



TOWN OF LEDYARD

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Ledyard, Connecticut 06339-1551
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Town Council Meeting Minutes

Chairman S. Naomi
Rodriguez

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, January 24, 2024

7:00 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/81844224986?pwd=YHsswcsqJVgxC9rCnUjbi4fN137b9s.1>

Audio Only: Telephone: +1 646 558 8656; Meeting ID: 818 4422 4986; Passcode: 408498

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 7:00 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 April Brunelle
Councilor Jessica Buhle
Councilor Kevin Dombrowski
Councilor Carmen Garcia-Irizarry
Councilor Gary Paul
Chairman S. Naomi Rodriguez
Councilor Tim Ryan
Councilor Tony Saccone
Councilor Gary St. Vil

IV. PRESENTATIONS

None.

V. RESIDENT & PROPERTY OWNERS (COMMENTS LIMITED TO THREE (3) MINUTES)

None.

VI. COMMITTEE COMMISSION AND BOARD REPORTS

Mr. Charles Duzy, 4 Harvard Terrace, Gales Ferry, Housing Authority Chairman, stated he would like to make the following Statement so that it is part of the Record:

The Ledyard Housing Authority owns and operates the property at Kings Corner Manor, the Town of Ledyard's Elderly & Disabled Affordable Housing. Chartered under state law, the Ledyard Housing Authority is an autonomous, public organization that was overseen by a 5-member Board of Commissioners. The Ledyard Housing Authority is a quasi-independent agency, not a municipal government agency. It does not receive subsidized funding for housing operations, nor is it owned or operated by the State of Connecticut. As in the case of all housing authorities, the Ledyard Housing Authority is directed by the Board of Commissioners, which are appointed by the Ledyard Town Council. Property management and daily operations of Kings Corner Manor is the responsibility of the Executive Director, Colleen Lauer, at the direction and discretion of Ledyard Housing Authority. It is at this direction by the Ledyard Housing Authority, that the Executive Director is enforcing the Non-Smoking Policy which went into effect August 1, 2023. The residents of Kings Corner Manor were notified of the Non-Smoking Policy on March 17, 2023. At this time, there will be no Addendum to the Lease regarding the Non-Smoking Policy.

VII. COMMENTS OF TOWN COUNCILORS

Councilor Brunelle noted that January 27th is International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Chairman Rodriguez announced the following changes to the Liaison Assignments:: :

- ✓ Permanent Municipal Building Committee - Councilor Brunelle
- ✓ Zoning Board of Appeals - Councilor Buhle

VIII. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION to approve the Town Council Regular Meeting Minutes of January 10, 2024

Moved by Councilor Dombrowski, seconded by Councilor Saccone

VOTE: 9 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

IX. COMMUNICATIONS

Communications List - January 24, 2024

Chairman Rodriguez stated a Communications List has been provided on the meeting portal for tonight's meeting and she noted there were referrals listed.

X. REFERRALS

XI. COUNCIL SUB COMMITTEE, LIAISON REPORTS

1. Administration Committee

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated the Administration Committee has not met since the last Town Council meeting. She noted that their next meeting would be held on February 14, 2024.

RESULT: .

2. Community Relations Committee

Councilor Brunelle stated the Community Relations Committee met on January 17, 2024 and discussed the following: (1) Black History Month Activities - Contest - Councilor Brunelle noted that the Committee discussed several ideas and preparations for the upcoming Black History Month Essay and Poster Contest which would be open from February 1 - 23, 2023; (2) Communication with residents - Councilor Brunelle stated today she posted a video on the Town's website on how to sign up to receive notifications through the "*Notify Me*" tab.

To sign up to receive email notifications of upcoming meetings/events/and other notices; visit the town's website www.ledyardct.org <<http://www.ledyardct.org>> and click on the *Notify Me* tab and complete the form.

RESULT: .

3. Finance Committee

Councilor Saccone stated the Finance Committee met on January 17, 2024 and have a few items on tonight's Agenda.

RESULT: .

4. Land Use/Planning/Public Works Committee

Councilor St. Vil stated the LUPPW Committee has not met since the last Town Council meeting.

RESULT: .

5. Public Safety Report

Councilor Saccone stated the Public Safety Commission met on January 22, 2024 and addressed the following: (1) Set their 2024 Meeting Schedule; (2) Elected Officers as follows: Chairman - Administrator of Emergency Services Steve Holyfield, Vice-Chairman Ledyard Center Fire Chief Jon Mann.

6. Gales Ferry Fire Department

Councilor Saccone stated ever since the town received notification that the Gales Ferry Fire Company's Grant Application was approved, the Fire Department has been working through a lot of red tape for the State to release the grant funding. He noted that the Grant Funding would be used to replace their roof and purchase some new firefighting equipment.

7. Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Commission Fiscal Year 2023/2024

Councilor Buhle stated she attended the Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Commission's January 18, 2024 meeting noting that they addressed the following: (1) Approved their Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget; (2) The increase in all of their Program Enrollment post Covid-19 Pandemic. The Commission noted that they were experiencing space issues.

8. Water Pollution Control Authority

Councilor Dombrowski stated the WPCA met on January 23, 2024 and addressed the following: (1) Election of Officers as follows: Chairman Ed Lynch, Vice-Chairman Sharon Wadecki; Recording Secretary Tony Capon; (2) Cashman Property Development - Route 12, Gales Ferry- Councilor Dombrowski stated the WPCA discussed the potential impacts to the water lines in the area if the Blasting Permits were approved; (3) Budget Consultant - Councilor Dombrowski stated he reviewed the WPCA's proposed Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget that was attached to their Agenda Packet, noting that was reduced by \$56,000 from the current year's budget. However, he stated the Consultant who was hired reported that the WPCA Budget was insolvent and that they would need to increase their rates by 100%. Councilor Dombrowski stated the WPCA discussed options such as increasing the budget by 50% over a two-year period; but that they would have to borrow money from the Municipality to cover the loss. Councilor Dombrowski went on to state because of financial issues in 2010 the Town Council dissolved the WPCA, and the Town Council was designated to serve as the WPCA in an effort to remedy financial issues that they were having at that time, noting that it was a very different circumstances than the financial issue that was being identified today. He stated it seemed as though the WPCA was operating well, doing all the right things with implementing increases each year; and now all of a sudden a Consultant has come in and says that the WPCA was insolvent. He noted that he did not know what budget numbers the Consultant was using to make their assessment.

Mayor Allyn, III, questioned whether the WPCA Budget Study was done by Groton

Utilities. Councilor Dombrowski stated during their Budget Study discussion the WPCA noted the water cost for the average household was about \$30.78 per month; but that \$21.00 of that amount was the *fixed fee*. He stated he did not know if the Budget Study was a Groton Utilities funded initiative or where the WPCA Budget numbers that were used in the Consultant's study came from. Mayor Allyn explained that the WPCA was similar to the Housing Authority in that they were a quasi-independent agency, noting that the Town Council's authority was to appoint members to the WPCA. He stated the WPCA had its own budget; however, in accordance with Section 4 of Ordinance #400-001 "*An Ordinance Establishing a Water Pollution Control Authority*" the Town Council was required to approve the WPCA's Annual Water Operations Budget and their water rates. He stated it was shocking News to hear that the Budget Consultant reported the WPCA was insolvent because they have been implementing 5% -7% rate increases each year. He thanked Councilor Dombrowski for his report.

9. Board of Education

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated the Board of Education met on January 16, 2024 and discussed the following: (1) Board Member Laurel Wiers resigned to pursue other professional opportunities. Mr. Brandon Graber was appointed by the Board to fill Ms. Wiers vacancy; (2) Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Board of Education Budget \$38,054,073 - Councilor Garcia-Irizarry noted that Superintendent Jason Hartling presented the proposed Board of Education Budget which requested an increase of \$2,145,705 or 5.98% over the current year's budget. She stated that Mr. Hartling provided the following narrative: Ledyard's Per Pupil Expenditure was \$16,871 compared to Waterford's Per Pupil Expenditure of \$21,325; Ledyard's Students to Adult Ratio was 7.5 students per adult; the next highest in the area was East Lyme who had 6.0 students per adult. Key Changes were as follows: Savings from 3 Teachers Retiring; Increase in Substitute Teacher Wages; Multi-Tier system to support a Sports Coordinator; Compliance with the *Right to Read Statewide Professional Learning Series* would cost \$100,000 for the first year curriculum; Elementary Teacher Staffing; Middle School would eventually have a Family Consumer Science Class to help alleviate class size challenges; Middle School Social Worker - The Board currently has a social worker through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSR) Grant and want to make the position permanent; Eliminate the *Over the River Choice Transportation* which would save approximately \$75,000, noting that New London said they could send a bus to pick up Ledyard Students.

10. Library Commission

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated the Library Commission met on January 22, 2024 and addressed the following: (1) Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget - Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated Library Director Jennifer Smith reported that the expense for the photocopiers, which had been paid out of the Mayor's budget last year, would be added to the library's operating budget. This budget operating line would increase to \$21,262.00; (2) Library Commission Funding - Councilor Garcia-Irizarry noted that the Library Commission was self-funded through Donations, Investment Income, and by funds raised by the "*Friends of the Library*". She stated these revenues were used to support the Adult and Children Programs, noting that

these expenses were not paid by taxpayer dollars. She stated things such as Museum Passes were paid for by the Friends of the Library, the new Outdoor Sign at the Gales Ferry Library was paid for by the Library Commission; (3) Libraries Online (LION) Consortium - Councilor Garcia-Irizary stated the LION Membership cost about \$50,000 per year and has increased about 3% per year. She noted that LION has been cutting back on a number of the benefits that they previously provided, and she noted as an example, that LION used to provide computers to the Library, and now they do not. Therefore, she stated the Library Commission was comparing LION with two other Consortiums, noting that the *Library Connection Inc.* (LCI) was about \$25,000 less than LION. She stated should the Library decide to change to a less expensive Consortium that they planned to use the savings to expand programs, purchase more books, etc.

Mayor Allyn, III, addressed the Library's copier costs, explaining that the Bill Library had previously owned their copier, which was about ten-years old, and was no longer producing quality copies and it was requiring maintenance. Therefore, he stated when Town Hall was updating their copier leases last year, they thought that it was a good time to put a new copier in the Bill Library. He stated because they were already into the budget year that he included the Bill Library copier in his budget for the first year of the lease. He stated the use of the new copier was going well, noting that the fees the Library charged patrons to make copies was being used to offset the cost of copier lease. He stated the Library Commission, and the residents were happy with the new copier.

XII. REPORT OF THE MAYOR:

Mayor Allyn, III, reported on the following: (1) Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget Preparations - Mayor Allyn stated that he and Finance Director Matthew Bonin met with Department Heads on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of this week to review their proposed budget requests. He stated because there was a lot of work that needed to be done before he delivered his proposed budget to the Town Council on March 4, 2024 (first Monday in March in accordance with Chapter VII; Section of the Town Charter), that he could not provide any budget projections at this time. However, he noted that the Board of Education Budget included an increase of \$2,145,705 or 5.98% over the current year's budget; and that Healthcare Costs were projected to increase by 10%; or \$610,000. He explained their Healthcare Consultants have indicated that the costs could increase by 6% - 10%; therefore, he stated the Town typically assumes the higher increase and then if it comes in less that was good, noting that they did not want to be on the other side of the equation by not budgeting an adequate amount for those costs. He stated moving away from the ClearGov format and going back to the Excel format was progressing nicely, in terms of readability for the residents; (2) Ledyard Interchurch Emergency Assistance Fund (LICEAF) January 11, 2024 Meeting - Mayor Allyn explained that LICEAF provided grants to assist residents who have fallen into the most challenging situations with expenses such as rent and mortgage payments. He stated he attended their January meeting noting that LICEAF approved one grant. He stated that he appreciated LICEAF and what that group of churches do for Ledyard residents; (3) Southeastern Connecticut Housing Alliance (SCHA) January 12, 2024 meeting - Mayor Allyn explained the SCHA Board of Directors was a collective group in New London County that were working on the Housing crisis, specifically Affordable Housing. He stated SCHA was planning a Bus

Tour in April or May to visit 4 - 5 Different Affordable Housing Projects in Southeastern Connecticut. He stated the Bus Tour was open to Town Leaders as well as Councilor Members to see what Affordable Housing looked like. He stated he would let the Town Council know the date as soon as it becomes available should anyone like to attend; (4) Discount Wine and Liquor Ribbon Cutting - January 13, 2024 - Mayor Allyn stated Discount Wine and Liquor was located on Route 12 in Gales Ferry. He stated he has heard from

residents and has seen social media posts/comments regarding all the liquor stores that the town permits. He noted Connecticut General State Statutes 30-14a was the law that permits liquor stores in every municipality in the State. He stated in accordance with CGS 30-14a municipalities were allowed 1 liquor store per 2,500 residents. He stated based on Ledyard's population they were allowed to have six liquor stores and that they have six liquor stores; noting that there were three stores on each side of town; (5) Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCOG) Solid Waste Subcommittee January 16, 2024 Meeting - Mayor Allyn stated that he Chaired the meeting noting that they prepared a List of Requests for the upcoming Legislative Session which would start on February 7, 2024. He stated the Committee would be meeting with fourteen State Legislators (Representative and Senators) next week to discuss their Agenda which included the following: (a) Legal Notices - Again this year the Municipalities were requesting the State allow Legal Notices to be digitized opposed to having to publish them in the Newspaper at a cost that can range from \$400 - \$1,000 or more; (b) Special Education - Request the State increase Funding for Special Education and allow the funding to follow the student. Mayor Allyn explained if a student moved from one school district to another school district during the course of a school year that those funds should move with the student; (c) Heating Assistance Funding to be approved at the beginning of the Legislative Session (February 7, 2024). Mayor Allyn noted that last year the state authorized additional funding for heating assistance. However, he stated the Legislature did not approve the funding until May, which was too late to help folks during the winter months; (d) Uniform Relocation Assistance Act - Mayor Allyn explained this Act required towns to be involved if someone could not stay in their home, whether it was for health or safety purposes. The Act calls for the town to put the people up in housing that was similar to what they were coming out of. He stated in today's market that finding short-term rental housing that was similar to what they had was impossible. Therefore, the Municipalities were asking the State for Relief from the Uniform Relocation Assistance Act; (e) Municipal Shared Services - Mayor Allyn stated they were asking the Office of Management and Policy (OPM) and Department of Administration (DAS) to work with the Municipalities to allow more Shared Services for greater efficiency; (f) Solid Waste - Mayor Allyn stated the Solid Waste Committee, which was another Committee that he Chaired, was asking for things such as Waste to Energy Plants. He explained with the July, 2022 closing of the East Harford MIRA Facility (Materials Innovation and Recycling Authority) that 30 Municipalities had to find another facility, noting that all the Incinerator Plants were currently at capacity. However, he stated the Bristol Incinerator

Plant, which was operated by Covanta, and the Lisbon Incinerator Plant, which was operated by Wheelabrator, both have a plan to increase to a second burner at each of their facilities. However, he stated the State Department of Environment Energy Protection (DEEP) was required to approve their plans for a second burner, which was a slow process. Therefore, he stated that SCCOG was asking the State DEEP to allow both plans to move forward in a reasonably fast manner. He stated that currently the State of Connecticut was trucking 800,000 - 900,000 tons of garbage out of the State every year and putting it in landfills in Seneca Falls New York, Eastern Pennsylvania, and Ohio. He stated this was not a reasonable solution, commenting that he was stunned that in the year 2024 they were doing this, and it was okay. He stated we need to do better;

(g) Planning & Zoning Commission Training Reporting - Mayor Allyn stated that currently the Mayor or First Selectman was required to sign-off that Commissioners have completed their training. He stated that SCCOG was asking the State Legislature to consider changing this to allow the Commission Chairman to sign-off stating that the Commissioners have completed their training;

(h) Public Safety - Street Take-Overs and Reckless Driving - Mayor Allyn stated SCCOG was asking that the \$250 maximum fine for these infractions be increased;

(i) State Department of Transportation (DOT) Roadside Mowing - Mayor Allyn stated that SCCOG was asking that the DOT increase roadside mowing to more than one-time per year;

(6) Bond Counsel January 16, 2024 Meeting - Mayor Allyn stated he along with Finance Director Matthew Bonin met with Bond Counsel to discuss their next round of Bond Anticipation Notes (BAN) - Short Term Borrowing (one-year commitments) for the Schools Consolidation/Improvement Projects (Middle School & Gallup Hill School);

(7) Norwich Chamber Legislative Breakfast January 23, 2024 - Mayor Allyn stated about 120 people attended the Breakfast, at which they again talked about Solid Waste along with the issues and opportunities with the Legislators who were present;

(8) Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region (seCTer) Board of Directors January 24, 2024 Meeting - Mayor Allyn stated seCTer offers low interest loans (seCTer Rise Grants; and seCTer Boost Loans). He stated seCTer had about \$5 million available to lend, at a 4.5% interest rate for a \$500,000 loan, noting for a commercial loan that this was a very low interest rate. He stated currently Ledyard had one business in town that has utilized the seCTer Loan opportunity. He stated the top five towns in Southeastern Connecticut who have taken advantage of the seCTer Loans were Stonington, New London, Norwich, Groton, and East Lyme. He stated if they have an opportunity to help businesses that they need to connect them with seCTer. He stated that he would be working with the Economic Development Commission (EDC) to make sure they get this information out to businesses;

(9) Small Resource Forum - February 14, 2024 - Mayor Allyn stated that Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region (seCTer) would be hosting a Small Resource Forum; and that he would share the invitation with the Town Council. He suggested they also share the invitation with any business that may benefit by attending the Forum;

(10) Tri-Town Trail (Bluff Point to Preston Plains Park) January 24, 2024 Meeting - Mayor Allyn stated the Tri-Town Trail was currently 3.4 miles out and back, noting that the Tri-Town Trail Association was looking to expand the Trail. He stated they were working with property owners to advance the trail, explaining they have purchased easements from property owners for the Trail to move through.

Questions to the Mayor - None.

RESULT: .

XIII. OLD BUSINESS

XIV. NEW BUSINESS

Administration Committee

1. MOTION to appoint Mr. Ethan Foltz (D) 894 Colonel Ledyard Highway, Ledyard, to the Ledyard Farmers' Market Committee to complete a three (3) year term ending May 9, 2027; filling a vacancy left by Ms. Brunelle.

Moved by Councilor Garcia-Irizarry, seconded by Councilor Brunelle

Discussion: None.

VOTE: 9 - 0 Approved and so declared

MOVER: Carmen Garcia-Irizarry

SECONDER: April Brunelle

2. MOTION to appoint the following Temporary Members to the Permanent Municipal Building Committee (PMBC) to serve as Representatives for Board of Education Projects in accordance with Ordinance #100-015 "An Ordinance Establishing A Permanent Municipal Building Committee for the Town of Ledyard:

- Ms. Kate DiPalma-Herb (D) 20 August Meadow Drive, Ledyard
- Ms. Jennifer Reguin (D) 6 Mill Cove Road, Gales Ferry

Moved by Councilor Brunelle, seconded by Councilor Dombrowski

Discussion: None.

VOTE: 9 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: April Brunelle

SECONDER: Kevin Dombrowski

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

Finance Committee

Meeting went into Recess

3. MOTION to authorize the Mayor to submit a 2024 High Risk Rural Road Speed Enforcement Grant Application in the amount of up-to \$60,000 funded through the Federal Highway Safety Administration (FHWA).

Moved by Councilor Saccone, seconded by Councilor Buhle

Discussion: Councilor Saccone explained in a letter dated January 10, 2024 that the Police Department received notification that they were eligible to apply for a *2024 High Risk Rural*

Road Speed Enforcement Grant. He stated that this opportunity would use Connecticut's grant monies that were being funded through the Federal Highway Safety Administration (FHWA) to reduce the amount of speed related fatalities and injuries on Connecticut's High Risk Rural Roads. He stated the Grant funding would cover the following expenses:

- Purchase of 4 speed measuring devices not to exceed a maximum of \$4,900 per device.
- Overtime wages and overtime fringe benefits.

Police Chief John Rich explained although eligible Municipalities could receive a total of \$60,000 through this 100% Reimbursable Grant Program, that Ledyard would be seeking \$15,572.94. He noted because a *Statement of Interest* must be submitted to the State by January 31, 2024; that Sergeant Pudvah has been working to prepare the required documentation. He stated the Enforcement Period would be from March 1, 2024 - May 31, 2024.

Chief Rich noted that Ledyard would be operating one radar location; and that their expenses would be as follows:

- Staffing would include thirty shifts - each shift would be four hours during the Enforcement Period (March 1, 2024 - May 31, 2024);
- Purchase of one speed measuring devices.

Councilor Dombrowski questioned whether any local matching funds would be required. Councilor Saccone noted that no local matching funds would be required.

VOTE: 9 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Tony Saccone

SECONDER: Jessica Buhle

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

4. MOTION to transfer funding to Account 21020103-57300 (Dispatch - New Equipment) for the purchase of communications equipment to accommodate emergency radio communications for Ledyard Police Department, Ledyard Fire Company, and Gales Ferry Fire Company on the Connecticut Land Mobile Radio Network (CLMRN) as follows:

- Up to \$14,513.00 from Account 21020103-57300 G0014 (Dispatch - New Equipment - AARPA Funds); and
- Up to \$30,000.00 from Account 21020401-57300 (AES - New Equipment).

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: Administrator of Emergency Services Steve Holyfield provided some background stating that the town received \$298,210.52 FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant to purchase mobile radios and associated equipment. He noted at their July 26, 2023 meeting the Town

Council appropriated the Grant Funding to Account #21020401-57300-G0015 (Admin Emerg Services - New Equipment - Misc. Grants).

Administrator of Emergency Services Steve Holyfield went on to state at their January 22, 2024 Public Safety Commission Meeting that Chief Rich reported that all of the Police Cruisers had a mobile radio for the Police Officers to talk to Dispatch and other Agencies, noting that this portion of the Project was well underway. He stated in working through the process they found that they needed some infrastructure related items which included installing a Combiner on the Radio Towers. He stated this would allow them to take all of the operational frequencies from the Fire Department's and Police Department's existing equipment, along with some new equipment, to seamlessly work with the Connecticut Land Mobile Radio Network (CLMRN) system.

Mr. Holyfield continued by noting that he and Police Chief John Rich identified a combination of some remaining grant funding that was transferred into the Emergency Services Capital Account, some remaining American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding (\$30,000); and annual budget funding (\$14,513), to provide enough funding for the Departments to obtain the necessary mobile radio equipment for all the town's first responders to communicate on the State Radio System. He explained that both Fire Chiefs agreed to put forward the \$30,000 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding that was remaining from the \$75,000 that was allocated to replace two Dispatch Communications Stations at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). He stated that they were looking for the Town Council's permission to proceed with the use of the identified funds to facilitate the migration of all primary emergency radio communications to the Connecticut Land Mobile Radio Network (CLMRN) to provide interoperability and interpretive communication among all the police departments and fire departments in the local area, noting that many of the towns were joining the State Radio System.

Councilor Ryan stated during their January 17, 2024 Finance Committee meeting that he noted that the reallocation of the \$30,000 that was remaining from the \$75,000 that was allocated to replace two Dispatch Communications Stations was being handled differently than how they have been handling the ARPA Funding. He explained that typically the unspent ARPA funds would go back into the General ARPA Projects Budget to be redistributed to other Projects in the priority order. He stated the Finance Committee discussed the process regarding the reallocation of the \$30,000 for the Connecticut Land Mobile Radio Network (CLMRN); and he noted there was a general agreement among the Finance Committee that this was a valid use and timely use of the funding, given that the quotes for the equipment were only valid until the beginning of February, 2024. He stated had they waited to redistribute the funds that the town would have endured a price increase.

Councilor Buhle stated during the Finance Committee's January 17, 2024 meeting that Administrator of Emergency Services Steve Holyfield talked about how the reallocation of the ARPA funds would impact the Dispatch Center. Therefore, she stated it made sense to reallocate the remaining Dispatch Center ARPA funds to purchase the equipment that would allow the town to use the Connecticut Land Mobile Radio Network (CLMRN) system.

Councilor St. Vil questioned whether there was a plan to identify the source of the additional

\$15,000. Mr. Holyfield stated the additional \$15,000 was already in the Police Department's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), noting that they had a Capital Account for Radio Equipment.

Councilor Saccone stated with the Connecticut Land Mobile Radio Network (CLMRN) system that they could use a walkie-talkie in Ledyard to talk to someone in Hartford, noting that the transmission was crystal clear. He stated the following surrounding communities were already using the State system: Stonington, Groton Town, Groton City, Montville, Norwich, the Connecticut State Police, and Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). He noted that Waterford, New London, and East Lyme were also submitting petitions to join the State System. Director of Emergency Services Jim Mann noted that he agreed with Councilor Saccone's comments, noting that using a handheld radio that he was able to communicate with Hartford from the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) which had six-feet of concrete over the top of it.

Councilor Dombrowski stated the town has been taking steps and working toward joining the Connecticut Land Mobile Radio Network (CLMRN) system for many years. He noted that the town applied several times before their Grant Application to purchase the necessary equipment to join the Radio Network was finally approved. He noted with the allocation of the funding requested this evening and the purchase of the equipment that the town would be able to fully implement the communication system throughout the town. Mr. Holyfield stated by Ledyard securing the FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant in the amount of \$298,210.52, which required a 5% local match (\$14,200.52) the town was able to purchase the new portable and mobile radios for the Fire Departments, while providing a significant saving to their residents.

VOTE: 9 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Jessica Buhle

SECONDER: Tim Ryan

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

5. MOTION to authorize the expenditure of up to \$30,000 from Account #0210-21020401-54325 (AES - CNR -Fire Apparatus) for the purchase of a used Fire Command Vehicle and to grant a bid waiver for the same amount for the purchase.

Moved by Councilor Saccone, seconded by Councilor Buhle

Discussion: Councilor Saccone stated the Ledyard Center Fire Chief's Command Vehicle has reached the end of its useful life. He stated this action would authorize the town to spend up-to \$30,000 purchase a new Command Vehicle for the Ledyard Center Fire Chief.

VOTE: 9 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Tony Saccone

SECONDER: Jessica Buhle

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

6. MOTION to approve a revised Appendix A- Qualifying Income Schedule in accordance with Ordinance #200-005 (rev. 1) “An Ordinance to Provide Property Tax Relief for Certain Homeowners Age Sixty-Five or Over or Permanently and Totally Disabled (rev.1)” for the filing period of February 1, 2024 - May 15, 2024.

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Saccone

Discussion: Mayor Allyn, III, stated in addition to the State, the town provided tax relief to qualifying homeowners thru the adoption of Ordinance #200-005 (rev. 1) “*An Ordinance to Provide Property Tax Relief for Certain Homeowners Age Sixty-Five or Over or Permanently and Totally Disabled*”. He explained that the provisions of the Ordinance required the town to annually update the “*Qualifying Income Schedule*” to be consistent with the State’s Qualifying Income, which was based on the United States Social Security Administration Program.

Mayor Allyn went on to note that in accordance with Ordinance #200-005 (rev.1) Paragraph 3 “*Qualifications*”; paragraph (e) “*Persons qualified for tax credit or deferment benefits under this Ordinance are those whose maximum income during the calendar year preceding the year in which application is made for the tax credit does not exceed the Qualifying Income Schedule, as hereby incorporated in the ordinance as though fully set forth herein. A copy of the approved Qualifying Income Schedule shall be filed with the Town Clerk when established and when amended. The income guidelines provided in the Qualifying Income Schedule (Appendix A) shall be adjusted to reflect a cost-of-living increase issued by the United States Social Security Administration, pending the approval of the Town Council prior to the first of January of the year of application.*” He stated because the “*Qualifying Income Schedule*” was an Appendix to the Ordinance, and they were not changing the Ordinance itself, that a public hearing was not required. He stated annually updating the “*Qualifying Income Schedule*” for the town’s Tax Relief program was an administrative action. **VOTE: 9 - 0 Approved and so declared**

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Jessica Buhle

SECONDER: Tony Saccone

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

General Items

7. MOTION to accept and refer the Committee to Review the Budget Process Final Report dated October 31, 2023 to the Finance Committee.

In addition, disband the Committee to Review the Budget Process.

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: Chairman Rodriguez stated at the January 10, 2024 Town Council Meeting Councilor Ryan, who served as the Chairman of the *Committee to Review the Budget Process*, presented the Committee’s Final Report dated October 31, 2023. She stated the Report was a

comprehensive document which identified a number of areas for the town to consider for improvement. She thanked and acknowledged Committee Chairman Ryan and all Committee Members for their hard work as follows:

- ✓ Former Town Council Chairman Kevin Dombrowski
- ✓ Former Town Council Finance Committee Chairman Bill Saums
- ✓ Councilor Tim Ryan, Committee Chairman
- ✓ Former Board of Education Member Michael Brawner, Committee Vice Chairman
- ✓ Community Member at Large Minna DeGaetano
- ✓ Terry Jones Community Member at Large
- ✓ Board of Education Member Joanne Kelley
- ✓ Community Member at Large Earl (Ty) Lamb, Recording Secretary
- ✓ Community Member at Large Beth Ribe

Ex-Officio Members:

- ✓ Mayor Fred Allyn, III
- ✓ Superintendent of Schools Jason Hartling

VOTE Approved and so declared

VOTE: 9 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Jessica Buhle

SECONDER: Tim Ryan

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

XV. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Buhle moved to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Paul

VOTE: 9- 0 Approved and so declared. The meeting adjourned at 7:44 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 Regular Town Council Meeting held on January 24, 2024.

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.