



TOWN OF LEDYARD

CONNECTICUT
TOWN COUNCIL

Chairman Kevin J. Dombrowski

MINUTES
LEDARD TOWN COUNCIL – REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JULY 26, 2023; 7:00 PM
HYBRID FORMAT
VIDEO CONFERENCE VIA ZOOM

DRAFT

- 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 –

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Location
Kevin Dombrowski	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
Andra Ingalls	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
Whit Irwin	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
John Marshall	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
Mary McGrattan	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
Gary Paul	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
S. Naomi Rodriguez	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
Timothy Ryan	Town Councilor	Present	Remote
William Saums	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person

- IV. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS/PRESENTATIONS – None.

- V. RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS

Mr. Charles Hollis, 6 Autumn Way, Ledyard, appealed to the Town Council to consider adopting an Ordinance in accordance with Connecticut General State Statute 12-81c to provide a personal property tax exemption for modified handicap accessible vehicles owned by a person with disabilities. He stated in researching surrounding towns that the towns of Groton, Montville, Branford, and Stonington currently provide tax exemptions for “*Modified Handicap Accessible Vehicles*”, noting that Montville had a similar population and similar total tax levy to Ledyard. He stated in providing a tax exemption for six vehicles that met the *Modified Handicap Accessible Vehicles*” definition the financial impact to Montville was of \$3,400. He stated that he would be purchasing a handicap accessible vehicle for his wife, noting that the cost was about \$90,000; which was the reason he was requesting the town consider an Ordinance to provide a property tax exemption for modified handicap accessible vehicles. He provided examples of a Tax Assessor’s Exempt Forms from other towns that offer this type of tax abatement. He stated that he planned to contact the Tax Assessor’s Office to find out how many handicapped accessible vehicles Ledyard had on their tax roll. He stated in surrounding town’s this type of vehicle accounted for 0.04% of the total personal property tax.

Councilor McGrattan asked Mr. Hollis what a modified handicap accessible vehicle looked like. Mr. Hollis stated several manufacturers made handicap accessible vehicles such as Chrysler, Toyota, Honda, etc. He stated depending on the needs of the person’s disability that some vehicles had lifts for wheelchair access, or a ramp that slides out; and that some vehicles kneel down so that it was lower on one side and a ramp that folded out. He also noted that the side door on some vehicles open with a remote control. Chairman Dombrowski noted a vehicle with a handicap sticker would not comply with the State Statute 12-81c.

Mr. Hollis read the governing state statute as follows:

“Sec. 12-81c. Municipal option to exempt certain motor vehicles. The legislative body of any municipality may, by ordinance, exempt from personal property taxation (1) any ambulance-type motor vehicle which is used exclusively for the purpose of transporting any medically incapacitated individual, except any such vehicle used to transport any such individual for profit, (2) any property owned by a nonprofit ambulance company, and (3) any motor vehicle owned by a person with disabilities, or owned by the parent or guardian of such person, which vehicle is equipped for purposes of adapting its use to the disability of such person, provided the legislative body of the municipality adopts a definition of such vehicle.”

Chairman Dombrowski thanked Mr. Hollis for bringing the state statute to the Town Council’s attention and he referred the request to the Finance Committee. Councilor Saums noted that next Finance Committee would be held on August 16, 2023.

Mr. Hollis questioned the process for the town to implement an Ordinance. Chairman Dombrowski explained it would take a few months, noting that first the Finance Committee would review the request and financial impact to the town, as well as look at other town’s ordinances. He stated should the Finance Committee recommend the town move forward with the tax exemption program for *Modified Handicap Accessible Vehicles* that the proposal would be reviewed by the Administration Committee, and sent onto a Public Hearing before the Town Council would consider adopting the Ordinance.

IV. COMMITTEE COMMISSION AND BOARD REPORTS – None.

VI. COMMENTS OF TOWN COUNCILORS

Councilor Paul stated the Community Relations Committee hosted a Booth at the July 19, 2023 Farmers’ Market to bring awareness and to provide information regarding Mental Health. He thanked Councilor Saums and Councilor Rodriguez for participating in the event. He also thanked the Ledyard Police Department, the Brian Dagele Healing Hearts Foundation from Niantic, and SERAC who was a new addition to their Booth this year. He stated SERAC was a non-profit organization located in Norwich that served 41 communities in Eastern Connecticut, he noted that they provide programs and services to reduce the impact of substance abuse, problem gambling, and mental health challenges. He stated SERAC Representative Mark Lyons (Suicide Prevention Lead) was at their Booth, noting that SERAC provided group trainings to help people identify the signs of suicide and teach people how to help others. Councilor Paul stated that he was going to try to start at group in Ledyard, and that he would like Mr. Lyon’s to give a brief presentation at a Town Council Meeting. He stated we pass people who are functioning with mental health issues, depression, or contemplating suicide at the grocery store, or at other places. He stated the question was whether you would be able to help that person, and whether you would know what to do. He stated if you saw someone with a broken arm you may ask them what happened or how you could help them. However, he stated if they saw someone with tears in their eyes and desperate, most people would probably not say anything to the person. He encouraged folks to visit the SERAC website at: SERACCT.org and take the quiz to challenge yourself to see if you knew some of the truths and myths and whether you would be interested in taking one of Mr. Lyon’s trainings. He stated it was a good event for the Farmers Market and for the community. He thanked everyone who stopped by their Booth and picked up information from their table.

Councilor Paul continued by noting the “*Take It To The Box*” Campaign and he encouraged residents to take their unused prescription medications to the Box located at the Ledyard Police Department and keep the medications out of the schools and to keep our community safe. He stated the Police Department was open 7/24 for folks to drop off their unused prescription medications in the Box, no questions asked. He stated that he did a Radio Ad for the *Take It To The Box* campaign, noting the following:

- Last year New London County had 123 drug overdose deaths.
- 90% of those 123 overdose deaths involved an Opioid.
- 12 Ledyard residents had a non-fatal overdose last year.

Councilor Paul stated these statistics were the reasons, as leaders of their community, the Town Council needed to get the *Take It To The Box* message out there. He stated we all have old prescriptions laying around and he encouraged residents to take those medications to the Box, noting we all have to try to keep our schools and our community safe. He stated that he was told he did a good job on the Radio Ad, and that he was waiting for the telephone call for his next career, noting that he had a face for radio!

Councilor Saums commented on Councilor Paul's passion on the topic of Mental Health, Suicide Prevention, and helping folks and for the work he has done on the Community Relations Committee. He stated Councilor Paul was organized, he was engaged, he was passionate, and that he talked to people during the full three-hours they were at the Booth at the Farmers' Market. He stated the new Town of Ledyard Tent was beautiful, and he thanked Administrative Assistant Roxanne Maher for her initiative to get the tent/canopy, noting that it made him proud of his community.

Councilor Rodriguez stated as Councilor Paul noted, she participated at the Brian Dagle Healing Hearts Foundation Tent at the July 19, 2023 Farmers' Market. She stated the residents thanked the Brian Dagle Healing Hearts Foundation for being at the Farmers' Market and stated that they needed this type of support in their area. She also stated that teachers, nurses, police officers, and members from the community stopped by their tent and she noted that many folks said they were dealing with grief or had a suicide in their family. She stated that she was glad to have the Brian Dagle Healing Hearts Foundation here in Ledyard.

Councilor McGrattan addressed SERAC of Norwich noting that they have been in existence for a long time. She stated they were not a new organization, noting that years ago they were very involved with teenage alcohol drinking. Councilor Paul stated that SERA has expanded their teenage drinking program and that they focus on working to get the right connections for training and help. Councilor Saums noted SERAC could be found on-line at: SERACCT.org

VII. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

MOTION to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes June 28, 2023
Moved by Councilor Ingalls, seconded by Councilor McGrattan
9 – 0 Approved and so declared

VOTE:

IX. COMMUNICATIONS

Chairman Dombrowski stated a Communications List has been provided. He noted there were no referrals listed; other than the one he made earlier this evening to the Finance Committee regarding CGS 12-81c pertaining to tax exemptions for *modified handicap accessible vehicles*.

X. COUNCIL SUB COMMITTEE, LIAISON REPORTS

Administration Committee

Councilor Ingalls stated the Administration Committee met earlier this evening and addressed one new appointment to the Historic District Commission. She noted this item would be forwarded to the Town Council for action their August 23, 2023 meeting.

Community Relations Committee

Councilor Paul stated although the Community Relations Committee has not met since the last Town Council meeting because they hosted a Booth at the July 19, 2023 Farmers' Market as he mentioned earlier this evening under VI. *Councilor Comments*. He stated the Committee's next meeting will be held on August 16, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. He stated the Committee looked forward to their next Farmers' Market Informational Booth scheduled for August 30, 2023 noting that they would feature Library Services.

Finance Committee

Councilor Saums stated the Finance Committee met on July 19, 2023 and he noted in addition to the items on tonight's Agenda that the Committee also discussed the following: (1) Fiscal Year 2022/2023 Close-Out - Councilor Saums stated Finance Director Matthew Bonin reported that the Finance Department was working to close-out the Fiscal Year 2022/2023 Budget and that he did not expect the full amount that was budgeted from the Mill Rate Stabilization fund would be needed; (2) Schools Consolidation/Improvement Projects (Middle School and Gallup Hill School) State Funding- Councilor Saums noted

Finance Director Matthew Bonin reported that the Town was still waiting on the State Department of Administrative Services (DAS) regarding their request for additional paperwork on the school projects. He noted during the meeting Mayor Allyn stated that he was aware of two other towns that have been waiting 3 and 5 years for the State to audit and close out their school projects. Councilor Saums stated the Mayor commented that the State needed to be more responsive knowing that towns were using short term loans at higher interest rates to pay for the projects while the State deliberated; (3) Sandy Hollow Road Guide Rail Replacement – Councilor Saums stated the Finance Committee discussed the replacement of the guide rails on Sandy Hollow Road. He noted that Councilor Ingalls questioned whether the town might be able to apply for grants to cover the cost difference between standard steel ribbon rails, which were unsightly compared to the existing post and cable guide rails, since Sandy Hollow Road was designated as a scenic road by the Town; (4) Nip Bottle Surcharge Revenues received from Public Act No.21-58 “*An Act Concerning Solid Waste Management*” - Councilor Saums stated the Finance Committee continued their discussion regarding ways to use the payments from the solid waste (nip) reimbursement program. He noted Mayor Allyn, III, reported that Montville had an interesting program in place using the nip surcharge revenues to encourage non-profit organizations to adopt roads and collect the nip bottles as well as trash. He stated the Mayor would be communicating with Mayor McDaniel to obtain more details regarding Montville’s Program.

Land Use/Planning/Public Works Committee

Councilor Paul stated the LUPPW Committee has not met since the last Town Council meeting. He stated the Committee would be meeting on Monday, August 7, 2023.

Water Pollution Control Authority

Councilor Saums stated the WPCA met on July 25, 2023 and addressed the following: (1) Fire Hydrant Flushing - Routine flushing of specific hydrants and blow-offs was being conducted to lower the water age in both the Ledyard Center and Gales Ferry systems, as part of their efforts to maintain the lowest Total Trihalomethanes (TTHM) levels possible in both systems; (2) Ledyard Center Water Storage Tank Maintenance – Groton Utilities (GU) was finally able to make contact with the painter for the top of the Ledyard Center tank top, who provided an August 14, 2023 start date; (3) Holmberg Water Storage Tank - Groton Utilities obtained one quote for the Holmberg tank re-inspection work and were trying to obtain two more quotes; (4) Skid Mounted Sewer Pumps - One of the Smith and Loveless skid mounted sewer pumps had a failure that was being covered by the manufacturer. However, they would need to operate on one pump in manual mode until the part could be replaced; (5) WPCA Policy Manual - The WPCA continued discussing their Policy Manual and were planning to vote on the revisions at their next meeting; (6) Baldwin Hill Road - The homeowner on Baldwin Hill Road whose well has run dry decided to have their well fracked, so there may be no immediate need to continue consideration of a water main at this time; (7) Cost of Services Study – For financial due diligence the Department of Public Health (DPH) required a *Cost of Service Study for Ledyard* be performed prior to the merger of the two water systems (Ledyard’s water system and Groton Utilities’ water system). The Study that was offered by Groton Utilities in March, 2023 would cost approximately \$30,000. Whether a sale of Ledyard’s assets was contemplated or not, the study was expected to inform the WPCA on their Billing Practices and Rate Structure, as well as their Capital Plan; (8) Multi-Model Pathway-Trail - The WPCA has not received word on when the work for multi-modal trail could proceed. However, Councilor Saums stated Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin reported that he believed Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SECCOG) has finished its approval process, but that the Department of Transportation (DOT) would have another turn at it from a funding standpoint, after which they would be ready to solicit bids.

Councilor Marshall questioned whether there was only one home on Baldwin Hill Road that reported their well was dry. Councilor Saums stated at this time only one homeowner has reported a dry well. However, he stated the WPCA expected that there may be more because of the blasting that was being done in the area, which can alter the flow of water into the wells in the area. He stated the WPCA sent a letter to the Planning & Zoning Commission regarding their concerns about what could happen with the blasting in the area.

Ledyard Beautification Committee

Councilor Ingalls stated the Beautification Committee met on July 18, 2023 noting that the Committee has changed their meeting schedule from quarterly to monthly because of the amount of work they have, and because they were missing out on opportunities. She stated the Committee also discussed the following: (1) Parade Banner; (2) Ledyard Center Streetlights

Holiday Flags; (3) Farmers Market – The Committee will be hosting Booths on August 16, 2023 and September 20, 2023 and will have rock painting kits available for kids; (4) Gales Ferry School Gardens – The Committee will be talking to the Garden Club for some guidance and hope that the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) would also be interested in helping.

Committee to Review the Budget Process

Councilor Ryan stated the Committee to Review the Budget Process held its Organizational Meeting on July 25, 2023. He stated the Committee elected the following Officers: Chairman – Tim Ryan; Vice-Chairman – Mike Brawner, Recording Secretary – Earl (Ty) Lamb. He stated the Committee also set their meeting schedule to be the first and third Monday of each month at 6:00 p.m. beginning on August 7, 2023 and ending in October. He stated they would be putting together some background information from the 2016 Budget Committee and working to obtain some data based on Committee member comments. He stated that the Committee was comprised of a great group of residents, and he looked forward to working with them on this assignment.

Councilor Ingalls stated she attended Committee to Review the Budget Process' Organizational Meeting last night. She commented that she was impressed by some of the comments made by Members who were representing the Community-at-Large, noting that they requested some data that was astute to ask for. She stated that their questions made her feel good that they had good people on the Committee.

XI. MAYOR'S REPORT

Chairman Dombrowski stated Mayor Allyn, III, was not present; however, he provided the following written Report, which was also attached to the Agenda on the meeting portal: (1) Long Pond- Whitford Brook Bridge, Dam and Culvert Replacements – A Public Information Forum was held on July 11, 2023 in the Council Chambers from 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm. Twenty-eight residents attended, including some Stonington residents. The Mayor opened the Informational Forum with introductions, Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin with WMC Engineers presented the project that was followed by a Question & Answer period. It was noted that the town planned to seek Bids this Fall, 2023 for the bridge construction work and for the engineering work for dam and culvert replacements. The bridge construction was expected to begin in the Spring, 2024; however, the dam and culvert replacements work was not expected to be completed for 3-4 years; (2) Schools Consolidation/Improvement Projects (Middle School and Gallup Hill School) – Mayor Allyn attended a meeting at the Ledyard Middle School with Superintendent of School Jason Hartling and Board of Education Director of Grounds & Facilities Wayne Donaldson, Project Manager O&G Industries, and Colliers Project Leaders who was hired to prepare and assemble the entire body of evidence that would meet the State's Guidelines, to discuss the issues concerning the gymnasium floor. They indicated that they could not determine if the nails pre-existed the project or not; because they sanded as many as 10 coats of polyurethane from the gymnasium maple wood floors; and once the many years of finish was removed, the nails apparently became more evident. At the meeting the group unanimously agreed that the best course of action was for the Town to hire a contractor to countersink the screws, install maple wood plugs over screw heads, sand flush with floor and polyurethane the areas with plugs. The cost for this work was anticipated to be minimal; (3) Subbase Change of Command – Mayor Allyn attended the US Subbase Change of Command. The Groton Subbase would be the homeport for the new Virginia Class Submarine; adding to the local fleet and population; (4) Ribbon Cutting – Mayor Allyn attended *The Creamery at Sweet Hill* Ribbon Cutting. Ms. Charlene Rand was doing a nice job with the operation and collected \$400 in her first fundraiser to support the Ledyard Youth Soccer Club; (5) Disband the Nursing Board – Mayor Allyn sent letters to Nursing Board members to thank each one for all their service to the Town and to officially disband the Nursing Board. He also offered the residents other opportunities to volunteer to serve the town if they wished to do so; (6) Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SECCOG) Solid Waste Committee – Mayor Allyn Chaired the first SECCOG Solid Waste Committee meeting on July 18, 2023. After introductions of the members, the Committee discussed the components of the waste stream, speaker lineup for the coming meetings, various municipal formats (subscription (Preston), town-wide (Ledyard), Public Works (New London). The Committee planned to dive into single stream, organics and glass cullet; (7) Town Hall Space Needs and Reconfigurations - Mayor Allyn was working to streamline operations and to provide for better customer service by moving Tax Collector and Tax Assessor into one office area. In addition, to help support the State's new early voting requirements which would be implemented in early 2024 the Registrars would be moved into current location of the Building Office in the lower level of Town Hall which would provide access to their office

from the outside. Also, the Land Use Department (Planning & Zoning, Inland Wetland and Watercourses, and the Building Office) would be expanding their office space into the area where the nursing office was located, in the lower Town Hall.

Questions to the Mayor - None.

XII. OLD BUSINESS – None.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

Finance Committee

1. MOTION to transfer up to \$21,027.00 Account #21020101-57510 (Police Capital Vehicle) to Account 21020101-57300 (Police Capital New Equipment) to allow for the purchase of new Glock 9mm handguns for Ledyard Police Department.

Moved by Councilor Saums, seconded by Councilor Ingalls

Discussion: Councilor Saums provided some background explaining over the years that the Police Department went from using a 9mm handgun to a 45mm handgun and now they are looking to go back to a 9mm handgun. He stated one of the reasons they were looking to go from the 45mm back to 9mm handgun was because they now had more female police officers and the 9mm handgun was a better design for a smaller hand. He stated it also included an optic system commonly referred to as a “red dot” sight and that the ammunition costs would be reduced by approximately \$1,000 per order because the magazine capacity would hold 17 rounds versus the current 13 rounds that the 45-caliber handgun holds.

Councilor Saums continued by addressing the importance of the “red dot” sight technology for shooting accuracy and for liability, explaining that it was not a red laser dot like what they see with a taser. He stated the “red dot” sight was a hologram that was mounted on the handgun. He stated when the dots were lined up in the hologram the police officer could see where they were aiming, noting that it did not put a red dot on the target.

Councilor Saums noted the horrific incident that occurred in Bristol last year when two police officers were shot and killed and another was wounded in responding to an Emergency 911 Call for a domestic dispute on October 22, 2022. He stated because of the red dot sight technology the wounded police officer was able to take out the assailant in the dark using the Glock 9mm because he was trained, because of the better visibility in low light, and because of the red dot sight technology. He stated an interesting PowerPoint was attached to the Agenda on the meeting portal that showed what the sights looked like and the difference in low light conditions.

Councilor Saums went on to explain that the Police Department has requested a transfer of \$21,027.00 from their Police Vehicle Capital Account to their Equipment Account to purchase the new 9mm handguns. He stated the town would be receiving about a \$10,000 for the trade-in of the current handguns, which were about 10-years old. He stated during the Finance Committee meeting Councilor Ryan questioned how this transfer would impact the Police Department relative to their vehicle replacement schedule. He stated that Chief Rich explained that when the Police Department provides traffic services at construction sites, etc., that the Contractor pays for the Police Officer, and the use of the Police Cruiser, etc., noting that the funding received for the police cruiser was allocated to their Vehicle Capital Account. He stated because the Police Department had a lot of traffic/construction work this year with Eversource replacing the transmission lines, Frontier Communications installing the fiber network throughout the entire town, tree work, and other projects, that the Police Department received more revenue than they have typically received in past years. Therefore, the transfer of these funds and for the next item (#2) on tonight’s agenda would not adversely impact the funding for the cruiser replacement schedule for Fiscal Year 2023/2024. Councilor Saums noted Chief Rich was attending tonight’s meeting remotely via zoom should anyone have questions.

Police Chief John Rich explained in accordance with recent trends in law enforcement, including changes to the standard issue of firearms for the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Connecticut State Police, that Ledyard’s Firearms Training Staff conducted testing of handguns with the intention of transitioning to a 9mm platform. He explained that the selected handgun, the Glock G45 MOS 9mm pistol, would be equipped with an optic system commonly referred to as a “red dot” sight, as Councilor Saums mentioned. He stated the use of red dot sights has been shown to improve shooting accuracy at all distances in varying light conditions.

Chief Rich went on to explain the Firearms Training Unit Proposal considered the following factors:

- Handgun frame size with consideration to varying hand sizes within the department.
- Shooting accuracy and marksmanship at all distances and in varying light conditions (Red dot vs fixed sights).
- Availability to use one’s peripheral vision while shooting (with both eyes open).
- Reduced Ammunition Cost - 9mm versus 45 caliber
- Additional capacity per magazine (17 rounds vs. 13 rounds)
- Officer performance under stress conditions (Bristol).
- Age of current equipment – typically keep handguns about 8 – 10 years
- Credit for equipment trade in (\$10,850.00 or \$310 per unit)
- Available State Contract Pricing

Chairman Dombrowski questioned whether funding to purchase the new 9mm handguns was included in the Capital Improvement Plan. Chief Rich stated that the Police Department included funding for the purchase of the 9mm handguns in their Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Capital Improvement Plan. However, he stated during the budget deliberations and preparation process the funding was not included. Chairman Dombrowski noted the importance to set up a sinking fund to allocate funding on an annual basis to facilitate a Handgun Replacement Plan to be prepared for the handguns lifecycle.

VOTE: 9- 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED 9 - 0
MOVER: Bill Saums, Town Councilor
SECONDER Andra Ingalls, Town Councilor
AYES: Dombrowski, Ingalls, Irwin, Marshall, McGrattan, Paul, Rodriguez, Ryan, Saums

2. MOTION to transfer up to \$8,863.00 from Police Capital Vehicle Account 21020101-57510 to Police Capital New Equipment Account 21020101-57300 to allow for the replacement of critical accident investigation and reconstruction equipment for Ledyard Police Department.

Moved by Councilor Saums, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: Councilor Saums stated the Ledyard Police Department has an Accident Investigation/Reconstruction Team that investigates fatal and serious injury crashes in the area. He stated because the equipment failed the Police Department was requesting \$8,863.00 be transferred from the Police Capital Vehicle Account (#21020101-57510) to Police Capital New Equipment Account (#21020101-57300) to replace the equipment. He stated during the Finance Committee’s July 19, 2023 meeting Councilor Ryan and Councilor Ingalls asked good questions about the equipment, why the equipment needed to be replaced, how the equipment was used, and how Ledyard participated in the region.

Councilor Saums went on to explain that Police Chief John Rich used the analogy that this equipment was similar to surveyors tools noting that it had special measuring devices such as lasers for the reconstruction of fatal crash scenes. He stated all this data was then used to create a map and a report of the incident. He stated this equipment recently failed in working on an investigation and they had to use manual procedures to reconstruct the accident. He stated should there be a fatal accident in an area that Ledyard would send Police Officers to that town to operate the reconstruction equipment; and in return Ledyard would receive “*In-Kind/Mutual Aid*” type of services such as a Canine Unit, etc., from the towns that have things that our town was not equipped with, noting that the area towns worked together, shared resources, as well as personnel.

Councilor Rodriguez questioned how long the special accident reconstruction equipment would last. Chief Rich stated the equipment they had was at least ten-years old. He stated as Councilor Saums mentioned, their equipment recently failed in working on an investigation and they had to use some manual procedures to reconstruct the accident, which took them a couple of months to complete. He stated the new laser equipment had a Bluetooth type of communication that would talk with the other end of the equipment, which their current equipment did not have. Therefore, he stated the updated equipment, although it would provide the same type of evidence collection process, would greatly improve the integration of the digital data, inspections, maps/overlays of the scene to produce presentations/reports that could be used in the court process. He stated this equipment could tell them when the brakes went on, the speed of the vehicle, etc. He stated this \$8,863.00 would purchase the critical mapping equipment that would

reproduce the accident scene as it occurred, when the Police Officers were doing the investigation.

Councilor Saums stated the data collected also goes into a traffic data base, which allowed the town to monitor where accidents frequently happen, and that the data was also shared with the state.

VOTE: 9 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED 9- 0
MOVER: Bill Saums, Town Councilor
SECONDER Tim Ryan, Town Councilor
AYES: Dombrowski, Ingalls, Irwin, Marshall, McGrattan, Paul, Rodriguez, Ryan, Saums

Councilor Saums thanked Police Chief John Rich for attending tonight’s meeting as well as last week’s Finance Committee.

3. MOTION to appropriate \$298,211 to Account #21020401-57300-G0015 (Admin Emerg Services - New Equipment - Misc. Grants).

In addition, authorize the expenditure of up to \$298,211 for purchase of new radio equipment for the fire departments.

Moved by Councilor Saums, seconded by Councilor Ingalls

Discussion: Councilor Saums provided some background noting that Administrator of Emergency Services Steve Holyfield has been diligently submitting Applications for the Assistance to Firefighter’s Grant from FEMA over the past few years to purchase new radio equipment for the Fire Departments.

Councilor Saums went on to note at their March 24, 2023 meeting the Town Council authorized the Mayor to submit a grant through the FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program in the amount of \$298,210.52 with a local match of \$14,200.52 for the acquisition of new portable and mobile radios for the Fire Departments. He stated the Town received notification that this year’s Grant Application was approved. He stated this item would allocate the \$298,210.52 grant funding to the Admin Emerg. Services - New Equipment Account and would also authorize the purchase of the new radio equipment.

Councilor Saums continued by pointing out that the backup information indicated at that the Viking-Kenwood Radios have not been accepted for the use on the State’s system. However, he stated Mr. Holyfield explained at the time of the original quote which was received in January, 2023 that the State had not yet approved the Viking-Kenwood Radios. He stated the State has since accepted this radio model, noting that Mr. Holyfield received a revised quote from J&S Radio of Willimantic, which included the State of CT Contract Bid Number, which was a clear indication that the State has approved their selected radio model to operate on the State’s Communication System.

Councilor Saums noted that Administrator of Emergency Services Steve Holyfield was attending tonight’s meeting remotely via Zoom. Mr. Holyfield stated this was the third year he submitted the Assistance to Firefighter’s Grant from FEMA for the purchase of the portable radios, and that he was happy it was finally approved. He stated the purchase of these mobile and portable radios, chargers, carry cases, batteries, etc., would be a big improvement, noting that Ledyard has been working toward getting onto the State’s Radio Communication System for many years, stating that former Administrator of Emergency Services Russ Shaw began this process. He stated this radio system frequency and bandwidth would have the interoperability that would allow Ledyard to communicate with Groton, Norwich and many other agencies that were making this change to the State’s communication system.

VOTE: 9 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED 9 - 0
MOVER: Bill Saums, Town Councilor
SECONDER Andra Ingalls, Town Councilor
AYES: Dombrowski, Ingalls, Irwin, Marshal, McGrattan, Paul, Rodriguez, Ryan, Saums

Councilor Saums thanked Administrator of Emergency Services Steve Holyfield for attending tonight's meeting as well as last week's Finance Committee.

Chief Rich and Mr. Holyfield left the meeting at 7:38 p.m.

4. MOTION to authorize the Mayor to enter into a Real Estate Listing Agreement for the sale of the house located at 332 Colonel Ledyard Highway.

Moved by Councilor Saums, seconded by Councilor McGrattan

Discussion: Councilor Saums provided some background explaining in 2006 the 96.52 ± acres Founders Preserve property was subdivided into a 36-lot subdivision with a new road and approximately forty new drainage structures. He stated because the road was never constructed none of the building lots were sold. However, he stated the property was zoned R-60 and tax bills were generated for the 36 approved building lots. He continued to explain because of unpaid taxes the town foreclosed on the property around 2016. He stated at a Special Town Meeting held on October 28, 2020 the Townspeople voted to transfer/convey the parcel to Avalonia Land Conservancy. However, he stated with the new boundary lines the Developer made for the planned Subdivision, the property was essentially landlocked, and Avalonia Land Conservancy has not been able access the property; therefore, the property transfer has not yet been completed. He stated the Town has since corrected (or restored) the boundary lines to their original lines. He stated with correcting the boundary lines, the street address of the former Founders Preserve has become 334 Colonel Ledyard Highway and the adjacent property with the house on it has reverted back to its original address of 332 Colonel Ledyard Highway. He noted Avalonia Land Conservancy paid for the site plan and survey.

Councilor Saums went on to explain that the Town acquired the house at 332 Colonel Ledyard Highway thru a foreclosure in June 2017. He explained because there was a title issue regarding the boundary line the Town did not have a clear title at that time; and has been leasing the house for about \$15,600 in rent per year, until they could get the title issue resolved, at which time the town planned to dispose of/sell the house. He stated the site plan and survey has been completed, and the boundary lines have been corrected, so that the detached garage was now within the property boundary lines of 332 Colonel Ledyard Highway, and therefore, the property was ready to be sold.

Councilor Saums continued by noting the smaller parcel to the north of the Founders Preserve property was part of 334 Colonel Ledyard Highway. He stated the same Developer owned this house; which the Town also acquired thru a foreclosure. He stated because of the condition of the house it was condemned and the town has obtained the demolition permit and quotes to demolish the structure. He stated the Mayor has been reporting on these properties at previous Town Council Meetings, (January 25, 2023; March 8, 2023; April 12, 2023; April 26, 2023; May 24, 2023; June 14, 2023).

Councilor Saums stated the house located at 332 Colonel Ledyard Highway has been cleaned out. He stated a Market Analysis for the Valuation of the property has been conducted; and the offering price would be 255,000. He stated selling 332 Colonel Ledyard Highway would allow the Town to recoup most of the unpaid tax dollars and the blight lien fees (\$277,000) associated with the properties, while also removing the Town as a Landlord, and getting the home (332 Colonel Ledyard Highway) back on the tax rolls.

Councilor Saums concluded by noting at the July 19, 2023 Finance Committee meeting there was a question regarding how the town selected the real estate broker to handle the town's business for the sale of 332 Colonel Ledyard Highway. He noted that Mayor Allyn explained for the previous sale of a commercial piece of property that he selected a commercial practitioner, who was not in-town. However, he stated for residential properties, the Mayor has been using different residential practitioners (realtors) who reside in town. He stated when the town has business that the Mayor has been trying to spread it around to people who were town residents.

Chairman Dombrowski suggested if an 8-24 Review for the sale of 332 Colonel Ledyard Highway has not yet been done that they ask Planning & Zoning Commission to conduct the required 8-24 Review before the town received an offer from an interested party, as not to delay the sale of the property. He noted once the Town received an offer to purchase the property, that in accordance with CGS 7-163e a Public Hearing would be held; and in accordance with the Chapter VII; Section 9 of the Town Charter a Special Town Meeting would be held at which the Townspeople would be asked to vote on the sale of 332 Colonel Ledyard Highway.

VOTE: 9 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED 9 - 0
MOVER: Bill Saums, Town Councilor
SECONDER Mary McGrattan, Town Councilor
AYES: Dombrowski, Ingalls, Irwin, Marshall, McGrattan, Paul, Rodriguez, Ryan, Saums

General Items

5. Discuss Work Session Items as time permits. – None.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

VOTE: Councilor Rodriguez, moved to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Irwin
9 - 0 Approved and so declared. The meeting adjourned at 7:44 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 July 26, 2023.

Kevin J. Dombrowski, Chairman