



TOWN OF LEDYARD

Administration Committee

Meeting Minutes

741 Colonel Ledyard Highway
Ledyard, CT 06339
<http://www.ledyardct.org>

Chairman S. Naomi
Rodriguez

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, January 10, 2024

5:30 PM

Town Hall Annex- Hybrid Format

In -Person: Council Chambers, Town Hall Annex Building

Remote Participation Information is Noted Below:

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

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82200729029?pwd=a7kAYvviH0A1m5FjunsTXhXUG1kGOk.1>

Or by Audio Only: Telephone: +1 646 558 8656; Meeting ID: 822 0072 902; Passcode: 471931

I CALL TO ORDER

the Meeting was called to order by Councilor Garcia-Irizarry at 5:30 p.m. at the Council Chambers Town Hall Annex Building.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry welcomed all to the Hybrid Meeting. She stated for the Town Council Administration Committee and members of the Public who were participating via video conference that the remote meeting information was available on the Agenda that was posted on the Town's Website - Granicus-Legistar Meeting Portal.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Carmen Garcia-Irizarry
Kevin Dombrowski
April Brunelle

In addition, the following were present:

S. Naomi Rodriguez Town Council Chairman
Jessica Buhle Town Councilor
Pamela Ball Farmers Market Committee
Roxanne Maher Administrative Assistant

III. RESIDENTS & PROPERTY OWNERS COMMENTS

None.

IV. PRESENTATIONS / INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

None.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION to approve the following:

- Organizational Meeting Minutes of December 13, 2023
- Regular Meeting Minutes of December 13, 2023

Moved by Councilor Brunelle, seconded by Councilor Dombrowski

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

VI. OLD BUSINESS

1. Any other Old Business proper to come before the Committee

None.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. MOTION to appoint Mr. Ethan Foltz (D) 894 Colonel Ledyard Highway, Ledyard, to the Ledyard Farmers' Market Committee to complete a three (3) year term ending May 9, 2027; filling a vacancy left by Ms. Brunelle.

Moved by Councilor Dombrowski, seconded by Councilor Brunelle

Discussion: None.

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

MOVER: Kevin Dombrowski

SECONDER: April Brunelle

AYE: 3 Garcia-Irizarry, Dombrowski and Brunelle

2. MOTION to appoint the following Temporary Members to the Permanent Municipal Building Committee (PMBC) to serve as Representatives for Board of Education Projects in accordance with Ordinance #100-015 "An Ordinance Establishing A Permanent Municipal Building Committee for the Town of Ledyard:

- Ms. Kate DiPalma-Herb (D) 19 Meadow Drive Gales Ferry
- Ms. Jennifer Reguin (D) 6, Mill Cove Road, Gales Ferry

Moved by Councilor Brunelle, seconded by Councilor Dombrowski

Discussion: Councilor Garcia-Irizarry noted that Ms. Reguin was a member of the Board of Education.

Chairman Rodriguez explained in accordance with Ordinance #100-015 “*An Ordinance Establishing A Permanent Municipal Building Committee for the Town of Ledyard*” (Section 3) stated the following:

“Temporary Members: For each municipal project, up to two (2) temporary members who are a member or representative of the Proposing Body shall be appointed by the Town Council.

For Board of Education projects, at least one temporary member shall be a Board of Education member. Temporary members shall have the right to vote on the activities of the Permanent Municipal Building Committee only with respect to the particular project for which such members were appointed.”

Chairman Rodriguez stated the Board of Education has selected and forwarded for appointment Ms. Reguin and Ms. DiPalma-Herb to serve as their Representatives. She explained because Ms. DiPalma-Herb was a former member of the Board of Education and served on the PMBC that the Board of Education has requested that she continue to serve on the PMBC because she has been involved and was up-to-date on the School Projects.

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

MOVER: April Brunelle

SECONDER: Carmen Garcia-Irizarry

AYE: 3 Garcia-Irizarry, Dombrowski and Brunelle

3. MOTION to recommend the Town Council adopt a draft a “An Ordinance Establishing a Farmers Market for the Town of Ledyard” as presented in the draft dated December 22, 2023.

Moved by Councilor Dombrowski, seconded by Councilor Brunelle

Discussion: Councilor Dombrowski stated at their December 13, 2023 meeting the Administration Committee deferred action on the proposed Ordinance (draft dated September 27, 2023) to obtain a legal opinion from the Town Attorney regarding the following language pertaining to “*Friends of the Market*”:

“In addition, the Farmers Market Committee may, by a two-thirds vote of the Committee, select and engage “Friends of the Market” who may not be electors of the town. “Friends of the Market” may attend and participate in Committee meetings, and at the Markets. “Friends of the Market shall not have any voting rights or carry any weight or influence the decisions of the Committee.”

Councilor Dombrowski noted that based on the Attorney Matthew Ritter’s legal opinion that was provided in his email dated 12/20/2023, and attached to the Agenda packet on the meeting portal, that the language of concern (see above) was removed because in accordance with Chapter IV; Section 9 of the Town Charter Members of

Town Committees/Commissions *shall be electors* of the Town, explaining that they could not have any volunteers who were not electors of the town be any part of the Committee either voting or otherwise.

Councilor Dombrowski stated in reviewing the proposed Ordinance that he had concern regarding the following language provided in Section 6. *Revenue, Funding, and Monetary Gifts*:

“In addition, upon the annual approval of the Farmers Market Committee, stipends may be issued to the Market Manager and Committee Members. The Committee shall annually determine and approve the amount of the stipends.”

Councilor Dombrowski stated that Chapter VII; Section 13 of the Town Charter stated: *“No purchase shall be made by any department, board, commission, or officer of the Town, other than the Board of Education, except through the Purchasing Agent.”* Therefore, he stated providing a stipend to the Market Manager and Committee Members would need to come through the Purchasing Agent, explaining that it could not come from a Board or Committee. He went on to suggest that because the proposed Ordinance involved finances that the Finance Committee should also review the proposal to determine how it should be handled. He noted that he was not opposed to giving a stipend to the Market Manager, however, he stated that he did not agree with giving stipends to Committee Members. He stated there were no other volunteer Committee Members, including the Town Council that gets paid. Therefore, he stated that he did not know the reason the Farmers’ Market Committee would be different from any other committee or board in the town.

Councilor Dombrowski stated the Farmers’ Market Committee does collect revenue and that the revenue should be accounted for though the accounting practices of the Town. Administrative Assistant Roxanne Maher explained that the Farmers’ Market Committee’s revenues were deposited into the Farmers Market Fund 020810201-54201-24201, which was in the custody of the Town Treasurer. She noted that this was a “Donation” type of account and that Purchase Orders were opened from that account for the payment of invoices for expenses related to the operation of the Farmers’ Market, such as trash removal, entertainment, Porta-John services, Facebook Host, etc. She noted that Finance Director Matthew Bonin and Treasurer Ian Stammel were aware and involved with the management of the Farmers’ Market Committee’s revenues.

Ms. Pamela Ball, 674 Shewville Road, Ledyard, Farmers’ Market Committee Treasurer and Chairman Pro-tem, explained that the Market Manager stipend was relatively new noting it was implemented about two years ago. She stated the Farmers’ Market Committee was self-funded noting that they do not have a town budget. Councilor Dombrowski stated that his concern did not have anything to do with taking money from the town, he stated that his concern was regarding the proper accounting of the revenues. Ms. Ball stated that the Farmers’ Market Committee revenue was accounted for noting that it was deposited with the Town Treasurer Ian

Stammel and that Purchase Orders were opened following the Town's Procedures to pay invoices/expenses. Councilor Dombrowski stated his concern was about how the money was accounted for and how it was audited, noting that it could be in violation of the Town Charter.

Councilor Dombrowski stated the proposed "*An Ordinance Establishing a Farmers Market for the Town of Ledyard*" needed to be reviewed by the Finance Committee for the following reasons:

- There was money involved;
- Committee Members receiving a stipend was completely different from any other Town Committee/Commission/Board
- Setting of Fees - The Town Council should approve Fees as they do for other Departments and Boards.

Chairman Rodriguez stated that she asked Mayor Allyn, III, about the payment of a stipend to the Market Manager because she had not heard of any other volunteer committee members receiving a stipend. She stated that it seemed to be an Agreement between the two. Administrative Assistant Roxanne Maher stated that the Farmers' Market Committee voted to authorize the payment of a stipend to the Market Manager along with the dollar amount per Market. She stated a Purchase Order was opened and upon the receipt of the Market Manager's Invoice the stipend was then paid.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated that she agreed with Councilor Dombrowski in that there were no other Town Committee volunteers who receive a stipend. She stated once they start giving a stipend for one Committee that others will also want the same. Councilor Dombrowski stated he understood the stipend for the Market Manager because they were running the Farmers' Market each week, but that he did not agree with the other committee members receiving a stipend, noting that there were other Commissions such as the Parks & Recreation Commission that collect fees, and they do not receive stipends.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated when she served on the Conservation Commission that they would ask for volunteers from the community to help the Commission clean-up the Trails. She noted that the Ledyard Beautification Committee also asks for volunteers from the community for projects such as the planting of the daffodil bulbs; and other initiatives. Therefore, she questioned the reason the Farmers Market Committee cannot do the same type of thing. Councilor Dombrowski explained that the members who were making the decisions were all electors of the town, noting that the other volunteers who were helping with the planting of bulbs or clearing trails were not contributing to the business of the meeting. He stated if there was a citizen from the Preston that they could not participate in the business of the meeting, but that they could volunteer to help with a project. Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated that she thought the Farmers' Market Committee was looking for volunteers to help them set up the Farmers' Market each week. Councilor Dombrowski stated that the

“Friends of the Market” that the Farmers' Market Committee was looking to add would be similar to Ex-Officio Members, which would require them to be electors of the town per the Town Charter.

MOTION to Table the proposed “An Ordinance Establishing a Farmers Market for the Town of Ledyard” as presented in the draft dated December 22, 2023; and refer the draft Ordinance to the Finance Committee for their review.

Moved by Councilor Dombrowski, seconded by Councilor Brunelle

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved to Tabled

RESULT: TABLED

MOVER: Kevin Dombrowski

SECONDER: April Brunelle

AYE: 3 Garcia-Irizarry, Dombrowski and Brunelle

- 4. MOTION to recommend the Town Council set a Hybrid (In-Person & Video Conference) Public Hearing date on February 28, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. to be held in the Council Chambers, 741 Colonel Ledyard Highway, to receive comments and recommendations regarding a proposed “An Ordinance Establishing a Farmers Market for the Town of Ledyard” as presented in the draft dated December 22, 2023.

This was No Action .to the Administration Committee due back on 2/14/2024

RESULT: NO ACTION

- 5. Any other New Business proper to come before the Committee.

None.

IV ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry moved the meeting be adjourned, seconded by Councilor Dombrowski.

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared, the meeting was adjourned at 5:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carmen Garcia-Irizarry
Committee Chairman

Administration Committee

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