



TOWN OF LEDYARD

Administration Committee

Meeting Minutes

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

Chairman Gary St. Vil

Special Meeting

Wednesday, August 6, 2025

6:00 PM

Town Hall Annex- Hybrid Format

In -Person: Council Chambers, Town Hall Annex Building

Remote Participation Information Noted Below:

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

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84725361090?pwd=3DQLaPcztWfOHlv8nQNmCQCNIxwO9.1>

Or by Audio Only: Telephone: +1 646 558 8656; Meeting ID: 847 2536 1090; Passcode: 750730

I CALL TO ORDER

the Meeting was called to order by Councilor Buhle at 6:00 p.m. at the Council Chambers Town Hall Annex Building.

Councilor Buhle 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: Kevin Dombrowski
Jessica Buhle
April Brunelle

In addition the following were present:

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry
Mayor Fred Allyn, III
Mr. Milton (Dave) Schroeder, Jr.
Mr. Edwin Murray
Ms. Eleanor Murray
Ms. Deborah Edwards
Administrative Assistant Roxanne Maher

III. RESIDENTS & PROPERTY OWNERS COMMENTS

Mr. Milton Dave Schroeder, Jr., 290 Whalehead Road, Gales Ferry, stated before he begins his comments that he wanted to be clear that his comments were not intended as a personal critique of the Town Attorney, noting that he appreciated the time and expertise he has contributed in editing the draft *Ordinance Creating a Code of Ethics and Establishing an Ethics Commission*. He stated the Town Attorney's insights are clearly thoughtful, grounded in legal reasoning, noting he recognized that he was speaking without the benefit of having heard the Town Attorney's full explanation for the revisions that have been made.

Mr. Schroeder went on to state in the interest of keeping this discussion focused on the content rather than individuals, that he would refer to the proposed revisions simply as "*the attorney edits*" or "*the edits*."

Mr. Schroeder continued by stating as someone who was not legally trained, that he understands that some of these edits may be intended to streamline the language, removing redundant definitions or simplifying structure. He noted where that was the case, that he fully supported those changes. Clarity and simplicity serve everyone. However, he noted that there were other edits that he found more difficult to understand, and, in some cases, entire sections of the draft have been eliminated. He stated that he worried that these edits may substantially alter the intent or effectiveness of the Ethics Code itself.

Mr. Schroeder questioned whether the State provided a model template or example language to help municipalities establish effective codes of ethics and ethics commissions? He stated after more than a year of effort, it's worth asking: "*Have we simply recreated what already existed, or have we truly improved upon it?*" He also questioned whether it was really this challenging to arrive at a workable Ethics Code with clear enforcement mechanisms, and he questioned whether they have even managed to do that? He stated that it would be helpful to understand how this edited draft compares to those already adopted by neighboring towns; many of which have relied on more standardized, broadly accepted language.

Mr. Schroeder stated given the time and energy invested in this process, one would hope this Committee has produced a document that not only reflected the best practices, but sets a high standard. Otherwise, he stated that they risk ending up with a code that appears substantial but ultimately lacks the scope, authority, and the enforceability needed to be truly effective; and if was not effective, that perhaps the town would have been better served with the model template(s) and generic language.

Mr. Schroeder stated that he had about 1 ½ pages of comments regarding specific sections of the draft Ordinance. Councilor Buhle thanked Mr. Schroeder for his comments noting that the Town Council had a Special Meeting scheduled for 6:30 p.m. this evening. Therefore, she asked in the interest of time, that Mr. Schroeder

leave his 1 ½ pages of comments regarding specific sections of the draft Ordinance with her this evening for the Administration Committee to review as part of their deliberation. She stated the Mr. Schroeder's comments would be attached to the meeting portal.

Mr. Edwin Murray, 26 Devonshire Drive, Gales Ferry, stated after reviewing the seventeen pages of the draft *Ordinance Creating a Code of Ethics and Establishing an Ethics Commission* he realized that the Town Attorney made the document more concise. He stated that the proposed Ordinance provides a framework that the town can work from. He stated the draft *Ordinance Creating a Code of Ethics and Establishing an Ethics Commission*, as edited by the Town Attorney, should be voted on and approved.

Mr. Murray continued by noting the draft *Ordinance Creating a Code of Ethics and Establishing an Ethics Commission* included all the town officials and employees, however, it does not include the management staff of the schools. He stated that he thought the draft Ordinance worked for the town and provided them with the opportunity for the town to move forward with the proposal.

Ms. Deborah Edwards, 30 Bluff Road - West, Gales Ferry, stated that she echoed Mr. Schroeder's comments this evening. She stated that she believed the Town Attorney's comments regarding the draft *Ordinance Creating a Code of Ethics and Establishing an Ethics Commission* helped to clarify the document and made it more concise. However, she stated the Town Attorney's rewrite of the document left out some things that she thought were important; and were things that they were all looking to include in the proposed Ordinance. She noted that Councilor Buhle mentioned that she had a telephone conversation with the Town Attorney regarding the proposal; and that she looked forward to Councilor Buhle relaying the reason for the Town Attorney's edits page-by-page and hearing the Administration Committee's discussion regarding the Town Attorney's edits. She stated until all this was accomplished she would urge the Administration Committee not to move forward with the draft *Ordinance Creating a Code of Ethics and Establishing an Ethics Commission*.

Ms. Edwards requested clarification on the process for the Town Council to adopt an Ordinance, noting that it was her understanding that after the Administration Committee forwards a proposed Ordinance to the Town Council that a Public Hearing would be held before the Town Council would vote on the proposed *Ordinance Creating a Code of Ethics and Establishing an Ethics Commission*. Councilor Buhle stated that Ms. Edwards's understanding was correct, in that a Public Hearing would be held prior to the Town Council's deliberation and vote on the proposed *Ordinance Creating a Code of Ethics and Establishing an Ethics Commission*.

Councilor Buhle thanked the residents for their comments.

IV. PRESENTATIONS / INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

None.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION to approve the Administration Committee Minutes of July 9, 2025

Moved by Councilor Dombrowski, seconded by Councilor Brunelle

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared

MOVER: Kevin Dombrowski

SECONDER: April Brunelle

VI. OLD BUSINESS

1. Discussion and possible action to create an Ethics Commission for the Town of Ledyard.

Councilor Buhle stated after the Administration Committee's June 11, 2025 meeting the draft "*Ordinance Establishing a Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission for the Town of Ledyard*" was sent to Town Attorney Matt Ritter for his review. She stated that she and Attorney Ritter spoke by telephone on June 26, 2025 for thirty minutes about the draft Ordinance. She stated there were about seven changes that were discussed to provide clarity, such as increasing the gift amount from \$25.00 to \$100.00. She stated there were also some sections of the draft Ordinance that were removed that Attorney Ritter asked her about, noting that during their conversations they had agreed to keep, however, she stated that some of those sections were removed in the draft Ordinance that Attorney Ritter sent back, even though Attorney Ritter agreed that they were legal and permissible.

Councilor Buhle continued by stating that Councilor Garcia-Irizarry put in a lot of work and effort to draft the proposed "*Ordinance Establishing a Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission for the Town of Ledyard*" noting that the removed sections were being used in other towns Ethics Ordinances. She also noted that prior to submitting the draft Ordinance to Attorney Ritter that both she and Councilor Dombrowski provided some changes to the original framework that Councilor Garcia-Irizarry drafted. She stated that she felt that the Administration Committee had a strong working document, noting that she expected Attorney Ritter to make some changes. However, she stated the draft Ordinance Attorney Ritter returned to the Administration Committee did not fall in-line with her expectations of what she thought was going to get back.

Councilor Buhle noted that she has emailed Attorney Ritter stating that she had some concerns regarding the edited document she received from him because it did not match up with their telephone conversation they had regarding the draft "*Ordinance Establishing a Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission for the Town of Ledyard*". She stated that she strongly wanted to make sure they accomplish the goal to establish a Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission to protect the town in the future and to make sure they establish something that protected them going forward. She

stated that she did not want “*perfect*” to get in the way of “*good*”; but that she did not want to adopt something that was not what the residents were looking for, noting that the Administration Committee agreed that they had a good starting draft Ordinance, and that she expected to receive some changes back from the Attorney Ritter.

Councilor Buhle stated that the Administration Committee would not be acting on the draft “*Ordinance Establishing a Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission for the Town of Ledyard*” provided by Attorney Ritter this evening because she wanted the Committee to take some time to review Attorney Ritter’s recommendations to decide which recommendations they wanted to abide by and which sections they would like to see in the final draft.

Councilor Dombrowski stated that he agreed with Councilor Buhle’s recommendation to take some time to review Attorney Ritter’s recommendations, noting that 50% of the document was deleted; and the remaining 50% was reworded.

Councilor Dombrowski noted the document Mr. Schroeder provided to the Administration Committee this evening. He specifically addressed Mr. Schroeder’s comment regarding the following:

“Comment on Section 5 - Conflict of Interest Provisions:

Thank you for the clarification between officials and employees-that’s a helpful improvement.

*However, I’m concerned about the removal of the original language in Subsection 5.1 that prohibited any interest-direct or indirect-that could compromise a person’s independent judgment. **This language addressed a broad spectrum of ethical concerns, including non-financial conflicts of interest**, and provided a vital safeguard for maintaining public trust.*

***By narrowing the focus only to financial interests in contracts or purchases, the revised language may unintentionally weaken the scope of the ethics code.** Ethical conflicts don’t always come down to money-they can involve personal relationships, affiliations, or outside obligations that impair objectivity.*

I would recommend reinstating or adapting the original “independent judgment” clause to preserve its broader intent, while still benefiting from the added clarity and structure introduced in the new draft.

Subsection 5.3 “Personal beneficial interest” and “directly or indirectly” have been removed. These terms were important for covering non-obvious or indirect benefits (like a benefit to a friend, business associate, or shell company), not just direct financial gain. Their removal could narrow the definition of a conflict.”

Councilor Dombrowski explained the Connecticut General Statutes that enables Municipalities to establish an Ethics Commission only allowed Ethics Commissions to address financial matters, noting that an Ethics Commission cannot look at anything else. He stated someone cannot file an Ethics Complaint because they disagreed with a Town Official's decision on something. He stated that he wanted to provide this clarification because he was not sure what residents were expecting the Ethics Commission to look at. He stated the State Statute was specific *to personal financial gains while they were representing the town such as: embezzlement from the town, working on contracts that were self-imposed where they were the recipient of; and they was the person approving the contracts.*

Councilor Buhle stated that the Administration Committee would continue their work to draft an Ordinance that would protect the town and its residents; and would also fall in line with Connecticut General State Statutes.

Councilor Brunelle stated that it would be wise to sit back and take in Attorney Ritter's suggestions and weigh them against whether it was what the Administration Committee wanted versus whether it was fluff or really necessary. She stated that she would like more time to go through Attorney Ritter's recommendation.

Councilor Buhle suggested the Administration Committee review and compare the draft Ordinance they forward to Attorney Ritter to the mark-up draft they received back from Attorney Ritter. She asked that the Committee forward their comments and recommendations to the Administrative Assistant Roxanne Maher to compile for a discussion at a Special Meeting specially dedicated to work on the *Ordinance Establishing a Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission for the Town of Ledyard*".

RESULT: CONTINUE

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. MOTION to reappoint the following members the Agricultural Commission for a three (3) year term ending September 24, 2028:

- Ms. Allyson Angelini (U) 193 Iron Street, Ledyard (Regular Member)
- Ms. Katie Yugas (U) 34 Meetinghouse Lane, Gales, Ferry (Regular Member)
- Mr. Steve Martic (R) 59R-2 Long Pond South, Ledyard (Alternate Member)

Moved by Councilor Brunelle, seconded by Councilor Dombrowski

Discussion: None

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

MOVER: April Brunelle

SECONDER: Kevin Dombrowski

AYE: 3 Dombrowski, Buhle and Brunelle

2. MOTION to appoint Ms. Jennifer Bingham (D) 826 West Drive, Gales Ferry, as an Alternate Member to the Board of Assessment Appeals to complete a four (4) year term ending August 26, 2028 to fill a vacancy left by Mr. Nelson.

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 Dombrowski, Buhle and Brunelle

3. MOTION to appoint Mr. Greg Lockhart (D) 30 Tanger Lane, Gales Ferry, to the Planning & Zoning Commission, as an Alternate Member to complete a three (3) year term ending December 31, 2025 to fill a vacancy left by Mr. Harwood.

Moved by Councilor Brunelle, seconded by Councilor Dombrowski

Discussion: None

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

MOVER: April Brunelle

SECONDER: Kevin Dombrowski

AYE: 3 Dombrowski, Buhle and Brunelle

IV ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Dombrowski moved the meeting be adjourned, seconded by Councilor Brunelle.

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared, the meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Buhle
Committee Chairman

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