



TOWN OF LEDYARD

741 Colonel Ledyard Highway
Ledyard, Connecticut 06339

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, November 1, 2023

5:00 PM

Town Hall Annex Building - Hybrid
Format

In -Person: Council Chambers, Town Hall Annex Building

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

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89886939012?pwd=YRIygJprKA2rV9Lw43CF4FIjcYoMIA.1>

by Audio Only: Telephone: +1 646 558 8656; Meeting ID: 898 8693 9012; Passcode: 223941

I CALL TO ORDER

the Meeting was called to order by Councilor Saums at 5:00 p.m.
at the Council Chambers Town Hall Annex Building.

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

Councilor Saums stated that tonight would be the last meeting of this Finance Committee, noting the upcoming November 7, 2023 Municipal Election.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Councilor Bill Saums
Councilor Andra Ingalls
Councilor Tim Ryan

In addition, the following were present:

S. Naomi Rodriguez Town Councilor
Fred Allyn, III Mayor
Matt Bonin Finance Director
S. Naomi Rodriguez Town Councilor
Jennifer Smith Library Director
Scott Johnson, Jr. Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Director
Vincent Godino Historic District Commission & Cemetery Committee

Wayne Donaldson Board of Education Director of Facilities and Grounds
Roxanne Maher Administrative Assistant

****Add On****

Councilor Saums stated without objection that he would like to reorder the Agenda this evening to address New Business Item # 6 regarding the Board of Education School Roof Projects to accommodate Board of Education Director of Facilities and Grounds Mr. Donaldson's schedule.

MOTION to authorize the Mayor to sign a Owner Architect Agreement for Roof Projects at the Gales Ferry School, Juliet Long School, and Board of Education Central Offices, and PV with Silver Petrucelli & Associates of Hamden, Connecticut, in the amount of \$78,280.00 in accordance with Chapter III, Section 4 of the Town Charter.

Moved by Councilor Ingalls, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: Councilor Saums provided some background explaining at the February 22, 2022 Referendum the townspeople approved a "*Resolution Appropriating and Authorizing the Issuance of Bonds in the amount of \$6,725,000 for Various School Improvement Projects*", that included the following: the replacement of the roofs at the Central Office, Gales Ferry School, and Juliet W. Long School; the installation of solar equipment at Gales Ferry School and Juliet W. Long School; upgrades to the Building Management Systems (BMS) and electrical at Gales Ferry School, and the Juliet W. Long HVAC System.

Councilor Saums went on to note that more recently, at the October 17, 2023 Referendum, the townspeople approved to increase the original appropriation by 1,825,000 bringing the total funding authorization to \$8,550,000 to provide funding to redesign of the HVAC system at the Juliet W. Long School to a full air conditioning system, noting that the system had been previously designed as a split system.

Councilor Saums stated in reviewing the Silver Petrucelli & Associates contract in the amount of \$78,280 that he did not see any provisions for the Heating and Ventilation System (HVAC) for the Juliet W. Long School.

Board of Education Director of Facilities and Grounds Mr. Donaldson stated this \$78,280 Silver Petrucelli & Associates contract did not include the Heating and Ventilation System (HVAC) for the Juliet W. Long School. He explained the Contract presented this evening was in response to the original Bid for the Roof Projects. He stated subsequent to the October 17, 2023 Referendum, at which the townspeople approved to increase the original appropriation by 1,825,000 to provide funding to redesign of the HVAC system at the Juliet W. Long School to a full air conditioning system, that he submitted the Grant Application to the State. He stated it was his understanding that the State would most likely award this round of Grant Funding in January, 2024. However, he stated that he would like to get ahead of the curve so that when they receive notification from the State that they would be ready to move forward with the HVAC System.

Mr. Donaldson stated at the November 6, 2023 Permanent Municipal Building Committee (PMBC) Meeting that he planned to seek authorization to solicit bids for Architectural Services for the Juliet W. Long School HVAC System. Councilor Saums noted that if Ledyard does not receive the Grant Funding that they would not want to move forward with the HVAC System Design for the Juliet W. Long School. Mr. Donaldson stated that they would like to go as far as they can with preparing for the HVAC System at the Juliet W. Long School without committing to a timeline.

Councilor Saums questioned whether any changes would need to be made to the Juliet W. Long School Roof design to provide for the newly designed HVAC System. Mr. Donaldson stated the biggest roof design concern would be related to the location of the Solar Installations.

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared

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

Mr. Donaldson thanked the Finance Committee for accommodating his schedule. He left the meeting at 5:04 p.m.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

MOVER: Andra Ingalls

SECONDER: Tim Ryan

AYE: 3 Saums, Ingalls and Ryan

III. RESIDENTS & PROPERTY OWNERS COMMENTS

None.

IV. PRESENTATIONS / INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

None.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION to approve the Finance Committee Minutes of October 4, 2023.

Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Ingalls

VOTE: 3- 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Tim Ryan

SECONDER: Andra Ingalls

AYE: 3 Saums, Ingalls and Ryan

VI. FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Finance Director's Report

Finance Director Matthew Bonin reported that Auditor CliftonLarsonAllen, LLP was moving along with the Fiscal Year 2022/2023 Audit work. He stated the Auditor would be moving to the Board of Education tomorrow.

VII. FINANCIAL REPORTS

Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated that he would have Year-to-Date Actuals Revenue and Expenditure Reports for the December 6, 2023 Finance Committee Meeting.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

Continued discussion regarding the status and possible changes to Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and Capital Non-Recurring (CNR) Fund based on the American Rescue Act Funding (ARPA) and the process to approve ARPA Projects and expend ARPA Funding.

Finance Director Matthew Bonin noted that he provided an updated ARPA Projects Spreadsheet this afternoon which was attached to the Agenda packet on the meeting portal. He stated there has not been much activity during the past few weeks, noting that the spreadsheet did not change too much since the last report.

Councilor Saums stated there were a couple of ARPA Projects that he would like to see the Town get started; and that there were a few Projects that they could not start, such as the sidewalks in Gales Ferry because the town does not have a streetscape design plan for Gales Ferry.

Mayor Allyn, III, provided the following update regarding the ARPA Projects:

- Multi-Model Pathway and the Ledyard Center Sewer Line Extension Project - Mayor Allyn stated the town solicited Bids for these two projects. He stated although they were still reviewing the Proposals that they believed that the bids came in favorable. He presented the map below explaining the following pertaining to the Sewer Line Extension Project:
 - **Red Line** - Shows the Phase of the Sewer Line that was recently Bid. This follows the Multi Model Pathway. Mayor Allyn noted they had allocated \$1.1 million of ARPA Funding for this Phase of the Sewer Line Extension Project; however, the Bids came in

at \$364,000. He explained that was because some of the site work in this area was part of the Multi-Model Pathway; so there were expenses in this Phase that would be covered by the Multi-Model Pathway Grant Funding. Therefore, he stated this Phase of Sewer Line came in lower than anticipated.

-
- **Green Line** - Was the undersized Sewer Line that currently services from the High School to Penny Wise Lane.
 - **Blue Line** - Will go up Fairway Drive and connect to Colby Drive.
 - **Purple Line** - Mayor Allyn stated the Purple Line (Route 117) was a Phase that has not been discussed in much detail yet. He stated because Route 117 was a State Road that the Department of Transportation (DOT) has said that the town could put the sewer line under their road. However, he explained that the State did not want the construction to take place unless and until the State was ready to repave the road, noting that they did not know when that would happen. However, he stated if the town could accomplish all of the other Phases (blue, red, green) that they would have come a long way on the Sewer Line Extension Project; and at some point the town could finish up the stretch on Route 117.

Mayor Allyn went on to explain that the ARPA Funding had to be allocated in the next fourteen months. He stated if the funding was allocated, and they reached the fourteen months and found that they had surplus funding that they would be out of time to reallocate those funds, and that the funding would have to be returned to the US Treasury. He noted as an example if they moved slowly on the next Phase of the Sewer Line Extension Project and then found out that it has come in \$500,000 under budget, that the town would have to return the \$500,000 to the US Treasury. Therefore, he stated he has asked the Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) to consider possibly extending the Sewer Line halfway up Fairway Drive and halfway up Colby Drive, which would potentially benefit the Apartment Development at the former Ledyard Center School, and the Habitat for Humanity Project (see attached map).

Mayor Allyn went on to note that the Sewer Line Extension Projects were the biggest projects funded using the ARPA Funding. Therefore, he stated if there was going to be any surplus funding that they would want to make sure they had time to reallocate those funds. He stated Wastewater Supervisor Steve Banks was working to put this together for the

WPCA to review and consider. However, he stated the WPCA has verbally indicated that they supported the idea to extend the sewer line halfway up Fairway Drive and Colby Drive.

The Finance Committee and Mayor Allyn continued by discussing the following ARPA Projects:

- **LED Message Signs** - Mayor Allyn stated the sign in front of the Gales Ferry Fire Department on Route 12, Gales Ferry, should be in place soon, noting that they recently received the permit. However, he stated that the town was still waiting for approval from the State Department of Transportation (DOT) to use one-square foot of their property to install the Message Sign in Ledyard Center by the Town Green.
- **Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Stations** - Mayor Allyn explained that the town was hoping to install one Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Station in Gales Ferry and one in Ledyard Center at one of the parallel parking spaces on Route 117. However, he stated in speaking with Dollar General (Gales Ferry) about installing an EV Station in their parking lot that they were opposed to having one at their location because they were concerned about the liability should a car catch fire on their property and

burn a row of cars. Therefore, Mayor Allyn stated that he would continue to reach out to some of the Plaza Owners in Gales Ferry (CVS, Spiros, Fireside Building, or Job Lot) to discuss the town installing a Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Stations at one of their locations.

Mayor Allyn went on to explain that the Town would own the EV Charging Station that would be on someone else's property, noting that was where it can become complicated. He stated installing an EV Charging Station on Route 117 in front of the former Ledyard Center School would be a good location because if a car was to catch fire it would not be close to another vehicle or a building.

- Linda C. Food Pantry Vinyl Siding - Mayor Allyn stated the Food Pantry new roof has been completed. He explained that residing the Food Panty has not been done yet because the Food Panty would like to make some changes to the building to provide a covered area outside the door so that volunteers would be out of the weather when providing curbside pick-ups and when receiving deliveries. He stated the weather protection overhang would be about 12-feet wide and would project out 8-feet. He stated that they were also looking to install a concrete pad for a “*Market Cart*” in that same area. He stated that this project was assigned to the Public Works Department to oversee.

RESULT: CONTINUE

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

Councilor Saums stated he and Beautification Committee Chairman Jennifer Eastbourne planned to meet to work on the details of the Adopt a Highway Program. He stated that he would be happy to continue to work on this initiative after he steps down from the Town Council at the end of this term.

Mayor Allyn stated the town recently received its six-month disbursement in the amount of \$15,420 of the Surcharge Revenues from the State. He stated during the last six months there were 308,418 nip bottles sold in Ledyard which was about 50,000 more nip bottles than what was sold in the previous six months. He noted the following data regarding the number of nip bottles that were sold in their area during the last six months:

- Ledyard: 308,418
- Waterford: 388,00
- Montville: 368,
- New London: 723,000
- Groton: 852,000
- Norwich: 1.2 million

Mayor Allyn noted the Surcharge Revenue Account had a balance of about \$48,000 since the program started in 2022.

Councilor Ryan stated with six Package Stores in town that they were each selling about

300 nip bottles per day to total the 308,418 nip bottles sold during the past six months. He went on to note the on-line news publication *The Mirror* published an interesting article that showed how the Nip Surcharge Revenue was being tracked by both the government and third parties. Therefore, he stated the town has to be diligent in tracking how they use the funding.

Mayor Allyn stated that the Town was required to annually submit a Report to the State Office of Policy & Management (OPM) on how they have allocated the Nip Surcharge Revenue.

Councilor Ingalls stated that this revenue appeared to be more than what they planned to pay their Non-Profit Organizations to help the town cleanup the nip bottles from their roads. Therefore, she questioned what were the other permitted uses of the funds.

Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated that this year the Public Works Department rented a street sweeper for \$13,000 to clean the roads, which was a permitted use.

Mayor Allyn noted per the Public Act No.21-58 "*An Act Concerning Solid Waste Management*" the surcharge revenues could only be used for the following purposes:

- (1) Environmental measures intended to reduce the generation of solid waste;
- (2) Reduce the impact of litter caused by such solid waste, including, but not limited to, the hiring of a recycling coordinator;
- (3) The installation of storm drain filters designed to block solid waste and beverage container debris; or
- (4) The purchase of a mechanical street sweeper, vacuum or broom that removes litter, including, but not limited to, such beverage containers and other debris from streets, sidewalks and abutting lawn and turf

RESULT: CONTINUE

3. Any other Old Business proper to come before the Committee.

None.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

Councilor Saums stated that the Finance Committee had two new items that came to their attention late this afternoon, noting that the Finance Committee already added and addressed one of the items, which was the Silver Petrucelli Contract for the Board of Education Roof Projects. He stated the second item was funding to remove dead trees in the Newton Cemetery, which the Finance Committee would add and discuss later this evening.

1. MOTION to authorize the Mayor to submit an American Library Association Application to obtain "Round II" of the - Libraries Transforming Communities: Accessible Small and Rural Communities Grant in the amount of \$20,000 to purchase a new circulation and reference

desk for the Bill Library designed to meet ADA requirements and better serve individuals with disabilities

Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Ingalls

Discussion: Councilor Saums provided some background noting at the Town Council's April 26, 2023 meeting they accepted and appropriated \$20,000 to Account #20250101-50000-G0015 (Library Grant Expense) that was received from Round I of *The American Library Association - Libraries Transforming Communities: Accessible Small and Rural Communities Grant* to purchase books, programming, and building improvements designed to serve individuals with disabilities. He went on to explain that the Library was seeking authorization to apply for Round II of this Grant Program which was also designed to meet American with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements and better serve individuals with disabilities.

Library Director Jennifer Smith noted as Councilor Saums stated, Ledyard was successful in obtaining \$20,000 in Round I of *Libraries Transforming Communities: Accessible Small and Rural Communities* grant offered by the American Library Association which they applied for in December, 2022, noting that they were awarded the funding in April, 2023. She explained that the Library was now seeking authorization to apply for Round II through this Grant Program which was designed for communities with a population less than 25,000 to provide "*community engagement and accessibility resources to small and rural libraries*".

Ms. Smith continued by explaining this Program provided two grant levels: \$20,000 and \$10,000, and that Ledyard would be applying for the \$20,000 level, noting that the Application Deadline was December 11, 2023. She stated the funds would be used for a one-time purchase of a new Circulation and Reference desk at the Bill Library noting that the current desk was original to the 1983 Library addition/renovation, and it was at the end of its useful life. She stated the current desk was 39 inches high and not ADA compliant. She stated the 39-inch-high desk was a challenge for anyone in a wheelchair or with other mobility limitations. She also noted that the height of the desk was daunting for a young child trying to check a book out. She stated the desk was also a problem for those working behind the desk explaining that the space was tight and the maneuverability was limiting for staff, noting that the desk was "L" shaped desk and only had two entrances/exits, and did not have a *book return*. She stated in speaking with Public Works Buildings & Grounds Foreman Shawn Ruzcyk about the desk, which had been modified in the past, that the desk could not be modified any further to achieve their goals. She stated the new desk would be designed to allow for better mobility out to the library floor and would have more than two entrances/exits, and a book return, which would be a slot in the front of the desk where the books and other materials that were being returned would drop into a bin.

Ms. Smith stated any Libraries that did not apply for or receive this Grant Funding in Round I would be given priority over the Libraries that already received funding and were applying for Round II. She stated this was a National Grant and that the *American Library Association* would be awarding fifty Libraries \$20,000 in Round II.

Councilor Ingalls questioned whether the grant program required any local matching

funds. Ms. Smith stated that no matching funds were required to apply for or receive the grant. She also noted that based on the quotes received they could purchase a new desk that would meet the Library's needs within the \$20,000 grant.

Councilor Ingalls questioned if the Library received the \$20,000 grant and the desk came in under that amount would they be able to use the balance for other things. Ms. Smith stated that she believed the Grant Program would allow for the remaining funds to be used for other spending; noting that she could phrase the Grant Application to state "*should there be surplus funds after the desk was purchased that they would use those funds for the following items...*" and that she would list the items.

Councilor Ryan requested clarification stating that it appeared the *American Library Association Grant* was not based on the quotes, noting that the grant was in the amount of \$20,000. Ms. Smith stated that was correct. Councilor Ryan noted the Motion stated "*up-to \$20,000*", therefore, he suggested they strike the words "~~up-to~~" from the Motion. Ms. Smith noted that the reference desk was attached/part of the circulation desk and that the \$20,000 would be used for both portions of the desk.

The Finance Committee agreed to strike the words "~~up-to~~" and to add the word "*reference*" to the Motion as "*friendly amendment*".

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared

The Finance Committee thanked Ms. Smith for attending tonight's meeting. Ms. Smith left the meeting at 5:31 p.m.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

2. MOTION to grant a Bid Waiver to Locust Grove Landscaping, of Ledyard, Connecticut, in the amount of \$27,000 to rebuild the retaining wall of the race and reset the steps to divert water away from the building at the Up-Down Sawmill due to the lack of receiving the required three (3) Bids in response to Bid #2023-09 (Sawmill Repairs); in accordance with Ordinance #200-001 (rev 1) "An Ordinance for Purchasing".

Moved by Councilor Ingalls, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: Councilor Saums noted that the Historic District Commission had previously requested a Bid Waiver for this work at the Up-Down Sawmill. However, he stated at their August 16, 2023 meeting the Finance Committee withdrew the Commission's request for a Bid Waiver to Locust Grove Landscaping based on a procedural technicality. He stated although three quotes were obtained, that because the cost of the Project exceeded the \$15,000 threshold, as provided in Ordinance #200-001 (rev 1), the town was required to solicit Proposals through an Advertised Bid Process.

Councilor Saums went on to state that since August, 2023, the Historic District Commission sought proposals through the Advertised Bid Process for the repairs to

the Sawmill. However, he stated that only one Bid Proposal was received. Therefore, a Bid Waiver to Locust Grove Landscaping (Ken Geer) has been requested. He noted that Historic District Commission Chairman Vincent Godino was present this evening should the Finance Committee have any questions.

Councilor Ryan stated that he understood that it may have been a little frustrating to go back through the process; and therefore, he thanked Mr. Godino for his follow-thru, noting that they have to be careful that they do not set a precedent. Mr. Godino stated that he understands that they have to follow the town's procedures. He stated when this came up in August, 2023 that he had hoped the quotes/cost would have come in under the \$15,000 threshold; and that the three quotes would have been sufficient. However, he stated the cost came in over the \$15,000 which then required them to follow the Advertised Bid Process.

Councilor Saums stated they appreciated the work that the Historic District Commission does for the town.

VOTE: - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

3. MOTION to appropriate the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding in the amount of \$29,827 to Account 20360101-57300-G0014 (New Equipment - Park & Rec - AARPA)

In addition, authorize the Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Center to expend the \$29,827 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) specifically designated for Senior Citizens Centers as outlined in their ARPA Senior Center Plan dated October 17, 2023.

Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Ingalls

Discussion: By way of Background: During the 2022/2023 Legislative Session the Department of Aging and Disability Services (ADS) was awarded \$10 million dollars in ARPA funds specifically for Senior Centers in Connecticut. The State Unit on Aging (SUA) within Aging and Disability Services (ADS) developed a Plan and a Calculation Process to distribute these funds to the Senior Centers, with the majority of \$750,000, or 7.5%, being reserved for statewide senior center activities; and the remaining \$9,000,000 was set aside for Connecticut senior centers and was broken down by municipality. In addition, there was also \$250,000, or 2.5%, reserved for administrative purposes to support this project.

The funding could be used for activities such as senior center-focused website, a senior center summit event, and/or a media campaign to encourage engagement at senior centers.

The allocations contained the following two parts:

- **Base allocation and a formulaic allocation.** All municipalities received a base allocation of \$5,000.
- **Other Calculation:** was based on the Census data on town demographics, including share of the population aged 60 and older, race/ethnicity status, disability status, poverty status and whether the town is in a rural location.

Mr. Johnson noted at their October 17, 2023 the Park, Recreation & Senior Citizens Commission voted on the following Spending Plan for the use of the \$29,827 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding: Peloton Bike \$1,445; Rower \$700; Elliptical \$600; Dumbbell set and Bench \$1,200, Rubber Flooring \$810; Gym Contingency \$470; Chairs (88) for the Dining Room; \$5,409 Card Tables (5) \$190, 71” Table \$875; Room Divider \$8,524, Floor Carpet \$6,355 for the building. He stated once they reached the \$29,827 that they would stop spending. However, he stated if they had enough funding that they would also purchase the following items: Refrigerator \$800, Replacement Railing \$1,000. He stated that Public Works Department would be doing some of the work (installation, etc.) to keep the costs down.

Mr. Johnson went on to explain that the room that was formerly used for ceramics was now only being used for storage and was an underutilized space. Therefore, he stated this room would be converted into the Gym which would help the Senior Citizens Center capture the next phase of retirees. He stated the baby boomers who were all starting to retire at an incredible rate, would be looking for different services than the current their current Senior. He stated the current residents that frequent the Senior Citizens Center were more sedentary and liked to play card games, bingo, etc. He stated the next generation of Seniors were going to be more active noting that they liked to hike, go to the gym, etc. He stated our country was currently on the verge of the largest retirement surge in US history and that they need to do everything possible to prepare for an increase in participation and attract them to visit the Senior Citizens Center.

The Finance Committee and Mr. Johnson discussed the following:

- **Contingency for Gym** \$470 - Councilor Ryan questioned how Mr. Johnson arrived at the \$470 Contingency for the Gym. Mr. Johnson stated that the total Spending Plan Contingency was \$1,800 explaining that initially he calculated a 10% contingency, but it seemed high. Therefore, he stated to simplify the budget that he arrived at the \$1,800 total contingency number to make the Plan add up to their ARPA Funding allotment of \$29,827. He stated if they needed to use the contingency to accomplish the other items on the Plan then they would not purchase the refrigerator or railing.
- **Spending Plan:** Councilor Ingalls questioned how the Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Commission felt about the \$29,827 Spending Plan. Mr. Johnson stated they approved the Plan and were on-board. Councilor Rodriguez stated someone at the Senior Citizens Center said that the 80 & 90-year olds would not use the Gym. However, she stated that she responded stating that that 50-60-70-year olds would use the Gym.

Councilor Saums stated if the space was not being used for anything but storage that he thought making it a Gym was a good use.

- ***Equipment Maintenance:*** Councilor Ryan questioned the future maintenance and repair cost for the gym equipment. Mr. Johnson stated that Parks & Recreation had a capital account that could be used for maintenance and repairs of the gym equipment. He also noted that they had a Special Revenue Account that was now supporting the Senior Programs. He stated with combining the Parks & Recreation with the Senior Citizens that they were now taking 20% from the Parks and Recreation to support the Senior Citizens Programs, which they could use toward equipment. He went on to explain that they were considering charging a Membership Fee to help maintain the Gym.

Councilor Ryan stated that there was an on-line site to purchase used gym equipment that was similar to GovDeals.com auction site. He stated when gyms go out of business they look to sell their equipment. He stated this may be a good place to look to buy some used equipment such as weights noting that he has seen them sell for \$2 per pound. However, he stated the on-line site might not necessarily be a good source to buy mechanical equipment, because they do not know how the equipment was maintained.

Mr. Johnson stated that he had a friend that was the Director at UConn and he noted that they constantly rotate/replace their equipment, explaining that they only keep their equipment for a certain period of time. He stated that he has gotten brand new commercial grade equipment that was still in the box from them. He stated some of the equipment they give away for free, and that some of the equipment was sold at a very reduced price. He stated he was going to reach out to them to let them know that he would be interested in their surplus gym equipment.

- ***Sustainability- Program Fees:*** Councilor Ingalls questioned the sustainability based on the Program Fees. Mr. Johnson stated that the Seniors were essentially self-sufficient, explaining that 100% the money collected for the programs was used to pay for the Instructors. However, he stated for the Parks & Recreation Programs that they keep 20% of the money collected for the programs and that 80% went to paying the Instructors. He stated to keep the fees lower for the Senior Programs that they do not keep 20% of the fee collected, explaining that the Senior Programs had been previously subsidized through the General Government budget. However, he stated that they were able to move the 20% they retain from the Parks & Recreation Fees to the Special Fund, and therefore, with the 20% off-set that they were able to keep the Senior Programs Fees the same without having to have the town's taxbase subsidize them.

Councilor Ingalls asked about the other Senior Activities, where there may not have been an instructor. Mr. Johnson stated they were now charging a nominal fee for the Programs/Activities that they used to offer for free, explaining that they have found if people paid for something, they show-up. He went on to note as an example that they used to offer Pick-up Basketball for free, the Program would fill up and only two of the fifty people who signed up showed up. Therefore, he stated they were now charging \$20 for the Pick-up Basketball and everyone was showing up.

Mr. Johnson continued by addressing the fee to use the Gym and he stated for liability reasons they were planning to give everyone a crash course so that the members would know how to use and clean each piece of equipment. He stated once the the individuals have gone through the course with a staff person that they would be approved to use the Gym. Councilor Ryan stated for liability purposes that some Gyms give each member a light physical to make sure they were capable to use the gym equipment, noting that he was not suggesting that the town do that.

- ***Peloton Subscription:*** Councilor Saums questioned whether Peloton equipment comes with a subscription. Mr. Johnson stated that the Peloton equipment does come with a subscription. However, he stated that the Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Center has discontinued their subscription with The Day Newspaper, therefore, he stated that those funds could be used to pay for the Peloton subscription. He stated that they were still working out all of those details.

Councilor Saums questioned whether multiple people could use the Peloton subscription. Mr. Johnson explained that the Peloton subscription would be for the Senior Center so that members could log-on, pick their class and go. Councilor Ryn suggested they look into Peloton's Policy for commercial and municipal use.

Mayor Allyn, III, noted that the data indicated that the rate that people were entering retirement was going to triple. Therefore, he stated that there would be a big boom of new retirees and potential Senior Citizens Center patrons.

3 VOTE: 3- 0 Approved and so declared

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

RESULT: RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

4. MOTION to approve a tax refund in the amount of \$3,256.25 exceeding \$2,400.00 in accordance with tax collector departmental procedures.
Barbara Arthur \$3,256.25

Moved by Councilor Ingalls, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: Councilor Saums stated in accordance with policies established for the Tax Collection Department, refunds to taxpayers exceeding \$2,400 are to be approved by the Town Council. He stated the paperwork was in order for the refund, noting that a double payment was made, explaining that both the property owner and the mortgage escrow company paid the taxes.

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

5. Any other New Business proper to come before the Committee.

****Add On****

MOTION to appropriate \$4,200 from Undesignated/Unassigned Fund Balance to Account # 10110107-56100 Cemetery Committee Operating Expenses for the removal of four dead trees at the Newton Cemetery.

Moved by Councilor Saums, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: Councilor Saums stated that this request was similar to one that the Town Council previously addressed, noting that the Newton Cemetery had four dead Ash Trees

that needed to be taken down. He stated the resident who has been maintaining the Cemetery has expressed concern that he was fearful that the trees were going to fall down; and has been advised not to go into the cemetery until they could remove the trees. He stated the Cemetery Committee does not have funding in their budget to remove trees; and that \$4,200 was a small amount to take from the Undesignated /Unassigned Account to use for this purpose.

Cemetery Committee Mr. Godino stated he contacted a half of dozen Tree Companies, and was able to obtain a cost estimate from H&H Landscaping, here in Ledyard, to remove the trees for \$4,200; noting that the other cost estimate he received was \$10,000. He stated most of the Tree Companies had to turn down the job did because they did not have the right equipment needed. He explained that specialized equipment that was called the Spider was required to get into the Cemetery, which only had a four-foot gate to enter the property, and was compact enough to maneuver between the gravestones, not to cause damage.

Councilor Ingalls stated that the Finance Committee has discussed the issue of removing dead trees with Public Works/Town Engineer Steve Masalin over the past few years. She stated because the town has only been budgeting a nominal amount to remove trees, that Mr. Masalin has come to the Finance Committee multiple times to obtain additional funding to address the dead trees. Councilor Saums stated that the Finance Committee has increased the Public Works Tree Removal budget, however, he stated the trees were dying faster than what the budget could handle.

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

6. Review outstanding action items contained in the memo dated November 8, 2023 as forwarded by Finance Committee of the Twenty-sixth Town Council.

The Finance Committee agreed by consensus to forward the following outstanding items of business to the incoming Finance Committee:

- Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and Capital Non-Recurring (CNR) Fund based

on the *American Rescue Act* Funding (ARPA) and the process to approve ARPA Projects and expend ARPA Funding.

- Potential uses of the revenue received from Public Act No.21-58 “*An Act Concerning Solid Waste Management*” in accordance with “*Resolution Regarding Revenues Received from Beverage Container Surcharges*” adopted on June 8, 2022.
- National Opioid Settlement Payments
 - ✓ Potential Uses of the Funds
 - ✓ Allocations of the Funds
 - ✓ Oversight-follow-up-communication with Organizations administering the funds.

RESULT: COMPLETED

V ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Saums went on to state that both he and Councilor Ingalls have chosen not to seek reelection. He stated that it has been a pleasure working with both Councilor Ingalls and Councilor Ryan on the Finance Committee. He stated Councilor Ingalls’ insightful thinking has been a complement to Councilor Ryan’s deeply detailed, analytical, statistical thinking, noting that he has such a mind for numbers. He stated they have both made his job as the Finance Committee Chairman easy.

Councilor Ingalls thanked Councilor Saums for his kind words, noting that she appreciated Councilor Saums’ leadership. She stated that he was one of the most diplomatic and fair-minded people that she has had the pleasure to work with.

Councilor Ingalls went on to state that it has been enriching to watch Councilor Ryan work over the past two-years, noting that he was very analytical. She stated that Councilor Ryan sees the whole story in the numbers, noting that he could look at a spreadsheet and know what questions to ask, and where to dig for more information, which was a gift. She stated the Town Council and the Town would be blessed to have him serve as the Finance Committee Chairman, presuming the outcome of the November 7, 2023 Election. She stated it has truly been a pleasure and honor to work with both Councilor Saums and Councilor Ryan.

Councilor Ryan stated that he appreciated Councilor Saums’ and Councilor Ingalls’ comments. He stated that this was his first term serving on the Town Council, noting that it was a learning experience for him in all different types of facets. He stated being assigned to the Finance Committee was a steep learning curve, noting that Councilor Saums has been an excellent mentor; and that he has learned a lot over the past two-years.

Councilor Ryan went on to note the insightful questions that Councilor Ingalls asked has provided balance to the Finance Committee, noting that she focused on the historical narrative of the issues. He stated that he appreciated all of her help and that

he was very disappointed that both Councilor Saums and Councilor Ingalls have chosen not to see reelection.

Councilor Saums concluded by stating that he wanted to express his confidence in Councilor Ryan, noting that should he be reelected to the Town Council, that he could potentially be the next Finance Committee Chairman.

Councilor Ingalls moved the meeting be adjourned, seconded by Councilor Saums.

VOTE:3 - 0 Approved and so declared, the meeting was adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

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