



TOWN OF LEDYARD
CONNECTICUT
TOWN COUNCIL
HYBRID FORMAT

741 Colonel Ledyard Highway
Ledyard, CT 06339

towncouncil@ledyardct.org
860 464-3203
Roxanne Maher
Administrative Assistant

Chairman S. Naomi Rodriguez

MINUTES
FINANCE COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING

Wednesday, February 19, 2025

5:30 PM

Annex Meeting Room - Video Conference

DRAFT

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

Councilor Saccone 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**

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Location	Arrived	Departed
Jessica Buhle	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	6:02 pm
Tim Ryan	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	6:02 pm
Tony Saccone	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	6:02 pm
S. Naomi Rodriguez	Town Council Chairman	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	6:02 pm
Carmen Garcia-Irizarary	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	6:02 pm
Fred Allyn, III	Mayor	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	6:02 pm
Matthew Bonin	Finance Director	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	6:02 pm
Steve Masalin	Public Works Director/Town Engineer	Present	In-Person	5:03 pm	5:21 pm
John Rich	Police Chief	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	6:02 pm
Ken Creutz	Police Captain	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	5:36 pm
Scott Johnson, Jr.	Parks, Recreation, & Senior Citizens Director	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	6:02 pm
Roxanne Maher	Administrative Assistant	Present	Remote	5:00 pm	6:02 pm

III. **RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS COMMENTS** – None.

IV. **PRESENTATIONS/INFORMATIONAL ITEMS** – None.

V. **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES**

MOTION to approve the Finance Committee Meeting Minutes of February 5, 2025
Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Ryan

VOTE: 3 – 0 Approved and so declared

VI. **FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Finance Director Matthew Bonin reported on the following: (1) Fiscal Assistant Finance Department – Mr. Bonin stated that Fiscal Assistant Nancy Marchand was back in the office

and has been working to get the Journal Entries caught up; (2) Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget Preparation – Mr. Bonin stated that work continues to prepare the budget for the upcoming year.

VII. FINANCIAL REPORTS

Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated that he provided an updated American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Projects Spreadsheet for discussion this evening.

Mr. Bonin noted that the Budget versus Actual Revenue and Expenditure Reports for the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 were attached to the agenda on the meeting portal. He provided an overview noting the following:

- Revenue Year-to Date Report- Thru January 31, 2025

- ✓ **Tax Collection** - Mr. Bonin stated the Tax Collection Rate was on-track at 97.7%.
- ✓ **Vo-Ag Funding** – Mr. Bonin explained that there were the following two budget revenue lines in the Annual Budget regarding the Agri-Science (Vo-Ag) Program as follows:
 - **Vo-Ag Tuition** – Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Initial Budget Amount: \$764,000; the Revised Budget Amount: \$412,000; a decrease of \$352,000.

Mr. Bonin explained the Vo-Ag Tuition Revenue was funding received from other towns for their students to attend Ledyard's Agri-Science Program. He went on to note, as he previously reported, the State changed the amount the town could bill for students to attend the Program. Therefore, he stated the revised Vo-Ag Tuition Revenue was \$412,000.

Vo-Ag Stabilization Revenue – Mr. Bonin explained because of the reduction in the Tuition Fees the State was providing some Vo-Ag Stabilization Revenue in the amount of \$280,00; which was more than anticipated. However, Mr. Bonin stated the town would still have a \$77,000 shortfall in the budgeted Vo-Ag Revenue.

ASTE Grant Funding – State Funding – Initial Budget Amount: \$850,000; the Revised Budget Amount: \$1,244,000; an increase of \$394,000.

Mr. Bonin explained although the additional ASTE Grant Funding would help to equal out the reduction in the Vo-Ag Tuition Revenue line that when the Board of Education requests the additional \$394,000 ASTE Funding be allocated to their budget that the Town Council would need to look at the combination of the Vo-Ag Tuition Revenue line and the ASTE Grant Funding line to determine the true ASTE Grant Funding overage number.

- ✓ **Interest on Deposits** – 113% of the amount budgeted.

• Expenditures Year-to Date Report- Thru January 31, 2025

- ✓ **Legal Fees** Mr. Bonin noted at the Town Council's October 23, 2024 meeting they voted to overspend the account.
- ✓ **Defined Contribution** - Mr. Bonin stated at the Town Council's February 12, 2025 meeting they voted to overspend the Early Voting budget, noting that it would be short by about \$3,500.
- ✓ **Early Voting** - Mr. Bonin stated early voting would be over budget by about \$3,500.
- ✓ **Police Salaries** Mr. Bonin stated the Police Overtime was over budget mostly because of the DARE Programs at the Schools. Also, the Police Department Salary Line would be over budget due to mid-year salary-step increases.

Councilor Saccone questioned whether the Board of Education reimbursed the General Government to administer the DARE Program. Police Chief John Rich stated that the DARE Program was paid out of the General Government Police Department budget. He went on to note that he has worked with Finance Director Matthew Bonin to calculate the costs to be included in the upcoming Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget.

- ✓ **Police Training** – Mr. Bonin stated the Police Training line was over budget and it has been adjusted for the upcoming Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget.
- ✓ **Dispatch Overtime** – Mr. Bonin stated that the Dispatch Overtime line was over budget due to staff turnover.

Mr. Bonin stated that there were no other significant changes to the General Governments expenditures at this time, noting that the expenditures were tracking as budgeted.

III. OLD BUSINESS

1. Continued discussion regarding potential uses for the funding received from the National Opioid Settlement Payments.

Councilor Buhle questioned whether the town could use the Opioid Settlement funding to support the costs to provide the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) Programs in their Schools.

Police Chief John Rich stated many of the supplies the Police Department used for the DARE Program were donated. However, he stated most of the costs to administer the program was for personnel which required about 133-man-hours. He stated because of the Police Department's limited staffing level, that they take a Police Officer from their regular patrol for about 10-weeks to teach multiple times in the schools, which culminates with a DARE Graduation.

Mayor Allyn, III, noted in the Opioid Settlement Funding Guidelines under *Prevention Programs* that it stated: "*Funding for evidence based programs in schools*". Therefore, he stated that administrating the DARE Program would be a permitted use of the Opioid Settlement Funding.

Councilor Ryan questioned the total cost to administrate the DARE Program in the schools. Chief Rich stated the DARE Program cost about \$7,908 based on the middle range of the pay scale for the 133-man hours. He stated the supplies were received through donations. The Finance Committee agreed that this was a good discussion for the upcoming Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget preparation.

Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated that the Opioid Settlement Funding Account balance was about \$91,000. He provided an overview of the Opioid Settlement Funding allocations to date as follows:

- \$30,000 Ledyard Prevention Coalition- Town Council Action 9/27/2023
- \$10,000 – Community Speaks Out – Town Council Action 10/23/2024
- \$10,000 - Connecticut Recovery Support Center – Town Council Action 1/22/2025

Mayor Allyn, III, stated Ledyard would continue to receive funding from the National Opioid Settlement for another nine-years.

RESULT: DISCUSSED

Next Meeting:03/05/2025 5:00 p.m.

2. 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.

Finance Director Matthew Bonin noted that he provided an updated ARPA Projects Spreadsheet, which was attached to the Agenda on the meeting portal.

Councilor Ryan noted the ARPA Spreadsheet was showing a shortfall of \$340,000 and he questioned whether Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin was still confident that some of the Ledyard Center Sewer Line Extension Projects would come in under budget to provide funding for the other approved projects that were under contract. Public Work Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin stated although work was still underway that he continued to expect there would be adequate funding to cover the approved ARPA Projects.

RESULT: DISCUSSED

Next Meeting 3/19/2025 : 5:00 p.m.

3. Continued discussion regarding potential grant opportunities.

Councilor Buhle stated that the Finance Committee would be addressing some grant opportunities later this evening. She went on to note in talking with Senator Chirs Murphy's Executive Aide Erin McBride she learned that to date the Congressionally Directed Spending Grant Applications for 2025 were not yet available. She noted that last year the town submitted a Grant Application for the *COPS Law Enforcement Technology and Equipment Grant* in the amount of up-to \$240,000 through the Congressionally Directed Spending Program to replace the Ledyard Dispatch Emergency Communications CAD/RMS System. She suggested the town should be prepared by having projects ready, to apply for these types of grants when they become available.

4. Any other Old Business proper to come before the Committee.- None.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

1. MOTION to recommend the Town Council authorize the over-expenditure of the following Winter Operations Budget Accounts:
- Account 10140103-51815 (Snow Overtime),
 - Account 10140103-58300 (Employee Reimbursement), and
 - Account 10140107-56301 (Salt and Sand) due to higher-than-normal winter operation's needs.

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin stated the winter season started with limited snow and ice management needs this year. However, he stated that the trajectory changed, and the costs were presently projected to be very close to and could potentially exceed the budgeted amounts. He noted that he provided an updated Winter Operations graph that illustrated the trends for this winter season in its historical context. He stated this winter they have had two snowstorms that came on the weekend; noting that one of snowstorms came on a holiday weekend, which significantly impacted the Winter Operations Wages budget. He stated for the last ten years the Winter Operations came in under budget because they have had mild winters; noting that last year he actually gave back an accumulative \$60,000 from the Public Works Department. He stated there was still a good chance that the Winter Operations would not go over budget, and that if it does, that he may have some funding within the Public Work's Budget to cover those costs. However, he stated because of the unpredictability of weather conditions he was seeking authorization to overspend now, so that they do not find themselves in a position where they have to call an emergency meeting to authorize additional funds to clear the roads.

Councilor Ryan stated that he appreciated the graph and the data Mr. Maslin has provided.

VOTE: 3– 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVE TO RECOMMEND 3 – 0

MOVER: Tim Ryan, Town Councilor

SECONDER: Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor

AYES: Jessica Buhle, Tony Saccone, Tim Ryan

The Finance Committee thanked Mr. Masalin for attending tonight's meeting.
Mr. Masalin left the meeting at 5:21 p.m.

2. MOTION to recommend the Town Council authorize the Police Department to overspend 10120101-51630 (Public Safety Employees) to allow for the hiring of ~~two~~ **one** police officer candidates in FY25 to replace two officers planning retirement in FY26.

Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Buhle

Discussion: Police Chief John Rich stated that the Police Department received information from two senior officers of their intention to retire from town service in Fiscal Year 2025/2026, noting that they would begin terminal leave in August/September 2025. He explained that the process to replace a certified police officer was lengthy, noting that it took about 10 months after a candidate has successfully completed the statutory requirements for selection. However, he stated this afternoon he learned that one of their candidates did not pass one of the required exams. He went on to state that Ordinance 500-001 "*An Ordinance Creating a Town of Ledyard Police Department*" allowed the Department to exceed its authorized staffing to employ probationary officers in advance, to replace officers who have submitted an intent to retire or resign. He stated the Department was finalizing the selection process which included two qualified candidates for the position of probationary police officer. He stated that Ledyard has secured two seats at the Police Training Academy which commences on March 14, 2025. However, he stated because the salaries for the two candidates was not included in the Police Department's budget that funding was being requested to overspend Account #10120101-51630 (Public Safety Employees) in the current fiscal year (fy 24/25) to pay the salaries of two probationary officers from March 2025 through June 30, 2025.

Chief Rich stated an appropriation of up-to \$22,214.40 would pay for the salary to hire a new recruit and send them to the Police Training Academy in March, 2025; not including the \$4,200 for medical benefits.

Councilor Ryan stated that the total financial exposure with the medical benefits would be about \$27,000; and he questioned when the probationary officers pension benefits or any other benefits would start. Chief Rich stated there was a six-month waiting period before the pension benefit would start; and therefore, those expenses would not be incurred in the current Fiscal Year 2024/2025.

Councilor Buhle questioned whether the Police Department budget had funding to outfit the new recruit. Chief Rich stated that they did have adequate funding for the other expenses.

Councilor Saccone questioned whether the Police Department had another candidate they could send to the Police Training Academy to fill the position of the candidate who did not pass one of the exams. Chief Rich stated because the next Training Class would begin on March 14, 2025 that they did not have enough time to fill the second seat that they had reserved. He went on to explain that they would go back out to the selection process. He stated the Training Academy in Meriden typically runs three classes a year; but that there were other satellite Training Facilities in New Britain, New Haven, Hartford, and Bridgeport, that Ledyard has sent recruits to as well. He stated although Applications were down for those seeking a career in Police Law Enforcement; that Ledyard has been fortunate to have had some good candidates to choose from.

Councilor Saccone questioned whether the Police Department took lateral transfers. Chief Rich stated although they have not done so since 2023, that they do take lateral transfers from other Police Departments, noting because they were already certified that the training period is to come up to speed with Ledyard's systems, etc.

Councilor Ryan suggested the following as a “friendly amendment” “.....hiring of ~~two~~ **one** police officer candidate.....”. The Finance Committee agreed to the update as a “friendly amendment” as noted above.

VOTE: 3– 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVE TO RECOMMEND 3 – 0	
MOVER:	Tim Ryan, Town Councilor
SECONDER:	Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor
AYES:	Jessica Buhle, Tony Saccone, Tim Ryan

The Finance Committee thanked Chief Rich and Captain Creutz Mr. Johnson for attending tonight's meeting.

Captain Creutz left the meeting at 5:36 p.m.

3. MOTION to recommend the Town Council approve four tax refunds in the combined total amount of \$13,146.20 each exceeding \$2,400.00 in accordance with tax collector departmental procedures.

- Patricia Ference \$3,112.39
- Jessica Johnson \$2,619.98
- Law Office Sean Donohue for Amanda Plante \$3,079.65
- Sheela Nerurkar \$4,334.18

Moved by Councilor Saccone, seconded by Councilor Buhle

Discussion: Councilor Saccone explained in accordance with the Tax Collector’s Procedures that refunds over the amount of \$2,500 need to be approved by the Town Council. He stated because both the property owner and the lender paid the taxes that refunds were due.

VOTE: 3– 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVE TO RECOMMEND 3 – 0	
MOVER:	Tony Saccone, Town Councilor
SECONDER:	Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor
AYES:	Jessica Buhle, Tony Saccone, Tim Ryan

4. MOTION to recommend the Town Council approve a revised Appendix A- *Qualifying Income Schedule* in accordance with Ordinance #200-005 (rev. 1) “*An Ordinance to Provide Property Tax Relief for Certain Homeowners Age Sixty-Five or Over or Permanently and Totally Disabled (rev.1)*” for the filing period of February 1, 2025 – May 15, 2025.

Ordinance # 200-005 (rev.1)

Appendix A
Qualifying Income Schedule
Filing Period
February 1, 2025 – May 15, 2025

Qualifying Income		Tax Reduction As Percentage Of Property Tax	Tax Reduction For Any Year
Over	Not Exceeding		

Married Homeowners			Maximum	Minimum
\$ 0	\$22,700 \$22,000	50%	\$1,250	\$400
\$27,000 \$22,200 -	\$30,400 \$29,500	40 %	\$1,000	\$350
\$30,400 \$29,500	\$37,900 \$36,700	30 %	\$750	\$250
\$37,900 \$36,700	\$45,200 \$43,800	20%	\$500	\$150
\$45,200 \$43,800	\$55,100 \$53,400	10%	\$250	\$150
Unmarried Homeowners				
\$ 0	\$22,700 \$22,000	40%	\$1,000	\$350
\$22,700 \$22,700 -	\$30,400 \$29,500	30%	\$750	\$250
\$29,500 \$27,100	\$36,700 \$33,800	20%	\$500	\$150
\$37,900 \$36,700	\$45,200 \$43,800	10%	\$250	\$150
\$45,200 \$43,800	\$55,100 \$53,400	None	-0-	-0-

Adopted by the Ledyard Town Council on: _____

S. Naomi Rodriguez, Chairman

Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Buhle

Discussion: Mayor Allyn, III, explained in addition to the State, the town provides tax relief to qualifying homeowners thru the adoption of Ordinance #200-005 (rev. 1) *“An Ordinance to Provide Property Tax Relief for Certain Homeowners Age Sixty-Five or Over or Permanently and Totally Disabled.”*

It was noted that provisions of the Ordinance requires the town to annually update the *“Qualifying Income Schedule”* to be consistent with the State’s Qualifying Income, (Cost of Living Adjustment) which was based on the United States Social Security Administration Program.

In accordance with Ordinance #200-005 (rev.1) Paragraph 3 *“Qualifications”*; paragraph (e) *“Persons qualified for tax credit or deferment benefits under this Ordinance are those whose maximum income during the calendar year preceding the year in which application is made for the tax credit does not exceed the Qualifying Income Schedule, as hereby incorporated in the ordinance as though fully set forth herein. A copy of the approved Qualifying Income Schedule shall be filed with the Town Clerk when established and when amended. The income guidelines provided in the Qualifying Income Schedule (Appendix A) shall be adjusted to reflect a cost of living increase issued by the United States Social Security Administration, pending the approval of the Town Council prior to the first of January of the year of application.”*

Mayor Allyn explained that because the *“Qualifying Income Schedule”* was an Appendix to the Ordinance, and because they were not changing the Ordinance itself, a public hearing was not required. He noted that annually updating the *“Qualifying Income Schedule”* for the town’s Tax Relief program was an administrative action.

VOTE: 3 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVE TO RECOMMEND 3 – 0

MOVER: Tim Ryan, Town Councilor
SECONDER: Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor
AYES: Jessica Buhle, Tim Ryan
EXCUSED: Tony Saccone

5. Any other New Business proper to come before the Committee (see below).

MOTION to *recommend the Town Council* rescind the following, as approved by the *Town Council Finance Committee* at their February ~~5~~¹², 2025 meeting:

MOTION to approve the proposed “*Municipal Certification of a Resolution for Small Town Economic Assistance Program ~ STEAP 2025 ~ Ledyard Playscape Improvement Projects* as presented in the draft dated February 5, 2025; with the exception not to exceed \$1 million.

In addition, the Parks & Recreation Commission shall review and approve the Conceptual Plan to be submitted as part of the Application;

And, if Grant Funding is approved, Town Council approval will be requested for the Town’s local matching funds, when that amount is known, and before any contract is signed and the project is commenced.

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: Councilor Ryan stated unfortunately he was not able to attend the Town Council’s February 12, 2025 meeting. However, he stated that it was his understanding that the Town Council approved the 2025 STEAP Resolution for the Playscape Projects. Therefore, he stated that he did not think the Finance Committee could rescind an action that the Town Council already voted on.

Administrative Assistant Roxanne Maher explained that based on some additional information that was received for the Playscape Projects, they needed to update the 2025 STEAP Resolution to include four Playscapes, noting that based on Parks, Recreation, & Senior Citizens Director Scott Johnson, Jr. comments at the Town Council’s February 12, 2025 meeting Blunders Park was removed from the Project. With the additional information Mr. Johnson received since the Town Council’s February 12, 2025 meeting he was asking that Blunders Park be included in the Playscape Project. Therefore, she stated rather than amend the Resolution, that because it was not sent to the State yet, that it would be cleaner to rescind the Resolution and start fresh.

Councilor Ryan suggested updating the language in the Motion as follows: “*MOTION to recommend the Town Council rescind the following, as approved by the Town Council Finance Committee at their February ~~5~~¹², 2025 meeting:*”. The Finance Committee agreed to the updated language as a “*friendly amendment*”; as noted above.

VOTE: 3 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVE TO RECOMMEND 3 – 0

MOVER: Jessica Bule, Councilor
SECONDER: Tim Ryan, Town Councilor
AYES: Jessica Buhle, Tim Ryan
EXCUSED: Tony Saccone

6. MOTION to approve the proposed “*Municipal Certification of a Resolution for Small Town Economic Assistance Program ~ STEAP 2025 ~ Ledyard Playscape Improvement Projects*” for the following Parks: Town Green, Aljen Heights, Blonders Park, and East Park, as presented in the draft dated February 5, 2025; with the exception not to exceed \$1 million.

In addition, the Parks & Recreation Commission shall review and approve the Conceptual Plan to be submitted as part of the Application;

And, appropriate \$179,000 from CNR Undesignated, as the Town’s 20% Local Match, upon the receipt of the Grant approval.

~~And, if Grant Funding is approved, Town Council approval will be requested for the Town’s local matching funds, when that amount is known, and before any contract is signed and the project is commenced.~~

DRAFT: 1/22/2025

Res. 003-2025/_____

MUNICIPAL CERTIFICATION OF RESOLUTION
SMALL TOWN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
~STEAP 2025 ~
LEDYARD PLAYSCAPE IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

I, Patricia A. Riley, Town Clerk of the Town of Ledyard, a municipality organized and existing under the laws of the State of Connecticut, hereby certify that the following is a true copy of the resolution adopted by the Ledyard Town Council of said municipality at the Special Meeting held on _____.

RESOLVED, that Mayor Fred B. Allyn, III, be, and hereby is, authorized to accept on behalf of the Town of Ledyard, a 2025 Connecticut STEAP Grant in the amount of \$1 Million for the *Ledyard Playscape Improvement Projects* for the following Town Parks: Town Green, Aljen Heights, Blonders Park, East Drive; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that Mayor Fred B. Allyn, III, is hereby authorized to enter into and execute any and all agreements, contracts and documents necessary to obtain said 2025 STEAP Grant with the State of Connecticut.

Approved by the Ledyard Town Council on: _____

S. Naomi Rodriguez, Chairman

I DO FURTHER CERTIFY that the above resolution has in no way been altered, amended or revoked, and is in full force and effect.

AND I DO FURTHER CERTIFY that Mayor Fred B. Allyn, III is the Mayor of the Town of Ledyard, and has been since May 1, 2017.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of the Town of Ledyard this _____ day of _____, 2025.

(Seal)

Patricia A. Riley, Town Clerk
Town of Ledyard

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: Councilor Buhle stated during the discussion at the Town Council's February 12, 2025 meeting, it was mentioned that the 2025 STEAP Grant Application required them to identify the Town's 20% Local Match at the time the Application was being submitted. She went on to note at that meeting the Town Council also discussed options for the funding source which included the following: (1) Undesignated Account; and (2) Parks & Recreation Capital Fund 0203. However, she stated because of town procedures they did not have the time to authorize funds from Parks & Recreation Capital Fund 0203. She also noted that because of current capital needs, she had concerns with using Fund 0203, noting that she did not want to cripple the Parks, Recreation, & Senior Citizens Commission's ability to take care of other capital needs in the upcoming year.

Councilor Buhle continued by stating that 140 Municipalities were competing for the \$30 million being offered in this round the 2025 STEAP Grant Program. Therefore, she stated although the 20% Local Match was not required, it was highly recommended. She suggested the motion be amended as follows:

~~And, if Grant Funding is approved, Town Council approval will be requested for the Town's local matching funds, when that amount is known, and before any contract is signed and the project is commenced.~~

"And, appropriate an amount not to exceed \$179,000 from CNR Undesignated, as the Town's 20% Local Match, upon the receipt of the Grant approval."

Councilor Buhle stated by identifying the Town's Local Match that they would improve their potential to receive the 2025 STEAP Grant. However, she explained if the State does not approve Ledyard's Grant Application to replace their Playscapes that the funding identified as the Town's 20% Local Match would stay in the Undesignated Fund.

Councilor Ryan stated that he agreed that replacing the Playscapes would have a positive impact for Ledyard residents. However, he stated from the Finance Committee's position they need to understand where the Town's 20% Local Match would come from.

Mayor Allyn, III, stated at the Town Council's February 12, 2025 meeting he suggested the using some funding from Parks & Recreation Capital Fund 0203 for the Town's 20% Local Match, noting that this Fund has gained about a \$100,000 each year for the last three-years. He stated that he thought this was reasonable because for a \$200,000 investment from Fund 0203 that Parks & Recreation would be able to remove over \$1 million from their Capital Projects List.

Mayor Allyn continued by addressing the process to use money from Fund 0203 explaining that 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 “*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*”. Therefore, he stated if the replacement of the Playscapes were included in the Capital Plan it could have flowed through the Annual Budget Process and they could have used Fund 0203 as the funding source for the Town’s 20% Local Match. However, he stated because the Playscapes were not in the Capital Improvement Plan they did not have enough time to hold a Special Town Meeting for the townspeople to approve the use of the funds before the 2025 STEAP Grant Application was due on February 20, 2025 (tomorrow).

Parks, Recreation, & Senior Citizens Director Mr. Scott Johnson, Jr., provided updated Plans to replace the following Playscapes:

- \$567,588.38 - Town Green ADA Park included new equipment, installation, Poured In Place (PIP) Surfacing, R&D of existing equipment.
- \$199,113.00 - Colonel Ledyard/Blonders Park included new Playground Equipment, installation, Poured In Place (PIP) Surfacing under new equipment and under existing swings and R&D of existing equipment.
- \$141,321.42- Aljen Heights Park included new Playground Equipment and swings, installation, Poured In Place (PIP) Surfacing under new equipment and swings and R&D of existing equipment
- \$163,865.30 – East Drove includes new Playground Equipment and swings, installation, Poured In Place (PIP) Surfacing under new equipment and swings, and R&D of existing equipment.

Total Cost: \$1,071,888.10

- **\$1,071,888.10 Total Cost for all four Playscapes.** Mr. Johnson stated costs include the removal and installation of the new Playscapes; subsurface work and the Pour-in-Place surface. He stated the Pour in Place was better than using wood chips, noting that it required less maintenance.

Councilor Saccone questioned how long the prices were effective. Mr. Johnson stated that the costs were good for the duration of the contract, which was well beyond the time it was going to take to install the new Playscapes. He also noted that with the Contractor’s 20% discount the town was saving about \$50,000 on some of the Playscapes.

Councilor Ryan stated there were other projects (Sewer Line Installation Fairway Drive and Colby Drive) that were proposed for the use of the 2025 STEAP Grant. Therefore, he questioned what the funding source would have been for the Town’s 20% Local Match, if they had chosen the other project. Mayor Allyn stated traditionally it would have been the Undesignated Fund. However, he explained that currently the Town’s Undesignated Fund Balance was 7.5% of their expenditure budget. He went on to explain at the recommendation of the Auditor the Town Council adopted a “*Town of*

Ledyard Fund Balance Reserve Policy” which called for the town to increase its Undesignated Fund to 15% of their expenditure budget to help with the town’s Bond Ratings and to receive more favorable interest rates when they bond/borrow money. However, he stated they keep whittling down the Undesignated Fund Balance. He stated the Parks and Recreation Fund 0203 was funded 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 Fund”* “.....A sum equal to forty percent (40%) of the money received through conveyance tax shall be deposited to Fund 0203; the Parks and Recreation Capital and Non-Recurring Expense Fund” . He explained when real estate was sold in Ledyard, that by way of the State’s taxation, the town collects a fee for the sale. He stated in many towns the Conveyance Tax goes directly into their General Fund. However, he stated in 1967 Ledyard decided to take 40% of the Conveyance Tax and set it aside in a Capital Account for Parks & Recreation; noting that this Fund has gained about a \$110,000 each year for the last three-years. Therefore, he stated that Parks & Recreation had the ability to grow Fund 0203 to be used for capital needs; or for local matches to obtain grants for capital projects.

Mayor Allyn addressed the importance to have a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) in place so that they know what their needs were in advance. He stated this was the first they were hearing that four Playscapes that were at the end of their useful life, and needed to be replaced. He noted as an example, if suddenly they had a fire truck that came up for replacement, because it was thirty years old, that they would question the request, if they had not seen it on the fire truck replacement plan/schedule. He stated that Mr. Johnson knows that he has to have a Capital Improvement Plan going forward. He stated the Parks and Recreation Fund 0203 provides them with the ability to fund capital needs going forward. Therefore, he stated going forward that if Parks and Recreation had the opportunity to apply for grants that Fund 0203 would provide them with the local matching funds required to receive those grants, explaining that this would have to be included in the Annual Budget Process.

Mr. Johnson addressed the constraints tied to spending the funding received from the conveyance tax that resided in Fund 0203. He noted Ordinance 200-012 *“An Ordinance Creating a Municipal Park and Recreation Capital and Non-Recurring Expense Fund for the Town of Ledyard”* required that *“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”*. Therefore, he suggested Ordinance #200-012 be revised/amended to allow for the expenditure of funds from Fund 0203 without requiring a special town meeting.

Councilor Ryan noted the Mayor’s example of the replacement schedule for the fire trucks, stating that the Fire Departments have a plan that showed when each piece of apparatus/vehicle/equipment was purchased, when it would need to be replaced and a funding to plan to set aside money each year in their Capital Plan so in 20 or 30 years they would have the funding to replace the equipment. He asked whether Mr. Johnson had a similar type of plan for the parks, playscapes, vehicles, and other types of long-term needs.

Mr. Johnson stated it would take about ten-years for Parks and Recreation to allocate through the annual budget enough funding to replace the four Playscapes that the 2025 STEAP Grant would allow them to do in one year. He noted that Parks and Recreation was working to develop a *Parks Master Plan* to provide a road map going forward to upgrade parks and replace the capital equipment, such as Playscapes, etc., noting that that this grant would take about ten-years of Capital Needs off the Parks and Recreation's capital needs list.

The Finance Committee, Mr. Johnson, Mayor Allyn, and Finance Director Matthew Bonin discussed options, along with the appropriate the funding sources for the Town's 20% Local Match.

Finance Director Matthew Bonin noted that the Undesignated Capital Account had a \$500,000 balance; and the Undesignated General Fund had a \$5.4 million, which was 7.5% and was at the bottom of the Undesignated Fund Balance Policy threshold, noting that this affects the town's ability to bond/borrow funding.

The Finance Committee agreed to strike the language noted in ~~red font~~ and replace it with the language in *blue bold italic font* as noted below and in the Motion above as a "friendly amendment".

~~And, if Grant Funding is approved, Town Council approval will be requested for the Town's local matching funds, when that amount is known, and before any contract is signed and the project is commenced.~~

"And, appropriate an amount not to exceed \$179,000 from CNR Undesignated, as the Town's 20% Local Match, upon the receipt of the Grant approval."

VOTE:

3 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVE TO RECOMMEND 3 – 0

MOVER: Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor

SECONDER: Tim Ryan, Town Councilor

AYES: Jessica Buhle, Tim Ryan

EXCUSED: Tony Saccone

The Finance Committee thanked Mr. Johnson for attending tonight's meeting.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Saccone moved the meeting be adjourned, seconded by Councilor Buhle.

VOTE:

3 - 0 Approved and so declared, the meeting was adjourned at 6:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony Saccone, Sr.
Committee Chairman
Finance Committee