Commission met on February 17, 2026. He stated the Agricultural Commission's next Quarterly Joint Land Use Meeting was scheduled for April 21, 2026; and Commission Chairman Bruce Garstka asked that they reach out to all of their Liaison Assignments to encourage them to attend the Quarterly Meeting.

RESULT:

Conservation Commission Report Fiscal Year 2025/2026

Councilor Lamb stated the Conservation Commission met on February 10, 2026 and reviewed their regular items of business. He noted that members of the Commission attended the February 10, 2026 Freedom of Information Act Training and found it to be informative. The Commission's next meeting was scheduled for March 10, 2026.

RESULT:

XII. REPORT OF THE MAYOR

Mayor Report Fiscal Year 2025/2025

Mayor Allyn reported on the following: (1) 2026 Blizzard - February 22 - 24, 2026 - Mayor Allyn stated it snowed, and snowed and snowed, noting that they had quite a snow storm, using 300-tons of Salt. He stated he did remember the 1978 Blizzard, noting that the 2026 Blizzard rivaled that storm. He stated during the storm they only had to tow four cars; the Public Works Department was down three Plow Trucks due to mechanical issues; the mechanics got two Plow Trucks back in service, and then one Plow Truck was off the road due to a crash. He stated because the snow was coming down so hard and so fast that Plows got stuck 40+-times and they had to assist each other to pull the trucks out; and they also had to use the Large Heavy Front Loader to pull out multiple trucks. At one point they pulled the Public Works Crews off the road noting that they were sleeping on the floor here in the Council Chambers to get some rest so they could get back out to plow. He stated the Public Works Department was down by two guys and therefore, they did an amazing job. He stated they had a eight-foot drift at the Stonington end of Shewville Road and when the Plow Driver went into it he did not go through; and the snow was up so high he could not open the door, noting that he had to use his radio to call for assistance. Ledyard only had 221 Power Outages at the peak of the storm. He stated that Public Works would be continuing to work to do clean-up, and to cut down the snow banks on the corners of streets to help visibility, before next week's expected snow. Mayor Allyn continued by addressing damaged Mailboxes and he explained if a mailbox was damaged due to the snow that the homeowner would be responsible to fix the mailbox. If the Mailbox was physically hit by the Plow Truck that the Town would replace the mailbox; (2) Deer Strikes - Mayor Allyn stated on February 17, 2026 there were three cars versus deer accidents. He stated that he has been talking with the State Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) because they needed to find a solution for Ledyard. He noted one year they had 124 deer accidents; and potential loss of life; (3) Congressionally Funded Grant \$229,000 for the Dispatch Server and Records Management System - Mayor Allyn stated he met with Congressman Courtney and he stated that Ledyard's Records Management System was dated and he provided the following example: *Al Smith* was arrested; the next time they entered Al into the system they spelled his name *Al Smyth*; and the next time they spelled it *Al Smithe*. He stated the new Records Management System would automatically determine and detect duplicate entries, names,

etc., and would match the records up so they would not be a mess. He stated the Congressionally Funded Grant was a Reimbursable Grant Program, meaning that the Town would need to determine where the funding would come from, purchase and install the new Dispatch Server and Records Management System; and then seek Federal Grant Reimbursement; (4) Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region (seCTer) Board of Directors February 25, 2026 Meeting - Mayor Allyn stated that seCTer has funded 111 Business in the region with 65% of those being in New London Country; 42% were Woman Business Enterprises; and 19.6% were Minority Owned Businesses; (5) Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Board of Education Budget - Mayor Allyn stated Ledyard Public Schools delivered their proposed Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget today. He stated in accordance with the Town Charter the School District Budget was due on the fourth Monday in February; however, with the 2026 Blizzard it was delivered today. He stated the Board of Education's proposed Budget would be added to the General Government Budget which he would deliver to the Town Council on Monday, March 2, 2026 in accordance with the Town Charter; (6) Town Council's 2026 Goals - Mayor Allyn stated he reviewed the February 11, 2026 Town Council Minutes in which they discussed their Goals for 2026. He stated that he issued a letter today regarding the various Goal Ideas, and he asked that the Town Council review his letter before they finalized their List of 2026 Goals for the public. He noted an example that one of the ideas was to change the public buildings over to Light-Emitting Diode (LED) Lighting. Mayor Allyn stated that all the lighting in the town's buildings were LED Lighting; and in 2018 they converted all of the Street Lights to LED Lighting. He stated in the town buildings that they were now on the second generation of LED Lighting explaining that they were smart lights, meaning that they had occupancy sensors and they detect the ambient light coming in from outside and they automatically dim down to conserve on electricity. He stated that it was a great idea; however, that initiative has already been completed. He stated if some of the ideas have already been done, that perhaps the Town Council could come up with other ideas.

Questions to the Mayor:

Composting Facility

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry noted Mayor Allyn's February 25, 2026 letter regarding the Town Council's 2026 Goals and she questioned the status of Southeastern Connecticut's Regional Resource Recovery Authority's (SCRRA) Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) Permit to construct a Compost Facility. Mayor Allyn stated the DEEP Permit was still not in-place and that it has been a serious point of contention. He provided some background explaining that Southeastern Connecticut's Regional Resource Recovery Authority's (SCRRA) was comprised of twelve Municipalities, of which Ledyard was a member. He stated that SCRRA had an approved Plan to build an Organic Waste Composting Facility; which would convert table food scraps to top soil. However, he stated to construct the Organic Waste Compost Facility that they needed to obtain a Permit from DEEP who moved extremely slow, noting that SCRRA has been waiting for about 18-months to receive the DEEP Permits to construct a steel building that the food scraps would go into and be composted to top soil and would be bagged to be sold. He went on to explain that about 25% - 27% of their waste stream was organics; and by moving the organics out of the waste steam that it would save the town money. He also stated that the

Tipping Fees would be significantly increasing in the next couple of years. He stated that SCRRRA has contracted with Black Earth Composting, who would be taking over the entire operation and would be handling the large steel building as well as the food scrap collections from various places.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated the Food Scrap Bins at the Transfer Station were currently owned by Blue Earth. Therefore, she questioned whether Black Earth would be taking over those bins. Mayor Allyn stated the Food Scrap Bins at the Transfer Station would probably be taken over by Black Earth. However, he stated the Compost Program was currently seven-times more expensive than just throwing the food scraps in the general waste stream; and therefore, he stated he did not know how long they would continue the program at the Transfer Station. He stated from a cost perspective it was not effective because the program was so small and labor intensive.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated that she wanted to remind residents that the Town paid a set fee per month for the Food Scrap Compost Program whether they put 10-pounds of food or 100-pounds of food they were paying the same amount. Therefore, she stated the more they use it the more cost effective it was for the town. She stated that residents could purchase composting bins and the composting bags at the Transfer Station. She explained they were not required to use the composting bags, but that people liked to use them because they kept the composting bins clean, and it was easy to grab the bag and drop it off at the Transfer Station. She stated that if they were going to use a bag that they had to use the compostable bags, explaining that they could not use other types of bags.

Landfill Solar Farms

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry noted at the Town Council's December 10, 2025 meeting she asked about using the capped Landfill located at 889 Colonel Ledyard Highway as a Solar Farm and she asked whether the Mayor had talked with Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin about the initiative. Mayor Allyn stated that he has talked with Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin and that they would be drafting a Request for Proposals (RFP). He explained because they could not penetrate the ground where the Landfill was capped that they would have to be ballasted and the solar panels would have to be sitting on top of the ground. He stated with the snow right now there was no ground to see, noting that the bidders would want to see the site. Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated that she was excited about this initiative because the Solar Company would lease the Landfill from the town and it would generate revenue for Ledyard; plus it would save the town some money because they would not have to mow the Landfill.

Congressionally Funded Grant \$229,000 for the Dispatch Server and Records Management System - Federal Reimbursement

Councilor Barnes questioned the timeline for the Town to receive the Federal reimbursement; and whether he thought that it may cross over to another fiscal year. Mayor Allyn stated Congressman Courtney's Grant Assistant assured him that it was typically a quick turnaround, noting that it could take a month or two for the Federal Government to issue the reimbursement to the town. He stated that the timing would be important because

they would not want it to cross over from one fiscal year to another.

RESULT:

XIII. OLD BUSINESS

None.

XIV. NEW BUSINESS

Administration Committee

- 1. MOTION to set a Public Hearing (Hybrid Format - Video Conference and In-Person) Public Hearing March 25, 2026 to be held in Council Chambers, Town Hall Annex, 741 Colonel Ledyard Highway, Ledyard, Connecticut, to receive comments and recommendations regarding a proposed “An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code Of Ethics” .

Moved by Councilor Garcia-Irizarry, seconded by Councilor Brunelle
 Discussion: Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated during the Administration Committee’s February 11, 2026 meeting; after the Committee voted to forward the proposed Ordinance to the Town Council, that Human Resources Director Christine Dias asked the Committee about *Section 8. “Acknowledgment Forms”* and suggested that it would make sense for the Town Employees to return the Acknowledgement Forms to her; and for the Elected Officials and Volunteers serving on Town Committees/ Commissions/Boards to return their Acknowledge Forms to the Town Clerk. She asked Administrative Assistant Roxanne Maher the process to make that change.

Administrative Assistant Roxanne Maher stated if they set the Public Hearing date for March 25, 2026 that would allow the Administration Committee time to make the change at their March 11, 2026, meeting before presenting the proposed “*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics*”; at the Public Hearing.

Councilor Barnes stated the change was Administrative and was not substantive.

It was noted that in accordance with the Town Charter; Chapter III; Section 5, at least one public shall be held by the Town Council before any ordinance shall be passed.

VOTE: 8 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Carmen Garcia-Irizarry

SECONDER: April Brunelle

AYE: 8 Barnes, Brunelle, Buhle, Lamb, Parad, St. Vil, Ryan, and Garcia-Irizarry

EXCUSED: 1 Thompson

Finance Committee

- 2. MOTION to adopt a proposed "An Ordinance of the Town Of Ledyard Authorizing Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc., to Receive Property Tax Exempt Status As of the Date of Purchase of Real Property to be Preserved And Maintained As Open Space" as presented in the draft dated January 15, 2026.

DRAFT: 1/15/2026

Ordinance # 200-XXX

AN ORDINANCE
 OF THE TOWN OF LEDYARD
 AUTHORIZING AVALONIA LAND CONSERVANCY, INC
 TO RECEIVE PROPERTY TAX EXEMPT STATUS AS
 OF THE DATE OF PURCHASE OF REAL PROPERTY
 TO BE PRESERVED AND MAINTAINED AS OPEN SPACE

Be it Ordained by the Town Council of the Town of Ledyard “*An Ordinance of the Town Of Ledyard Authorizing Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc., to Receive Property Tax Exempt Status As of The Date Of Purchase of Real Property to be Preserved and Maintained as Open Space*” is hereby enacted.

Section 1 Statement of Purpose and Authority

The purpose of this Ordinance is to grant a property tax-exempt status to the Avalonia Land Conservancy Inc., located in the Town of Ledyard, a non-profit organization, pursuant to Connecticut General Statute §12-81b.

Section 2. Tax Exempt Status as of the Date of Acquisition.

The property tax exemption authorized by subsection (12) inclusive, of §12-81 of the Connecticut General Statutes shall be effective as of the date of the acquisition of the property acquired by Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc., for the purpose to be preserved and maintained as open space for public passive recreation.

Section 3. Severability

If any provision of the is Ordinance shall be held invalid by a court having competent jurisdiction, such invalidity shall not affect any other provision of this Ordinance, that can be given effect without the invalid provisions, and for this purpose the provisions of this Ordinance are hereby declared to be severable.

Adopted by the Ledyard Town Council on: _____

Signed/Certified on: _____

Gary St. Vil, Chairman

Approve/Disapprove on: _____

Fred B. Allyn, III, Mayor

Effective Date:

Published on: _____ Patricia A. Riley, Town Clerk

Effective Date:

Effective Date:

History: Pursuant to Connecticut General Statute §12-81b the Town of Ledyard granted a property tax-exempt status to the Avalonia Land Conservancy Inc., for properties they have acquired for conservation purposes to be preserved and maintained as open space for public passive recreation.

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: Councilor Buhle stated a Public Hearing was held on February 11, 2026 at which no comments were received from the public.

Councilor Barnes noted in a February 9, 2026 email that former Town Councilor Kevin Dombrowski suggested the Ordinance include an Appendix to list all of the properties owned by Avalonia Land Conservancy that would receive a tax exemption status.

Mayor Allyn, III explained that the proposed “*An Ordinance of the Town Of Ledyard Authorizing Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc., to Receive Property Tax Exempt Status as of the Date of Purchase of Real Property to be Preserved and Maintained as Open Space*” would apply to all property owned by Avalonia Land Conservancy that was acquired for conservation purposes and to be preserved and maintained as open space. He stated if Avalonia Land Conservancy purchase an Office Building that the property would not be tax exempt because it was not acquired for conservation purposes and for open space.

Councilor Buhle stated that Mr. Dombrowski’s suggestion was to maintain a List of the Avalonia Land Conservancy properties so anyone who was interested in knowing what properties were subject to this tax exemption could review the list. She stated the Appendix would not change the intent of the proposed Ordinance.

Avalonia Land Conservancy President Dennis Main, attending remotely via Zoom, thanked the Mayor, the Town Council, and all of their Committees for moving the proposed “*An Ordinance of the Town of Ledyard Authorizing Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc., to Receive Property Tax Exempt Status as of the Date of Purchase of Real Property to be Preserved and Maintained as Open Space*” forward. He stated that pursuant to Connecticut General Statute §12-81dd that lands owned by non-profit organization for conservation purposes were already tax-exempt. He explained that the proposed Ordinance would address the cumbersome process from between the time from the purchase of the property to the next Grand List. He stated the Tax Assessor could provide a list of the Avalonia Land Conservancy Properties that were tax exempt. He stated having this Ordinance in-place would save both the Town and Avalonia Land Conservancy from having to do separate tax abatements on every property. He stated that they were going to use this Ordinance as a template in other towns.

VOTE: 8 - 0 Approved and so declared**RESULT:** APPROVED AND SO DECLARED**MOVER:** April Brunelle**SECONDER:** Tim Ryan**AYE:** 8 Barnes, Brunelle, Buhle, Lamb, Parad, St. Vil, Ryan, and Garcia-Irizarry**EXCUSED:** 1 ThompsonGeneral Items**3.** Discussion and possible action on the Town Council's "Goals Letter"

Chairman St. Vil stated before he opened the floor for discussion that he would like to provide some context on how this document came together and what it was; and what it was not. He proceeded to state that the 2026 Goals Letter reflected individual submissions from Councilors and represented a Legislative Road Map for the year ahead. He stated that it was intended to provide residents with transparency into where the Town Council intended to focus its time, energy, and policy attention in 2026. He this was not an Operational Directive; it was not an Evaluation of any Department; and it was not a Critique of Current Work being

done by the Executive Branch; stating that it was a Governance Framework. He stated as a Legislative Body that their responsibilities were Policy Direction, Fiscal Stewardship, Long-Term Planning, and Community Engagement. He stated the Mayor's responsibilities were Administration and Execution. He stated these Goals were written to remain squarely within the Town Council's lane, noting that he appreciated the Mayor's February 25, 2026 written response regarding Sustainability efforts, Grants and Other Initiatives that were already underway. He stated that there was a great deal of good work happening in this town. This document does not diminish that work and in many cases it builds upon it. He stated historically Town Councils have discussed many topics throughout the year; and what they were attempting to do here was to introduce discipline and accountability into their Legislative Process. He stated these Goals gives them a structure to measure themselves against at year-end. He stated that they also allow residents to understand what to expect from them. He stated briefly that the Categories reflect the following:

- I. Fiscal Responsibility and Long-Term Planning - These items focus on process clarity, capital planning structure, collaboration opportunities, and responsible revenue exploration.
- II. Governance and Administrative Efficiency - These were about how they conduct their meetings; and how they operate as a Council.
- III. Communication and Community Engagement - This was about improving accessibility and encouraging resident participation.
- IV. Sustainability and Community Initiatives - These items reflect policy level support for environmental and community oriented efforts.

Chairman St. Vil stated he was open to suggestions for clarity, noting that these ideas came from Councilors and they remain of the Town Council. He encouraged them to stay focused on whether they reflected appropriate Legislative Priorities for 2026. He stated with this context he would open the floor for discussion.

- Budget Process - Councilor Lamb stated before they jumped into a Charter Revision Process to review Chapter VII "*Finance & Taxation*" Section 6 "*Annual Town Meeting*" paragraphs 3 & 4 with the objective to take away the Town Council's power to approve the Annual Budget; and to give the power to the taxpayers, by requiring the Annual Budget to go back to the townspeople until a budget is approved; that he would suggest this discussion begin with the Finance Committee to provide a recommendation. Councilor Ryan stated that he agreed with Councilor Lamb, noting that once they established a Charter Revision Commission they would be opening up the entire Charter.
- Ad Hoc Committee to Develop a Process for Capital Improvement Building Projects - Councilor Lamb stated that the new Ad Hoc Committee was comprised of seven people and the members have not yet been appointed. He went on to state that it was narrowly focused to develop an end-to-end process for the Permanent Municipal Building Committee; and he questioned whether it would cover the need to develop a Long-Term Capital Plan. Chairman St. Vil stated that the intent of these Goals was to provide some guidance.
- Ad Hoc Committee to Evaluate whether the Planning & Zoning Commission should be Separate Commissions or whether they should remain Combined - Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated the Administration Committee would be discussing creating an *Ad Hoc Committee to evaluate whether or not the Planning & Zoning Commission should be two separate Commissions*; or whether they should remain as one combined Commission. She suggested adding this under Section I "*Fiscal Responsibility for Long-Term Planning*". Councilor Ryan suggested the Ad Hoc Committee to Evaluate whether the Planning & Zoning Commission should be Separate Commissions or whether they should remain Combined would fit under Section II "*Governance and Administrative Efficiency*" because it had to do more with governance and how they legislate, noting that was what the Planning & Zoning Commission does.
- Revenue Implications - Councilor Ryan stated that Mayor Allyn has provided some insight that the Mashantucket Pequot Revenues to Ledyard would be changing. He suggested they include a long-term view on how revenues would be changing for the town; under Section I "*Fiscal Responsibility for Long-Term Planning*"; so they could more effectively forecast what they were going to need to do from a budgeting perspective.
- Unfunded Mandates - Councilor Ryan suggested they include getting their arms around the impact of Unfunded Mandates under Section I "*Fiscal Responsibility for Long-Term Planning*". He stated it would be good for the Town to understand what those impacts were. He noted as an example that earlier this evening School Superintendent Jason Hartling mentioned the State's Mandate for all School Bus Fleets to be Electric by 2030. He stated it would be good for them to understand what that would look like financially

for Ledyard for recapitalization purposes. Councilor Buhle suggested this goal may fit better under Section II “*Governance and Administrative Efficiency*” (2) *Monitoring State Legislative Developments*”.

Councilor Buhle stated one of Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) goals for 2026 was to push for Education Cost Sharing (ECS) Funding to be fixed, because it has not been updated since 2013. She stated had the ECS been adjusted for inflation that it would have resulted in an additional \$900 million across the State per year. She noted the State of Connecticut was collecting over \$8 billion more per year than they were in 2013; however, they were not passing that down to Municipalities. She stated that this was when the Education has become an Unfunded Mandate. She noted in the past the Town Council has discussed submitting a Resolution in support of significant Legislation that would benefit their Town; and she stated the ECS Legislation; or other pieces of Legislation may be an opportunity to consider doing that.

Mayor Allyn, III stated the twenty-two member Southeastern Connecticut of Council of Governments (SCCOG) towns submitted a request to the Legislature this year asking for every new unfunded mandate they put on the towns, that they must remove two unfunded mandates from the books.

- Increase Collaboration & Reduce Expenses - Councilor Lamb stated during the *Budget Committee to Review the Budget Process*’ work in 2023 it seemed like there was not an economy of scale in savings by buying pencils and paper, noting that all other things had been considered several times. He questioned whether it made sense to put efforts into that exercise again. Councilor Garcia-Irizary stated that Councilor Ryan previously mentioned the *Committee to Review the Budget Process* final Report dated October 30, 2023 that provided recommendations to consider Shared Services that might represent opportunities where there could be an economy of scale that could be achieved. She suggested they review the *Committee to Review the Budget Process* final Report dated October 30, 2023.

Councilor Buhle stated that she agreed with Councilor Lamb, noting at the February 4, 2026 Joint Finance Committee Meeting between the Town Council and the Board of Education they had a long discussion to find that they have done all that they could, and there were no obvious answers. However, she stated that she did like the Goal to increase collaboration between the Town Council and the Board of Education because it does build trust in the processes and would allow them to identify opportunities. She suggested moving “*Increase Collaboration*” to Section II “*Governance and Administrative Efficiency*”.

Councilor Ryan stated that he had a different take-away from the February 4, 2026 Joint Finance Committee meeting, noting that he suggested that they review the *Committee to Review the Budget Process* final Report dated October 30, 2023 because there were a number of recommendations in the Report which have not be acted on. He stated that discussions may have happened, however, there were no actions taken. He stated the Report was now three-years old and may benefit from a refresh; stating that he was not suggesting they establish another Budget Review Committee. He stated that they may be able to use some of the recommendations in the Report as a starting point to increase

collaboration and also for a shared resource approach. He stated that he agreed with Councilor Garcia-Irizarry that it may be good to review the *Committee to Review the Budget Process* final Report dated October 30, 2023.

Councilor Barnes stated he appreciated the concept of what Chairman St. Vil has done with the Town Council's 2026 Goals. He stated in listening to tonight's comments that he was concerned that they could find themselves admiring this problem for a long time; and find that they would be putting out a document at the end of 2026; on what they were going to do in 2026. Therefore, he encouraged them to move forward with their 2026 Goals stating that it was not a list of everything they were going to do, noting that it was a List of Highlights. He stated that he did not recall the Town Council doing anything like this in the most recent past, suggesting that they get something that was "*Good Enough*" and go with it.

Councilor Lamb noted during his Report this evening Mayor Allyn, III, mentioned the work that the town has already done with changing the town's buildings to Light-Emitting Diode (LED) Lighting; and his February 25, 2026 letter addressing the Goals the Town Council previously discussed. He suggested Chairman St. Vil and Mayor Allyn review the Goals the Town Council was considering for 2026 to get his insight on what may have already been done and his experience. Chairman St. Vil stated that he agreed with Councilor Lamb's suggestion; and he noted that he and Mayor Allyn meet every other Monday and that they could discuss the Town Council's 2026 Goals. The Town Council agreed that it may be beneficial for Chairman St. Vil and Mayor Allyn to review the Town Council's 2026 Goals and the work that has been previously done before they finalized their 2026 Goals Letter.

Chairman St. Vil stated that he and Administrative Assistant Roxanne Maher would review tonight's meeting video to incorporate tonight's comments into a revised draft 2026 Goals Letter. He stated that he would send the draft letter out to the Town Council for comments, with the expectations that he would go over the 2026 Goals at his meeting with Mayor Allyn on March 9, 2026; which would be the Monday before their next Town Council Meeting (March 11, 2026). He stated that he would then make some final tweaks before the Town Council would vote on the Goals Letter at their March 11, 2026 meeting. He stated this was the first iteration to cease the momentum of their collaborative efforts so at the end of the year they could point to some accomplishments they have done for the Town of Ledyard.

RESULT: CONTINUE

XV. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Buhle moved to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Garcia-Irizarry
VOTE: 8 - 0 Approved and so declared. The meeting adjourned at 9:43 p.m.

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

I, Gary St. Vil 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 February 25, 2026.

Gary St. Vil Chairman

DISCLAIMER:

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

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