



TOWN OF LEDYARD

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Town Council Meeting Minutes

Chairman Kevin J.
Dombrowski

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, February 22, 2023

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://us06web.zoom.us/j/84686270084?](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84686270084?pwd=MnlFV2c3bGxRbmlXaFZlZUM1YWVMTUT09)

[pwd=MnlFV2c3bGxRbmlXaFZlZUM1YWVMTUT09](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84686270084?pwd=MnlFV2c3bGxRbmlXaFZlZUM1YWVMTUT09)

Or by Audio Only: Telephone: +1 646 558 8656; Meeting ID: 846 8627 0084; Passcode: 267651

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

Chairman Dombrowski 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: Chairman Kevin Dombrowski
Councilor Bill Saums
Councilor Andra Ingalls
Councilor Gary Paul
Councilor John Marshall
Councilor Mary K. McGrattan
Councilor S. Naomi Rodriguez
Councilor Whit Irwin

Excused: Councilor Tim Ryan

IV. PRESENTATIONS

- Ledyard Police Department Medal for Meritorious Service to Officer Taylor Krajewski

Police Chief John Rich thanked all who attended the *Law Enforcement and Appreciation* Event that was held on Sunday, February 19, 2023 at the United Methodist Church. He stated because Police Officer Taylor Krajewski was not able to attend Sunday's event that he would like to recognize her this evening by presenting the following:

Department Medal for Meritorious Service
Officer Taylor Krajewski

On August 8, 2022 at approximately 2:36 a.m. the Connecticut State Police at Troop E made a broadcast over the police emergency hotline reporting an incident at the Bellissimo Grande Hotel located at 411 Norwich Westerly Road (Route 2) in North Stonington. Three individuals involved in a theft from a vehicle pointed a firearm at a witness and fled the scene in a white Jeep, traveling west on Route 2 toward Norwich. Subsequently, Ledyard Dispatch personnel were notified that the State Police were in pursuit of the white Jeep on Route 2 approaching the Ledyard town line. Officer Taylor Krajewski was conducting motor vehicle enforcement on Route 2 near the Foxwoods Casino when she observed the accused vehicle being pursued by two State Police vehicles with their lights and sirens activated. At that time, Officer Krajewski activated her lights and siren and entered onto Route 2 following behind the State Police vehicles, advising dispatch of her involvement. Officer Krajewski continued west on Route 2, then onto Route 2A in Preston. As Officer Krajewski radioed her location, Officer First Class Gary A. Butters began responding from his west patrol location and took a position on Route 2A near the Route 12 intersection, to deploy Stop Sticks to terminate the pursuit.

The Montville Police also responded to the area as the involved Jeep sped past Officer Butters' location, striking the Stop Sticks and puncturing the right tires. The Jeep slowed down and ultimately stopped in a driveway near the Preston Riverwalk property. Two of the three occupants exited the Jeep and began to run south in the woods along Route 12. The third suspect remained in the Jeep, where Officer Butters and members of the State Police took him into custody without incident. Officer Krajewski and Montville Officer Witts pursued the two fleeing suspects on foot for approximately 3/10 mile through a wooded area and over a chain link fence, ultimately apprehending both suspects. All three suspects were arrested and transported to the Troop E Barracks for processing. A loaded handgun and a backpack were recovered from the scene of the stop outside the Jeep.

Now, by the authority granted to me under Town of Ledyard Ordinance 500-001, I am proud to award Officer Taylor Krajewski the Ledyard Police Department Medal for Meritorious Service for her outstanding service beyond the ordinary course of duty. Her diligence, perseverance and timely judgment resulted in the protection of life, the solving of a major crime and the apprehension of three armed dangerous individuals. Her actions are in keeping with the highest traditions of Connecticut Law Enforcement.

Issued from the Office of the Chief of Police this twenty-second day of February 2023.

John J. Rich
Chief of Police

Mayor Allyn, III, stated State Senator Cathy Osten attended the Law Enforcement and Appreciation Day Event that was held on Sunday, February 19, 2023 at the United Methodist

Church; however, he stated that Senator Osten was not able to be here this evening. Therefore, he stated on behalf of Senator Osten he would be presenting Officer Taylor Krajewski an "Official Citation" that was introduced by Senator Osten as well as Representative Ryan, Representative Howard, and Representative Lanoue.

"Official Citation

Be it hereby known by All: *That the Connecticut General Assembly offers its sincerest congratulations to Officer Taylor Krajewski in recognition of receiving the Ledyard Police Department Medal for Meritorious Service.*

The entire membership extends its very best wishes on this memorable occasion and expresses its hope for continued success.

Given on the nineteenth day of February, 2023.

Signed at the State Capital by Senate Pro-tem Martin Looney, Speaker of the House Matt Ritter and Secretary of the State Stephanie Thomas".

RESULT: RECEIVED AND FILED

· Board of Education proposed Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget

Superintendent of Schools Jason Hartling presented the Board of Education's proposed Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget in the amount of \$35,908,368. This was an increase of \$1,353,048 or 3.92% over the current Fiscal Year 2022/2023 Budget.

Mr. Hartling began by discussing the increasing needs of students. He explained that the three characteristics of their at-risk students were:

- Poverty
- Disability
- Language acquisition

Mr. Hartling stated over the last ten years, even prior to the Covid-19 Pandemic, that there has been a dramatic change of the profile of the students entering Ledyard Public Schools. He stated this has caused the District to reformulate how they approach the needs that their students that were coming-in, with beginning in Kindergarten and matriculating thru their years in Ledyard Public Schools. He reviewed "*Students Needs Chart*" (please see attached presentation) noting the following:

Blue Metric - Illustrated the work Ledyard has done to stabilize the increase of needs by appropriately identifying their students and providing them with the services that would eventually allow them to exit out of the special education program if appropriate.

Orange Metric: Illustrated the Free or Reduced Lunch population which was over 30% for this current school year. Mr. Hartling explained that the State of Connecticut and Federal Government used the Free or Reduced Lunch population to measure the level of poverty in the community. He stated that he believed that this number was 5% - 6% less than what it should be, explaining that some families who were on the margin were resistant to returning the Free and Reduced Lunch Forms back to the school because they did not think they would qualify. Therefore, he stated the Central Office has continued to work to encourage families to fill out the Free or Reduced Lunch Forms and to get them back to the schools, so that they could have a better representation of the poverty rate in Ledyard.

Mr. Hartling continued by noting the drop in that poverty level metric during 2021-2022 coincided with the State providing free lunch for all students because of the Covid-19 Pandemic. However, he noted by the State providing free lunch to all students during the Pandemic that it removed any incentive to encourage families to complete the Free or Reduced Lunch Forms.

Mr. Hartling addressed the importance of the Free and Reduced Lunch metric explaining that this number was part of the formula that drives the State's Education Cost Sharing (ECS) funding to the town. He stated that it was also the number that the Federal Government used to award Federal Grants to Ledyard, and that it would become a qualifier for a lot of other additional funding sources.

Mr. Hartling went on to note in years past the Town Council was focused on Impact Aid Funding and he stated because of the Central Office's efforts, Ledyard has had some significant growth in that number. However, he stated the Free and Reduced Lunch Forms were as impactful if not more than the Impact Aid Form. However, he stated the Free and Reduced Lunch Forms were little more personal because they were asking people what they earned.

- **Red Column** showed the percentage of students *Not Meeting the Achievement Standard*.

Mr. Hartling stated in many of their grade levels they were seeing almost 50% of their students not at Standard by the State's Measure. He stated this was one measurement of student growth and achievement, however, he stated it was an important summary of how the year ended. He stated because it was a single year snapshot that these numbers were not cohorts and so they could not compare third grade to forty grade, etc. He stated Ledyard Public Schools was working to minimize the number of students that were *Approaching* and *Not Meeting Achievement* as illustrated the Yellow and Red Columns.

Mr. Hartling explained because they could not hire enough Interventionist to solve this problem alone, that they were looking to attack it in both daily instruction, which they would call a Tier I Intervention, explaining that this was what every student received, as well as providing the Tier III Intervention, for students who were in Red Column.

Mr. Hartling stated Ledyard Public Schools has done significant overhauls in both their

English Language Arts (Reading) and Math Curriculum. He stated in their programmatic approach they have added multiple science-based programs to assist them in the instruction of the students overall, which has had a great effect, noting that they were seeing positive changes and improvements in student achievements, but that they still had a long way to go.

- ***Staffing***

Mr. Hartling stated understanding Ledyard Public Schools Teachers, Staff, and every Member of the Team were working incredibly hard and incredibly efficient to get the gains that they were getting; that they did not have enough to do what they need to do for the student profile and based on the academic needs they have in Ledyard moving forward.

Mr. Hartling stated although he did not like to make comparisons that he wanted to present two charts regarding other towns in Southeastern Connecticut:

- ***Student Achievement***

Mr. Hartling reviewed the Smarter Balance Achievement Consortium English Language Arts and the Math (SBAC Charts) (please see attached presentation).

Mr. Hartling noted these Chart were a representation of Student Achievement as measured by the State Assessment. He explained the following:

- **Purple Column** showed the percentage of students that were *At or Above the Achievement Standard*.
- **Yellow Column** showed the percentage of students that were *Approaching Achievement Standard*.
- **Red Column** showed the percentage of students *Not Meeting the Achievement Standard*.

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Mr. Hartling stated he broke these charts out based on Staff. He noted the following:

- Certified Student Support Staff - Special Education Team and Mental Health Professionals. Mr. Hartling stated Ledyard had 500 more students than Montville; however, Ledyard had 0.6 less of a staff person than Montville.
- General Education Staff - Classroom Teachers - Mr. Hartling stated Ledyard had 40 less Teachers compared to East Lyme (East Lyme had 194 students more than Ledyard).
- Per Pupil Expenditure - Mr. Hartling noted that Stonington's per pupil expenditure was \$1,000 more than Ledyard's per pupil. He stated if Ledyard were to increase its per pupil expenditure to the same level as Stonington that it would put Ledyard's education funding at \$2.5 million, which would amount to about forty more staff members to serve Ledyard's students.

Mr. Hartling stated because of these differences in Certified Staffing and General Education Staffing that they see the impact in a variety of ways, noting that it was not only in the interventions and the individual classroom, but in the programmatic offerings they could provide to Ledyard students. He also noted the comparison in the number of Paraprofessionals and other staffing, noting that Ledyard was being incredibly efficient. He stated that he was only raising these comparisons to help folks clearly understand how hard the Educational Team was working to serve the kids in Ledyard. He stated seeing this data added that perspective as they look to improve things and to improve student outcomes.

- ***Enrollment***

Mr. Hartling stated prior to his arrival in Ledyard seven years ago, the conversation relative to the Board of Education's budget was *enrollment*. He stated they used *enrollment* as the metric for funding without closely examining the other data points, which was student needs. He noted at the Town Council's January 25, 2023 meeting Mayor Allyn, III, mentioned that Ledyard was the fastest growing town in New London County with a 2.4% population increase over the last decade. Mr. Hartling stated Ledyard was going to see an increase in student enrollment over the next several years, particularly as Developments come on-line. He stated Ledyard student enrollment has remained relatively flat over the last several years with the exception of the Covid-19 Pandemic year, where they had a large number of students that temporarily moved to home schooling.

- ❖ ***Budget Priorities:***

Mr. Hartling provided an overview of the Budget Priorities as follows:

- ✓ Continue the evolution of K-5 literacy and numeracy instruction and the professional growth of their educators. Mr. Hartling stated they did not use a broad brush noting that they focused on the two elementary schools investing in literacy and numeracy curriculums, and professional development staff.

Mr. Hartling went on to explain that the Board of Education did other work that did not have a dollar ticket attached to it at the High School and Middle School. He stated they received the Department of Defense Education Activity (DODEA) Grant for mathematics instruction, which helped them accelerate their work in the Middle School, around intervention and curriculum pieces, noting that they would continue to build on these initiatives.

- ✓ Continue enhancements and evolution of the intervention model and expand serve capacity.

Mr. Hartling explained their Intervention Model for the students that were *Below Achievement* (Red Column) as noted in in the Smarter Balance Achievement Consortium English Language Arts (SBAC) Chart that he reviewed earlier this evening. He stated these students could be 2 - 3 years below level and required a Tier III Intervention, which was a specialized numeracy or literacy teacher, who worked with students to build their skill banks so that they could access the instruction in their classroom.

- ✓ Mr. Hartling stated for the students that were *Approaching Achievement* as noted in in the Smarter Balance Achievement Consortium (SBAC) Charts (Yellow Column) that the classroom teachers were using time each day to work on targeted skills.

Mr. Hartling went on to explain as teachers face more challenges and uniqueness in their classrooms that they have to provide them with the professional support and professional growth so that they could begin to approach those problems with different methods and different techniques. He stated that they were looking to

achieve this thru a Coaching Model.

- ✓ Continue to address and ameliorate achievement gaps and the number of students below basic

Mr. Hartling stated it was their moral imperative to make sure that 50% of Ledyard students were not falling behind or multiple years behind as they progress thru the system. He stated when they fail to do that they also accelerate a dynamic where they allocate more and more dollars to intervention and special education because they did not deal with the problem appropriately early enough. Therefore, he stated they wanted to continue to significantly reduce the number of students that were *Below Achievement* (Red Column) and *Approaching Achievement* (Yellow Colum) as noted in in the Smarter Balance Achievement Consortium (SBAC) Charts. He stated once they reduce these numbers that they could being to talk about expanding the Gifted and Talented and other Programs. He stated this was the District's Long-Term Strategy for growth.

❖ *District Needs*

Mr. Hartling stated as they have been doing for past few years the Board of Education has continued their "*Needs Assessment*" activities with the Administrators of each school to prioritize their request and needs. He although many of items in the yellow area were important, that they: (1) May not be able to secure funding; (2) May not be able to secure staffing; or (3) May not have the structure in place to fully utilize the program.

Mr. Hartling stated when they were looking at a finite resource environment that he wanted to make sure every dollar they spend had the best utilization and would have the highest impact for students. He stated as much as he would like to have all of the items on the List for their kids tomorrow that because of the realties they face, they did not make it into next year's proposed budget. However, he noted the importance to include these needs in the Board of Education's proposed Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget presentation so that the Town Council and the Board of Education understood where they were going and what they would like to see long-term. He stated all of these items were an investment and would cost \$2.8 million, which was roughly where they be if they were funding the education budget at the same level as Stonington.

Mr. Hartling stated as the School District has invested in improvements that they have made sure that they had the leadership, coaching, and training in place so that they were successful interventions. He presented the "District Needs" list noting that they were color coded to identify their priority (please see attached presentation).

❖ *Budget Expenditures:*

Mr. Hartling reviewed a pie chart regarding the Budget Expenditure Breakdown noting the following (please see attached presentation)

- 73.8 % Salary and Wages
- 2.5% Utilities
- Supplies 3.7%
- 2.9% Special Education
- 4.4% Transportation
- 3.4% Other Purchases Services
- 1.9% Purchases Property Services
- 2.9% Professional Technology
- 2.3% Insurance and Benefits (*This does not include Healthcare costs. The healthcare costs are carried on the General Government side of the Ledger*)

Mr. Hartling stated that the Education Budget was experiencing inflation pressures. He stated that they were working to mitigate some of the increased expenses thru some purchases for electrical, some utilities, and fuel. He stated by reducing bus routes and negotiating solid increases, that they have been able to reduce transportation costs, noting that they were paying the same amount for transportation this year as they did in 2008. He stated because they have consolidated everywhere they could to mitigate costs that Ledyard's Buses were jammed packed. However, he stated for the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 that they would have to go out to bid for transportation.

❖ ***Projected Revenues:***

Mr. Hartling reviewed the Board of Education's Projected Funding Sources as follows:

- 59.1% Town Appropriation (Tax Revenue)
- 31.7% Education Cost Sharing - Mr. Hartling noted they would see a slight increase in the ECS Funding.
- 4.2 % Impact Aid - Mr. Hartling stated Ledyard has maximized their Impact Aid working hard to increase awareness in the value of completing the request forms to identify eligible families
- 4.4% Agri-Science
- 0.6% Non-Resident Tuition

❖ ***Key Budget Changes:***

- Savings related to six (6.0) known teacher retirements (FTEs retained).
- Three (3) FTE District-Wide Interventionists for Literacy - This would bring the staffing level back up to the 2015 staffing level.
- One (1.0) FTE elementary level Instructional Coach

- One (1.0) FTE District-Wide EL Teacher (English as an additional language) - Mr. Hartling stated when he came to Ledyard seven years ago they had nine students who were learning English as their second or third language; and he noted that they were projecting to have forty-five students next year. He stated they were currently servicing this need with one teacher and one tutor; which was the reason they have added an additional English Language teacher into next year's proposed budget.
- Two Kindergarten Paraprofessionals - Mr. Hartling stated currently the Paraprofessionals have been moving between classrooms. He explained with the increasing social emotional needs of Kindergartners entering into the school districts the two additional Paraprofessionals was a critical path item that they needed to add into the budget for next year.
- Updated Athletic Trainer position transition from a stipend to staff - Mr. Hartling stated because of the Covid-19 Pandemic Athletic Training has become a significant challenge. He stated the old model where the schools would partner with an orthopedic group on a part-time basis was gone. He stated everyone in the region was now required to hire a full-time Athletic Trainer. Therefore, he stated this budget expense had to be increased to provide an athletic trainer for the High School athletes.
- Out of warrantee replacements for SMART boards/projectors - Mr. Hartling stated about \$30,000 was included in the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget to replace failing technology in the classrooms that was out of warrantee.
- Increase in required Special Educational Services - Mr. Hartling stated they have had some changes relative to the services for their youth *in-need* that they were working to manage their profile; and therefore, additional special education services were needed for some of their high need out placements.

Mr. Hartling concluded his presentation by providing a recap stating the Board of Education's proposed Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget in the amount of \$35,908,368, was an increase of \$1,353,048 or 3.92% over the current Fiscal Year 2022/2023 Budget. He stated this was the largest budget increase he has presented to the Town Council. He stated when the Board of Education began the budget preparation process that the budget came in with an 8% increase. He stated that they worked to minimize the increase to the 3.92% increase as presented this evening, noting that Ledyard's education budget increase was below average relative to the increases that were being published in the State of Connecticut. He stated there was one town in Connecticut that presented their education budget and that their elected officials added \$1 million to the budget. He stated this particular town had 50 more teachers to serve roughly the same student population that Ledyard has. He stated the Ledyard Board of Education has presented a responsible and ambitious Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget to make sure they were serving the students as they deserve to be served; and that they can continue their work around ameliorating the achievement and opportunity gap in the community. He stated as volunteer elected officials that he understood the difficult decisions that the Town Council has to make, noting that this was a challenging time.

Mr. Hartling stated that he would be happy to answer questions this evening and that he was always available should a Town Councilor like to meet with him to discuss any questions they may have regarding specific areas of Ledyard Public Schools, noting that

they would take any ideas or perspectives.

Councilor McGrattan noted during his budget presentation Mr. Hartling mentioned that when kids start off behind it was difficult to catch up and that it then becomes very expensive. Therefore, she questioned whether there was anything the town could do to identify some of the children who were not ready to go to Kindergarten.

Superintendent of Schools Mr. Hartling responded to Councilor McGrattan's question by stating that Ledyard had a good handle on students as they make the transition into the School District's Pre-K Program. He stated they have a limited number of high-quality Pre-K slots and that he believed they were doing a good job there. He noted the *District Needs Chart* that he presented earlier this evening included some provisions to set up for the Transition to Kindergarten, noting the cost would be about \$180,000. He explained the reason it was listed in the yellow section of the *District Needs Chart* was because he did not have the space, noting that the elementary schools were incredibly tight. He stated they moved a piece of the Library out of the Gallup Hill School to put in a Pre-K Classroom, noting that space was going to be a concern as they looked to add any programming.

Councilor McGrattan questioned where the forty-five children who do not speak English were from. Mr. Hartling stated the non-English speaking children were coming from all over, noting that next year they would have children that were speaking nine different languages. He stated the one teacher and one tutor have been moving from school to school to work with the children. He stated the professionals that work with the students transitioning into Ledyard Public Schools had an amazing skill set.

Councilor Saums addressed the Coaching Model that Mr. Hartling described designed to provide teachers with the professional support to learn how to address the many challenges and uniqueness in their classrooms. He stated adults receiving coaching or perceiving the approach of coaching for the first time were generally resistant to it. He stated that he was a huge fan of coaching for adults and that he thought using coaching was a great way for the Board of Education to make the best use the resources they had.

Mr. Hartling stated the idea of coaching was not intended to fix people who were not doing what they were supposed to be doing. He stated coaching was intended to get their best to be even better; and to recognize the new challenges that were in front of them. He stated that Councilor Saums was correct in that there can be some resistance when organizations muddy coaching with evaluation; or when they focus solely on poor performers. He stated the Administration has been alert to those types of pitfalls and he noted that the teachers have been receptive and demanding of the Administration to make sure that they receive job embedded coaching. He stated they have done this with their curriculum implementation, particularly with math, noting that they pursued a different model. He stated they have seen great success where their interventionist also worked as part of the curriculum coaching. He stated Ledyard's teachers were amazing professionals and that they responded very well to the coaching, noting that they were hungry to get new ideas and to think about the work in a different way for the benefit of their students.

Councilor Irwin stated the Board of Education has been investing in literacy and numeracy for a while now; and he questioned whether they had a sense of how much those numbers have moved because of the town's investment. Mr. Hartling stated the wildcard has been the Covid-19 Pandemic. He stated Ledyard did not see the type of loss that other school districts saw during the pandemic, which was a positive. He stated the other factor which was difficult to control was the increasing need. He explained that Ledyard has been able to stop the slide that was happening and that they were beginning to see other positive data points in student growth and gains this year. He stated it was fair to say that they have mitigated the downward slide and they were beginning to see a positive up-tick. He stated what was not represented on the *Student Achievement Charts* was the gap they were closing in the K-2 students.

Councilor Irwin addressed Mr. Hartling's comments that the buildings space was tight and the need for more faculty/instructors; therefore, he questioned how much space Ledyard had for additional personnel. Mr. Hartling stated that they have added some additional learning space by working with Fire Marshall Jim Mann and the Director of Buildings and Facilities Wayne Donaldson to make some instructional cubbies. He also noted one classroom, with dividers, was being used by four or five adults to provide intervention to students. He stated the *coaches* would be using individual teacher classrooms during the day. He stated the space was tight, but that this was some of the challenges of the State's reimbursement programs for school building projects. He stated that they were managing the best they could and that he was trying to avoid the very expensive set-up of portable classrooms. Councilor Irwin thanked Mr. Hartling for his informative budget presentation.

Chairman Dombrowski thanked Mr. Hartling and the members of the Board of Education who were present for attending tonight's meeting and for their hard work in putting together the Board of Education's proposed Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget. He stated although no one wanted to see an increase, that they also have to recognize that they have been holding the line for many years and knew at some point they were going to see a bigger increase. He stated he believed the Board of Education put together a responsible budget for next year.

RESULT: RECEIVED AND FILED

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

None

VI. COMMITTEE COMMISSION AND BOARD REPORTS

None.

VII. COMMENTS OF TOWN COUNCILORS

Councilor Rodriguez thanked the community for showing up in full force for *the Law Enforcement and Appreciation Day* Event that was held on Sunday, February 19, 2023 at the United Methodist Church. She thanked the following: Mayor Allyn, III, for his remarks, Councilors Saums, Councilor McGrattan, and Councilor Irwin for attending, Councilor McGrattan for volunteering and for all the work she did. She also thanked the Ledyard Rotary and the Organization Committee who were Mary Cassabria, Kathy Strout, Jennifer Eastbourne, Maria Knot and herself, noting that they all did an amazing job. She stated putting the event together was a lot of work, and that she wished they could hold the event every year. She stated the event was very touching and moving to see the community come together in support of our local heroes, our Police Officers.

Chairman Dombrowski noted the article in the newspaper shined a good light on the *Law Enforcement and Appreciation Day* Event.

Councilor Ingalls offered condolences to Councilor Ryan and his family as they mourn the passing of his father. She stated grief was terrible and that her heart goes out to him. Chairman Dombrowski stated Councilor Ingalls' sentiment was shared by all of the Town Council.

Councilor Irwin noted Councilor Rodriguez's comments regarding the *Law Enforcement and Appreciation Day* Event. He stated the Award Dinner was fantastic, noting that it was well attended, and well done from every aspect. He thanked Councilor Rodriguez for spearheading and organizing the event. He stated that he looked forward to seeing the *Law Enforcement and Appreciation Day* becoming an annual event.

VIII. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION to approve the following:

- Town Council Special Meeting Minutes of February 8, 2023
- Town Council Regular Meeting Minutes of February 8, 2023

Moved by Councilor Marshall, seconded by Councilor Irwin

VOTE: 8 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: John Marshall

SECONDER: Whit Irwin

AYE: 8 Dombrowski, Saums, Ingalls, Paul, Marshall, McGrattan, Rodriguez, and Irwin

EXCUSED: 1 Ryan

IX. COMMUNICATIONS

Communications List for February 22, 2023

Chairman Dombrowski stated a Communications List has been provided. He noted the referrals

listed.

X. REFERRALS

XI. COUNCIL SUB COMMITTEE, LIAISON REPORTS

1. Administration Committee

Councilor Ingalls stated although the Administration Committee has not met since the last Town Council meeting they have one item on tonight's agenda.

RESULT: .

2. Community Relations Committee

Councilor Paul stated the Community Relations Committee met on February 15, 2023 and discussed the following: (1) Informational Presentations - Councilor Paul noted Land Use Director Juliet Hodge attended the meeting to discuss a Land Use Informational Presentation that would focus on the land use processes. The Presentation would include topics such as the process to build a deck, put in a swimming pool, along with how their zoning regulations worked; the approval process for commercial businesses; as well as answering questions like why we can't have a Starbucks or Trader Joe's in town. He stated with the addition of the Dollar General Store and the Cashman Project in Gales Ferry that this Spring may be a good time to offer a Land Use Informational Presentation. He stated that the Committee hoped a lot of residents would attend the Presentation because of the recent activity in town. He stated the Presentation would be recorded and would be available on the town's website and on social media. The date for the Land Use Informational Presentation has not been set yet; (2) Whining Wednesday and Thankful Thursday - Councilor Paul stated as a way to engage residents on topics of interest for future Informal Conversations at various town locations, the Committee discussed bringing back Whining Wednesday and Thankful Thursday on the Ledyard Community Forum. He stated Councilor Saums contacted the Ledyard Community Forum Administrators and he reported that they may be interested in bringing back Whining Wednesday and Thankful Thursday. He stated to keep the Community Forum on topic the Committee discussed asking open-ended questions to engage residents on topics such as: Where would you like to see Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Stations in town; Do you think roadside trash is excessive in town; What town services would you like to know about; and Why do you Love Ledyard?; (3) Schedule for the coming year - Councilor Paul stated the Committee reviewed dates to present information to residents at the 2023 Summer Farmers Market. He noted the Committee discussed featuring the Library Services; Mental Health Awareness; and the Town's First Responders; (4) Black History Month Essay and Poster Contest - Councilor Paul stated the deadline to submit entries closed today. He stated the contest winners would be recognized and awards would be presented at the Town Council's March 8, 2023 meeting. He concluded by noting the next Community Relations Committee meeting was scheduled for March 15, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

Councilor Saums stated the Community Relations Committee has only discussed and has not decided on Whining Wednesday or Thankful Thursday. He stated it would be a lot of work for the Ledyard Community Forum Administrators to host.

Councilor Ingalls suggested the Community Relations Committee invite the Ledyard Community Forum Administrators to remind themselves of the reason the Whining Wednesday was shutdown, noting that often it would spin out of control. Councilor Paul noted that the reason the Committee discussed asking open-ended questions was to keep the conversation on topic. Councilor Saums stated the Ledyard Community Forum Administrators' idea was to use a poll instead of a free-for-all. Councilor Paul explained the intent was to obtain topics that residents were interested in, that they could then host an Informal Conversation with residents at one of the town's parks to engage residents.

RESULT: .

3. Finance Committee

Councilor Saums stated the Finance Committee met on February 15, 2023 and in addition to the items on tonight's agenda that Finance Director Matthew Bonin reported work continues on the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget Preparation; and that the Town was still waiting on the healthcare consultant regarding estimated healthcare costs and options for the coming budget year.

RESULT: .

4. Land Use/Planning/Public Works Committee

Councilor Paul stated the LUPPW Committee has not met since the last Town Council meeting.

RESULT: .

5. Ledyard Nursing Board

Councilor McGrattan stated the Nursing Board met on February 21, 2023. She noted during each of their meetings one school nurse describes their day. She stated that she forwarded to the Town Council Gallup Hill School Nurse Nickie Allyn's report noting that she did a great job telling the Board about her day

6. Parks and Recreation Commission Fiscal Year 2022/2023

Councilor Paul stated the Parks and Recreation Commission met on February 21, 2023 at the Parks & Recreation/Senior Citizens Center on Van Tassel Drive, and addressed the following: (1) Approved about \$25,000 to install four motorized Hurricane Shutters on the building at Judge Crandall Park to prevent the water from getting into the building from the holes and gaps around the windows which has caused damage to the drywall; and (2) Pfizer Field New Scoreboard - Councilor Paul stated Ledyard Little League attended the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting to discuss their plan to install a new scoreboard at Pfizer Field at their own expense. However, he stated because they would need to install a new utility pole at a cost of about \$1,800 to bring the electricity to the scoreboard, that the Little League asked the Parks and Recreation Commission who would be responsible for the installation of the new utility pole. Councilor Paul went on to report that the Parks and Recreation approved the installation of the new scoreboard

and the installation of a new utility pole at the Little League's expense.

7. Senior Citizens Commission

Councilor Rodriguez stated the Senior Citizens Commission met earlier today and discussed the proposal to combine the Parks and Recreation Commission with the Senior Citizens Commission. Councilor Rodriguez stated Director of Parks and Recreation and Senior Citizens Scott Johnson, Jr. informed the Commission that a Public Hearing was scheduled for April 12, 2023 to receive comments on the proposed amendments to Ordinance #100-016 (rev 1) "*An Ordinance Combining Parks And Recreation Commission and Senior Citizens Commission for the Town of Ledyard*". Councilor Rodriguez stated that she invited the Senior Citizens to attend the Public Hearing or to write a letter to the Town Council.

XII. REPORT OF THE MAYOR

REPORT OF THE MAYOR:

Mayor Allyn, III, reported on the following: (1) Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget - Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) State Legislative Budget Meeting - Mayor Allyn stated at this week's meeting they discussed the State's proposed Bill to require Municipalities of 10,000 residents or more to establish a Fair Rent Commission, noting that the Bill would apply to Ledyard. He stated the Fair Rent Commission was already in place for Municipalities of 25,000+ residents and now the State was looking to bring the required Commission to smaller Municipalities. He stated that he would be presenting written testimony in opposition to the unfunded Fair Rent Commission. He noted the challenge to find more volunteers that would have the background to serve in this capacity. He stated this would be another unfunded mandate from the State, noting that they were already faced with the Early Voting unfunded mandate, that required the town to have staff available ten hours a day, for five days a week, for two straight weeks; (2) Groton Utilities Annual Water Analysis Report - Mayor Allyn stated there were no reportable violations, noting the water was good. He stated Groton Utilities had one or two minor infractions last year, which they communicated to ratepayers, explaining that they were not of consequence; (3) Ribbon Cuttings - Mayor Allyn stated he along with some Town Councilors attended two Ribbon Cuttings on Saturday, February 18, 2023 for the following new businesses in Gales Ferry: (a) My Pets World at 10:00 a.m. in the Job Lot Plaza; and (b) Dollar General at 11:15 a.m. He stated both events were well attended noting that there were a bunch of dogs at the Pet's World Ribbon Cutting. He went on to state for the number of complaints the town received about having a Dollar General Store; that prior to the Ribbon Cutting he walked the aisles of the store and he saw about fifteen people with shopping carriages at 11:15 a.m. He noted the Dollar General Store stocked several aisles with grocery items, which would be helpful for the residents in Gales Ferry. He wished both businesses success noting that the Dollar General Store was making a generous donation to the Board of Education of new books for the Elementary Schools; (3) Public Hearings - State House Bills; (a) House Bill Requiring Zoning Enforcement Officers to be (CAZEO) Certification by January 1, 2023 - Mayor Allyn stated that he submitted written testimony to support extending the period to 2024 or 2025; and to also allow newly hired Zoning

Enforcement Officers to be able to enroll and start taking the classes. He stated the Bill as currently written required the Zoning Enforcement Officer to be CAZEO Certified before they begin employment; (b) House Bill Personal Property Taxation Issue at the Tribal Entities in both Ledyard and Montville - Mayor Allyn stated because the proposed House Bill only impacted two towns out of the States 169 Municipalities (Ledyard and Montville) there was only testimony from the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation; Mohegan Tribe, Town of Ledyard and Town of Montville; (4) *Law Enforcement and Appreciation Day* - Mayor Allyn stated as Councilor Rodriguez mentioned earlier this evening, he attended the event on Sunday, February 19, 2023. He stated it was a fantastic event, complementing Councilor Rodriguez and the whole Team that put the event together, noting that it was very well attended, and the Police Officers greatly appreciated the recognition and the event. He stated during a time when we need to appreciate the men and women in Blue it was nice to see the appreciate that was offered at the event; (5) Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget Preparation - Mayor Allyn stated budget work continues, noting that to date they have pared the budget increase down to a 3.2 mil increase, which he was not satisfied with, explaining that this number was before they added-in the Board of Education's 1.1 mil increase. He stated they were working to reduce the impact of some needed capital items by not purchasing them this year, but rather postponing the purchases and allocating a smaller amount of money over the course of a few years to make the purchase. He also noted as Superintendent of Schools Jason Hartling mentioned earlier this evening during his presentation of the Board of Education's proposed Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget that the Educational Cost Sharing (ECS) State Funding was expected to increase for next year. Mayor Allyn explained that a House Bill has been proposed that would require the State Legislature to speed up the rate at which they fund ECS to Municipalities. He suggested the Town Council review the *Budget Transformation Committee Report* of October, 2016 relative to the "Nice to Have" versus "Necessity". He also noted during this meeting with Ledyard's State Delegation he expressed concern regarding Governor Lamont's flat funded budget in this hyper-inflationary (6% - 8% inflation). He provided the following examples of cost escalations that included a +20% increase in fuel; +40% increase in electricity; +10% in healthcare costs which was about \$6.10 million per year. He stated that he had more work to do on the budget before he delivered it to the Town Council on March 6, 2023; (6) Browns Crossing Bridge - Mayor Allyn stated after several years the Town officially took ownership of the Brown's Crossing Bridge. He provided some background noting at their February 10, 2021 meeting the Town Council authorized him to enter into an agreement with the Providence & Worcester Railroad Company to provide a physical replacement of the Brown's Road Crossing Bridge with the agreement that the Town would take ownership of the bridge and manage the maintenance of the bridge after P&W Railroad replaced the structure with a bridge that met the current highway rating standards. On June 9, 2021 the Town Council voted to accept ownership of the new Brown's Crossing Bridge, located on Brown's Crossing Road, Gales Ferry, from Genesee & Wyoming (G&W) Railroad, contingent upon the completion of construction and certification. He stated Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin stayed on top of the project ensuring all of the final punch list items were addressed; (7) Lantern Hill Road-Whitford Brook Bridge State Grant Funding - Mayor Allyn stated with the executed Agreement with the State to receive the \$3 million grant funding for the bridge and dam replacement and repairs that the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for the engineering work has been publicized/posted; (8) American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding - Electronic Message Boards (\$70,000 Gales Ferry and Ledyard Center) - Mayor Allyn stated a Request for Proposals (RFP) has been

publicized/posted for the two Electronic Message Boards. He noted that the town has been receiving proposals for the project and the that Bid Opening was scheduled for the first week for March; (9) MIS Director Retirement - Mayor Allyn stated MIS Director Reginal Brulotte who has been with the town for twenty years would be retiring on March 2, 2023. He stated the position has been offered to the MIS Technician Justin Dube, who has been second in command in the MIS Department. He stated Mr. Dube was excited to start in his new role as MIS Director noting that he was a hard worker. He went on to state that they were working to update the MIS Technician Job Description in preparation to fill the position. He stated in the hiring environment we were in that the town was fortunate to have Mr. Dube in-place.

Questions to the Mayor - -

Councilor Ingalls addressed the former Budget Transformation Committee and she questioned whether it may be time to stand that Committee up again, noting that since they completed their work in 2016 and provided recommendations in their final Report, a lot has changed. Mayor Allyn explained that the Report provided Immediate Goals; Near-Term Goals; and Long-Term Goals. He stated most of the Immediate Goals and some of the Near Terms Goals have been addressed. He stated as Councilor Ingalls's mentioned a lot has changed, and that he agreed it would be a good time to look at standing up the Budget Transformation Committee again. He stated that they need to look at: (1) What is the role of government; (2) Should the Town be engaged in this; and (3) Are we duplicating services somewhere else. He stated a copy of the Final Report would be provided to the Town Council.

Councilor Rodriguez addressed the upcoming Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget preparation and she questioned whether the Mayor has heard from other towns on what their projected budget increases looked like for next year. Mayor Allyn stated Waterford's proposed budget increase was at 8%; and that East Lyme's budget was quite high, but that their First Selectman Kevin Serry just passed the Department's proposed budget on to their Finance Board. However, he stated that he believed his job in Ledyard was to work to make adjustments before passing the proposed budget onto the Finance Committee for them to make further adjustments before presenting the proposed budget to the taxpayers. He noted as an example, that the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) included \$23,000 to update the Police Department's Duty Weapons. However, he stated because it was a taxpayer item that he asked the Police Department whether they could work with the weapons they had for another year, noting that the answer was "yes"; therefore, he stated this expense was removed from the budget. He noted another area where he was working to reduce the impact of some capital items that would be paid solely by tax dollars was by not purchasing them this year, but rather allocate a smaller amount of money over the course of a few years to make the purchase. Councilor Rodriguez stated because of the current economic environment, with the high costs in energy and other expenses, that the Ledyard's proposed budget increase may be typical. Mayor Allyn stated he agreed with Councilor Rodriguez's comments that because of inflation, at a minimum, that the upcoming budget year was going to be higher and that he was working to try to bring in a proposed budget that more palatable.

Councilor Marshall addressed the proposed House Bill requiring Municipalities of 10,000 or more to establish a Fair Rent Commission. He stated that he agreed with the Mayor, that this was something that should be done at the State level, noting that he believed that the State was overreaching. Mayor Allyn explained that the Fair Rent Commission would not only be required to oversee rent controls of a 4% maximum, that they would also be required to address complaints such as air quality or the condition of the apartment, etc. interact with the landlords to try to resolve matters, and also serve as the “*Fining Authority*” to levy fines against landlords that do not comply. He went on to comment that issues such as air quality and many other matters would fall under the Department of Health; and that he believed it was a slippery slope to ask volunteers to oversee this type of work, noting that he was not in-favor or the Bill. Chairman Dombrowski stated he has been following the Bill that would require Municipalities to establish a Fair Rent Commission and that he agreed with Mayor Allyn’s comments and position on the subject. He went on to comment that what he found interesting was that the State wanted Municipalities to be the Housing and Rental Authority, but yet the State wanted to take local Zoning Regulation away from the Municipalities.

RESULT: .

XIII. OLD BUSINESS

None.

XIV. NEW BUSINESS

Administration Committee

1. MOTION to set a Hybrid (In-Person & Video Conference) Public Hearing date on April 12, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. to be held in the Council Chambers, 741 Colonel Ledyard Highway, to receive comments and recommendations regarding a proposed amendments to Ordinance #100-016 (rev 1) An Ordinance Combining Parks And Recreation Commission and Senior Citizens Commission For The Town Of Ledyard” as contained in draft dated December 14, 2022.

Moved by Councilor Ingalls, seconded by Councilor Rodriguez

Discussion: Councilor Ingalls provided an overview of the process, noting that in accordance with Chapter III, Section 5 “*Public Hearing on and Passage of Ordinances*” of the Town Charter; a public hearing was required to be held prior to the adoption of an Ordinance/Ordinance Amendments.

VOTE: 8 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Andra Ingalls

SECONDER: S. Naomi Rodriguez

AYE: 8 Dombrowski, Saums, Ingalls, Paul, Marshall, McGrattan, Rodriguez, and Irwin

EXCUSED: 1 Ryan

Finance Committee

2. MOTION to appropriate and transfer the Board of Education Fiscal Year 2021/2022 audited surplus of \$448,253 from unrestricted fund balance as follows:

- \$381,015 to Account #21070101-58250 (BOE Reserve Fund) in accordance with “Resolution Creating a Funding Mechanism for Making Annual Appropriations to a Capital Reserve Fund for the Board of Education” adopted on September 28, 1988; and
- \$67,238 to Account #21070101-58262 (Track & Field Rental Reserve) (15% when surplus exceeds \$250,000) in accordance with “Resolution Regarding The Establishment Of An Account For The Revenues Received From Leasing the Ledyard High School Multi-Use Facility” adopted on April 22, 2020.

Moved by Councilor Saums, seconded by Councilor Ingalls

Discussion: Councilor Saums stated the Finance Committee has spent a lot of time discussing the transfer of the Board of Education’s Fiscal Year 2021/2022 Operating Budget Surplus. He stated this was a routine transfer that was done every year, when Board of Education had an Operating Budget Surplus, noting that it was how they help to fund the School Buildings capital assets.

However, Councilor Saums stated during the Fiscal Year 2021/2022 Budget year they had an issue with healthcare expenses which caused a significant shortfall on the General Government Budget side of the ledger. Therefore, he stated the question they have been discussing was whether there was actually a surplus and whether the funds should be transferred. He went on to explain the overrun in the healthcare overrun was caused by an error in the calculation of the healthcare expenses, noting that mistakes were made along the way, that was crying out for a written procedure to be developed and put in place. He stated the Finance Director was working to draft a Procedure to make sure an error in the healthcare calculation does not happen again.

Councilor Saums provided some additional background noting that he along with Mayor Allyn, III and Finance Director Matthew Bonin met with Superintendent of Schools Jason Hartling and Board of Education Director of Finance and Human Capital Rachel Moser met on February 1, 2023 to discuss the “*Resolution Creating a Funding Mechanism for Making Annual Appropriations to a Capital Reserve Fund for the Board of Education*” relative to the Board of Education’s Fiscal Year 2021/2022 operating budget surplus, healthcare short-fall and their options. He stated during their meeting they also discussed times when they have had underruns in expenses and the town saved money as a whole. He stated the bottom line was that it was one town and one pot of money, noting that there were not two pots of money, or two separate tax bills (one for the General Government and one for the Board of Education). Therefore, he stated the consensus of the Group and the Finance Committee at their February 25, 2023 meeting, was that the right thing to do was to follow the Resolution and transfer the Board of Education’s operating budget surplus to their Capital Account.

Councilor Saums concluded by noting throughout this discussion that Councilor Ingalls has stressed the importance to get the written Procedure completed so that they do not have an issue going forward. He noted over the years there has been, and would be staff changes and they could refer to a written Procedure and would not have to rely on tribal knowledge for

how to calculate healthcare costs, or to move money, and what needed to be done.

Chairman Dombrowski stated in transferring these funds to the appropriate Board of Education Capital Accounts that they would be following the established procedures that they have today. He stated that they were not working to fix the transfer of the funds, but that they would be working to fix the issue with the calculation/funding of the healthcare expenses.

Councilor Ingalls stated that she agreed with Chairman Dombrowski’s comments, noting that it would not behoove the town to write a Resolution and then ignore; or change it when it was not convenient.

VOTE: 8 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Bill Saums

SECONDER: Andra Ingalls

AYE: 8 Dombrowski, Saums, Ingalls, Paul, Marshall, McGrattan, Rodriguez, and Irwin

EXCUSED: 1 Ryan

- 3. MOTION to adopt proposed revisions to the “Resolution Establishing Administrator/Department Head Benefits” as contained in the draft dated February 15, 2023.

Draft 2/15/2023

**RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING
ADMINISTRATOR/DEPARTMENT HEAD BENEFITS**

WHEREAS, The Town Council recognizes the need to compensate its Administrators/Department Heads in a fair and equitable manner;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, That the Town Council reaffirms the practices, policies, plans and benefits set forth in the Town of Ledyard Employee Handbook which applies to all Employees, including Administrators/Department Heads and provides further that if the terms of this Resolution differ from the terms of the Town of Ledyard Employee Handbook, the provisions and terms of this Resolution shall apply exclusively.

For the purpose of this Resolution, the Town Council Chairperson shall be the immediate supervisor of the Administrative Assistant to the Town Council; the Chairperson of the Town Council Finance Committee shall be the immediate supervisor for the Town Treasurer; the Director of Finance shall be the immediate supervisor for the Assistant Director of Finance; the Mayor shall be the immediate supervisor for all other Administrators/Department Heads.

All benefits are computed based on a 40 hour work week. Benefits for employees working less than 40 hours will be pro-rated based on a 40 hour work week.

As of the date of this revision there are **17** non-union positions covered by the Administrator /Department Head Resolution:

1. Town Clerk
2. Director of Finance
3. Assistant Director of Finance/*Treasurer*
4. Director of Administrative Services/Mayoral Assistant
 1. Director of Human Resources
 2. Administrator of Emergency Services
 3. Director of Civil Preparedness and Emergency Management
 4. *Library Director*
 5. Public Health Nursing Administrative Supervisor
 6. Director of Parks and Recreation
 7. Public Works Director/Town Engineer
 8. Director of Planning and Development
 9. Administrative Assistant to the Town Council
 10. WPCA Wastewater Operations Supervisor
 11. Mayor *
 12. Chief of Police **
 13. Police *Captain* **

* Elected position. Applicable sections of this Resolution are limited to insurance, pension, and workers compensation.

** Appointed/Contracted Position. Applicable sections of this Resolution are limited to those not specifically covered in the contract.

Note: At times some of the positions listed above may be unfilled, combined, or contracted. Appropriate adjustments to benefits will be made in these circumstances.

LEAVES AND ABSENCES

All leaves and absences are based on a 40 hour work week. Leave and absences for employees working less than 40 hours will be pro-rated based on a 40 hour work week.

VACATION

See Personnel Handbook

SPECIAL LEAVE

Special Holiday leave shall be granted on the days, or portions thereof, listed below:

- a. December 24, whenever it occurs on a Monday;
- b. December 24, after having worked one-half of their normal daily work schedule,

- whenever it occurs on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday;
- c. December 26, whenever it occurs on a Friday;
 - d. December 31, whenever it occurs on a Monday;
 - e. December 31, after having worked one-half of their normal daily work schedule, whenever it occurs on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday;
 - f. January 2, whenever it occurs on a Friday.

The above Holiday leave may be adjusted based on Town Hall schedules; e.g. if union contracts are negotiated to allow the Town Hall to be open on any of these days compensatory time-off may be granted.

The Administrators/Department Heads whose duties and responsibilities require them to work during periods of special leave shall be eligible for equivalent amounts of compensatory time off.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE WITHOUT PAY

All requests for a Leave of Absence Without Pay must be made in writing and approved in advance by the Mayor. If the leave is for more than five (5) days in any one month, the Administrator/Department Head shall not earn sick or vacation leave for that month. The Administrator/Department Head shall not be paid for any holiday or special leave day which may occur during the Leave of Absence Without Pay. In order to qualify to be paid for a holiday or a special leave day, an Administrator/Department Head who has been on a Leave of Absence Without Pay must have worked the last work day directly preceding said holiday or special leave day.

SICK LEAVE TERMINATION

Upon termination of service from the Town of Ledyard, all unused sick leave up to a maximum of fifty (50) days will be paid to the Administrator/Department Head in a lump sum payment, provided the individual has been an Employee of the Town for a minimum of ten (10) years, and said Administrator/Department Head is not terminated for cause.

Employees hired on or after July 1, 2014 with a minimum of ten (10) consecutive years of service will upon termination be paid for a maximum of twenty (20) days.

PERSONAL LEAVE

Each Administrator/Department Head shall be entitled to three (3) personal leave days annually without loss of pay, provided such Administrator/Department Head notifies the Supervisor at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance, except in the case of a personal emergency. Personal days may be used in conjunction with a holiday or vacation provided a two (2) week written notice is supplied to the Supervisor and provided approval is granted by the Supervisor. During an Employee's first fiscal year, he or she shall be eligible for one (1) personal day for every four (4) months worked.

COMPENSATORY TIME

Administrator/Department Heads may, with the advanced approval of the Supervisor or Mayor, be provided compensation in the form of compensatory time at the rate of one hour

of compensatory time for each hour worked in excess of the maximum work week of each employee. Salaried exempt employees shall be eligible for compensatory time off for work performed which is beyond the normal scope of duties. All compensatory time must be taken within three months, unless otherwise approved by immediate supervisor. Compensatory time which is not taken within three months of accrual will be forfeited.

INSURANCE

The Town shall continue to provide eligible Employees and their dependents substantially similar group health and dental insurance coverage and benefits as exist in the Town's conventional insurance plan. The Town reserves the right to change or provide alternate insurance carriers, health maintenance organizations, or benefit levels or to self-insure as it deems appropriate for any form or portion of insurance coverage, so long as the new coverage and benefits are substantially similar to the conventional insurance. The Town will not be responsible for changes unilaterally imposed by an insurance provider so long as the Town uses its best efforts to minimize changes by incumbent insurance providers from one plan year to another.

- a. Each Employee shall be responsible for fifty percent (50%) of the cost of the dental plan for spouse or family coverage, and the applicable Employee contribution rate, as set forth below, for the Employee's dental coverage.
- b. The Town will purchase for each Employee at no cost to Employee, life insurance which in the event of death of the Employee while employed by the Town, will provide a benefit of \$50,000 or a sum equivalent to the Employee's base salary, whichever is less.
- ~~c. Effective with the adoption of this Resolution, each Employee shall be responsible for ten percent (10%) of the applicable conventional premium rate (COBRA rate) determined by the insurance carrier or administrator for all health and dental insurance benefits, excluding life insurance. An Employee with individual coverage shall have deducted from his/her monthly wages ten percent (10%) of the monthly conventional premium rate (COBRA rate) for individual coverage. An Employee and spouse or an Employee and eligible dependent, (two person coverage classification), shall have deducted from his/her monthly wages ten percent (10%) of the monthly conventional premium rate (COBRA rate) for such two person coverage. An Employee with family coverage shall have deducted from his/her monthly wages ten percent (10%) of the monthly conventional premium rate (COBRA rate) for family coverage.~~

*Effective with the adoption of this Resolution, each employee shall be responsible for the percentage of
the applicable conventional premium rate c. determined by the insurance carrier or administrator for all health and dental benefits as outlined in Paragraph d below.*

- d. Effective July 1, 2010 and each July 1 following, the co-insurance and co-pay contributions shall be the same as the lowest negotiated Town Hall labor contracts effective on that date.

- e. Employees may elect to waive all group insurance benefits, and in lieu thereof, be remunerated in the amount of twenty-five percent (25%) of the actual premium saved.
- f. Employees are required to notify Human Resources of significant changes to circumstances affecting insurance, including but not limited to births, death of dependents, marriage, adoptions, divorce, or change in eligibility of dependents.

PENSION

Employees hired prior to July 1, 2009 may be eligible to participate in the town's Defined Benefit Pension Plan. Details of this plan are provided in the Defined Benefit Summary Plan Description which will be provided to all eligible employees.

Employees hired on or after July 1, 2009 may be eligible to participate in the town's Defined Contribution Pension Plan. Details of this plan are provided in the Defined Contribution Summary Plan Description which will be provided to all eligible employees.

~~Effective July 1, 2014 employees eligible for the Defined Contribution Plan will be auto-enrolled at an employee contribution rate of 3% of base salary effective the first day of the first full quarter of the fiscal year after the hire date. Unless the employee directs the town otherwise, the employee minimum contribution rate will increase by 1% on July 1st each year until an employee contribution rate of 15% is achieved. Employees have the right to opt out of or modify the auto-enrollment by notifying Human Resources within 90 days after the actions are effective. The Town will match the employee's contributions up to a rate equal to the highest rate negotiated by Town Hall labor contracts currently in effect on July 1st of each fiscal year.~~

Effective July 1, 2022 employees eligible for the Defined Contribution Plan will be automatically enrolled at date of hire at a contribution rate of ten percent (10%) of base salary. The Town will match the employee's contribution effective six months after the date of hire.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

If an Employee is injured in the performance of his or her duties or is otherwise qualified for benefits under the Workers' Compensation Act, the net after tax difference between his or her regular base pay and Workers' Compensation shall be paid by the Employer for a period not to exceed six (6) months or until maximum recovery is attained (whichever is first.)

Until a determination is made as to the eligibility for Workers' Compensation payments, absences shall be charged, at the Employee's option, to accumulated sick leave and/or vacation time, provided eligibility requirements are met. The Employee's time will be credited when compensation becomes effective.

Notwithstanding the above, if the Town, in its sole discretion, advances pay before an eligibility determination is made, and the Employee is thereafter found ineligible or the Employee's eligibility is terminated for any reason, the deficiency shall be charged at the Employee's option to accumulated sick leave and/or accumulated vacation leave. However, if an Employee has not accumulated sufficient sick and/or annual leave to cover the period of absence, the Employee shall be considered on leave with pay and shall be required to repay the Town for any salary advanced while on leave with pay in the following manner:

- a. Sick Leave
- b. Vacation
- c. Personal Leave
- d. Incentives
- e. Wages
- f. Welfare Benefits

WAGES AND COMPENSATION

Employees shall be paid at the rate as designated by the Mayor or contractually negotiated. Increases in wages shall be effective on the first day of July; and continuing until June 30, 2025, wage increases may not be less than the percentage of the highest union contracted increase for that fiscal year.

Employees required to be available via cell phone outside of regular work hours who are not issued a Town cell phone, shall receive a monthly stipend for usage of their personal cell phone at a rate equivalent to the highest stipend paid to any of the Town's bargaining units.

With the implementation of this Resolution, retroactive reimbursement for wages and personal cell phones shall be paid to employees who were on staff as of July 1, 2022.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The Administrator/Department Head shall be reimbursed for travel expenses, meals, lodging, registration fees and other appropriate expenses as may be required when attending professional meetings, training and/or conducting Town business, provided prior approval to attend such meeting and incur such expenses is obtained from the immediate supervisor.

Any Administrator/Department Head who successfully completes an education or vocational course approved, in advance, by the immediate supervisor shall be reimbursed the cost of such courses up to a maximum of fifty percent (50%) not to exceed One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000) per year. Courses eligible for reimbursement must be at an accredited college or university and directly relate to the Administrator/Department Head's professional development. Employees who receive tuition reimbursement shall remain in the employment of the Town for one year following completion of the course or shall be required to reimburse the tuition.

LONGEVITY

In return for good and faithful service to the Town, each Administrator/Department Head shall receive the following longevity payments:

- a. Ten years, but less than fifteen years \$250.00-\$350.00
- b. Fifteen years, but less than twenty years \$350.00 \$450.00
- c. Twenty or more years \$450.00 \$550.00

Payment shall be paid in one lump sum annually on the pay date nearest the Administrator/Department Head’s anniversary date of employment.

Employees hired after July 1, 2014 shall not be eligible for Longevity payments.

TRIENNIAL REVIEW

The terms of this Resolution shall be reviewed every three (3) years from its adoption date by the Administrator/Department Heads and Town Council.-

Adopted by the Ledyard Town Council on: _____.

Kevin J. Dombrowski, Chairman

Revisions: March 10, 1989; July 13, 1998; September 26, 1990; January 27, 1993; October 8, 2003; May 28, 2014; January 13, 2016.

History:

2022: Updated the titles of the following positions:

Librarian to Library Director; Assistant Finance Director to include Treasurer; Police Lieutenant to Police Capitan.

Insurance Section paragraph (c): Removed/replaced the following language

~~Effective with the adoption of this Resolution, each Employee shall be responsible for ten percent (10%) of the applicable conventional premium rate (COBRA rate) determined by the insurance carrier or administrator for all health and dental insurance benefits, excluding life insurance. An Employee with individual coverage shall have deducted from his/her monthly wages ten percent (10%) of the monthly conventional premium rate (COBRA rate) for individual coverage. An Employee and spouse or an Employee and eligible dependent, (two person coverage classification), shall have deducted from his/her monthly wages ten percent (10%) of the monthly conventional premium rate (COBRA rate) for such two person coverage. An Employee with family coverage shall have deducted from his/her monthly wages ten percent (10%) of the monthly conventional premium rate (COBRA rate) for family coverage.~~

(New Language): Effective with the adoption of this Resolution, each employee shall be responsible for the percentage of the applicable conventional premium rate determined by the

insurance carrier or administrator for all health and dental benefits as outlined in Paragraph d below.

Pension Section: Removed/replaced the following language:

~~Effective July 1, 2014 employees eligible for the Defined Contribution Plan will be auto-enrolled at an employee contribution rate of 3% of base salary effective the first day of the first full quarter of the fiscal year after the hire date. Unless the employee directs the town otherwise, the employee minimum contribution rate will increase by 1% on July 1st each year until an employee contribution rate of 15% is achieved. Employees have the right to opt out of or modify the auto-enrollment by notifying Human Resources within 90 days after the actions are effective. The Town will match the employee's contributions up to a rate equal to the highest rate negotiated by Town Hall labor contracts currently in effect on July 1st of each fiscal year.~~

Effective July 1, 2022 employees eligible for the Defined Contribution Plan will be automatically enrolled at date of hire at a contribution rate of ten percent (10%) of base salary. The Town will match the employee's contribution effective six months after the date of hire.

Added New Section : "Wages and Compensation".

Longevity Section: Updated longevity payments as follows:

- a. Ten years, but less than fifteen years ~~\$250.00~~-\$350.00
- b. Fifteen years, but less than twenty years ~~\$350.00~~-\$450.00
- c. Twenty or more years ~~\$450.00~~-\$550.00

(New Section): Triennial Review: The terms of this Resolution shall be reviewed and acknowledged every three (3) years from its adoption date by the Administrator/Department Heads and Town Council; and shall remain in place until further action is agreed upon by both parties.

Moved by Councilor Saums, seconded by Councilor Ingalls

Discussion: Councilor Saums stated the Finance Committee spent a lot of time discussing the proposed updates to the "Resolution Establishing Administrator/Department Head Benefits", specifically, the following language: "wage increases may not be less than the percentage of the highest union contracted increase for that fiscal year". He stated while the Finance Committee understood the intent, that they had concerns regarding the possible long-term and unintended consequences.

Councilor Saums stated that the Finance Committee recognized that there were a number of years in which the Department Heads received zero and 2% wage increases; when bargained for employees received more than zero or more than 2% increases. He went on to state that the belief was that Ledyard's Department Heads' pay has fallen behind their peers' pay in surround towns. He stated proof of this wage issue was when the town has had a Department

Head retire or resign, they have had to pay the new replacement significantly more than the person who had all the knowledge and experience in the job. He commented that this indicated that there was something wrong with how Ledyard was paying their Department Heads. He stated the intent and acknowledgement of the Finance Committee was that they probably needed to do something about the Department Heads' compensation. However, he stated the Finance Committee did not think that having an automatic mechanism was the right way to do it.

Councilor Saums went on to state that the Finance Committee discussed surveying surrounding towns to see not only what their heads of their departments were getting paid but to find out what they do. He stated the second part of the survey was very important because no two jobs were alike among towns. He noted as an example Ledyard's Public Works Director was also the Town Engineer and he had a Highway Superintendent supporting him, noting that other towns could have four, five, or six people doing that job and they were not also doing the work of the Town Engineer. Therefore, he stated they could not just call a neighboring town and ask what they pay specific positions, noting that they would need to ask a lot of questions; and he stated that this was going to take some time.

Councilor Saums stated the Finance Committee talked with the Administrator of Human Resources Don Steinhoff about a couple of ideas and they settled on the idea of accepting the Department Heads proposed language for three years: "*wage increases may not be less than the percentage of the highest union contracted increase for that fiscal year*", noting that conceptually that would put the Department Heads wages closer to about where they should be. However, he stated to avoid the law of unintended consequences, the Finance Committee added the following language to sunset the clause after three years "*...and continuing until June 30, 2025*". He stated the Department Heads were happy with the Finance Committee's proposal. He stated what was not included in the Resolution was that a Salary Survey for Department Heads would be conducted so that the town could accurately evaluate what they should be paying their employees.

Councilor Saums continued to explain that the proposed revisions to the "*Resolution Establishing Administrator/Department Head Benefits*" also addressed providing a stipend for cell phones and there were also changes in how the Department Heads paid for their healthcare.

Councilor Ingalls stated that she wanted to repeat the comments she made at the Finance Committee's February 15, 2023 meeting. She stated budgets were a value statement. She stated by putting numbers into a budget that they were communicating their values, priorities, what the community needed and the things they think were important. She stated because there were always multiple needs pulling on the same pot of money there were tensions. She stated part of that pulling/tension was stewarding their tax dollars and stewarding their professionals. She stated the town's professionals were paid with tax dollars and that some of those tax dollars were being demanded of people who could not afford to pay somebody else's pay increases. She stated every time she voted "yes" on these types of decisions that she feels the tension, noting that she feels the need to take care of our staff

and that she feels the ach of someone who cannot afford to pay somebody else's pay increase; and that she knows everyone on the Town Council feels the same way. She stated the reality of working with the budget was that it affects people. She stated that they were always working to try to find that balance, noting that they cannot be absorbent, and at the same time they cannot be dismissive of the skill set that was being brought to the town.

Councilor Ingalls continued by noting that Councilor Saums' comments were spot-on, noting that something was wrong if the town has someone retire with a body of knowledge and they have to increase the pay just to get someone in the position, who presumably would have less experience or knowledge as it pertained to Ledyard.

Mayor Allyn, III, noted Councilor Saums' and Councilor Ingalls' comments about the replacement of dedicated employees who retire with someone who had less town knowledge at a higher salary, commenting that was the hardest part. He noted an example of this was when someone retires, like the former Tax Collector, who served the town for so many years; noting that she found a real disaster, she righted the ship, and brought the tax collection rate up an incredible number. He stated when she retired the town paid the next person in the door more than what the former employee was being paid when they retired, and he commented that this slap in the face to the person who has put the effort in for a number of years.

Councilor Saums stated during the School Superintendent's Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget presentation earlier this evening, that he had the same thoughts that Councilor Ingalls expressed. He stated he was thinking that the taxpayers cannot afford an increase; or if they can afford it that they do not want to pay it. However, he stated at the same time they have to look at what was happening to their kids. He stated that they have to strike a balance, noting that they have to get the kids the education they need, because they were going to produce and pay the taxes down the road; and at the same time, they have to be sensitive to those who have to pay for that education.

Councilor Paul stated that he appreciated the comments made this evening. He stated from a layman perspective that every time he hears about a tax increase that his heart sinks. He stated these are the types of things he talks about with residents, noting that it comes down to money. However, he stated they have a responsibility to provide education and services to the town.

Councilor Rodriguez stated that if they do not hire qualified people that it would also cost the town money, noting that having qualified employees was an investment in their town.

Chairman Dombrowski noted both Councilor Saums' and Councilor Ingalls' comments, and he stated by making an investment in their employees that they were making an investment for their residents and for the town, but at the same time he stated they needed to be careful not to over burdening their residents. He also addressed the importance to recognize the skill set of their employees and to make sure they were compensated at a point in which they wanted to continue work and produce for the town. However, he stated at the same time they have to recognize that it was the residents of the town who have to pay for it. He stated this

was the difficult challenge they had serving as members of the Town Council.

Councilor Ingalls noted earlier this evening the Mayor made a good point on another topic stating that he questioned: “*What was the role of local government?*”. She stated although this was a philosophical conversation that this was a question that always needed to be on the table.

Councilor Marshall stated to put this conversation in a different perspective that it costs him \$110.00 per week for the privilege to live in Ledyard. He stated for someone who was retired on a fixed income or who did not earn a lot of money that an increase of \$5.00 per week could be difficult. He noted when the Town Council served as the Water Pollution Control Authority they had ratepayers tell them that they could not afford another \$3.00 a month, noting that something else would have to go in order to pay that bill.

Councilor Ingalls stated that she was going to vote “yes” on the revisions to the “*Resolution Establishing Administrator/Department Head Benefits*” noting that their Department Heads deserve to be well paid, but at the same time her heart was aching.

Mayor Allyn stated the Department Heads were the glue that holds the town’s operations together. He stated Administrator of Human Resources Don Steinhoff was a good example of that. He stated if the town had an issue, it doesn’t matter what day of the week it was or what time of the day it was Mr. Steinhoff would be here. He stated Mr. Steinhoff was not alone in this dedication, noting that he was just one example. He stated the Department Heads put in the time, when ever the time was required, to get the job done.

VOTE: 8 - 0 Approved and so declared

General Business

4. Discuss Work Session Items as time permits.

None

XV. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Rodriguez moved to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Ingalls
VOTE: 89 - 0 Approved and so declared. The meeting adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

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

I, Kevin J. Dombrowski, 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 22, 2023.

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.