



Chairman Gary St. Vil

TOWN OF LEDYARD
CONNECTICUT
TOWN COUNCIL
HYBRID FORMAT

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MINUTES
FINANCE COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING

Wednesday, April 8, 2026

5:00 PM

Annex Meeting Room - Video Conference

DRAFT

- I. CALL TO ORDER - The Meeting was called to order by Committee Chairman Councilor Buhle at 5:00 p.m. at the Council Chambers Town Hall Annex Building.

Councilor Buhle welcomed all to the Hybrid Meeting. She stated for the Town Council Finance 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

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Location	Arrived	Departed
Jessica Buhle	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	5:18 pm
Carmen Garcia-Irizarry	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	5:18 pm
Tim Ryan	Town Councilor	Excused			
Jason Hartling	School Superintendent	Present	Remote	5:00 pm	5:18 pm
Jeff Eilenberger	Resident	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	5:18 pm
Roxanne Maher	Administrative Assistant	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	5:18 pm

- III. RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS COMMENTS (Comments limited to Three (3) Minutes)

Mr. Jeff Eilenberger, 2 Village Drive, Ledyard, stated that he reviewed Councilor Ryan’s April 8, 2026 email that was attached to tonight’s Agenda Packet in which he addressed the Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget and a number of uncertain State Revenues including Raised House Bill # 5704 “*An Act Concerning State Reimbursement to Municipalities for Revenue Lost Due to the Property Tax Exemption for Veterans with a One Hundred Percent Permanent and Total Disability Rating*”. He noted that Councilor Ryan used the word “*hopeful*” a lot throughout his email regarding a number of uncertain State Revenue Programs such as the *PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes)*; *Education Cost Sharing (ECS)*; and others. Mr. Eilenberger stated that hoping and praying was not a Plan. However, he stated working to have alternate increased income was a Plan for success. He stated it seemed every time they work through a crisis such as the State delivered something; that their work to increase revenues wains with the crisis, noting that this happened with most every Town Council.

Mr. Eilenberger questioned if the State Legislature does not approve the Raised House Bill # 5704 “*An Act Concerning State Reimbursement to Municipalities for Revenue Lost Due to the Property Tax Exemption for Veterans with a One Hundred Percent Permanent and Total Disability Rating*”; whether members of the Town Council were going to vote to Cap the 100% Tax Exemption for their Disabled Veterans at the Median House Value; or vote for the status quo. He stated that he hoped that they were committed.

Councilor Buhle thanked Mr. Eilenberger for his comments this evening.

IV. BUSINESS OF THE MEETING

1. Discussion and possible action regarding the Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget.

Councilor Buhle noted Councilor Ryan’s April 8, 2026 email regarding the Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget that was received today.

Councilor Buhle provided an overview of the Finance Committee’s Budget Adjustments to date as follows:

Expenditure Additions: (Budget Work Session 3/19/2026)

Total General Government Additions: \$8,197

Total Board of Education Additions: \$-0-

Total Expenditure Adjustments: (\$8,197)

Expenditure Reductions: (Budget Work Session 3/19/2026)

Total General Government Reductions; \$191,360

Total Board of Education Reductions : \$-0-

Expenditure Reductions (\$191,161)

Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Proposed Budget With Adjustments 3/19/2026:

General Government: \$31,878,334 \$31,695,171

Board of Education : \$41,932,335 \$41,932,335

TOTAL: \$73,810,669 \$73,627,506

Councilor Buhle noted during the Finance Committee’s April 1, 2026 meeting she stated that the Finance Committee drafted a responsible Budget Letter of Directive outlining the specific data they wanted to see from the Board of Education and the General Government proposed Budgets. She stated to date the Finance Committee has not made any changes to the Board of Education’s proposed Fiscal Year 2026/2027 noting that she believed they prepared and submitted a responsible budget.

- ❖ MOTION to add a New Department Budget Titled “*Ethics Commission*” and to appropriate \$3,000 for its Operating Budget.

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Garcia-Irizarry

Discussion: Councilor Buhle explained the purpose of the New Ethics Commission Department Budget was to establish a baseline for the Ethics Commission where their Operating Expenses could be tracked for transparency. She stated that she did not want to create an Ethics Commission and not provide them with funding should they need to

obtain legal support regarding an Advisory Opinion, etc. She stated should the budget line need to be increased that they would cross that bridge when they come to it.

Councilor Buhle continued to provide clarification explaining that she would like this to be New stand-alone Department Budget; and not fall under any other Department's Budget such as the Town Council Budget; or the Mayor's Budget. She noted that it would be treated like the Economic Development Commission's Budget or the Conservation Commission's Budget.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry noted that the Land Use Commissions such as the Planning & Zoning Commission and the Inland Wetlands and Water Courses Commission each have their own Department Budgets for legal expenses and other things. Councilor Buhle noted that the Zoning Board of Appeals also had their own budget with a \$530.00 allocation.

Councilor Buhle stated that while the Town Council would appoint the members to the Ethics Commission, she did not want them to feel that they beholden to the Town Council.

VOTE: 2- 0 Approved and so declared

Continued Discussion:

Councilor Buhle stated with the addition of \$30,000 that the General Government Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget was now in the amount of \$31,698,171. She asked Councilor Garcia-Irizarry whether she had any additional adjustments she wanted to propose to the budget.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated at the March 19, 2026 Budget Work Session they reviewed the Budget line by line, noting that Finance Director Matthew Bonin and Assistant Finance Director Ian Stammel answered all of their questions. Therefore, she stated that she did not have any additional proposed changes.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry noted Councilor Ryan's April 8, 2026 email regarding the proposed Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget. She commented that often they compare the General Government Healthcare costs with the Board of Education Healthcare costs, etc. She stated that it feels like they were comparing apples to oranges, noting that the Board of Education had about 400 employees and the General Government had about 40 - 50 employees. She stated because the Board of Education had ten times the number of employees that their Healthcare Costs were going to be higher, noting that the Board of Education Budget was always going to be higher than the General Government Budget because of their size. She stated Ledyard had four schools, with staffing, and administrators, (principles, assistant principals, teachers, par-professionals, custodians, and many others). She stated every single day the Schools were serving about 2,000 students or 10%+ of the town's 15,000 population. Therefore, she stated the Board of Education was going to have more expenses and their budget was going to be higher than the General Government Budget.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry went on to state that Ledyard's Per Pupil Expenditure ranked their town at 144 out of the State's 169 Municipalities in terms of funding per student, noting that Ledyard was not being lavish. She stated she was glad that Ledyard Per Pupil Expenditure was improving, noting at one time they were ranked at 154.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated that she appreciated what their General Government employees do noting that she looked at previous year's budgets stating that many did not spend their full budget because they were very careful with their spending.

❖ MOTION to recommend the Town Council adopt the Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget in the amount of \$73,630,506 comprised of:

- General Government: \$31,698,171
- Board of Education: \$ 41,932,335

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Garcia-Irizarry

Discussion: Councilor Buhle stated that this would be the proposed Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget to present at the April 21, 2026 Public Hearing to receive residents comments and input regarding this preliminary budget; should the Town Council vote to adopt it at their meeting later this evening.

VOTE: 2- 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT:	APPROVED 2 – 0
MOVER:	Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor
SECONDER:	Carmen Garcia-Irizarry, Town Councilor
AYES:	Jessica Buhle, Carmen Garcia-Irizarry
EXCUSED:	Tim Ryan

V. ADJOURNMENT

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

VOTE: 2 - 0 Approved and so declared, the meeting was adjourned at 5:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Buhle.
Committee Chairman
Finance Committee