



Chairman Gary St. Vil

TOWN OF LEDYARD

CONNECTICUT
TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES
PUBLIC HEARING
LEDYARD TOWN COUNCIL
HYBRID FORMAT
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, ANNEX BUILDING
741 COLONEL LEDYARD HIGHWAY, LEDYARD, CONNECTICUT
REMOTE MEETING VIA ZOOM

PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES

7:00 P.M., APRIL 22, 2026

- I. CALL TO ORDER – Chairman St. Vil called the Public Hearing regarding the proposed Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Council Chambers, Town Hall Annex Building, 741 Colonel Ledyard Highway, Ledyard, Connecticut.

Chairman St. Vil 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. PROCEDURE OF THE HEARING

Chairman St. Vil announced the procedure of the Public Hearing noting that they would begin the Public Hearing with budget presentations from Town Council Finance Committee Chairman Jessica Buhle and School Superintendent Jason Hartling. He stated a Public Comment period would follow.

III. CALL OF THE PUBLIC HEARING

Administrative Assistant Roxanne Maher read the call of the meeting as follows:

LEGAL NOTICE TOWN OF LEDYARD

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Ledyard Town Council will conduct a Public Hearing
at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 21, 2026
to receive comments/recommendations regarding a
Proposed Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget.

This Public Hearing will be Hybrid Format

Please join the Public Hearing in-person or
remotely from your computer, tablet, or smartphone as follows:

In-person attendance will be at the
Council Chambers, Town Hall Annex Building
741 Colonel Ledyard Highway, Ledyard, Connecticut

Remote Attendance: Via Zoom Video Conference at:

<https://ledyardct.zoom.us/j/85147626223?pwd=HeFQruBjX6VoXsUXdaTtpwbO3gQKXJ.1>

or by audio only telephone +1 646 558 8656; Meeting ID: 851 4762 6223; Passcode: 083327

Interested persons may submit
written communications to towncouncil@ledyardct.org

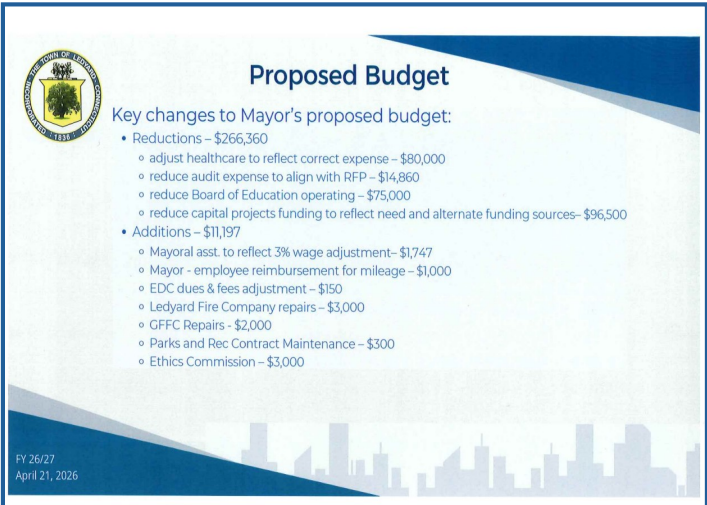
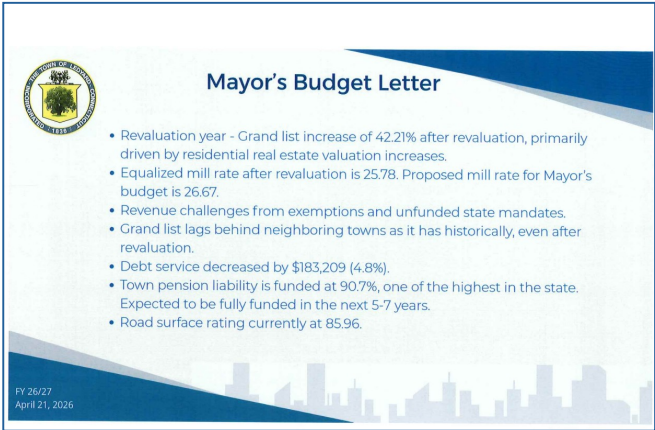
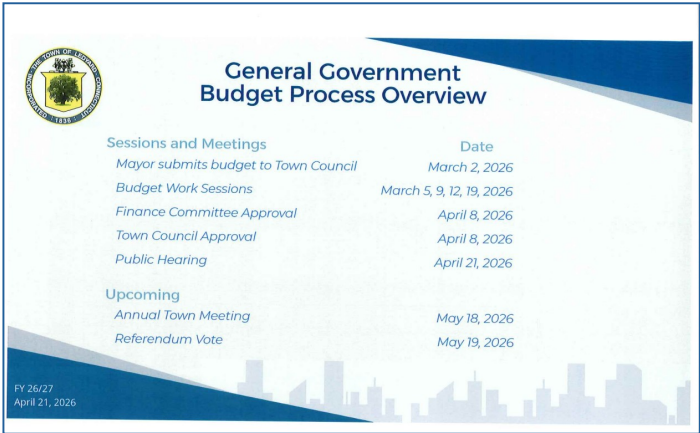
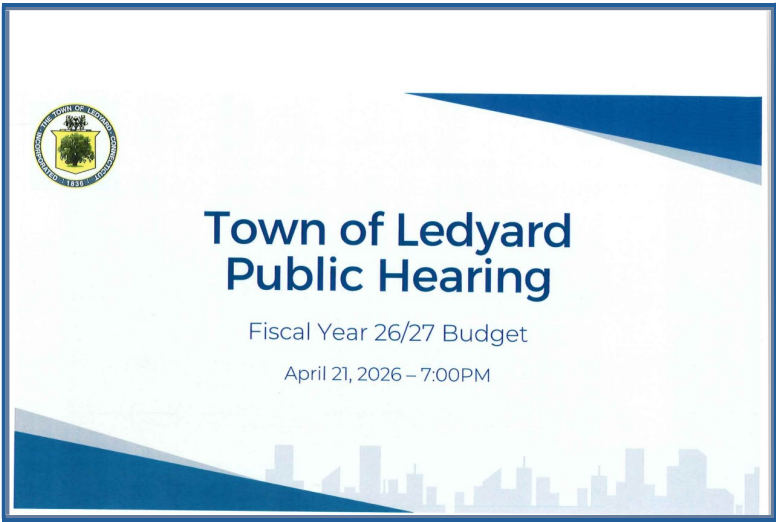
Copies of the proposed Budget will be available on April 20, 2026 in the Town Clerks' Office and on the town's website at:
<https://www.ledyardct.org/Proposed-BOE-Budget>
<https://www.ledyardct.org/proposed-annual-budget>

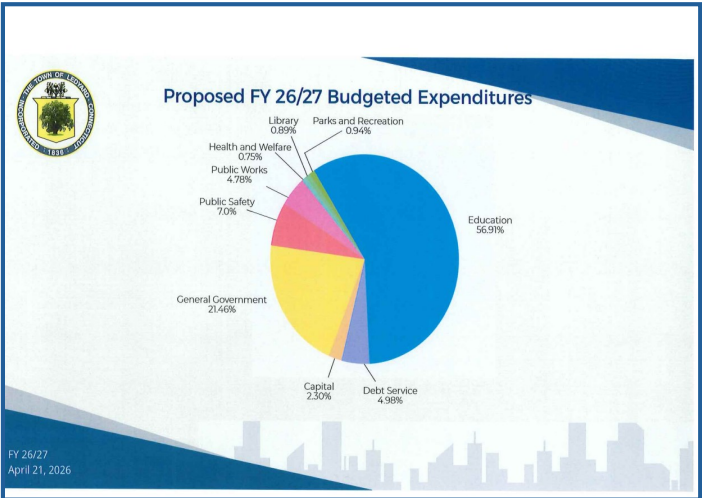
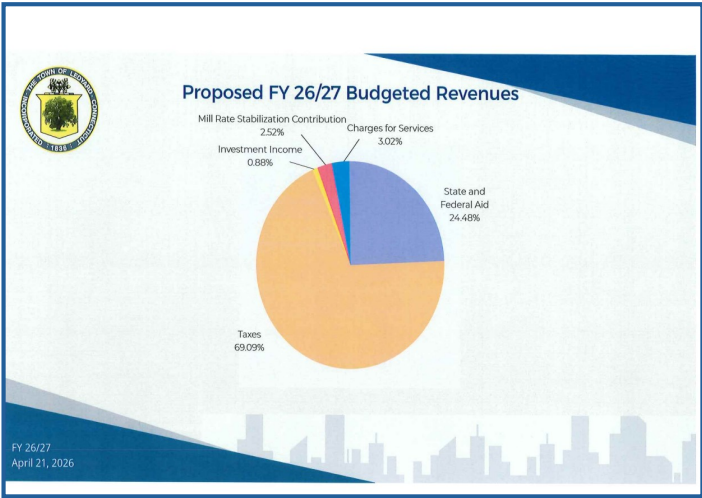
For the Ledyard Town Council
s/s Gary St. Vil, Chairman

Please Publish on: Saturday April 11, 2026

IV. PRESENTATION OF THE PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2026/2027 BUDGET

Town Council Finance Committee Chairman Jessica Buhle welcomed all those who were attending tonight's Public Hearing both in-person and by video conference. She presented the following PowerPoint regarding the proposed Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget:





Capital Improvement Plan

Major Projects & Ongoing Capital Funding – Tax Levy

- Sawmill Dam Remediation - \$25,000
- MIS Computer & Server Reserve Fund - \$75,000
- Fire Apparatus Reserve - \$384,305
- Public Works Equipment Reserve - \$360,500
- Municipal Building Reserve - \$100,000
- JWL Classroom Renovations - \$140,000
- BOE Ongoing Operating Capital - \$156,500

Total Tax Levy Capital Projects: \$1,690,487

FY 26/27
April 21, 2026

Grants and Other Capital Funding

- COPS Law Enforcement Technology Grant
 - The COPS Law Enforcement Technology Grant was awarded in FY 25/26 to purchase new computer aided dispatch and record management systems for LPD. Original funding requests were \$180,000 through tax levy. This grant is entirely funded with no match from tax levy.
 - In FY26/27, Council worked with Chief Rich and Capt. Creutz to apply for the COPS Law Enforcement Technology Grant again for in-car video cameras and body cameras. In realistic anticipation, capital funding was reduced by \$20,000 for FY 26/27.
- Land Use Property Sale Proceeds
 - A blighted property was recently sold; after legal fees to reimburse the Legal line for Land Use, \$73,000 was able to be allocated towards Land Use P&Z Document Updates instead of \$75,000 from tax levy.
- Whitford Brook Watershed
 - Grant awarded for \$2,800,000 toward replacement of the Lantern Hill Rd bridge over Whitford Brook. This grant is estimated to be 50% of the costs of replacing the bridge; a LOTCIP grant has been applied for as well for the other 50% of the cost.

FY 26/27
April 21, 2026

Additional Considerations

- Motor Vehicle Mill Rate Maximum
 - This year, the mill rate will be below the maximum mill rate. In FY 27/28, we will not receive any reimbursement from the state. In FY 26/27, we are projected to receive ~\$741,000
- Mashantucket Pequot/Mohegan Fund Revenue
 - FY 26/27 has an increase of \$800,000 from the efforts of Sen. Osten. Current legislation is proposing significant increases to all allocations from the Fund.
- Veterans Exemptions
 - PA 24-46 provides an exemption for veterans with a service-connected permanent and total disability rating. As a town with a rich military history and population, this Act exempts over \$26m of dwellings and motor vehicles. Proposed HB 5407 would provide reimbursement from the State to cover lost revenue.

FY 26/27
April 21, 2026

Questions?

FY 26/27
April 21, 2026

Councilor Buhle provided a recap regarding the proposed Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget as follows:

- Total Budget: \$73,555,506; comprised of
- General Government Budget \$31,698,171 for a 6% increase (which included Healthcare costs for both the Town and Board of Education)
- Board of Education Budget \$41,857,335 for a 3.4 % increase
- Projected Mill Rate 26.55

School Superintendent Jason Hartling reviewed the following PowerPoint Presentation regarding the Board of Education’s Proposed Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget in the amount of \$41,857,335



Mission Statement

Ledyard Public Schools provides every child with the experiences, supports, and opportunities necessary for life and success in our diverse and evolving world.

2024-29 Strategic Plan

A Budget for Stability and Stewardship

Our Mission: To deliver on the promises of the District Strategic Plan while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

The Context:

- Navigating contractual wage obligations.
- Absorbing inflationary pressures on operations.
- Strategically reallocating resources (funding new needs by reducing old costs).

FY27 Financial Overview

\$41,857,335
(Note: \$75,000 reduction from Town Council)

~~+\$1,470,093~~
Increase over FY26

3.63%
Increase

~~+\$1,395,093~~
Increase over FY26
(Includes \$75,000 reduction from Town Council)

3.45%
Increase

Driving the 2026–2027 Budget: Contracts & Inflation

The 2026–2027 Ledyard Board of Education budget is primarily focused on maintaining required services while addressing unavoidable external financial pressures, with nearly the entire proposed increase tied to existing legal contracts and the rising cost of goods and services.

THE DRIVERS OF GROWTH

77.3%
Attributable to Contracts

Largest portion of the budget increase is mandated by existing collective bargaining agreements.

22.2%
Driven by Inflation

Rising costs for utilities, supplies, and external services represent nearly a quarter of the increase.

KEY FINDING: Strategic Neutrality

Targeted strategic investments (20.7%) are almost entirely offset by line-item reductions (20.2%).

INFLATIONARY PRESSURE POINTS

Rising Special Education Costs
A limited pool of external providers continues to drive up tuition and service costs.

\$210,703 Tuition and Programming Costs

Transportation Adjustment \$115,678
Reflects the specific inflationary increase for daily bus services and student conveyance.

\$5,278 Misc. Supplies Inflation
(Districtwide Nursing, Art, Textbooks)

Utilities Inflation Adjustment \$27,339
(Maintenance: Electricity, Sewer, Water)

Ledyard Public Schools: 2026-2027 Budget Balancing Act

The proposed \$41.9M budget represents a 3.63% increase, strategically aligning resources to fund new investments (\$304,487) with targeted reductions (\$297,123) to maintain fiscal stewardship.

INVESTMENTS vs. REDUCTIONS

Targeted Strategic Investments

\$304,487
20.7%

Line-Item Reductions

\$297,123

Strategic Investments (Program Enhancements)

Strengthening Academic & Operational Support
Funding a 1.0 FTE Math Instructional Coach and 1.0 FTE Facilities Department support.

\$40,802 for Operational Efficiency
Investment in a new districtwide timekeeping system to improve administrative reliability.

Modernizing Classroom Tools
Allocation for 100 graphing calculators and updated math and science textbooks.

Targeted Reductions (Cost Savings)

\$297,123 in Line-Item Offsets
Reductions made to equipment, software, and tuition to fund new priorities.

Streamlining Technology & Curriculum
Discontinuing Dreambox software and replacing iReady with STARS assessment to save costs.

\$62,473 Savings in Tuition
Significant reduction in Magnet School Tuition costs based on current enrollment trends.

2026-2027 Budget Breakdown

Total Budget: **\$41,932,335**

Salaries & Wages: 71.3%

Utilities: 3.0%

Supplies: 3.6%

Special Education Out of Di...: 4.2%

Transportation: 6.9%

Purchased Property Services: 2.3%

Professional/Technical Serv...: 4.0%

Employee Taxes/Retirement...: 2.4%

2026-2027 Proposed Budget: \$41,932,335

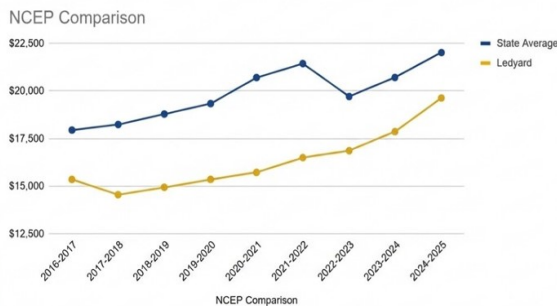
Budget Reductions

2026-2027			
BLUE - Reduction to budget	-\$297,123		
Request	Estimated Cost	Location	Type
Testing Supplies - iReady	-\$44,266	Curriculum	Supplies
Testing Supplies - Curriculum Assoc	-\$21,095	Curriculum	Supplies
WR & Wisdom Training	-\$5,000	Curriculum	Professional Serv
Curriculum Software - Dreambox, net of adj	-\$20,821	Curriculum	Other
Other Supplies - Athletics	-\$10,000	LMS	Supplies
Magnet School Tuition	-\$62,473	Curriculum	Other
Ignite Tutoring Services	-\$25,000	Elementary Schools	Professional Serv
Historic paraprofessional spending/turnover adjustment	-\$36,468	Districtwide	Salary
Equipment - Security	-\$52,000	Districtwide	Equipment
Teacher Retirement	-\$20,000	Districtwide	Salary

Budget Additions

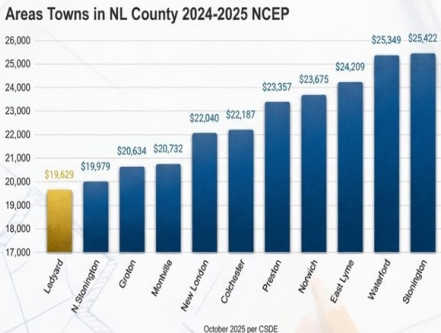
2026-2027				
GREEN - Recommend for inclusion in budget		\$304,487		
Request	Strategic Plan Alignment	Estimated Cost	Location	Type
STAR Assessment for grades 4-8/ Offset with cut to iReady	Provide Opportunities	\$15,000	Curriculum	Supplies
Additional Seats mClass/Forefront	Provide Opportunities	\$8,362	Curriculum	Supplies
100 TI84 graphing calculators	Program Maintenance	\$15,200	LHS	Supplies
Textbooks - General/Math Instruction	Program Maintenance	\$24,243	Districtwide	Supplies
Timekeeping system	Operational Efficiency	\$40,802	Districtwide	Equipment
1.0 FTE Elementary Math Coach (1 of 2 for full complement)	Active Engaged Learning	\$81,200	Elementary Schools	Salary
Afterschool Activities Director	Operational Efficiency	\$4,500	LMS	Salary
Marching Band	Excellence	\$12,180	LHS	Salary
District data dashboard engagement - year 1	Active Engaged Learning	\$10,000	Districtwide	Professional Serv
NEASC District accreditation - year 1	Excellence	\$8,000	Districtwide	Professional Serv
Professional Development - Teachers	Active Engaged Learning	\$5,000	LHS	Professional Serv
1.0 FTE Facilities Dept	Operational Efficiency	\$80,000	Maintenance	Salary

Per Pupil Expenditure: Comparison to State Average



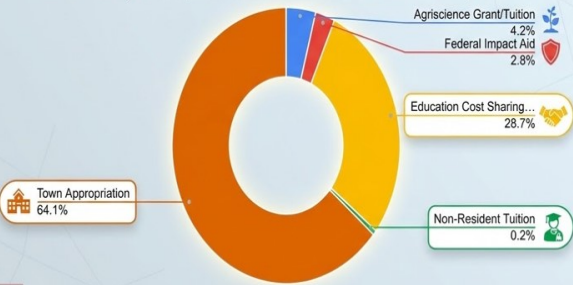
CT state average is \$22,029 versus \$19,629 for Ledyard, \$2400/student variance, \$2400 x 2296 students, \$5,510,400

Per Pupil Expenditure: New London County

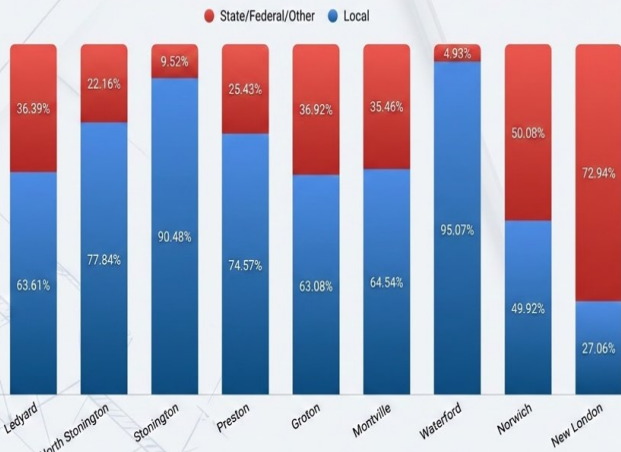


Funding Sources

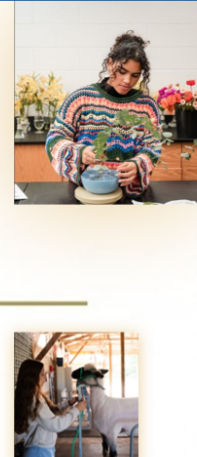
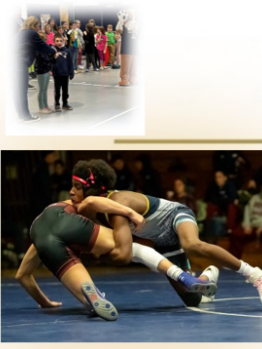
Town of Ledyard Proposed 2026-27 Estimated BOE Funding Source



Funding by Source* - Local Districts (2023-2024 School year)



Questions & Discussion



Chairman St. Vil thanked Councilor Buhle and Superintendent Hartling for their presentations.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENTS (Please limit to 3 minutes)

Chairman St. Vil opened the floor for Residents comments; and he asked that they keep their comments to three minutes or less. He asked those attending on-line to please put their name and address in the Chat and they would be called on in the order they were signed up.

Mr. Jeff Eilenberger, 2 Village Drive, Ledyard, commented on the recording of Board of Education expenses on the General Government side of the Budget ledger, noting that this began in 2001 because there were some bookkeeping discrepancies on the Board of Education's side of the budget ledger. He stated that this was not the fault of any of the current Central Office Staff, stating that they were not here in 2001.

Mr. Eilenberger continued by reading excerpts from the Finance Committee April 7, 2025 meeting; which was about one year ago, as follows:

“Board of Education Healthcare Expenses - Councilor Ryan stated that he agreed with Mayor Allyn’s proposal to move the Board of Education Employees Healthcare Expenses to the Education side of the budget ledger for the following reasons:

- (1) The Board of Education’s Employees Healthcare Expenses were part of the School District’s operational costs.*
- (2) Transparency - Councilor Ryan stated for accurate accounting of operational costs and for transparency Board of Education expenses should reside on the education side of the budget ledger.*
- (3) Accountability - Councilor Ryan noted that the Board of Education should have oversight of their operational expenses.*

Councilor Saccone stated although he 100% agreed that the Board of Education Employees Healthcare Expenses and the School Nurses Expenses should be recorded on the education side of the budget ledger, that he did not agree with making the move in the upcoming Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget. He explained that because the School Nurses Contract was scheduled to end next year (fy 26/27) that he would suggest they wait to the following year to move these expenses to the education side of the budget ledger. He stated this would give the Board of Education and School Superintendent Hartling 18 months to evaluate their needs, so they could plan accordingly and for the Town Council and Board of Education to work together and plan for the accounting change.

Finance Director Matthew Bonin explained other than moving where the Board of Education Employees Healthcare dollars were recorded in the budget ledger, that there would not be any other changes. He stated that the Board of Education was already handling the health insurance for their employees. He stated that the General Government just pays the invoices. He went on to explain that the Town uses a Healthcare Consultant, who was not tied to the Healthcare provider; and that the Healthcare Consultant was paid from the Plan.”

Mr. Eilenberger stated that Finance Director Matthew Bonin was a Certified Public Account (CPA); and that he trusted what Mr. Bonin said. Mr. Eilenberger commented that a CPA, although not officially, was like a master’s degree 2.0.

Mr. Eilenberger continued to read excerpts from the Finance Committee’s April 7, 2025 Minutes as follows:

“Councilor Saccone noted that based on Mr. Bonin’s explanation of how the Healthcare was currently being handled by both the Board of Education existing staff and the General Government’s staff, that he did not understand School Superintendent Mr. Hartling comments that moving the expenses and funds to the

education side of the budget ledger would incur additional costs for the Board of Education.

Mr. Hartling stated by moving the Board of Education's Employees Healthcare Expenses to the Education side of the ledger that they could anticipate an increased cost of about \$100,000 to take on the fiduciary responsibility of the managing a \$6 million program, because they do not have a staffing model to handle the work that has been being managed by the General Government Staff for 24 years.

Mr. Hartling went on to state that the Board of Education would have to hire Healthcare Consultants to adequately examine the Healthcare Plan to ensure that they were acting in the most responsible way for both their employees and the Town of Ledyard. He stated that there would also be the legal fees to renegotiate with their labor contracts; and that it would require the addition of one Full-Time Staff person in the Central Office. He noted that the Brown & Brown Employee Benefits Consulting Team was a commission based Consultant".

Mr. Eilenberger stated from last year's discussion, in which Councilor Saccone stated if they began work at that time, they would have eighteen months to figure things out. Mr. Eilenberger stated they now had about six- months left; and he questioned how they were doing. He went on to state that he worked for the Department of Corrections for 20-years; and therefore, he got pretty good at reading people; and at being able to understand when he was being threatened. He noted during that April 7, 2025 meeting the minutes reflected that Superintendent Hartling said the following:

"Mr. Harting continued by stating that he would have to have a conversation with the Mayor about what would happen for the General Government Employees Healthcare, noting that there would be no obligation for the Board of Education to include the General Government Employees".

Mr. Eilenberger stated that he could read between the lines, and hopefully the Town Council could to. He stated that this was the kind of School Superintendent they were dealing with.

Chairman St. Vil stated that he enjoyed having a dialogue and a conversation, and as a resident he cared about Mr. Eilenberger's opinion. He questioned whether there was an action that Mr. Eilenberger would like the Town Council to consider. He stated that Mr. Eilenberger described something that happened in previous years, and therefore, he asked whether there was something that the Town Council should consider, or take under advisement, noting that he was trying to figure out his point.

Mr. Eilenberger stated that the discussion he read were meeting minutes from eighteen months ago; noting that he was explaining how the conversation went when everybody was in the same room; noting there was no objection. He stated it was an 18-month deal and that somebody should have kept up with it.

Chairman St. Vil stated that he sat-in on the Budget Work Sessions this year, noting that where the healthcare expenses were going to reside came up as a point of discussion. He stated that input was provided not only by the Town Councilors, but that Mayor Allyn, III, and Superintendent Hartling provided input as well. He stated it was determined that the healthcare expenses would be something to revisit at a future date, because there was no known savings identified by anyone during that discussion. Therefore, he stated he was trying to figure out whether Mr. Eilenberger knew something that the Mayor does not know; that Superintendent Hartling does not know; and that the Town Council does not know, questioning whether there was a known savings by moving the budgetary line item.

Mr. Eilenberger stated after almost 25- years that he thought the Board of Education had the right staff to take the healthcare over themselves. He stated that it was more efficient, it was more transparent; they would be more accountable; and that was where the healthcare and school nurses expenses belonged.

Chairman St. Vil stated that he holds Mayor Allyn, and Superintendent Hartling in high regard, noting throughout the budget process they have conducted themselves with nothing but total and complete integrity. He stated that he wanted to help Mr. Eilenberger and he

wanted to get involved, however, he stated that he did not understand his statements; and what he was requesting. Therefore, he stated he did not know how to get involved to help.

Board of Education Chairman Jennifer Reguin, attending remotely via Zoom, stated she wanted to provide clarification for the public record. She stated the Superintendent's performance is evaluated by the Board of Education through a formal process, not at this hearing. She stated the Board of Education takes community feedback seriously, and they would address it through the appropriate channels.

Chairman St. Vil thanked the residents for their comments.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman St. Vil stated before they adjourn, the he would like to review of the Budget Process from this point forward:

- Tomorrow the Finance Committee (if needed) and Town Council will consider the comments received this evening to determine whether additional budget adjustments were warranted.
- April 22, 2026 the Town Council would vote to Finalize a Proposed Budget to present at the Annual Town Meeting and Referendum.
- **May 18, 2026** the Annual Town Meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m. to present the proposed Fiscal Year 2026/2027 to Residents, at which time they would have an opportunity to provide additional comments.
- **May 19, 2026 Budget Referendum** that will be held on the Voting Machines from 6:00 am – 8:00 p.m. The Voting Location for everyone would be in the Registrar's Office in the Town Hall Lower Level.

Should the Budget Fail at the May 19, 2026 Referendum:

- The Town Council would review the proposed Fiscal Year 2026/2027 to determine whether adjustments were warranted; and forward the Revised Budget to a Second Referendum on the Voting Machines on **Tuesday, June 9, 2026 from 12:00 Noon to 8:00 p.m.** in accordance with Chapter VII, Section 6, of the Town Charter.
- Should the Second Referendum not approve a budget; the Town Council shall adopt a final Budget by the fourth Monday in June (June 22, 2026), in accordance with Chapter VII, Section 6, of the Town Charter.

Chairman St. Vil asked those present to please provide this information to their Friends and Neighbors.

Chairman St. Vil stated hearing no further comments this Public Hearing is Adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Thank you for attending tonight's Public Hearing,

Transcribed by Roxanne M. Maher
Administrative Assistant to the Town Council

I, Gary ST. Vil, Chairman of the Ledyard Town Council,
hereby certify that the above and foregoing is a true and
correct copy of the minutes of the Public Hearing
Meeting held on April 21, 2026.

Gary St. Vil, Chairman