



TOWN OF LEDYARD

741 Colonel Ledyard Highway
Ledyard, Connecticut 06339

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

Chairman
Kevin J. Dombrowski

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, September 20, 2023

5:00 PM

Town Hall Annex Building - Hybrid
Format

In -Person: Council Chambers, Town Hall Annex Building

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

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87619530661?pwd=zf20dFzYH1PbRRWdhkPxn3rgbVwZ79.1>

by Audio Only: Telephone: +1 646 558 8656; Meeting ID: 876 1953 0661; Passcode: 596997

I CALL TO ORDER

the Meeting was called to order by Councilor Saums at 5:00 p.m.
at the Council Chambers Town Hall Annex Building.

Councilor Saums welcomed all to the Hybrid Meeting. He 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

Present: Councilor Bill Saums
Councilor Andra Ingalls
Councilor Tim Ryan

In addition, the following were present:

Fred Allyn, II Mayor
Matt Bonin Finance Director
Mary McGrattan Town Councilor
S. Naomi Rodriguez Town Councilor
Scott Johnson, Jr. Director Parks & Recreation, & Senior Citizens
Roxanne Maher Administrative Assistant

III. RESIDENTS & PROPERTY OWNERS COMMENTS

None.

IV. PRESENTATIONS / INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

None.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION to approve the Finance Committee Special Meeting Minutes of September 13, 2023

Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Ingalls

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared

VI. FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Finance Director Matthew Bonin reported that Auditors CliftonLarsonAllen LLP will be on-site at the Town Hall on October 2, 2023 to conduct their work on the Annual Audit for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2023. However, he noted that there was the possibility that the Auditor's visit could be set back by a week if the Board of Education was not ready, noting that they recently had some turnover in staff.

VII. FINANCIAL REPORT

Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated he planned to have the Year-End numbers and the Undesignated Fund Balance through June 30, 2023 for the Finance Committee's October 4, 2023 meeting.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

1. MOTION to recommend the townspeople appropriate up-to \$16,082.00 from CNR Account #20360101-53335 (Parks and Recreation Capital Non-Recurring Fund - Site Improvement) for the Pfizer Field Improvement Project.

In addition, set a Hybrid Format (In-Person and Remote) Special Town Meeting date for October 10, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. to be held in the Council Chamber, Annex Building to consider, discuss and vote upon the following:

"Shall the Town appropriate up-to \$16,082.00 from CNR Account #20360101-53335 (Parks and Recreation Capital Non-Recurring Fund - Site Improvement) for the Pfizer Field Improvement Project".

Moved by Councilor Ingalls, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: Councilor Saums stated Parks & Recreation had a unique opportunity to reseed and make some improvements to the Pfizer Field. He stated the High School has agreed to accommodate the Little League games that were originally scheduled for the Pfizer Field at the High School Field to enable these field improvements to be

done.

Councilor Saums explained because the improvements for the Pfizer Field only recently presented itself that the project and the funding request was not included in the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), noting that the project should have been included in the five-year Capital Improvement Plan. Therefore, he stated in accordance with Ordinance #200-012 “*An Ordinance Creating A Municipal Park And Recreation Capital And Non-Recurring Expense Fund For The Town of Ledyard*” that this funding request would have to be presented to the townspeople to vote on at a Special Town Meeting. He noted Section 4 of Ordinance #200-012 as follows:

“Section 4. Expenditure of Funds

(a) Upon authorization by the annual budget meeting of the Town or upon authorization by a special Town meeting of the Town, the monies in said fund may be used for capital and non-recurring expenditures incurred for any of the following:

1. Acquisition, development, improvement, maintenance and expansion of park and recreation lands;”

Councilor Saum went on to explain the funds were available in the Parks & Recreation Capital Non-Recurring Fund because per Ordinance #200-009 “*An Ordinance Providing for the Transfer of Certain Revenue from the Real Estate Conveyance Tax to Specific Town of Ledyard Funds*” the town sets aside twenty percent (20%) received from the real estate conveyance tax into the Capital and Non-Recurring Funds, which was designated for Parks & Recreation Capital, Public Works Capital and for Open Space. Therefore, he stated this Capital Account continuously received funding throughout the year.

Councilor Saums stated in speaking with Director of Parks, Recreation, and Senior Citizens Scott Johnson, Jr., that he shared his concerns about the Pfizer Field Improvement Project not being included in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and he told Mr. Johnson that this Finance Committee has turned projects down in the past because they were not included in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). However, he stated that this project had some unique perspectives, noting that timing was everything with regard to the narrow timeframe to get the project done, including the weather, and because the High School was able to accommodate the Little League games this Fall.

Director of Parks, Recreation, and Senior Citizens Scott Johnson, Jr. stated it was not often that they were able to get all the stars to align that would allow them to shut down a field for improvement work. He stated Little League, the Board of Education, and Parks & Recreation were all involved with this project at the Pfizer Field (Babe Ruth Senior Division Field) this fall to make the needed

repairs/upgrades.

Mr. Johnson explained that Little League has funded other improvements at the Pfizer Field that include bringing electrical service to the property and installing a new scoreboard. He stated the proposed \$16,082.00 Field Improvement Project would address safety concerns, improve drainage, and increase the overall quality of the field with the intent of being able to host State Tournaments in the future.

Mr. Johnson continued by providing an overview of the Pfizer Field (Babe Ruth Senior Field) Improvement Project as follows:

- **Improvements:**

1. Bring loam in to level and hydro seed a large indent located in right field.
2. Bring in red clay and sod to level the infield and eliminate any elevation change “lips”. The transition from infield to turf should be flat.
3. Additional seed to increase the overseed rate. Overseeding is part of the turf management contract, and the additional seed would allow them to seed at a higher pound per square foot than what was included under the contract.
4. The full field closure would allow them to establish new turf and fill in bare spots.

- **Safety/ Liability Concerns:**

1. Elevation/grade changes on a baseball field are a tripping hazard and can lead to sprained/rolled ankles.
2. The ball interacts differently with uneven turf causing the ball to change direction suddenly or cause a ground ball to become airborne.

Mr. Johnson stated that he along with the Landcare & Design Parks & Recreation’s Field Maintainer met with the Board of Education Director of Facilities and Grounds Wayne Donaldson, and Little League to develop a plan for these field improvements.

Councilor Ingalls requested clarification questioning whether the Little League Organization provoked the Pfizer Field improvement project. Mr. Johnson explained in meeting with the Board of Education to discuss how all three groups could work together better, the opportunity to make improvements to the Pfizer Field (Babe Ruth -Senior Division Field) arose. He noted the timeline/plan to get to this point included the following:

- ***Minor Improvements to High School Base Ball Field:***

Little League and the Board of Education have both provided funding to make minor improvements to the High School Baseball Field, which were nearly complete.

- ***Little League would use the High School Baseball Field this Fall***

This would allow them to close one of the Pfizer Field (Babe Ruth -Senior

Division Field) for the Field Improvements.

Councilor Ingalls asked if this \$16,082.00 was appropriated for the improvements at Pfizer Field (Babe Ruth-Senior Division Field) what project would be displaced or not be done this year. She also questioned what account this funding would come from.

Mr. Johnson responded stating because a number of the Parks & Recreation Capital Projects or Capital Purchases have come in under the amount budgeted that funding was available for the Field Improvements, noting that no projects that were planned for this year would be deferred.

Mayor Allyn, III, stated that these Capital Funds were available in the Parks & Recreation Capital Non-Recurring Fund explaining that in accordance with Ordinance #200-009 "*An Ordinance Providing for the Transfer of Certain Revenue from the Real Estate Conveyance Tax to Specific Town of Ledyard Funds*" the town sets aside twenty percent (20%) received from the real estate conveyance tax into the Capital and Non-Recurring Funds, which was designated for Parks & Recreation Capital, Public Works Capital and for Open Space, noting that they were all separate account. Therefore, he stated this Capital Account continuously received funding throughout the year as Real Estate Transactions occur. He stated although the Field Improvement Project was not included in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that the funding was in the Parks & Recreation Capital Account. Finance Director Matthew Bonin explained because of the provisions in Ordinance #200-012 that the revenues received from the Real Estate Conveyance Tax were continuously being deposited into the designated Capital Accounts, and therefore, the funding continues to grow. He stated the funding in these Capital Accounts have not been allocated to any projects, noting that it was "Undesignated".

Mayor Allyn stated initially they were concerned that although the cost for the Pfizer Field Improvement Project was only \$16,082.00 that it would a Referendum Vote on the voting machines, noting that in accordance with Chapter VII, Section 9 of the Town Charter a Special Town Meeting that adjourned to a vote on the voting machines was required when ***non budgeted appropriations accumulatively exceeded two (2) percent of the current tax levy in the current fiscal year.*** However, Mayor Allyn went on to state after further research they found that because of the timing this funding request could be voted on at the Special Town Meeting and it would not have to be presented at a Referendum.

Councilor Saums addressed the importance for all Departments to prepare and submit a Capital Improvement Plan each year when they submit their Annual Budget request. He stated although the Mayor and/or the Town Council may choose not to fund a particular capital request that it would be included in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) should funding become available during the year that they would be able to move forward with the initiative. Therefore, he stated if Mr. Johnson was aware of improvements that needed to be made, even if the improvement was not needed for the current year, that he include them in the Parks & Recreation Capital Request, going forward.

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

MOVER: Andra Ingalls

SECONDER: Tim Ryan

AYE: 3 Saums, Ingalls and Ryan

2. Any other New Business proper to come before the Committee.

None.

IX. OLD BUSINESS

1. Continued discussion regarding the status and possible changes to Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and Capital Non-Recurring (CNR) Fund based on the American Rescue Act Funding (ARPA) and the process to approve ARPA Projects and expend ARPA Funding.

Mayor Allyn, III, stated the ARPA Funding had to be Allocated to a project by December 31, 2024 and that the funding had to be fully Expended by December, 31, 2026. He stated any ARPA Funding that was not used by December 31, 2026 would have to be returned to the Federal Treasury.

Mr. Bonin explained the Federal Treasury definition of “*Obligated Funds*” meant “*An order has been placed for property and services, or contracts, or some awards were made*”. He stated just saying that the funds were going to be used for a particular project, was not considered “*Obligated*” and did not meet the Treasury’s definition. He stated they had to have contracts or Purchase Orders in place; however, he commented that this language was a little gray.

Councilor Ryan stated based on the Federal Treasury definition of “*Obligated Funds*” that it did not necessarily need to be a contract, noting that it could be a Memorandum of Understanding/Agreement (MOU-A) He stated he did not want the town to rush to have contracts finished by the end of 2024, unless that was what they really needed to do. He stated the ARPA Spreadsheet that Mr. Bonin has been updating would serve as the Objective Quality Evidence (OQE), noting that it has been documented in the minutes and was a public record.

The Finance Committee reviewed the updated ARPA Spreadsheet prepared by Finance Director Matthew Bonin (see attached)

Director Matthew Bonin noted the following:

- ✓ Completed Projects: \$229,000 Remaining
 - ✓ Not Yet Committed: \$29,293.98
- Total Available: \$255,256.47 to be committed to other projects.

The Group discussed in further detail the ARPA Funding for the following Projects:

- *Wastewater Treatment Facility Upgrade Project* \$175,000 - Cost came in about

\$15,000 higher than expected. The electrical to the facility , which had been a long-standing issue had to be corrected. The additional cost was not related to the installation of the new Smith and Loveless Sewer Pumps. Water Pollution Control Authority Chairman Ed Lynch and Waste Water Supervisor Steve Banks indicated that they would be submitting a Financial Business Request (FBR) to the Town Council for the additional funding.

- ***Ledyard Center Sewer Line Extension Project:***

Background:

At their January 12, 2022 Town Council meeting approved to appropriate \$1.37 million from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Account for Phase I, Phase II & Phase III of the Ledyard Sewer Line Extension Project. This appropriation was contingent on the approval of the town's CDBG Grant Application in the amount of \$1.38 million for the project. As part of that action the Council also voted, that should the CDBG Application not be approved, that they would appropriate the full cost of the Ledyard Sewer Line Extension Project in the amount of \$2.76 million from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

At the October 5, 2022 Finance Committee meeting it was reported that the town received notification that their CDBG Grant Application in the amount of \$1.38 million for the Ledyard Center Sewer Line Extension was denied.

Because the engineering company requested an extension of an additional 400 days to complete the geo-technical work on the sewer line project, it was anticipated that the Ledyard Center Sewer Project Extension would most likely not begin until May or June, 2023.

At their April 20, 2022 meeting the Finance Committee agreed that rather than allocate the full \$2.76 million for Sewer Line Extension now and forego a number of smaller initiatives on the ARPA Projects List, that they would recommend the Town only allocate \$1.2 million from ARPA Funding for Phase I, because the costs of Phase II would be shared by the Developers.

Because of the delay in the project timeline the Finance Committee was optimistic that they could again apply for the CDBG Grant in the next round or perhaps find other grant opportunities for Phase II and Phase III of the Sewer Line Extension Project.

- ✓ ***Phase I - Sewer Line Extension Project*** - (Bill Library to the High School) - Mayor Allyn stated he signed the Plans for Phase I of the Sewer Line Extension Project today, noting that it was ready to go out to Bid. He stated because this project has been in process for many years that they really did not know what the cost for this project was going to be at this time because of the inflationary environment.

- ✓ **Phase II - Sewer Line Extension Project** - would be shared by the Developers.
- ✓ **Phase III - Sewer Line Extension Project** - \$950,000.00 - Councilor Ryan noted that although ARPA Funding had been earmarked for Phase III, that should Phase I came in much higher than initially estimated that they would not pursue Phase III of the Project.

Mayor Allyn noted the importance of allocating adequate ARPA funding to complete Phase I of the Sewer Line Extension Project to be sure they meet the Federal Government's **Obligated funds requirements**. He also suggested the contracts include *Alt Add Options* such as additional laterals, noting that if they had surplus funds remaining that they could exercise the *Alt Add Options*.

Councilor Saums stated this type of detail work to stay on-top of their ARPA Spending Plan and the status of each of the Projects was what keeps the town whole.

RESULT: CONTINUE

2. Continued discussion regarding potential uses of the revenue received from Public Act No.21-58 "An Act Concerning Solid Waste Management" in accordance with "Resolution Regarding Revenues Received from Beverage Container Surcharges" adopted on June 8, 2022.

Councilor Saums stated that he saw the Beautification Committee at the Farmers Market earlier this evening and he noted that he asked them if they were ready and willing to take on the "Adopt a Highway" program to clean up the roads and to act as a clearing house for the non-profit organizations who would be participating in the program, should the town decide to implement the program. He stated the Committee noted that they have discussed the initiative. He stated that he mentioned to the Committee that the town has obtained a copy of the Town of Montville's Adopt a Highway program that the Finance Committee planned to review.

Councilor Saums noted the importance to get moving on the Adopt-a-Highway Program to clean up the roads and pick up the nip bottles that were littering their roadsides, because the roadside vegetation would be dying back soon and that they would want to be ready to deploy the non-profit organizations to get to work and to raise some money for their organization while the weather was cooperating.

Councilor Saums provided some background for those who may be watching or listening to this meeting explaining that the "Bottle Bill" (Public Act No. 21-58 - *An Act Concerning Solid Waste Management*) implemented a five-cent surcharge on any beverage container containing a spirit or liquor of fifty milliliters; and that every six-

months the State disbursed the surcharge fees collected to the town in which the beverages were sold. He stated the surcharge funding could only be used for the following purposes:

- (1) Environmental measures intended to reduce the generation of solid waste;
- (2) Reduce the impact of litter caused by such solid waste, including, but not limited to, the hiring of a recycling coordinator
- (3) The installation of storm drain filters designed to block solid waste and beverage container debris or
- (4) The purchase of a mechanical street sweeper, vacuum or broom that removes litter, including, but not limited to, such beverage containers and other debris from streets, sidewalks and abutting lawn and turf.

Councilor Saums went on to explain that the Finance Committee has been considering ideas on how best to use the surcharge funding and has decided to make this a community effort by paying non-profit organizations for the collection of the nip bottles.

Councilor Ingalls asked how the Adopt-a Highway Program would be initiated, questioning whether it would require an official communication from the Finance Committee or from Town Council to the Beautification Committee.

Councilor Saums stated that the Finance Committee should review the Town of Montville's Adopt-a-Highway Program and update it to meet Ledyard's needs and then review the Program with the Beautification Committee. He stated if the Beautification Committee agreed with the Program that they would then need to develop a Communications Plan to reach out to non-profit organizations such as the Lyons Club, Rotary Club, Fire Companies, Scouts, Churches, etc. to obtain their interest in participating in the Program.

Mayor Allyn suggested the Adopt-a-Highway Program include an age requirement, so they do not have small kids, such as eight-year-old scouts, on the side of the roads. He also suggested that the volunteers be required wear reflective/brightly colored safety vests, that they deploy "Caution Roadside Clean-Up" signs and or safety cones to block off the lanes where people were cleaning up the roads. He stated that they would also need to keep the nips bottles separate from the rest of the roadside litter. He stated the town could purchase the signs and other safety materials using the surcharge funding.

RESULT: CONTINUE

3. MOTION to accept the Ledge Light Health District-Ledyard Prevention Coalition proposal dated June 5, 2023 for the use of the National Opioid Settlement Funding received by the Town of Ledyard with the following changes:
 - Reduce the number of Narcan boxes from 194 to 154 for a total reduction of \$1,900;
 - Remove the Police Wellness Dog for a reduction of \$2,000.

These adjustments have reduced the total amount of the proposal to \$36,100 from the

\$40,000 originally proposed.

This obligation of funds does not guarantee future funding obligations to your organization.

Also, with the disbursement of funds the Town of Ledyard asks that the Ledyard Prevention Coalition provide quarterly reports to the Town Council regarding Program effectiveness from the start date of the Programs.

Councilor Saums stated at their June 7, 2023 meeting the Finance Committee briefly reviewed the one proposal received in the amount of \$40,000 from Ledyard Prevention Coalition regarding the use of the Opioid Settlement Funding that the Town would be receiving. He noted Ms. Mansfield later attended the Finance Committee's June 21, 2023 meeting to answer the Finance Committee's questions regarding the Coalition's Proposal. He stated to-date the Finance Committee has not received any other proposals.

Councilor Saums explained that the Town of Ledyard began receiving payments through its participation in the National Opioid Settlement; and that these payments were expected to continue until 2038. He also explained that the Opioid Settlement Funds were to be used exclusively for opioid abatement purposes, including, but not limited to, expanding access to opioid use disorder prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery options, etc.

Councilor Saums went on to state because they have not received any other proposals that the Town Council had the option to award some of the Opioid Settlement Funding to the Ledyard Prevention Coalition for their proposal.

Mayor Allyn, III, stated although Walmart and CVS Pharmacy were still outstanding from the National Opioid Settlement, that the Ledyard would be receiving about \$22,000 per year through 2038. Therefore, he stated the Town Council could appropriate funding to the Ledyard Prevention Coalition this year and to another organization next year, etc. He stated as an example that Administrative of Emergency Services Steve Holyfield suggested using some of the Opioid Settlement Funding to purchase an Automatic Chest Compression Device to use on someone who had an opioid overdose. He stated this device would conduct chest compressions on the person as they were being moved from their location into the ambulance. However, Mayor Allyn stated he would need to review the Opioid Settlement Use Guide to determine the permitted uses of the funding.

Councilor Ryan noted that much of the Ledyard Prevention Coalition's proposal was to support salaries. Therefore, he questioned should the Town Council want the flexibility to give the money to other organizations, as the Mayor Allyn suggested, that he would want to understand what would drop off of the Ledyard Prevention Coalition's proposal should they decide to use/give some of the Opioid Funding to another merit able use.

The Finance Committee stated during their June 21, 2023 discussion with Ms.

Mansfield they discussed the following adjustments to the \$40,000 Ledyard Prevention Coalition Proposal and they thought that Ms. Mansfield was going to submit a revised Proposal.

- \$24,128.00 Salaries Expenses (Project Coordinator and Peer Navigator)
- \$1,281.00 - Travel Expenses
- ~~\$9,215~~ **\$7,315.00** Narcan (\$47.50/box for ~~194~~ **154** boxes 1box per 100 people)
- \$600.00 - Emergency Overdose Kit (\$300.00/box for 2 boxes)
- \$1,844.00 - Awareness Campaign (local radio stations. social media, etc.)
- \$500.00 - Marketing Materials
- \$432.00 - Office Supplies to include Printing and Postage
- ~~\$2,000 — Wellness Dog for the Ledyard Police Department~~

NEW TOTAL: \$36,100

Mayor Allyn stated that the Finance Committee could make the adjustments as noted above and ask the Ledyard Prevention Coalition to submit a revised Plan.

Councilor Saums stated that although he understood the reason for a Wellness Dog that it would commit the town to a much more expensive endeavor.

Councilor Rodriguez questioned why they would not want to have a Wellness Dog. Councilor Saums stated the Ledyard Police Department previously had two Canine Units. He stated the \$2,000 would go toward a wellness dog that the Police Department would manage (see Finance Committee Minutes of June 21, 2023). However, he stated the \$2,000 would not cover the total cost of the Wellness Dog, noting in addition to feeding, caring for it, veterinarian expenses, and the training involved, etc., that more funding would be required. He stated there was a lot to having a dog, whether it was a Canine Unit or a Wellness Dog. Councilor Rodriguez questioned whether the Police Department currently had a dog. Councilor Saums stated the Police Department has requested a dog many times during the budget process; however, he stated the request has not been approved. Mayor Allyn stated having a dog would also require a vehicle that was outfitted with kennel, it would require training for both the dog and the police officer that would take place in Middletown, which would then require additional staff (overtime) to cover the shift while the dog and police officer were away at training, noting that the cost would balloon. Councilor Rodriguez questioned whether they know the full cost for the Police Department to have a dog. Councilor Saums stated that they did not know the total cost to have a dog, noting that there were some good reasons to have a dog. However, he stated they should not have a dog because it was a line item in a proposal. Mayor Allyn stated the Police Department has not had a dog since 2007, noting that there were memorials for each of the two dogs they previously had between the Police Department and the Town Hall buildings

- MOTION to recommend the Town Council accept the Ledge Light Health District-Ledyard Prevention Coalition proposal dated June 5, 2023 to use National Opioid Settlement Funding received by the Town of Ledyard as follows: Reduce the

number of Narcan boxes from 194 to 154 for a total reduction of \$1,900, and remove the police wellness dog for a further reduction of \$2,000, bringing the total amount of the proposal down to \$36,100 from the \$40,000 originally proposed. Obligation of funds does not guarantee future funding obligations. Ledyard Prevention Coalition is to provide quarterly reports to the Ledyard Town Council regarding Program effectiveness from the date of program start.

Moved by Councilor Saums, seconded by Councilor Ingalls

Discussion: (see above).

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared

- 4. Any other Old Business proper to come before the Committee.

None.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Ingalls moved the meeting be adjourned, seconded by Councilor Ryan.

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared, the meeting was adjourned at 5:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

William Saums
Committee Chairman

Finance

Committee

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