



**TOWN OF LEDYARD
CONNECTICUT
LEDYARD TOWN COUNCIL**

Chairman S. Naomi Rodriguez

**MINUTES
FINANCE COMMITTEE**

741 Colonel Ledyard Highway

Ledyard, CT 06339

<http://www.ledyardct.org>

Administrative Assistant, Roxanne Maher
(860) 464-3203

**FISCAL YEAR 2025/2026 WORK SESSION
MONDAY, MARCH 10, 2025; 2:00 P.M.
HYBIRD MEETING FORMAT
VIDEO CONFERENCE & IN-PERSON
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, ANNEX BUILDING**

DRAFT

I. **CALL TO ORDER** – The Work Session was called to order by Councilor Buhle at 2:02 p.m. She stated that due to a work commitment that Councilor Saccone would be joining the meeting shortly.

Councilor Buhle welcomed all to the Video Conference Meeting; and he noted that the remote meeting information for the Town Council Finance Committee Budget Work Session and members of the Public to participate in this afternoon's meeting was available on the Agenda that was posted on the Town's Website – Granicus/Legistar Meeting Portal.

II. **ROLL CALL –**

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Location
Jessica Buhle	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
Tim Ryan	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
Tony Saccone	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
S. Naomi Rodriguez	Town Council Chairman	Present	In-Person
Carmen Garcia-Irizarry	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
Fred Allyn III	Mayor	Present	In-Person
Matthew Bonin	Finance Director	Present	In-Person
Ian Stammel	Assistant Finance Director	Present	In-Person
Jim Mann	Director of Emergency Mgt/Fire Marshall	Present	In-Person
Steve Holyfield	Administrator of Emergency Services	Present	In-Person
Jon Mann	Ledyard Center Fire Chief	Present	In-Person
Jeff Erhart	Gales Ferry Fire Chief	Present	In-Person
John Rich	Police Chief	Present	In-Person
Kenneth Creutz	Police Captain	Present	In-Person
Paula Smith	Chief of Dispatch	Present	In-Person
Heather Haddon	Animal Control Officer	Present	In-Person
Ed Lynch	Water Pollution Control Authority Chairman	Present	In-Person
Dianna Mann	Registrar of Voters	Present	In-Person
Judy Johnson	Registrar of Voters	Present	In-Person
Christine Dais	Human Resources Director	Present	Remote
Justin Dube	MIS Director	Present	Remote
Roxanne Maher	Administrative Assistant	Present	Remote

III. **PRESENTATIONS**

DEPARTMENTS' PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2025/2026 BUDGET

2:00 p.m. Fire Marshall Jim Mann

Department 10120301

Mayor proposed \$104,690; an increase of \$3,574 or 3.59% over the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 budget.

Fire Marshall No CIP Request Fiscal Year 2024/2025

2:05 p.m. Emergency Management Director Jim Mann

Department 10120401 Emergency Management

Mayor proposed \$20,450; no change from the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 budget.

Emergency Management No CIP Request Fiscal Year 2024/2025

2:10 p.m. 10120401 Administrator of Emergency Services Steve Holyfield

Department 10120401 Administrator of Emergency Services

Mayor proposed \$487,934; an increase of \$51 or 0% over the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 budget.

➤ Admin Emergency Service Capital Requests

Automated External Defibrillators	\$9,175
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The Town owns and maintains 38 Automatic External Defibrillators. These defibrillators are assigned to both of the fire companies, the police department, and the Ledyard Schools. Each school has at least one public-accessible unit.

Fire Apparatus Replacement	\$362,552
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The Fire Apparatus replacement fund was revised in Fiscal Year 2021/2022 and represented a preliminary estimate for the replacement of all fire apparatus in the fleet projected out through Fiscal Year 2039-2040.

Total	Admin Emerg Serv CIP Fiscal Year 2024/2025	\$307,444
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2:15 p.m. Ledyard Center Fire Chief Jon Mann and Administrator of Emergency Services Steve Holyfield

Department 10120501 Ledyard Center Fire Department

Mayor proposed \$129,500; an increase of \$1,500; or 1.2% over the approved Fiscal Year 2024/2025 budget.

➤ **Ledyard Center Fire Department CIP Requests**

Fire Hose replacement \$3,000

The Ledyard Fire Company currently loses 2-5 foot lengths of hose per year due to the age of the hose during annual testing. This funding will allow the department to replenish the lost hose. Due to the cost of the hose it was not feasible to fund this expense through the operational budget.

SCBA Replacement \$12,000

Recently the town of Ledyard received a grant for both fire companies' self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA's). The SCBA's are a critical piece of safety equipment to allow firefighters to work inside hazardous environments.

Gear Dryer \$12,000

Currently the Fire Department was using a Gear Dryer one of the volunteer firefighters made, which was basically a rack to dry out their gear..

Having a professional Gear Drying System that was designed to safely and efficiently remove moisture from firefighters' protective gear (like bunker gear) after a fire or other emergency event, would provide equipment longevity.

Battering Ram \$12,000

A Battering Ram is a tool used to forcefully breach doors or walls, for entry in rescue situations where speed and force are needed to overcome obstacle.

Firefighter Personal Protective Equipment \$15,000

The CIP budget item continues with the necessary turnout gear replacement and procurement for existing and newly recruited firefighters. The Ledyard Fire Company has experienced a surge in membership due to aggressive recruiting this year.

Total	LCF	CIP	Fiscal Year 2025/2026	\$54,000
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2:30 p.m. GFFD – Gales Ferry Fire Chief Jeff Erhart and Administrator of Emergency Services Steve Holyfield

Department 10120551 GFFD – Gales Ferry Fire

Mayor proposed \$226,094; an increase of \$7,000 or 3.2 over the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 budget.

Councilor Saccone thanked the Emergency Services Volunteers for their service to the town, noting the training required and their dedication to help the residents during very critical situations was of significant value to their community.

➤ **Gales Ferry Fire Company Capital Requests**

Firefighter Personal Protective Clothing (PPE)	\$16,000
Required by OSHA, protective clothing must now be rotated out for interior firefighting every 10 years under the new National Standards. To save PPW costs the Gales Ferry Fire Department rotates out the 10-year old clothing to non-interior qualified firefighters. This funding was also used to purchase personal protective clothing for new firefighters. The 10-year life span was dictated by NFPA Department required by the State.	
Firefighters' Communications Equipment	\$5,000
Funding for the normal replacement of handheld radios. Radios are constantly changing for greater coverage and communication.	
Breathing Air Bottles	\$3,000
Per the Department of Transportation Firefighting breathing air bottles have a 15-year life "end of use". The replacement of the bottles are within National Fire Protection Association (NPPA) standards.	
Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA)	\$13,000
This capital funding request would replace the self-contained breathing apparatus that the firefighters wear to breathe safely in fires and other hazardous situations. Numerous governmental standards now mandate this apparatus. The Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus is the firefighters first defense for breathing air during a fire. During the past 25 years advanced and newer technology for these devices has been developed.	
Compressor, Breathing Air	\$12,000
The breathing air compressor produces certified, safe breathing air for firefighters as required by law. Their current compressor 20-years old and coming to the end of its useful life.	
Jaws of Life Rescue Tools	\$4,000
Replacement for the out-of-date equipment (Jaws of Life) used in the rescue and extricating of victims involved in motor vehicle accidents and other hazardous scenarios. Older equipment was not suitable for the new modern vehicles' reinforcement metals. This funding would also be used to purchase new Battery-operated tools.	
Fire Station Generator Replacement	No Funding Requested
The Gales Ferry Fire Station's emergency generator was used for powering the building during outages and for the apparatus/equipment emergency readiness. In addition, the Fire Station was used for a warming and cooling station for town residents.	
Fire Hose	\$4,000
This capital funding request will manage the costs associated with the replacement of aging and failed firefighting attack and supply hose as a requirement of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards on fire hose. The fire hose was tested annually per the (NFPA).	
Firefighting Equipment	\$3,000
Firefighting equipment must be cycled out on a regular basis. This funding would allow for the purchase of newer state of the art equipment to keep pace with new National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards.	
Total GFFD CIP	Fiscal Year 2025/2026
	\$60,000

2:45 p.m. Animal Control Officer (ACO) Police Chief John Rich
Department 10120105 ACO

Mayor proposed \$101,125; a increase of \$1,500; or 1.2% over the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 budget.

➤ ***Animal Control Capital Improvement Plan Requests***

ACO Vehicle Reserve	\$2,000
Reserve fund for planned replacement of ACO Vehicle. The current balance in FY 22 was \$29,000 with a Fiscal Year 2024/2025 allocation of \$2,000 the Department would be able to replace the current vehicle with a smaller more fuel efficient van.	

Total	ACO CIP Fiscal Year 2025/2026	\$2,000
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3:00 p.m. Emergency Dispatch Center - Paula Smith and Police Chief John Rich

Department 10120103 Emergency Dispatch Center

Mayor proposed \$713,900; an increase of \$44,651 or 56.4% over the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 budget.

The Group discussed the budget overrun of the Dispatch Salaries Account, noting that the turnover in staffing was a challenge.

No Dispatch CIP	Fiscal Year 2025/2026
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3:15 p.m. Police Chief John Rich and Captain Kenneth Creutz

Department 10120101 Police Department

Mayor proposed \$3,175,025; an increase of \$171,370 or 5.7% over the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 budget.

The Finance Committee and Chief Rich discussed: (1) Overtime costs; (2) Staffing; (3) Vehicle replacement schedule; and (4) New Officers coming in at lower salary step than the retiring officers; (4) DARE Program - Using the National Opioid Settlement Funding for the man-hours to administer the DARE Program in the Schools..

➤ ***Police Department Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Requests***

Police Vehicles	\$53,326
Planned Replacement of Police Vehicles. The department proposed the replacement of one patrol vehicles in Fiscal 2025/2026 based on current mileage and usage of the patrol fleet.	

CALEA Accreditation Reserve	\$6,500
Public Act 20-01 requires all CT police agencies to obtain CALEA accreditation by year 2025. CALEA was the Commission on the Accreditation of Law Enforcement Agencies Accreditation. The accreditation process involved a year long process.	

Police Psychological Exam Reserve	\$1,375
Public Act 20-01 Requires all law enforcement officers to have a psychological evaluation at least once every 5 years.	
 Flock Safety Cameras	\$12,750
Flock Safety cameras are automated license plate recognition (ALPR) systems that provide real-time alerts to law enforcement when a vehicle of interest, like a stolen car or one associated with a wanted person, is detected, aiming to assist in crime prevention and investigation.	
 Firearm Reserve Fund	\$7,000
Funding to outfit new Officers with firearms and associated equipment.	
 In-Car Video	\$1,800
The Police Department implemented in car cameras in Fiscal Year 2018/2019. The Program required maintenance and software and updates. The cost was \$1,800 annually	
 Police Body Worn Cameras	\$7,050
The Police Department implemented body-worn cameras in Fiscal Year 2021/2022 in accordance with Public Act 20-01; Section 19. The Program required maintenance and software and updates. The cost was \$7,050 annually.	
 Base Station Replacement Reserve	\$8,500
Reserve Fund for Dispatch Base Station Radio replacement and repair as needed. This is a reserve fund that has been in effect for several years to update equipment used for police, fire, and EMS emergency communications.	

Total	Police CIP Fiscal Year 2024/2025	\$137,596,926
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4:15 p.m. Water Pollution Control Authority Chairman Ed Lynch

Chairman Ed Lynch presented the Water Pollution Control Authority's proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2025 Budget as follows:

Water Operations Budget:

Water Operations: \$1,556,166 an increase of \$38,983 over the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget.

Mr. Lynch stated that Groton Utilities notified the WPCA that they would be increasing the cost of water by 4% to commence on October 1, 2025. He noted that the WPCA would be scheduling a Public Hearing sometime in April, 2025 to present the 4% water rate increase to the Ratepayers; as it would be included in the upcoming Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Water Operations Budget.

Mr. Lynch went to explain the following account lines saw increases; noting that that some debt would be paid off during the current fiscal year:

- ✓ GU Operating Agreement – increase of \$25,413.00
- ✓ GU Customer Service - increase of \$5,883.21

- ✓ Route 12 Water Purchased Used - increase of \$10,407.97
- ✓ Route 117 Water Purchased Used - increase of \$10,407.97
- ✓ CWF/DWSFR Loan Principal - increase of \$ \$5,190.00
- ✓ Retirement - increase of \$202.92

Mr. Lynch and the Finance Committee discussed the following:

- **Highlands Waterline Breaks** – Mr. Lynch noted the age of the system stating that Groton Utilities would be installing shutoff valves. He explained because the system currently does not have any shutoff valves that when they have to repair a break or leak in the system everyone in the Highlands area is impacted when the water was shut off to repair the pipe.
- **Ledyard Center Sewer Line Extension Project** - WPCA Chairman Ed Lynch addressed the Ledyard Center Sewer Line Extension Project stating the sewer line from the High School to Ledyard Center (along Route 214/Route 117 to Colonel Ledyard Highway 2,450 linear feet of sewer line) has been completed. He stated the sewer line would support additional economic development behind the former Ledyard Center School, as well as support existing businesses in Ledyard Center. He stated the new Developments would spread the costs to operate the Wastewater Treatment Facility over a larger number of sewer customers.
- ✓ **Phase I – American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) \$1,200,000-**: Mr. Lynch stated the piping that was installed along Route 117 while they were constructing the Multi-Model Pathway went well. He explained that there was some savings because the project was coordinated 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 came in \$731,668 under the estimated \$1,200,000 amount that was initially assigned for Phase I of the Sewer Line Extension Project.
- ✓ **Phase II: American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) \$950,000** would bring the sewer line from the High School to Pennywise Lane.
- New Developments – WPCA Chairman Ed Lynch noted that the Planning & Zoning Commission has indicated that the Habitat for Humanity 35 – 40 Affordable Homes Project planned for Colby Drive would be coming forward soon, noting that Habitat for Humanity has finished a project in Norwich and has turned their attention their project in Ledyard. Therefore, he stated to avoid tearing up a newly paved road that they would be working to run the pipe up Fairway Drive to the Colby Drive intersection, noting that this would bring the sewer line halfway to the Habitat for Humanity house and halfway to the proposed Apartment Development , noting that it that it would require about 740 linear feet of pipe.

Sewer Operations Budget:

Sewer Operations: \$694,015 an increase in the amount of \$22,266 from the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget.

It was noted that stated per Ordinance #400-001 that “*The Town Council shall approve the water system budget. This shall be provided to the residents at the Annual Town Meeting on the budget.*” He explained although the Town Council was interested in the Sewer Operations Budget that per the Ordinance that the Town Council was not required to approve the Sewer Operations Budget, noting that it was provided for informational purposes only.

4:35 p.m. Registrar of Voters Diana Mann and Judy Johnson

Department 10110301 Registrar of Voters

Mayor proposed \$53,820; an increase of \$7,020 or 157% over the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 budget.

10110303 Elections –

Mayor proposed \$63,062; an increase of \$8,791 or 16.2% over the approved Fiscal Year 2024/2025 budget.

Early Voting Bill – The Group discussed the funding needed to support the Early Voting. Registrar of Voters Diana Mann explained that currently the State was not providing any funding for Early Voting for next year. However, she stated that they were considering reducing the number of days for early voting, and therefore, they would not need as many people/hours which would reduce the amount of what they spent this year for early voting.

Registrars

No CIP Requests Fiscal Year 2025/2026

4:50 p.m. Budget Work

During the work sessions the Finance Committee asked questions about line items in each budget category. The Committee also explained to each Department that should there be any changes in State Revenues proposed by the Governor's Budget, that they may want to meet again with the Finance Committee to offer alternatives, suggestions and recommendations as the Finance Committee works to put forwarded a recommended Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget.

The Committee commented that as they have been working thru the Budget Work Sessions that they were pleased to see that Department Heads worked to off-set General Government contractual increases with reductions in other expenses to find efficiencies. They also noted that it was apparent that the Mayor and his staff were well prepared to answer the Committee's questions and that they appreciated the level of detail they provided.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

The Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget Work Session adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony Saccone, Sr.
Committee Chairman
Finance Committee