



## VII. FINANCIAL REPORTS

Finance Director Matthew Bonin noted that he provided an updated American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA Projects List for discussion later this evening.

## VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. MOTION to recommend the Town Council grant a Bid Waiver to Quiet Corner Restoration LLC, of Hampton, Connecticut, the amount of \$83,025.17 due to receiving fewer than the required three bids in response to Bid 2024-03 (Nathan Lester House Exterior Rehabilitation ) in accordance with Ordinance #200-001 (rev 1) "*An Ordinance for Purchasing*".

Moved by Councilor Saccone, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: Councilor Ryan stated he read the background information noting that in response to Bid #2024-03 RFP (Nathan Lester House Exterior Rehabilitation) that only two Bids were received from the following: (1) Proulx Building & Remodeling, LLC in the amount of \$111,240.00; and (2) Quiet Corner Restoration, LLC in the amount of \$83,025.17. He stated that he did some research and found that Quiet Corner Restoration, LLC, was a reputable contractor; and that he understood the request for the bid waiver.

Councilor Ryn continued by noting Item #2 on tonight's agenda, in which the Historic District Commission was requesting that \$55,575.17 of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding that was allocated for the Historic Up-Down Sawmill improvements be moved to the Nathan Lester House to pay for the exterior improvements to the house. He stated after paying for this work that there would be no ARPA Funding remaining for the Nathan Lester House. Therefore, he questioned whether any other funding would be required for improvements to the Nathan Lester House. Mr. Earl (Ty) Lamb, Historic District Commission Chairman, replied "*No*"; stating that there were no other projects planned using the ARPA funding for the Nathan Lester House.

Councilor Ryan went on to note by moving the \$55,575.17 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding from the Up-Down Sawmill improvements that they would only have \$33,000 remaining for the Sawmill improvements. Mr. Lamb explained although they had projects planned for the Sawmill that the Historic District Commission felt that residing the Nathan Lester House was much more important than the work that was planned for the Sawmill. Councilor Ryan stated later this evening the Finance Committee would be discussing the ARPA funding. Therefore, he stated if there were projects for the Sawmill that might exceed the remaining \$33,000 that they could talk about them at that time.

Councilor Saccone stated that he had the same question that Councilor Ryan asked relative to taking some of the ARPA Funding away from the Sawmill projects, noting that Mr. Lamb stated he was comfortable with doing that. He noted that the Finance Committee would be discussing the ARPA funding in depth later this evening and he invited Mr. Lamb to stay for that discussion, noting that if there was any additional funding need for the Sawmill that tonight would be the time to speak up. Mr. Lamb stated that he would stay for the ARPA Funding discussion later this evening.

**VOTE: 3 – 0 Approved and so declared**

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

2. MOTION to recommend the Town Council authorize the Finance Director to revise the tracking of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) in Account #21010103-54500-G0014 (Historic District – Building Maintenance- ARPA) to move \$55,575.17 from the Sawmill Projects to the Nathan Lester House Projects to facilitate the Nathan Lester House Exterior Rehabilitation work (Bid #2024-03).

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: Councilor Saccone noted that moving the \$55,575.17 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding from the Up-Down Sawmill to the Nathan Lester House to pay for the residing of the house was discussed as part of Item #1 (see above) this evening.

Mayor Allyn, III stated that he and Historic District Commission Chairman Lamb discussed the re-siding of the east side of the Nathan Lester House, noting that it would be a long-term solution to the exterior of the home.

Councilor Ryan stated the re-siding of the east side of the Nathan Lester House was a good use of ARPA Funding, because it would mitigate capital expenses. He also noted in reviewing the bid proposal that they received a good price for the reglazing of the windows as well.

**VOTE: 3 – 0 Approved and so declared**

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

3. Lantern Hill Valey Association’s (LHVA) request for the Town of Ledyard to include \$5,000 in the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 General Government Budget to help support a PILOT Program to develop a “*Sustainable Boat Launch Monitoring Program at the Long Pond State Boat Launch*”.

Councilor Buhle noted that Mrs. Betsy Graham representing the *Lantern Hill Valley Association* (LHVA) appealed to the Town Council at their February 14, 2024 meeting to provide funding to help support the development of a “*Sustainable Boat Launch Monitoring Program at the Long Pond State Boat Launch*”. She stated although she agreed that addressing and preventing invasive plants from being transferred from different bodies of water was an important initiative, that more information was needed for the Finance Committee to consider the *Lantern Hill Valley Association* \$5,000 request.

Councilor Saccone stated that he would like to see a town employee oversee the “*Sustainable Boat Launch Monitoring Program at the Long Pond State Boat Launch*” Program.

Councilor Ryan explained the next step in considering the *Lantern Hill Valley Association* (LHVA) \$5,000 request, would be for the Finance Committee to determine whether this was an expense that could find a home for in the General Government's Budget.

Mayor Allyn, III, stated on March 4, 2024 he would submit a proposed Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget to the Town Council; at which time the Finance Committee would begin their work.

Councilor Buhle questioned whether Ms. Graham has discussed the *Sustainable Boat Launch Monitoring Program at the Long Pond State Boat Launch* with the Conservation Commission to see if it was something they would be interested in taking on. Ms. Betsy Graham, 72A Long Pond Road, South, Ledyard, Conservation Commission Member, stated that the Commission did not have the budget to allocate funding for the Program. However, she stated if the town allocated the requested \$5,000 to the Conservation Commission's budget that she did not know if they would be as dedicated to overseeing the program as the Lantern Hill Valley Association would be. She continued by addressing the uncertainty of grant funding, noting that you do not know when grant opportunities would come along; if your grant application would be approved, and if approved whether the timing of the receipt of the grant funding would coincide with their Program. She stated the *Sustainable Boat Launch Monitoring Program at the Long Pond State Boat Launch* would be time sensitive, explaining that they have to have the people and other components in-place to make it work. She stated in attending a conference in 2019 she learned that the *CT River Hydrilla* was one of most invasive plants they were aware of, noting that these types of invasive plants would eventually kill their lakes; although they would not see it in their lifetime. She stated the Connecticut River was in jeopardy, the Mysitic River was in jeopardy, and all the freshwater lakes were in jeopardy. She asked the town to think about whether an ounce of prevention would be worth a pound of cure.

Ms. Graham provided the Finance Committee with a copy of the CT Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Grant. Councilor Buhle suggested Ms. Graham look for additional conservation type of grants such as a Water Conservation Stewardship grant, noting that she believed the Grant Application period was open around April.

Councilor Saccone questioned the process should a Boat Monitor find a boat or a piece of equipment that was contaminated. Mrs. Graham stated the *Invasive Investigator Program* would teach the Boat Monitors how to approach boaters, engage them, and help them learn about the best boating practices. She stated that if they found invasive fragments they were supposed to take them off the boat/equipment and put them on the ground way above the waterline in a pile where they would dry out and defecate. However, she stated if a boat owner said the Volunteer Boat Monitor could not look at their boat, even if they saw a plant on the boat, that they would have to step back. However, she stated if she was the Boat Monitor that she would take a picture and send it to the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) noting that there was a \$90 fine for transporting invasive plants. She stated that she would take that risk, but that she would not expect other volunteers to take that type of risk. She went on to state that in working to help the public learn about best boating practices that if boaters

see the invasive plants in the water that they should bring the plant back to shore to let it defecate to help stop the spread of the plant. She noted the handout she provided at the February 14, 2024 Town Council meeting included a picture of the *CT River Hydrilla*.



*CT River Hydrilla*

The Finance Committee noted that they would discuss Ms. Graham’s \$5,000 request during their Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget preparations.

Ms. Graham questioned the process going forward. Councilor Saccone suggested Ms. Graham discuss the Lantern Hill Valley Association’s proposal regarding *Sustainable Boat Launch Monitoring Program at the Long Pond State Boat Launch* with the Conservation Commission. Mayor Allyn explained that Town Council Administrative Assistant Roxanne Maher would send Ms. Graham a copy of the Agenda the next time they plan to discuss her proposal.

The Finance Committee thanked Ms. Graham for attending tonight's meeting.

Ms. Graham thanked the Finance Committee for their time this evening and she left the meeting at 5:18 p.m.

**RESULT: DISCUSSED**

4. MOTION to appropriate and transfer the Board of Education Fiscal Year 2022/2023 audited surplus of \$217,387 from unrestricted fund balance to Account #21070101-58250 (BOE Reserve Fund) in accordance with “*Resolution Creating a Funding Mechanism for Making Annual Appropriations to a Capital Reserve Fund for the Board of Education*” adopted on September 28, 1988.  
Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded Councilor Ryan  
Discussion: Finance Director Matthew Bonin explained with the receipt of the Annual Audit for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2023 that in accordance with the “*Resolution*

*Creating a Funding Mechanism for Making Annual Appropriations to a Capital Reserve Fund for the Board of Education*” it has been the Town Council’s practice to annually transfer the Board of Education’s surplus to their Reserve Capital Fund to be used for capital projects. He stated that this was an administrative action to document on the record the transfer of the surplus funds.

Councilor Saccone suggested the Town Council consider revisiting the “*Resolution Creating a Funding Mechanism for Making Annual Appropriations to a Capital Reserve Fund for the Board of Education*” to see if it was still needed 36 years later.

Mayor Allyn, III, explained when the Town Council adopted “*Resolution Creating a Funding Mechanism for Making Annual Appropriations to a Capital Reserve Fund for the Board of Education*” in 1988 the idea was that if the Board of Education was fiscally responsible and underspent their budget; they would essentially be rewarded by having funding available to help meet their capital needs.

Mayor Allyn went on to note a recent newspaper article which reported that after ten-years of use the Town of Stonington had to replace their artificial turf football field which cost \$1million. However, he stated when Ledyard installed their artificial turf multi-use field in 2020 that they were told the turf would last about 12-years and would cost \$250,000 to replace. He stated \$1 million was a substantial investment; and therefore, he stated it was important to continue to transfer the Board of Education’s surplus to their Capital Fund.

Councilor Buhle recognized that the Board of Education was fiscally responsible and underspent their budget by \$217,387. She questioned whether the Board of Education would be allocating these funds based on capital needs that were not approved as part of the Fiscal Year 2022/2023 Budget. She explained the reason for her question was because the Town Council approved the Board of Education’s Fiscal Year 2022/2023 Budget based on the needs/expenses that the Board presented for that budget year. However, she stated once they get to the end of the year, if the Board of Education had surplus funding that they could spend it however they wanted, which did not fall in-line with the current practice of the Town Council approving the Board of Education’s budget.

Mayor Allyn addressed Councilor Buhle’s comments explaining that during the past several years the Board of Education has been using their surplus funds for capital projects such as renovating the High School bathrooms and updating classrooms. Councilor Buhle stated that she would like to see the Board of Education provide a list prioritizing their capital projects for the use of the surplus funds; noting that the Town Council could have allocated those \$217,387 differently. Therefore, she stated at this point in the process that it felt like the Town Council did not make a decision on where that money would be used.

Councilor Ryan responded to Councilor Buhle stating that the Town Council’s decision was the initial approval of the Board of Education’s budget. He explained that the Board of Education does present a Capital Plan that the Town Council approved each year,

which included large expenses such as roof replacements. He went on to explain that the Board of Education has typically used their surplus funds to off-set smaller capital projects, as the Mayor mentioned. He stated that he was not arguing for or against the transfer of the Board of Education's surplus funds. He explained by allowing the Board of Education to keep and use their surplus funds that it does off-set potential future expenses that may have gone into their capital plan or their facilities budget request. However, he stated to Councilor Buhle's point, that it would be nice to see an accounting of those costs.

Mayor Allyn stated the Board of Education's annual proposed budget does include a Capital Plan along with a narrative explaining each of the projects and prioritizing their capital projects. He noted as an example that the Juliet W. Long School Classroom Renovations would be included in the Board of Education's Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Capital Plan. He recognized that although \$217,387 seemed like a lot of money to most of us, that it was a small percentage of a \$35,908,368 education budget, noting that the surplus money would go a long way, especially when they were looking at a cost of \$70,000 for a playscape.

Councilor Buhle stated that she understood Mayor Allyn's and Councilor Ryan's comments. However, she stated it would be helpful for the Board of Education to identify how each of their capital projects would be funded. Mayor Allyn stated when the Board of Education submitted its Annual Budget to him that the Capital Plan would typically show *tax levy* for all of the projects, which actually meant "*Tax the residents this year and they would do the projects*". Therefore, he explained that the Board of Education has left it to the Town to decide which projects to fund, noting that the Board of Education has stated that planning and budgeting for capital projects was not their thing. He noted as an example, the Board of Education was aware and should have been planning over the past few years for the \$300,000 elevator car at the High School. Therefore, he stated that the town would not be able to do the elevator car this year, explaining that they would now need to begin allocating funding over the next couple of fiscal years for the elevator car.

Councilor Ryan expressed concern that the Board of Education felt that their capital expenses relative to strategic planning was not their thing, noting that the Board of Education's budget represented 68.5% of the total budget. Mayor Allyn stated it was important for the Board of Education to make capital expenses and strategic planning their thing and that they start planning for capital expenses that they know were needed in the next five years, etc. He noted as an example the Fire Departments and other departments know that equipment and other capital items have a specific lifecycle, and therefore, they work to plan for the replacement of those items over a period of time.

Councilor Ryan asked Board of Education Member Earl (Ty) Lamb to bring the message regarding the importance for the Board to start to strategically plan for capital items back to the Board of Education. Mr. Lamb stated he would convey the Finance Committee's message, noting that although he could not speak for the Board of Education, that some of the issues the Finance Committee was discussing this evening were the reasons he decided to get involved.

Councilor Saccone stated although the school buildings were town facilities, that the Board of Education should be participating in the strategic planning for capital expenses such as roof and window replacement, noting that they were the everyday stewards of those facilities and should be able to identify those types of capital needs.

Councilor Buhle stated should the Town Council decide to revisit the 1988 “*Resolution Creating a Funding Mechanism for Making Annual Appropriations to a Capital Reserve Fund for the Board of Education*” that they include language that would require the Board of Education to provide a capital spending plan on how their surplus funds would be used.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry, Board of Education Liaison, noted that in speaking with Board of Education Members they were not aware, or included in the process to transfer their surplus funds at year end to their Capital Account, noting that the Board of Education has not talked about the transfer of their surplus funds at their meetings. She suggested that the Board of Education be made aware of the transfer of their surplus funds.

Councilor Buhle explained that the Board of Education’s \$217,387 surplus they were transferring this evening was from the Fiscal Year 2022/2023, noting that they had to wait until the Annual Audit Report was completed to determine the whether the Board of Education had a surplus and the dollar amount. She went on to comment that she could not imagine that the \$217,387 would be allocated to projects without the Board of Education voting on it.

Councilor Ryan explained per the 1988 “*Resolution Creating a Funding Mechanism for Making Annual Appropriations to a Capital Reserve Fund for the Board of Education*” the transfer of the Board of Education’s surplus funds was an automatic function; unless the Town Council decided to do something different, noting that the transfer of funds was done without the Board of Education getting involved.

Mr. Lamb, Board of Education Member, stated he was not aware that the 1988 “*Resolution Creating a Funding Mechanism for Making Annual Appropriations to a Capital Reserve Fund for the Board of Education*” existed.

Finance Director Matthew Bonin explained when the Board of Education submitted its Capital Projects List they note that all the funding to support their projects would be coming from the tax levy. However, he stated, as has been the practice in past years, that he would then reduce the amount of tax levy needed to support the Board of Education's Capital Projects request for the upcoming fiscal year budget.

**VOTE: 3 – 0 Approved and so declared**

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

5. MOTION to recommend the Town Council set-up a new, stand alone, Board of Education Capital Fund for Non-Bonded Board of Education Capital Items to reside outside of the Town's Capital Nonrecurring Fund (CNR Fund 210).

Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded Councilor Buhle

Discussion: Finance Director Matthew Bonin explained that he was recommending the Board of Education's Capital Lines for non-bonded expenses be taken out of the General Government's Capital Nonrecurring Fund (CNR). He explained that currently the Board of Education has five non-bonded capital lines that were nested within the Town's CNR Fund 210. He stated because these capital lines were part of the Town's Capital Account, that all the activity had to flow through the General Government's Finance Department, which has created additional work and oversight for the Town's Finance Department that could be alleviated by creating a new, stand alone, Board of Education Non-Bonded Capital Fund. He stated by removing the Board of Education's capital lines from the Government's Capital Nonrecurring Fund that it would also speed up the process and create a smoother workflow for the Board of Education.

Mr. Bonin went on to explain that because the Board of Education's five non-bonded capital lines were nested within the Town's CNR Fund 210 that he has been holding them accountable relative to the compliance with the provisions of Ordinance #200-001 (rev 1) "*An Ordinance for Purchasing*" which included thresholds for the solicitation of bids and quotes, payment of invoices, vendor numbers, etc. He stated that processing payments has become time consuming because he continuously had to send things back to the Board of Education because invoices were not signed off, or they did not comply with other requirements.

Mayor Allyn, III stated that Ordinance #200-001 (rev 1) "*An Ordinance for Purchasing*" only applied to the General Government and did not include the Board of Education.

Councilor Ryan stated that he was in-favor of moving the Board of Education's non-bonded capital lines to outside of the General Government's Capital Fund from the perspective that it would help Finance Director Mr. Bonin with making his job more efficient; and because it would put more accountability and ownership on the Board of Education. However, he questioned whether there would be the same level of accountability; and stewardship of taxpayer funds if the Board of Education's non-bonded capital lines were outside of the General Fund.

It was noted that the Board of Education's Regulation #3320 pertained to "*Purchasing Procedures Guidelines for Bids and Quotes.*" Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated the Board of Education's Purchasing Regulations had higher purchasing thresholds.

- Goods and Services between \$5,000 and \$14,999 required three quotes;
- Goods and Services between \$15,000 and \$29,999 required that written quotes be obtained;
- Goods and Services between \$30,000 required a formal advertised process to solicited proposals.

Mr. Bonin stated the Board of Education’s new Finance Director Kenneth Knight previously worked for the Town of Groton. He stated since Mr. Knight joined Ledyard in July, 2023 that they have been working well together; and that they have discussed moving the Board of Education’s non-bonded capital lines to outside of the General Governments Capital Account. He went on to note that there have been staffing changes in the Central Office, stating that the Board of Education recently posted their Assistance Finance Director job opening.

Councilor Saccone questioned whether Finance Director Matthew Bonin would still have access to view the Board of Education’s five non-bonded capital lines. Mr. Bonin stated that he would continue to have visibility of all accounts.

**VOTE: 3 – 0 Approved and so declared**

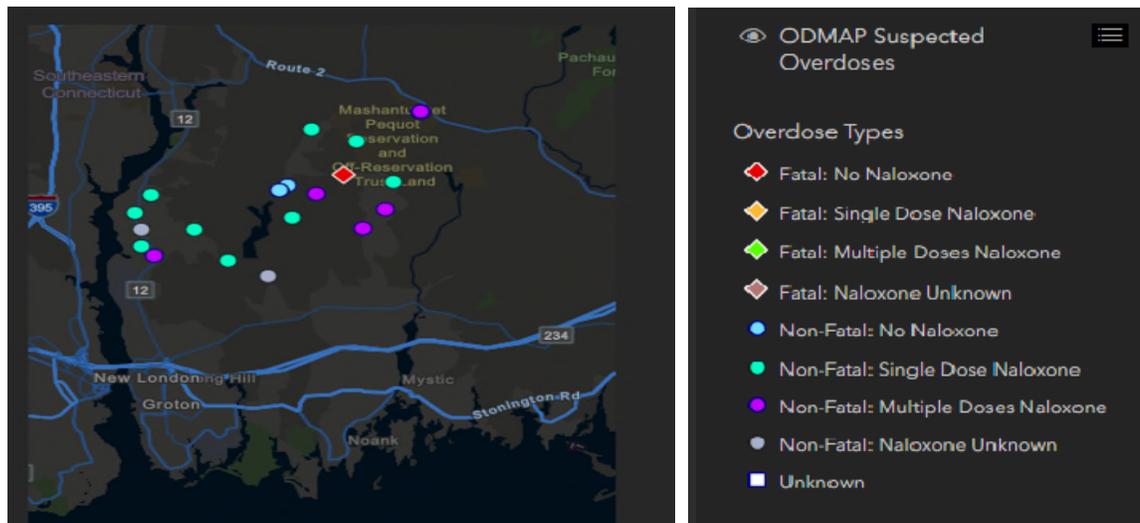
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| <b>RESULT: RECOMMEND TO APPROVE 3 – 0</b>          |
| <b>MOVER:</b> Tim Ryan, Town Councilor             |
| <b>SECONDER:</b> Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor     |
| <b>AYES:</b> Jessica Buhle, Tim Ryan, Tony Saccone |

6. Discussion regarding potential uses for the funding received from the National Opioid Settlement Payments.

Mayor Allyn, III noted that since 2022 the Town has been receiving National Opioid Settlement Funding that was coming from the Sackler Family Trust - Purdue Pharma, and others who were party to the case such as Johnson & Johnson, Teva, Allergan, Walgreens, CVS, and Walmart. He stated that he received notification earlier this week that the town would be receiving a Settlement Payment from Walmart in the amount of \$28,400, which would be added to the payments that the town has already received from other companies.

Chairman Rodriguez provided some background noting at that their September 27, 2023 meeting the Town Council appropriated \$36,100 from the National Opioid Settlement Funds to Ledge Light Health District/ Ledyard Prevention Coalition to implement programs to address opioid use disorder and prevention, and to expand access to intervention, treatment, and recovery options. She went on to note that she along with Mayor Allyn, Police Chief Rich, and Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Director Scott Johnson, Jr. attended yesterday’s Ledyard Prevention Coalition Meeting at which Senior Program Health Coordinator Kerensa Mansfield provided a Report that included maps showing that since January, 2023 to February, 2024 that there were 40 overdoses and one fatal overdose in Ledyard/Gales Ferry.

Chairman Rodriguez provided an overview of the map that was forwarded to the Town Council as noted below:



Chairman Rodriguez stated per the *Overdose Map* the Ledyard Prevention Coalition agreed to place Emergency Overdose Kits which included 12 doses of Narcan, 6– 8 Fentanyl Testing Strips, and Resource Cards to provide contact information at the following two locations: (1) Ledyard Center area; and (3) Gales Ferry. She stated Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Director Mr. Johnson would have the Narcan Emergency Overdose Kits placed on town-owned property. She stated the Kits would be periodically checked to make sure the supplies were stocked. She also stated that they would begin to work to get the word out regarding the availability of the Narcan & Emergency Overdose Kits and their locations. She noted that Ms. Mansfield indicated that that one dot on the map identified one overdose but that there could have been more than one at that location and that they did not know if the overdoses was accidental or intentional.

Mayor Allyn stated that there was also one overdose death that occurred at the end of 2022 calendar year that was not included in this data set.

Councilor Rodriguez addressed the importance to help their community noting that people experiencing an overdose were not only drug addicts, explaining that they were people who may have taken a medication such as Zantac which unbeknownst to them contained Fentanyl.

Councilor Buhle commented on the importance of using the National Opioid Settlement Funds to help people in their community, who may not know that they needed help, noting that opioid medications were incredibly addictive. She stated there were people in their community who may have been prescribed a pain medication after a surgery or after an accident, noting that you do not know how the medication would affect a person. Therefore, she stated it may be worth taking home Narcan, because by the time they realized they needed the Narcan, that they may not have the resources needed.

Mayor Allyn stated allocating some of the National Opioid Settlement Funds to the Ledyard Prevention Coalition was one avenue that the Town Council decided to give the funding to for the implementation of programs to address opioid use disorder and prevention, and to expand access to intervention, treatment, and recovery options. However, he stated that there were other local Organizations such as SERAC that does similar work, noting that the Town Council could also consider other groups/organizations to be recipients of these funds.

Councilor Ryan questioned the balance in the town’s Opioid Settlement Fund. Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated to date Ledyard has received about \$90,000 which would include the \$28,000 the Mayor mentioned earlier this evening. He stated \$36,100 was allocated to the Ledyard Prevention Coalition leaving a current balance of \$54,000.

Councilor Saccone addressed how the temperature could affect the Narcan in the Emergency Overdose Kits. He stated the medication would not freeze, but that the mist could freeze when it goes through the applicator nozzle to spray the medication into the nose. Chairman Rodriguez stated someone asked a question at yesterday’s Ledyard Prevention Coalition meeting about the Narcan medication freezing with the Emergency Overdose Kits being outside. She stated that Senior Program Health Coordinator Ms. Mansfield stated that the Narcan would be fine in the weather. Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Director Mr. Johnson stated that Ms. Mansfield stated the temperature would need to be well below freezing (in the negative temperatures) before it would affect the Narcan, commenting in our area that it would most likely not happen.

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| <b>RESULT: DISCUSSED</b> | <b>Next Meeting: 03/20/2024; 5:00 p.m.</b> |
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7. Any other Old Business proper to come before the Committee – None.

## VIII. OLD BUSINESS

1. Potential uses of the revenue received from Public Act No.21-58 “*An Act Concerning Solid Waste Management*” in accordance with “*Resolution Regarding Revenues Received from Beverage Container Surcharges*” adopted on June 8, 2022.

Councilor Buhle stated as she mentioned at the Finance Committee’s February 7, 2024 meeting, that she has been researching how other towns were spending their Nip Bottle Surcharge Revenues noting that the use of *Solar Powered Trash Compactors* peaked her interest.

- ***Solar Powered Trash Compactors*** – Councilor Buhle stated one of the allowed uses provided in Public Act No.21-58 for the Nip Bottle Revenue was “*Environmental measures intended to reduce the generation of solid waste*”. She stated that Groton, East Lyme, Rocky Hill and other towns have pursued *Solar Powered Trash Compactors* with the use of their Nip Bottle Revenue.

Councilor Buhle went on to state that she and Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Director Scott Johnson, Jr., had a Zoom call with a sales representative from *Bigbelly Solar Powered Trash Compactor*, during which they asked a lot of questions.

Councilor Buhle provided an overview of the *Bigbelly Solar Powered Trash Compactors* noting that they were made in the United States:

- Lifecycle of about 10-12 years.
- Five-year warrantee that covered everything including battery replacement if it occurred during the warrantee period. The warrantee would not cover vandalism, theft, or damage such as being hit by a car.
- Batteries lasted about 4-5 years.
- Fully enclosed container would keep trash from blowing out of the container; and would keep bees and other pests out of the trash.
- Could hold anywhere from three-times to eight-times the capacity of traditional trash cans (Bin sizes 32 or 5- gallon capacity) using the same footprint of the traditional trash cans.
- Reduced collections by 80%; plus, reduced costs for fuel and staff time to empty the trash cans.
- Had both trash containers and recyclable containers.
- Connect to the internet.
- Included Mobile App software that would provide the following types of notifications:
  - ✓ When the bin was full and needed to be emptied
  - ✓ Battery replacement
  - ✓ Bin status (door & hopper activity, bin location, change bags)
  - ✓ Diagnostics
  - ✓ Service History
- Made of corrosion-resistant material.
- Allowed for custom graphic wraps and provided for interchangeable Message Panels

Councilor Buhle noted that she and Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Director Scott Johnson, Jr., thought a good location to try the solar powered trash compactors would be at the Lower Town Green because of the amount of trash that was generated by the Farmers Market. She stated information regarding Big Belly Solar Powered Trash Compactor was attached to the agenda on the meeting portal for discussion this evening.

Councilor Buhle stated she obtained a cost estimate in the amount of \$7,770.80 the following:

- 1- Solar Powered Unit that connected to the internet, with the hopper, and foot peddle.

- 1- Recycling Unit with a circle open top for bottles and cans that connected to the internet, but did not have the compactor.
- Five years of software.
- 2- Bags of trash liners for the trash compactor unit.
- 1-Bag of non-compactor recycle bags.
- Cost for Shipping.

Councilor Buhle stated for two set-ups as described above the cost would be \$15,543.60

Councilor Ryan noted that the five-year software would be a recurring expense. Councilor Buhle stated the *Bigbelly Solar Powered Trash Compactors* were available without the software and could operate without the software. She also explained at the end of the five-years, the town had the option not to renew the software; however, if they chose to renew the software the current cost was \$100 per year, per unit. She stated the reason she liked the idea of the software for their PILOT Program was because it would provide them with data that would allow them to determine whether the units provided a benefit/cost savings to the town.

Councilor Ryan stated after the five-year warrantee period that the costs to maintain the units would become the town's responsibility. Therefore, he questioned whether the *Bigbelly* Sales Representative provided general maintenance costs for items such as the replacement of batteries, bags, etc. Councilor Buhle noted that the *Bigbelly* Sales Representative said the maintenance costs would be about \$100-\$200 per year, per unit. She stated the units were built to last and the parts were interchangeable. She also noted that should the town find the *Solar Powered Trash Compactors* PILOT Program was beneficial that the Implementation Plan would not purchase all units at the same time, explaining that the units could be purchased and maintained as the Nip Bottle Revenue came into the town.

Mayor Allyn, III, questioned whether the *Solar Powered Trash Compactors* Software would need to be able to connect to a Wi-Fi network. Councilor Buhle stated it was a Mobile App Software, noting that all it needed was a cell phone.

Councilor Saccone questioned whether there had been any incidents of vandalism at the Town Green. Mayor Allyn stated he was not aware of any vandalism, noting that the parking lot was well lit. Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Director Scott Johnon, Jr., stated that he was not aware of any incidents of vandalism at the Town Green, noting that the area was highly visible. However, he stated that they do see vandalism at other parks in town that were not as visible.

Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Director Scott Johnon, Jr., stated the Town Green was the only park where they had to empty trash cans, explaining all the other Park Facilities had trash containers that were like the household trash containers, where the Trash Contractor picked up the trash carts with the automated trucks. He stated because of the volume of trash that was generated during the Farmers' Market that he was considering assigning a staff person to work during the Farmers' Market to change out the trash bags. Therefore, he stated the *Solar Powered Trash Compactors* might alleviate that need.

Mr. Johnson continued to state that *Bigbelly Solar Powered Trash Compactor* containers looked cleaner, and that they could use them for Marketing with the interchangeable Message Panels to advertise upcoming events; or perhaps sell advertisements to businesses to offset the cost of the units. He also suggested they put a pad under the units to make it easier to trim and mow around the units. Councilor Buhle added that the Message Panels could be wrapped with the town seal or to advertise sports registration, trunk or treat, summer camp registration, etc. She also noted that it would be great to get the Beautification Committee, or the schools to involved with an Environment Drawing Contest for earth day, etc.

Councilor Saccone noted because the units were solar powered that they could not be placed under the pavilion. Councilor Buhle stated that they could be under a tree canopy, but as Councilor Saccone noted the units could not be under a completely covered structure. Mr. Johnson stated that *Bigbelly* also offered an adopter kit that would allow them to connect to a solar panel and run a wire to trash container. Councilor Buhle stated that the units could also be hard wired to charge the battery.

Councilor Buhle stated should the town decide to move forward with using the Nip Bottle Revenues to launch a *Solar Powered Trash Compactor* PILOT Program that they would be looking at a delivery and installation by early May, 2024, if they placed their order soon. She went on to note that the other towns that purchased the Trash Compactors allocated/transferred the funds to their Parks & Recreation Departments to handle the purchasing of the units along with the related work. Mayor Allyn agreed that it would make sense for the Parks & Recreation to handle the Solar Powered Trash Compactors noting that the Town Green was under their Administrative Control.

Mayor Allyn stated he has seen the trash compactors in airports and other places, noting that he liked the idea for this use of the Surcharge Revenues (Nip Bottles). He stated it was incredible to see how much they compact.

Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated the available balance in Surcharge Revenues (Nip Bottles) Account was just under \$29,000; noting that \$10,000 was already encumbered to lease the street sweeper this Spring, 2024.

Mayor Allyn noted the State disbursed the Surcharge Revenues to the towns in April and October. He went on to explain that normally the street sweeper lease cost \$15,000. However, he stated because the street sweeper they received last year was a lemon the company was giving the town a break for this coming Spring on the cost of the lease. He noted as a comparison that the cost to purchase a street sweeper was about \$250,000.

Councilor Ryan offered to develop a spreadsheet similar to the American Rescue Plan Act Projects List/Funding to track the revenues and expenditures of the Surcharge Revenues (Nip Bottles) and to plan for recurring expenses such as the street sweeper, the maintenance of Solar Powered Trash Compactors, as well as new purchases, etc.

Mr. Johnson stated that he would prepare a full budget cost for the *Bigbelly Solar Powered Trash Compactors* to include the concrete pads, etc. He stated that he would also review the Parks & Recreation's procedures to see if the Commission would need to approve the placement of the trash units at the Lower Town Green.

Councilor Buhle stated that currently *Bigbelly Solar Powered Trash Compactors* was the only company that sold these types of units in the United States. Mayor Allyn noted that the Capital Region Council of Governments does not have a bid on this product.

Councilor Ryan stated in researching how other towns were using their Surcharge Revenues (Nip Bottles) that many have not started to use the funds yet. He noting that he thought that the towns were still working to figure out how they could use the funds within the State's Guidelines.

**RESULT: DISCUSSED**

**Next Meeting: 03/20/2024; 5:00 p.m.**

Councilor Saccone suggested the Finance Committee take a short recess before they start their discussion on the *American Rescue Act* Funding (ARPA) Projects List.

Entered into Recess at : 6:10 p.m.

Came out of Recess at 6:15 p.m.

Councilor Saccone called the meeting back to order at 6:15 p.m.

2. 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.

The Finance Committee, Mayor Allyn, III, and Director of Planning & Development Juliet Hodge discussed the status of the ARPA Projects relative to the allocation of surplus funds from completed projects to date; and to consider and prioritize the remaining needs as follows:

- ***Gales Ferry Route 12 Corridor Study \$15,000*** – Mayor Allyn explained that they have learned that \$15,000 was not adequate, noting that \$50,000 was going to be needed to obtain a suitable Study that the town could use to later apply for Grants to facilitate improvements in that area.

Director of Planning & Development Juliet Hodge explained because of the data needed, the cost to conduct the Route 12 Corridor Study was going to cost \$50,000. She stated there was a lot happening in Gales Ferry, with a lot more on the way, therefore, this Study was going to be crucial. She noted the \$35,000 ARPA funding that was included on the Projects List for the sidewalks in Gales Ferry could be reallocated to be used toward the Gales Ferry Route 12 Corridor Study, noting by adding the \$35,000 to the \$15,000 already assigned for the Study that they would have the \$50,000 needed to produce the type of Study needed.

- ***Sewer Line Extension Project Phase I \$1,200,000***- Mayor Allyn stated Phase I of the Sewer Line Extension was currently in-process. He explained that there has been some savings because they have coordinated this work with the construction of the Multi-Use Pathway (pedestrian and bicycle) along Colonel Ledyard Highway, which was being paid for by the by LoTCIP Grant funding (Local Transportation Capital Improvement Plan). Therefore, he stated the work to lay the pipe under the Multi-Use Pathway has come in \$731,668 under the estimated \$1,200,000 amount that was initially assigned for Phase I of the Sewer Line Extension Project. He stated the Multi-Use Pathway work would begin on March 4, 2024, with the clearing of the land, with an expected completion date of November 30, 2024. He stated Weston & Sampson Engineers, who designed the Multi-Use Pathway, would oversee the construction of the Pathway project.

Mayor Allyn continued by addressing the importance to also provide construction oversight of the Sewer Line Extension Project. He stated the cost to hire a Clerk of the Works, who would be in the field on a daily basis to witness and oversee that work the was being done properly and that the pipes/connections etc. were being tested, etc., would cost \$50,000.

Councilor Buhle requested clarification, noting that the LoTCIP Grant funding was paying for the Multi-Use Pathway portion of the project and that the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding was paying for Phase I of the Sewer Line Extension portion of the project. Mayor Allyn stated that was correct.

Councilor Ryan noted Phase III of Sewer Line Extension Project \$950,000. He questioned based on the timeline of needing to have signed contracts in-place by December 31, 2024 whether the town would be able to accomplish this project. Mayor Allyn stated the Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) was working with Weston & Sampson Engineers to start the engineering work for the next Phase, which would bring the sewer line from the High School to Pennywise Lane. He stated the hope was that they would have a signed contract in-place by December 31, 2024.

- ***Sandy Hollow Guiderail Replacement Project \$390,000*** – Mayor Allyn stated because the guiderail was 7,000 feet that he asked Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin to identify the critical components of the 1.5-mile stretch of road. He stated although Sandy Hollow Road has not been designated as a *Scenic Road*, that it was quite scenic. Therefore, he stated that he would suggest that they install the Rusted Metal Guiderails that would blend into the natural rural setting.

Councilor Ryan stated although the *Sandy Hollow Guiderail Replacement Project* was included in the initial ARPA Projects List that it was currently not on the List. Mayor Allyn stated the replacement of these guiderails have been requested in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for several years, however, he stated due to budget constraints that the project was annually taken out of the Plan.

Councilor Saccone noted when they began talking about the *Sandy Hollow Guiderail Replacement Project* several years ago the cost was about \$225,000. However, he stated over the years that the costs have continued to increase, noting that the project was now going to cost \$165,000 more, than it would have if they replaced the guiderails years ago.

Councilor Buhle questioned the cost for the regular guiderails. Mayor Allyn noted the following cost estimates:

- \$1.1 million - Wood Guiderails, similar to the type that were on the Merit Parkway.
- \$312,000 - Galvanized Guiderails
- \$390,000 - Rusted Metal Guiderails that would blend into the natural rural setting.

Mayor Allyn, stated that he would ask Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin to obtain quotes from the State Bid Contract List.

Councilor Ryan stated they had an *Uncommitted ARPA Balance in the amount of \$225,962.49*. Therefore, he stated if they wanted to move forward with the replacement of the Sandy Hollow Guiderails this year that they would need to include the project in the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Budget with \$225,962.49 coming from ARPA and the balance in the amount of \$164,037 coming from the tax levy. He stated another option would be to replace as much of the guiderail as they could with the \$225,962 ARPA Funding.

Councilor Buhle questioned the reason Groton Utilities has not been willing to help pay for the replacement of the guiderails, noting that it would make sense that they would want to keep vehicles that may go off the road from going into the reservoir property, noting that this project had been included on the town's Capital Improvement Plan for many years. Mayor Allyn stated he has talked with Groton Utilities about co-sharing the cost to replace the guiderails and he stated that Groton Utilities' response was an absolute "*No*".

Councilor Saccone addressed the need to replace the dilapidated Guiderails on Sandy Hollow Road. He commented on the safety/protection for motorists stating that it would not take much to push through the current guiderails. He stated spending the money to replace the guiderails on Sandy Hollow Road would go a long way in protecting their residents.

Councilor Ryan noted the following projects have not been started:

- ✓ ***Ledyard Center Sidewalk In-Fill: \$35,000*** – Mayor Allyn noted they have obtained quotes for this project, and that it was scheduled to be done this spring, 2024.
- ✓ ***Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Stations: \$20,000*** – Mayor Allyn stated he would be attending a webinar next week regarding a new program in Connecticut for EV Charging Stations. He stated that he thought one Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Station could be installed on Colonel Ledyard Highway at one of the parallel parking spots across the street from the Town Hall. However, he stated the town has been having difficulty identifying a location in Gales Ferry for an Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Station, explaining that it would need to be on private property such as the parking lot of businesses.

Councilor Ryan questioned whether there would be a way to offer a discount to Ledyard Residents that used the Electric Vehicle Charging Station in town. Mayor Allyn stated some towns who have installed Electric Vehicle Charging Stations were offering them for free, noting that the town was paying for the electricity to charge the vehicles. He addressed the cost of electricity, and he stated that offering the Electric Vehicle Charging to residents for free was not realistic. Therefore, he stated that it would need to be a Fee for Service Electric Charging Station, noting that users would need to use a credit card or some type of payment method. He stated that it would take some time to figure out how to provide a discount to Ledyard Residents.

Councilor Buhle suggested to provide an incentive to businesses to allow the town to install an Electric Vehicle Charging Station on their property, that perhaps the business could provide a validation slip to customers that would provide the customers with a discount at Electric Vehicle Charging Station. She stated people could charge their vehicle while they were having breakfast, shopping, etc., noting that the program could also bring customers to local businesses. Mayor Allyn stated Councilor Buhle had a good suggestion, however, he explained that some of the businesses owners/operators were not the property owners, and that he would try to contact the property owners.

Councilor Ryan questioned whether the Electric Vehicle Charging Stations could be accomplished within the ARPA Funding timeline. Mayor Allyn stated that he believed they would be able to get contracts for Electric Vehicle Charging Stations in place by December 31, 2024.

The Group noted the following projects were scheduled to begin soon:

- ***Erickson Park Improvements \$55,000*** - Mayor Allyn stated the stone dust path was put down this fall (2023). Therefore, he stated that Parks & Recreation planned to proceed with the excavation work to create an additional fifteen parking spaces, and the other improvement work, which included installing a retaining wall this spring (2024).

Councilor Ryan questioned whether there was any plan to improve the boat launch at Erickson Park. Parks, Recreation, & Senior Citizens Director Scott Johnson, Jr., explained that they continuously bring in gravel for that area, noting that the slope and location made it difficult to maintain. He stated they would be open to ideas to try to remedy the issue. Councilor Ryan questioned whether improvements to the boat launch would need to involve the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP). Mr. Johnson stated because the Erickson Park boat launch was on the Thames River, that he believed DEEP would need to be involved. Councilor Buhle questioned whether the Rain Garden has helped with the erosion in that area. Mr. Johnson stated that the Rain Garden has redirected the water and has helped with some of the washout.

Councilor Saccone noted that the Parks & Recreation Capital Account had a current balance in the amount of \$332,000; noting that this account was funded by Ordinance \$200-009 “*An Ordinance Providing for the Transfer of Certain Revenue From the Real Estate Conveyance Tax to Specific Town of Ledyard Funds*” which allocated 40% percentage of the Conveyance Tax from the Real Estate Transactions to the Parks & Recreation Capital Account. Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated that there were still some conveyance tax revenues that have not been recorded to that Account, noting that Fiscal Assistant Nancy Marchand was continuing her work to catch up on journal entries, noting the position had been vacant since November, 2023. Councilor Saccone questioned whether Parks & Recreation would still need the entire \$55,000 of ARPA Funding for the Erickson Park Improvements.

Parks, Recreation, & Senior Citizens Director Scott Johnson, Jr., stated the stone dust path was paid out of the Parks & Recreation Capital Account, noting that the parking lot and stonewall would be paid by the \$55,000 ARPA Funding. He went on to explain that much of the Parks & Recreation Capital Account has already been earmarked for other projects.

Councilor Buhle stated that Parks & Recreation could not apply for grant funding without documentation showing that the improvement project was needed. Therefore, she suggested the town consider conducting a Park Study that would evaluate all of the town’s parks based on the population and location/space/parking/etc. of the parks. Councilor Ryan noted a Park Study would provide guidance for future investments.

- ***Linda C. Davis Food Pantry Re-siding \$28,250*** – Mayor Allyn noted the Bid opening for the Food Pantry Siding Improvements ((Bid #2024-02) was scheduled for February 22, 2024.
- ***Exterior Doors Town Hall & Annex Building \$23,000*** – Mayor Allyn stated the doors were in-process.

Mr. Earl (Ty) Lamb, 95 Lambtown Road, Ledyard, Historic Commission Chairman, noted earlier this evening (New Business Item #2- see above); the Finance Committee addressed the Commission’s request to move \$55,575.17 of ARPA Funds from the Up-Down Sawmill to the Nathan Lester House to accomplish the exterior improvements. However, he stated that the Historic Commission had the following four improvement projects for the Sawmill:

- (1) Raceway
- (2) Line Penstock
- (3) Handicap Access
- (4) Framing

Mr. Lamb went on to note that former Historic District Commission Chairman Vincent Godino was planning to use ARPA Funding plus \$32,000 from their Capital Account to pay for some of these Up-Down Sawmill improvement projects. However, he explained that the Commission’s Capital Funds were typically used for emergency expenses. Therefore, he stated rather than use their Capital Fund for these Sawmill improvements that it would be helpful if they could use ARPA Funds instead. Councilor Ryan questioned whether they could have these four Sawmill projects under contract by December 31, 2024. Mr. Lamb replied “Yes”.

Mr. Lamb continued by stating that the Historic District Commission has also been discussing the following:

- Replacement of the siding on the Sawmill.
- Ability to expand the use of the Nathan Lester House for things such as historical education, which would require the construction of a building on the property.

Mr. Lamb stated the Commission was also planning a trip to a Historical Education Center in Westwood, Massachusetts, noting that the Center has made money for their town.

Councilor Ryan questioned whether there were some smaller projects on the upcoming Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Capital Improvement List (CIP) that could be funded using the remainder of the ARPA Funding, which would help to bring the projected mil rate increase down. Mayor Allyn stated that there were some projects that were being deferred over the next 2-3 fiscal years; however, he stated there were some projects on the CIP for the upcoming fiscal year that had low funding thresholds. He stated they could accomplish a number of the smaller capital projects/purchases by using the ARPA Funding. Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated the ARPA funding could also be used for road improvement work. Councilor Saccone stated although he liked the idea to offset

the cost of the Capital Improvement Plan to keep the mil rate increase low; that he would urge caution in delaying projects such as the replacement of the Sandy Hollow Road guiderails noting that the cost was only going to continue to increase, as they have already experienced.

Chairman Rodriguez questioned whether the replacement of the Sandy Hollow Road guiderails had ever been included on the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Mayor Allyn stated “Yes”; noting the project had been included on the Capital Improvement Plan several times but that it was removed, because of budget constraints. He stated every budget year there were \$8 million-\$12million in capital costs submitted, noting that they have to take some projects out, noting that they cannot afford to do them all.

Councilor Buhle suggested they use the \$225,000 ARPA funding for projects that were on the Capital Improvement Plan, instead of doing the Sandy Hollow Guiderail project this year; and then begin to budget for the guiderail replacement project in the Capital Impromvent Plan by allocating \$125,000 over the next 3-years, noting that it would be \$200,000 less to the taxpayers.

Mayor Allyn stated that he and Finance Director Matthew Bonin could create a short-list of capital projects, to also present with the proposed Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget for the Finance Committee to consider during their budget work.

Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated that he would like to zero-out the ARPA Projects that have been completed, which would put any remaining funds from those projects back into the Uncommitted column. However, he also noted that there were some ARPA Projects that came in over the amount that was budgeted, noting that the net amount of all those projects was about \$12,000. The Finance Committee noted that a Motion was not required for Mr. Bonin to close-out the projects and make the adjustments to the ARPA Project spreadsheet.

Mayor Allyn provided a recap noting the Finance Committee discussed the following ARPA Funding Adjustments/Reallocations:

| <u>Move From:</u>                       | <u>Move To:</u>                            |
|---|--|
| ✓ \$35,000 Gales Ferry Sidewalks        | Route 12 Corridor Study                    |
| ✓ \$50,000 Sewer Line Extension Phase I | Hire Clerk of the Works for Sewer Projects |

Mayor Allyn stated that Mr. Bonin would make the adjustments as noted above along with closing out the completed projects on the ARPA Project spreadsheet to provide the balances for the Finance Committee’s March 6, 2024 meeting. He also noted that he would work with Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin to obtain quotes for replacement of the Sandy Hollow Guiderails for their next meeting as well.

Councilor Buhle addressed the former Dow-Styrenics property in Gales Ferry, noting that the property needed to be remediated before it could be developed. The Finance Committee noted that it was private property and that it would be the responsibility of the current or future owner of the property to have the remediation work done.

**RESULT: DISCUSSED**

**Next Meeting: 03/6/2024 5:00 p.m.**

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

X. ADJOURNMENT

**VOTE:** Councilor Buhle moved the meeting be adjourned, seconded by Councilor Ryan.  
**3 - 0 Approved and so declared**, the meeting was adjourned at 7:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony Saccone, Sr.  
Committee Chairman  
Finance Committee