



TOWN OF LEDYARD

Town Council Meeting Minutes

741 Colonel Ledyard Highway
Ledyard, Connecticut 06339-1551
(860) 464-3203
council@ledyardct.org

Chairman S. Naomi
Rodriguez

Sp. Town Council Mtg Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget

Tuesday, May 27, 2025

5:30 PM

Town Hall Council Chambers

In-Person: Council Chambers Town Hall Annex

Remote: Information noted below:

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

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86968297481?pwd=eRm954zj1U2Frn3dAriH4QMaWnWelc.1>

Audio Only: Telephone: +1 646 558 8656; Meeting ID: 869 6829 7481; Passcode: 430700

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Rodriguez called the special meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. at the Council Chambers, Town Hall Annex Building.

Chairman Rodriguez welcomed all to the Hybrid Meeting. She stated for the members of the Town Council and the Public who were participating via video conference that the remote meeting information was available on the Agenda that was posted on the Town's Website - Granicus-Legistar Meeting Portal.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL

Present: Councilor William Barnes
Councilor April Brunelle
Councilor Jessica Buhle
Councilor Kevin Dombrowski
Councilor Carmen Garcia-Irizarry
Chairperson S. Naomi Rodriguez
Councilor Tim Ryan
Councilor Tony Saccone
Councilor Gary St. Vil

IV. BUSINESS OF THE MEETING

Finance Committee

1. MOTION to grant a Bid Waiver to Building One Facility Services, LLC, of Durham, Connecticut, due to receiving fewer than the required three bids in response to Bid #2025-09 (Janitorial Services), in accordance with Ordinance #200-07 (rev 1) “An Ordinance for Purchasing”

Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Buhle

Discussion: Mayor Allyn, III, stated in response to Bid #2025-09 (Janitorial Services for the Town Hall Annex Building and the Police Department) that only two bids were received; therefore, a bid waiver was being requested. He explained in addition to a new Janitorial Vendor that as a cost-cutting measure the new contract would only lean the Town Hall and the Annex Building once a week; and they would clean the Police Department five days per week, noting that they have three shifts that operate 24/7. He stated that the Town Hall Staff would take out their trash, noting that this was another step for a lean operation at Town Hall. He stated the new Janitorial Services Contract was for four-years and would be a savings of \$8,900 per year.

VOTE: 9 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Tim Ryan

SECONDER: Jessica Buhle

AYE: 9 Barnes, Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Rodriguez, Ryan, Saccone, and St. Vil

2. MOTION to waive the reading in its entirety the “Town Council Resolutions Approving Bond Resolutions And Calling Town Meeting” to be held on Monday, June 23, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 741 Colonel Ledyard Highway, Ledyard to consider said Resolution; and adjourn to a vote at a referendum to be held on Tuesday, July 8, 2025 between the hours of 12:00 Noon and 8:00 p.m. at the Town Hall, Lower Level - Registrar’s Office, 741 Colonel Ledyard Highway.

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: None.

VOTE: 9 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Jessica Buhle

SECONDER: Tim Ryan

AYE: 9 Barnes, Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Rodriguez, Ryan, Saccone, and St. Vil

3. MOTION to approve the “Town Council Resolutions Approving Bond Resolutions And Calling Town Meeting” to be held on Monday, June 23 2025 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 741 Colonel Ledyard Highway, Ledyard to consider said Resolution; and adjourn to a vote at a referendum to be held on Tuesday, July 8, 2025 between the hours of 12:00 Noon and 8:00 p.m. at the Town Hall, Lower Level - Registrar’s Office, 741 Colonel Ledyard Highway.

Res: 003/2025/

DRAFT

TOWN COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS
APPROVING BOND RESOLUTIONS AND
CALLING TOWN MEETING

RESOLVED,

That the resolution entitled **“RESOLUTION AMENDING THE RESOLUTION ENTITLED “RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING \$8,550,000 FOR VARIOUS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS; AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF BONDS AND NOTES IN THE SAME AMOUNT TO FINANCE SAID APPROPRIATION” TO INCREASE THE APPROPRIATION AND BORROWING AUTHORIZATION TO \$9,800,000”** is hereby approved and a copy of said resolution shall be attached to and incorporated into these minutes.

FURTHER RESOLVED,

That the Ledyard Town Council recommends that a town meeting, adjourned to referendum, adopt the above resolution entitled **“RESOLUTION AMENDING THE RESOLUTION ENTITLED “RESOLUTION APPROPRIATING \$8,550,000 FOR VARIOUS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS; AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUE OF BONDS AND NOTES IN THE SAME AMOUNT TO FINANCE SAID APPROPRIATION” TO INCREASE THE APPROPRIATION AND BORROWING AUTHORIZATION TO \$9,800,000”** in accordance with Chapter VII, Sections 7 and 12 of the Town Charter.

FURTHER RESOLVED,

That the Chairman of the Town Council is authorized to call a hybrid (In-Person & Video Conference) meeting via Zoom <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88245336277?pwd=dsL5439nviyhuTta0qRkyP6MrXZL3D.1>; or by telephone 1-646- 558-8656; Meeting ID: 882 4533 6277; Passcode: 558287; Special Town Meeting held on Monday, June 23, at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 741 Colonel Ledyard Highway, Town of Ledyard to consider said Resolution.

FURTHER RESOLVED,

That the Town Council, pursuant to Section 14 of Chapter III and Section 9 of Chapter VII of the Town Charter, hereby designates for submission to the voters at referendum to be held on Tuesday, July 8, 2025 between the hours of 12:00 Noon and 8:00 p.m. at the Town Hall, Lower Level - Registrar's Office, 741 Colonel Ledyard Highway in the Town of Ledyard, in the manner provided by said Sections, action on the aforesaid Resolution to be presented to said Special Town Meeting, and directs the Town Clerk to give notice of such referendum vote.

FURTHER RESOLVED,

That the Chairman of the Town Council cause notice of the time, place and purpose of said Special Town Meeting and Referendum to be posted and published in accordance with the provisions of the Town Charter.

FURTHER RESOLVED,

That the aforesaid Resolution shall be placed upon the ballot under the following heading:

“SHALL THE TOWN OF LEDYARD APPROPRIATE AN ADDITIONAL \$1,250,000 (INCREASING THE APPROPRIATION AND BORROWING AUTHORIZATION TO AN AGGREGATE \$9,800,000) FOR VARIOUS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS, AND AUTHORIZING THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS AND NOTES IN THE SAME AMOUNT TO FINANCE THE APPROPRIATION?”

Voters approving the Resolution will vote “Yes” and those opposing the Resolution shall vote “No”. Voting will be held at the usual polling places in the Town. Absentee ballots will be available from the Town Clerk’s office.

Approved by the Ledyard Town Council on: _____

S. Naomi Rodriguez, Chairman

Moved by Councilor Saccone, seconded by Councilor Buhle

Discussion: With the May 20, 2025 Referendum not being approved by the voters, the Town Council was resubmitting to the voters the request to seek authorization to appropriate an additional \$1,250,000 to move the Juliet W. Long School Heating Ventilation and Air Condition System (HVAC) forward. The Juliet W. Long HVAC Project was one component of the Various School Improvement Projects.

This Resolution would schedule a Special Town Meeting on Monday, June 23, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. and to adjourn to a Referendum on the Voting Machines on Tuesday, July 8, 2025 between the hours of 12:00 Noon and 8:00 p.m.

VOTE: 9 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Tony Saccone

SECONDER: Jessica Buhle

AYE: 9 Barnes, Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Rodriguez, Ryan, Saccone, and St. Vil

4. MOTION to adopt a proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget in the amount of \$70,440,669 comprised of:

- General Government: \$29,933,427_
- Board of Education: \$40,507,242.

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Saccone

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Saccone

Discussion: Councilor St. Vil stated based on the feedback received from residents responses to the Budget Advisory Questions that he would like to amend the Motion on the floor.

❖ MOTION to adjust the following Account Lines in the General Government's proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget:

Account #	Title	Reduction	New Amount
1011-2101-51600	Finance Director	\$17,083	\$115,917
1011-0311-51600	Town Clerk	\$7,639	\$ 69,761
1011-4301-51600	Land Use Director	\$6,084	\$102,066
<u>1011-0205-51606</u>	<u>Human Resource Director</u>	<u>\$1,442</u>	<u>\$ 96,408</u>
Total Reductions		\$32,248	

For a revised General Government Fiscal Year Budget in the amount of \$29,901,179.

Moved by Councilor St. Vil, seconded by Councilor Garcia-Irizarry

Discussion: Councilor Ryan stated that he would be voting "No" on the proposed amendment for the following reasons:

- What the department heads were worth to the town - Councilor Ryan stated the town's highest paid Administrator/Department Head was the Police Chief at \$144,000.
- Currently all of the town's Administrators/Department Heads salaries were at; or below the midpoint of the pay scale. Councilor Ryan stated according to the *Employee Classification 10 Town Salary Survey* that Ledyard was not even paying their department heads above the midpoint. He stated that it was not debatable that Ledyard was lucky to have the departments heads they have, noting that all of them could easily go somewhere else with the qualifications they have.

Councilor Ryan continued by stating that he was going to provide some data that may shock some people in the Council Chambers; and perhaps give pause to some Town Councilors:

- \$180,000 was the average salary for the Ledyard Public School Administrators.
- \$3 Million was the town's cost for Ledyard's Public Schools 17 Administrators. This included the following:
 - ✓ School Superintendent
 - ✓ School Assistant Superintendent
 - ✓ Director of Finance & Human Capital
 - ✓ High School Principal
 - ✓ High School First Assistant Principal
 - ✓ High School Student Services Administrator
 - ✓ Middle School Principal
 - ✓ Middle School Assistant Principal
 - ✓ Middle School Student Services Administrator
 - ✓ Four Elementary School Principals
 - ✓ Elementary School Student Services Administrator

- ✓ Director of Student Services
- ✓ Special Education Director

Councilor Ryan stated in doing the math the Town's Chief of Police/Public Safety Department Head (\$144,000) was earning less than their Elementary School Principals (\$166,333). He stated *Shame on us!* noting that he was beside himself that some members of this Town Council actually wanted to lower the proposed salaries for these Town Administrators/Department Heads. He stated for the combined total cost \$32,248 in salary increases for these Town Department Heads that Ledyard was actually getting quite a deal. He stated if we want to save some real money in the budget that they all know what needed to happen; and he noted that it was not on the General Government side of the budget.

Councilor Ryan stated that he would like to hear the justification on why this School District had Principals earning \$166,333; which was more than any of the General Government's Administrators/Department Heads. He stated that he would be voting "No" on the budget Amendment, because it was shameful that Ledyard does not pay their Administrators/Department Heads market value. He stated what was even more shameful was that they were now trying to reduce the salary increases that they deserve.

Councilor Brunelle responded to Councilor Ryan's comments as follows:

- ✓ General Government Department Head Salaries were in the middle of the pack compared to the salaries for other areas.

Councilor Brunelle stated that Ledyard's Education Funding was at the bottom of the pack, noting that there was a big gap.

- ✓ Board of Education Administrators were paid more than the General Government Administrators/Department Heads.

Councilor Brunelle stated that she could not speak for the Board of Education, but that she was pretty sure that to be on education side of things, you have to have a lot of education, noting that they have to have Doctorates or PhDs, and they have to go to specialty classes and all that good stuff. Therefore, she stated what they were paying the Board of Education's

Administrators was probably appropriate for their education and skill levels. She went on to state that they all know that running a School System was a lot different than running a government system. Therefore, she stated that there were no comparison between the Board of Education's Administrators and the Town's Administrator/Department Heads, noting that they were just numbers.

Councilor Brunelle went on to state that she thought the Budget Amendment was good because more people voted that the General Government side of the budget was *Too High*. Therefore, she stated that it did not sit well with her that the Education side of the budget was going to take the bigger hit; when it seemed like the voters, who she worked for, and who they all worked for, wanted a bigger hit to the government side of the budget. She stated that she did not want to hit

anything, which was the reason she voted for the budgets. She stated that she thought both budgets were great and what was needed to run our town, but unfortunately the voters came out and voted the budget down; and as a result things have to be cut. She stated that she did not think that it was ethical or moral to give high raises to people when a typical raise for our constituents and the people who voted were really lucky if they get a 3% or 4% raise. She stated wanting to give someone an 18% increase was obscene, and that she could not ethically and morally say that it was okay. She stated that they were all going to cut back and that they would all have to make sacrifices. She stated maybe the Town's Administrators/Department Heads would not get an 18% raise, but they would still get a raise. She stated that she thought that was more than fair in the current situation that they were facing.

Councilor St. Vil stated that he wanted to clarify his proposed Amendment noting the following;

- ✓ His proposed salary reductions were to pay raises that were in excess of 10% and 15%. They were not a reduction to anyone's pay.
- ✓ His proposed adjusted salaries represented a 4% increase over the prior year. Councilor St. Vil stated for Councilor Ryan to insinuate that a 4% increase was inadequate in today's environment; that he would ask that Councilor Ryan poll their constituents and see what their average raises were.

Councilor St. Vil noted as the Mayor said during the May 21, 2025 Finance Committee meeting that every dollar counts. Therefore, he stated to save \$8,900 that the town was shifting Janitorial Services for the Town Hall and Annex Building to once per week instead of the current four-days per week; and that town employees would take their own garbage out.

Councilor St. Vil questioned how Councilor Ryan could disregard a savings in an excess of \$32,248 for our residents. He noted that Councilor Ryan's substantiation was to look at what the Board of Education was paying their Administrators; rather than look at the merits of the budget reduction. He stated as a Member of the Finance Committee that he believed Councilor Ryan voted "Yes" to forward the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget to the townspeople. Councilor St. Vil stated that he would admit that he voted for the previous budget, however, he stated that he was wrong, noting that their constituents have said: *"Go back; Take a harder look; And don't leave a stone unturned"*. Therefore, Councilor St. Vil stated that this was what his proposed Amendment to reduce the budget by \$32,248 represented. He stated that it was not a reduction of anyone's pay, noting it was still an increase.

Councilor Buhle stated that she was a member of the Finance Committee and that she supported the proposed Amendment. She stated that she wanted to be clear that she does think that the Town's Administrators/Department Heads need to be paid. However, she questioned the following:

- ✓ When was *the Employee Classification 10 Town Salary Study* conducted. Councilor Buhle noted that the Study was not linked to any of their Agendas.
- ✓ The reason they were pushing the salary increases this year; and why they did not do the

salary increases last year; or two-years ago.

Mayor Allyn, III, stated that the *Employee Classification 10 Town Salary Study* was conducted two-years ago; and that everyone should have received the Study. He noted the proposed salary adjustments would not even bring these Administrator/Department Heads' salaries to the mid-range salary for these same positions in neighboring towns. He stated the Salary Study breaks out the salary levels based on years of experience, noting for people with 10+ years of experience that they would be at the midpoint or higher. He stated last year they adjusted the salaries of two Administrators/Department Heads with the Plan to address these Administrators/Department Heads this year. He stated all these Administrators/Department Heads were the critical people that keep the Town's General Government running.

Mayor Allyn continued by addressing the comments that they need to cut the General Government more; and he questioned which facility they would want to close. He stated the only remaining "Nice to Have" services were the Bill Library, Gales Ferry Library, and the Senior Citizens/Parks & Recreation Center. He stated everything outside of these facilities was central service. Therefore, he stated in looking at the proposed Amendment; and given the fact that the 10 Town Salary Study was two-years old, that they were not really catching these salaries up, because the salaries in the study were already 2 years old. He stated with the changes that the Finance Committee made to the budget at their May 21, 2025 meeting, that the General Government's proposed budget increase, exclusive of the Healthcare, was 0.2 of 1%; and yet nobody was looking at the Board of Education's 5.98% budget increase. He stated that this just confounded him.

Councilor Buhle questioned when they were telling their taxpayers that a 5.98% increase was too big; how they could justify paying 10% salary increases. She went on to state furthermore, they were talking about bringing the General Government Administrator/ Department Heads' salaries to the midpoint; when their Education Budget was not even close to being funding at the midpoint compared to other towns in the State. Therefore, she stated that if they would bring the Education Budget to the midpoint, or even to the bottom quarter of the 169 towns in the State, that would be amazing.

Councilor Buhle went on to state in trying to understand the \$32,248 reduction in the grand scheme of the budget, that it was not a magic number. She stated that she did not think that the voters who said the General Government budget was too high were saying anything about any other expenses other than these salary increases, noting that was the feedback she was hearing. She stated in looking through the General Government budget and seeing 10% salary increases that residents were saying that they were not getting a 10% raise.

Chairman Rodriguez stated these employees were getting raises, but that the raises were just not as high as originally proposed in the budget. She stated in past budget years that they have staggered expenses over a couple of years. She noted as an example that when they were planning to buy something they would allocate funding over three budget years. Therefore, she asked Mayor Allyn if they could do the same to implement these salary increases. She stated that she would approve the salary increases if they could implement them over a two-year period.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated before they even started to look at the town's budget expenses for the upcoming Fiscal Year 2025/2026 that they already had a \$2 million reduction in revenues. Therefore, she stated when she looked at the budget increases that she did not take them lightly. She noted that she and Councilor St. Vil asked Human Resources Christine Dias for the *Employee Classification 10 Town Salary Study*. She stated in addition to the Salary Study that Ms. Dias also provided a Chart that compared the salaries to other municipalities.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry noted the following data:

- Finance Director Position Current Salaries:
 - ✓ Ledyard: \$111,459
 - ✓ Stonington \$136,000
 - ✓ East Lyme \$163,000
 - ✓ Colchester \$126,000

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry because she wanted to be fair; compensate their employees appropriately; keep their employees working for us; and let them know that we appreciate them that she looked at municipalities that were most like Ledyard to see if our salaries were below or above the salaries that comparable towns were paying. She noted that Stonington and East Lyme had a bigger population and a bigger budget than Ledyard, therefore, she decided to use Colchester for her comparison for the Administrator/Department Head Salaries because they were similar to Ledyard in terms of population and budget. Therefore, she stated the following adjusted salaries that were being proposed this evening were about the same as Colchester.

<u>Position</u>	<u>Ledyard (proposed 5/27/2025)</u>	<u>Colchester</u>
Finance Director:	\$115,917	\$111,954
Town Clerk	\$ 69,761	\$ 79,022
Land Use Director	\$102,066	\$ 99,732
Human Resource Director	\$ 96,408	\$ 76,385

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry went on to note the salary comparisons for the following positions; noting that Colchester and other towns had two separate positions for their Parks & Recreation Director and for their Senior Citizens Director; where Ledyard has one employee that does both jobs:

<u>Position</u>	<u>Ledyard (proposed budget)</u>	<u>Colchester</u>
Library Director	\$ 89,529	\$106,404
Parks, Rec & Senior Director	\$86,642	
Senior Citizens Director		\$ 75,692
Parks & Recreation Director		\$ 87,000
Public Works Director/Town Engineer	\$140,000	\$ 55,540

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated that she was not against the salary increases, however, she stated that she was apprehensive about doing them all at once. She stated that she would be more

comfortable with staggering the increases over a few years noting that it would make sense; and it would take into consideration the position of their voters, noting that it would be economically feasible for everyone involved, and it would also acknowledge the work these employees were doing for the town.

Mayor Allyn stated that he appreciated Councilor Garcia-Irizarry's desire to be fair, because he also wanted to be fair with these Administrators/Department Heads, which was the reason he started this conversation five- years ago. He stated that he started this conversation to bring their Administrators/Department Heads salaries in line with market value, not to have massive raise increases, and not to bring the salaries up to the high end, but at the same time they should not be at the low end for what these critical people do for the town. He stated if they continue with the 3% or 4% increase model that they would constantly be chasing, and they would never get the salaries to where they should be. He stated that the goal and the objective was to bring these critical staff people's salaries to the right place.

Mayor Allyn stated that he wanted to address the comments regarding Ledyard's Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Director wearing two hats and about his salary. He explained that the salary was increased by \$15,000 when the Parks & Recreation Director took on the role of Senior Center Director. He stated because the position was wearing an additional hat that the Director received a chunk of money, noting that this position was not left out of the salary analysis when he reviewed all the salaries. He stated in reviewing the *Employee Classification 10 Town Salary Survey* there were five salaries that stuck out as being below where they should be, noting that they addressed the salaries of two positions last year; and that he was addressing the salaries for these three positions this year. Therefore, he stated by reducing these salary increases that they would be creating a new disparity because last year the Town Council supported the salary increases for two positions; but they were not supporting the salary increases for these three positions this year.

Chairman Rodriguez stated at their May 21, 2025 meeting the Finance Committee approved \$207,500 reductions from the General Government budget. She stated during that meeting the Mayor presented \$145,700 in budget reductions; and that he was going to provide the additional \$60,000 reductions for tonight's meeting. She asked Mayor Allyn if he could review the additional \$60,000 reductions.

Mayor Allyn noted with the Finance Committee's May 21, 2025 reductions that the General Government's budget increase was 0.2 of 1%. He explained because the Capital Budget for both the Town and Board of Education resided in the General Government Budget that the total reduction to the General Government Budget was \$467,571 (GG 207,500 + BOE Capital \$260,00).

Mayor Allyn proceeded to review the May 21, 2025 reductions in the amount \$147,500 and the additional \$60,000 for the General Government as follows:

Account #	Title	Reduction	New Amount
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Town Council

10110101-5879	Contingency	\$7,000	\$7,000
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Mayor's Office

10110201-58790	Contingency	\$1,500	\$ 6,000
10110203-53700	Contract Maint/Leases	\$8,900	\$57,700

Town Clerk's Office

1011-0311-51600	Town Clerk	\$7,639	\$ 69,761
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Human Resources Department

1011-0205-51606	Human Resource Director	\$1,442	\$ 96,408
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Finance Department

1011-2101-51600	Finance Director	\$17,083	\$115,917
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Land Use Department

1011-4301-51600	Land Use Director	6,084	\$102,066
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Public Works

Acct #101401-53300	Engineering/MS4	\$10,000	\$ 70,000
10140103-56260	Gasoline/Oil	\$7,500	\$ 37,500
10140103-56265	Disel Fuel	\$5,000	\$ 60,000
10140107-56301	Sand and Salt	\$10,000	\$135,000
10140113-54210	Solid Waste Disposal	\$5,000	\$706,300
10140113-58790	Bulky Waste Removal	\$10,000	\$ 90,000

Police/Dispatch

10120101-5626	Disel/Gasoline	\$8,000	\$62,000
10120101-53645	Training Salary	\$5,000	\$80,000
10120101-57300	New Equip-Fire Arms	\$2,800	\$ 4,200

Human Resources

10110253-52400	Salary Benefit Adj	\$25,000	\$50,000
10110253-52310	Defined Benefit Plan	\$40,00	\$760,00

Capital Budget- Reductions

Title	Reduction	New Amount
PW Heavy Equipment (Long term Budgeting)		\$10,000 \$ 80,000
PW Large Trucks (Long Term Budgeting)		\$20,000 \$165,000
Road Restoration	\$10,000	\$890,000
LHS - Science Lab Upgrades	\$125,000	Deferred to FY 26/27
JWL - Classroom Renovations	\$135,000	Deferred to FY 26/27

Mayor Allyn went on to explain at the Finance Committee's May 21, 2025 meeting that he also suggested the following increase to the General Government's Revenue (Transfers-In).

Revenues

Account #	Title	Increase	New Amount
1010502-49002	Mil Rate Stabilization	\$200,000	\$1,504,675

Mayor Allyn went on to explain at the Finance Committee's May 21, 2025 meeting that he also

suggested the following increase to the General Government's Revenue (Transfers-In).

Revenues

Account #	Title	Increase	New Amount
1010502-49002	Mil Rate Stabilization	\$200,000	\$1,504,675

Councilor Saccone stated that he would be voting against the Amendment on the floor to reduce the Administrator/Department Heads salary increases. He stated as a past Fire Chief of the Gales Ferry Fire Department that he has worked with the Finance Director and the Town Clerk, noting that both of these employees helped him numerous times. He stated that the salaries for these Administrator/Department Heads were below where they should be for the education, licenses, and other certifications required to perform these jobs. He stated that they have kicked this can down the road for at least five years; noting that they have done the same with the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

Councilor Saccone went on to note that the taxpayers have spoken; and they wanted the budget to be reduced. He stated at their May 21, 2025 meeting the Finance Committee reduced the budget by \$621,571; and reduced the mil rate increase from 2.76 to 1.99. He stated that the Finance Committee has recommended the Town Council approve to forward the following proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget in the amount of \$70,440,669 comprised of a General Government: \$29,933,427 and Board of Education: \$40,507,242 to a Second Referendum, noting that it would require a project mil rate of 37.20.

Councilor Saccone stated that the proposed Amendment to reduce the salary increases by \$32,248 would be less than a \$5.00 per month savings in their tax bills; and it would not lower the 1.99 mil rate increase. He went on to state that Finance Director Matthew Bonin has made the town nearly \$2 million in interest earnings over the last two years. He stated these revenues have saved Ledyard residents \$2 million in tax dollars. He stated these Administrator/Department Heads have earned these salary increases, noting that he would be voting "No" on the Amendment on the floor.

Chairman Rodriguez stated these Administrator/Department Heads were getting raises noting that they all know that they were qualified; they were excellent employees, and they want them all to stay, noting that they were still getting a raise. However, she stated they also have a very difficult budget, and the residents have spoken.

Chairman Rodriguez continued by stating that she was shocked by the results of the Advisory Questions noting that the General Government received about 100 more votes than the Board of Education in response to whether the budget was *Too High*. However, she stated if they include the Capital Budget cuts that the Board of Education's budget was being cut by almost double the amount that the General Government was being cut.

Chairman Rodriguez stated that she understands the *Employee Classification 10 Town Salary Study* was done about two-years ago. Therefore, she questioned the reason the Mayor did not begin to implement the salary increases last year, stating that the increases could have been made

over a couple of budget years. Mayor Allyn provided some background noting that they began discussing the need to bring the Administrator/Department Heads salaries in line with market value for the positions. He stated because another town was already conducting a Salary Survey that Ledyard was able to save about \$30,000 - \$50,000 by using their Salary Study instead of conducting Study on their own. He stated in reviewing the data that there were five salaries that were below their counterparts in neighboring municipalities. He stated they began the process to bring these employees' salaries to the right place last year, noting that they addressed the salaries of two positions during the current fiscal year, and that they were addressing the salaries for these three positions in the upcoming Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget. Chairman Rodriguez stated that they wanted to give the salary increases, however, the voters have spoken loud and clear. Therefore, she stated that she thought it would be best to increase these salaries incrementally over a couple of budget years, noting that these Administrators/Department Heads would still be getting raises.

Councilor Buhle stated that she was proud of the way the Finance Committee worked together at their May 21, 2025 meeting. She stated if they were going to discuss incremental raises that she would agree with Mayor Allyn that 4% increases were not incremental to a point that would bring the salaries inline moving forward. However, she stated when the taxpayers looked at the budget and saw these salary increases that they were commenting that their salary increases did not even come close to what the Administrator/Department Heads were getting; especially when they were talking about 31% of their residents being on the Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed (ALICE) Report.

Councilor Buhle continued by questioning whether there was an incremental increase that they could agree on; without saying "*All or Nothing; or All or 4%*". She questioned whether they could come to a point where they could say half this year and half next year, or whatever they could agree on.

Councilor Ryan stated that he was disappointed by Councilor Buhle's comments, noting at their May 21, 2025 Finance Committee meeting that she supported the proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget that the Finance Committee moved forward to the Town Council for action this evening; and now it seemed like she was backtracking. He stated that he expected tonight's Town Council meeting would be procedural, just to vote on the budget that Councilor Buhle had previously agreed to support. He stated that it was unfortunate that she was not supporting it anymore.

Councilor Ryan continued by noting that Councilor St. Vil stated that the Administrators/Department Heads were getting a raise in the adjusted salary numbers that he provided in his proposed Amendment; and although he was cutting their increase that he was providing them with a 4% increase; which in his words was enough. Therefore, Councilor Ryan stated that if they thought a 4% increase was enough, then he was happy to go to a 4% increase on the Board of Education's side of the Budget instead of their requested 5.98% increase. He stated if they were going to talk about percentage increases that he would like to note the following percentage increases in the Board of Education Budget:

✓ 6%; 5.57%; 5.86%.

- ✓ 16.25%; 8.24%.
- ✓ 10.75%; 25.11%
- ✓ 6.24%; 36.78%; 7.39%.

Councilor Ryan stated these percentage were the salary increases for the Teachers, Paraprofessionals; and Administrative Assistants; and that he could go on listing the Board of Education Employee's salary increases. He stated that he was disappointed that some members on this Town Council were trying to cut \$32,248 from the General Government's Administrators/Department Heads. He stated that they were talking about how every dollar counts; and yet they were still voting for a 5.57 % increase for the Board of Education Budget.

Councilor Ryan continued by stating if they took the Healthcare Costs out of the budget equation that the General Government Budget increase was slightly over 2%. He stated if they put that number to the townspeople that he did not believe that they would receive the same reaction from the voters on the Advisory Questions. He stated when the general public looks at the budget, many do not realize that all of the Healthcare Costs for both the General Government Employees (\$1,122,900) and the Board of Education Employees (\$5,193,830) was recorded on the General Government side of the budget ledger. He stated while they would never know that answer; that this was his conjecture for the reason they received the response that the General Government Budget was *Too High*.

Councilor Ryan went on to address Chairman Rodriguez's concern that the Finance Committee's May 21, 2025 budget cuts were higher for the Board of Education's Budget than they were for the General Government. He stated that he would assume that she was looking at the dollars and not looking at the percentage, noting that the Board of Education's expenses were 70% of the budget and the General Government's expenses were 30% of the budget. He stated that the Finance Committee's budget cuts were based on the percentage of the budgets, and he noted that Councilor Buhle could attest to that. Therefore, he stated that the budget cuts were proportional based on the operating budgets; and based on the capital budgets. He stated that this was important to keep in mind when they were looking at dollars versus percentage, noting that they should be looking at the percentage.

Councilor Ryan stated that if they do not pay their employees a competitive salary they would go elsewhere, and that it would end up costing the town more money because the town would not be able to hire the same caliber person for the same salary of the person that left. He stated that he did not need to explain this scenario to those who were involved in the private business sector.

Councilor Barnes stated that he appreciated the comments from everyone on a very important topic, noting that they have a tough decision to make. He stated that there was not anybody here who would not want someone to receive a fair and competitive wage; regardless of whether they were on the Board of Education or General Government side of the budget. He stated that he was struggling with the Amendment on the floor, noting that the Motion would not allow the salary gaps to be removed. He stated that he did not know whether there was a mechanism that would allow that to happen in a limited period of time. Therefore, he stated that he could not support the Amendment on the floor this evening.

Councilor Dombrowski stated that he applauded Councilor St. Vil's thoughts, in that they were

trying to squeeze every penny out of the bucket to make it right. He stated that they had hard decisions to make, noting that this process was emotional for a lot of people because of what the impacts would be for both the General Government and for the Board of Education. Therefore, he stated that he appreciated everyone's candor and their discussion.

Councilor Dombrowski continued to state that he appreciated the work the Mayor and his Department Heads did to provide \$207,500 in budget reductions; and the work of the Finance Committee to reduce the Board of Education's budget, which included \$160,000 from their operational budget; and \$260,000 from their capital projects by delaying those projects to next year. He noted the total combined reductions that the Finance Committee put forward this evening was in the amount of \$621,571. However, he stated that it was his opinion that the budget should have been reduced by \$1 million.

Councilor Dombrowski thanked everyone for all their hard work that has been done to support the proposed budget reductions and to move the Revised Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget forward to the townspeople for the Second Referendum on June 10, 2025. However, he stated that he would not support the Amendment on the floor this evening to reduce the salary increases by a total of \$32,248; and that he would also be voting "No" on the Revised Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget.

Chairman Rodriguez thanked the Town Council for their comments; and she called for a vote on the proposed Amendment; asking that the Amendment on the floor be read:

❖ **MOTION** to adjust the following Account Lines in the proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget:

Account #	Title	Reduction	New Amount
1011-2101-51600	Finance Director	\$17,083	\$115,917
1011-0311-51600	Town Clerk	\$7,639	\$ 69,761
1011-4301-51600	Land Use Director	\$6,084	\$102,066
<u>1011-0205-51606</u>	<u>Human Resource Director</u>	<u>\$1,442</u>	<u>\$ 96,408</u>
Total Reductions		\$32,248	

For a revised General Government Fiscal Year Budget in the amount of \$29,901,179.

Moved by Councilor St. Vil, seconded by Councilor Garcia-Irizarry

VOTE: 5 - 4 Approved and so declared (Barnes, Dombrowski, Ryan, Saccone- not in favor)

Chairman Rodriguez called for a vote on the Main Motion as amended; and she asked the Motion be read:

MOTION to adopt a proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget as amended in the amount of **\$70,408,421** comprised of:

- General Government: **\$29,901,179**
- Board of Education: **\$40,507,242**.

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Saccone

Information: In addition to the budget adjustments approved during this meeting the Revised Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget, as noted above, included the following Board of Education

adjustments that were approved at the May 21, 2025 Finance Committee Meeting:

Board of Education Reductions

Board of Education- Discretion to make reductions \$160,000

Revenues

Account #	Title	Increase	New Amount
1017002-42018	Vo-AG Grant		\$ 68,000
			\$ 549,385

VOTE: **7 - 2 Approved and so declared** (Dombrowski, Ryan- not in favor)

RESULT: APPROVED AS AMENDED

MOVER: Jessica Buhle

SECONDER: Tony Saccone

AYE: 7 Barnes, Brunelle, Buhle, Garcia-Irizarry, Rodriguez, Saccone, and St. Vil

NAY: 2 Dombrowski, and Ryan

General Items

5. Discussion regarding the Town Council Summer Meeting Schedule.

The Town Council discussed their schedules and, by consensus, agreed to cancel the following meetings for their Summer Meeting Schedule:

- ✓ June 25, 2025
- ✓ July 23, 2025
- ✓ August 27, 2025

RESULT: RECEIVED AND FILED

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Buhle moved to adjourn, seconded by Councilor St. Vil

VOTE0 Approved and so declared. The meeting adjourned at 6:23 p.m.

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

I, S. Naomi Rodriguez, Chairman of the Ledyard Town Council,
hereby certify that the above and foregoing is a true and
correct copy of the minutes of the Special Town Council
Meeting held on May 27, 2025.

S. Naomi Rodriguez, Chairman

DISCLAIMER:

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

The Town Council's Official Agenda and final Minutes will be on file in the Town Clerk's Office.