



TOWN OF LEDYARD

Finance Committee

Meeting Minutes

741 Colonel Ledyard Highway
Ledyard, Connecticut 06339

Chairman S. Naomi
Rodriguez

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, January 15, 2025

5:00 PM

**Town Hall Annex Building - Hybrid
Format**

In -Person: Council Chambers, Town Hall Annex Building

Remote Participation: Information Noted Below:

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

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88442934781?pwd=tbWI4esRxaS5q7wOlkukPMsNzcXWlI.1>
by Audio Only: Telephone: +1 646 558 8656; Meeting ID: 884 4293 4781; Passcode: 325708

I CALL TO ORDER

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

Councilor Saccone 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.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Tony Saccone
Jessica Buhle

Excused: Tim Ryan

In addition, the following were present:

S. Naomi Rodriguez Town Council Chairman
Fred Allyn, III Mayor
Matthew Bonin Finance Director
Steve Masalir Public Works Director/Town Engineer
Elizabeth Burdick Land Use Director-Town Planner
Mike Doyle Connecticut Recovery Support Center
Roxanne Maher Administrative Assistant

III. RESIDENTS & PROPERTY OWNERS COMMENTS

None.

IV. PRESENTATIONS / INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

None

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION to approve the Finance Committee Meeting Minutes of December 4, 2024.

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Saccone

VOTE: 2 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

VI. Finance Director's Report

Finance Director Matthew Bonin reported the following: (1) Finance Department Staffing - Mr. Bonin stated Fiscal Assistant Nancy Michaud would be returning to work this week noting that she had been injured while on vacation and has been out of the office since the end of October. He stated that she was doing some work from home and was working to catch up on the recording some of the financial data; (2) Annual Audit Report Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2024 - Mr. Bonin stated on January 9, 2025 the Audit Report for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2024 was emailed to the Town Council, noting that Auditors CliftonLarsonAllen LLP would be attending the February 5, 2025 Finance Committee meeting to present the Audit Report; (3) Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget Preparations - Mr. Bonin noted that Department Heads proposed budgets were due to the Mayor's Office on January 21, 2025.

VII. Financial Reports

Finance Director Matthew Bonin noted that the following Reports were provided for tonight's meeting:

- Revenue Year-to Date Report- November 30, 2024

Mr. Bonin provided an overview of Revenues noting the following:

- ✓ Interest on Deposits was at 86% of budget.
- ✓ Tax Collections were coming in well.
- ✓ Municipal Revenue Sharing - The town will not be receiving Municipal Revenue Sharing this year.
- ✓ Tuition Revenues - Tuition Revenues began to flow in during December, and would continue into February and March.

- Expenditure Year-to Date Report- December 31, 2024

Mr. Bonin noted the Expenditures were continuing to track as has been previously reported.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

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

RESULT: CONTINUE

1 a MOTION accept the Connecticut Recovery Support Center 2024-2025 Proposal in the amount of \$10,000 for the use of the National Opioid Settlement Funding.

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Saccone

Discussion: Connecticut Recovery Support Center, Mr. Mike Doyle stated he attended the Town Council's September 11, 2024 meeting and the Finance Committee's October 16, 2024 meeting along with *Community Speaks Out* Mr. Joe de la Cruz, and Ms. Tammy de la Cruz. He stated that both *Community Speaks Out*, and his organization *Connecticut Recovery Support Center*, presented proposals regarding the programs and services they each provide to help those struggling with addiction. He stated at that time Ledyard stated that they would prefer to address the two organizations separately, noting at their October 26, 2024 meeting the Town Council approved to allocate \$10,000 of the funding they were receiving from the National Opioid Settlement to engage with *Community Speaks Out* and asked him to come back with a sperate proposal.

Mr. Doyle continued by noting that he submitted a *Connecticut Recovery Support Center* proposal in the amount of \$10,000 to provide the following services programs: Overdose Follow-ups, Referrals, Community Outreach, Opioid Education, Training for First Responders and Employers, and Recovery Basics Seminars.

Mr. Mike Doyle went on to provide some background stating during the last eight years he worked for Reliance Health running their Recovery Support Services. He stated in July, 2024 he decided to go out on his own as a free agent because he could see that the Recovery Community needed help; and that he could be more effective as a free agent. He stated that he was running a Recovery Coach Program in Norwich; and that he had a good network of people that were ready to work, noting that they knew the area. He stated in 2023 there were about 22 or 24 reported overdoses in in Ledyard-Gales Ferry and that through his Norwich Program he was currently providing services to 16 Ledyard-Gales Ferry Residents that came to his Program either through the courts or through other providers, noting that he was still connected with the Norwich Task Force.

The Finance Committee and Mr. Doyle discussed in further detail the following:

- ***Opioid Education and Naloxone Trainings*** (2 per year). Mr. Doyle stated that this training course was about 1-hour and that he would provide training to First Responders, Police Departments, Fire Departments, and also to the Public at the Library or other locations. He stated all he needed was a room with a projector and space for the public to attend.

Mr. Doyle stated the Trainings often roll into a Recovery Basics Course for parents and friends and family and community members. He stated that he held one of these Trainings in in Stonington which went well, noting about 6 residents attend.

Mr. Doyle stated that he would provide a separate Training Program for First Responders explaining that it would be more toward responding to the scene and other areas that First Responders come across.

- ***Connecticut Recovery Support Center advertises*** its Programs and Services on Town Websites, Facebook Market, sends letters/flyers home through the schools to parents and word of mouth, etc. Mr. Doyle explained by working with the Police Department and First Responders that he would respond to the call with them and then he was able to follow up with the individual who overdosed. He also stated that he received referrals from the Police Departments, and others.
- ***Monitor Program, Services Provided, and Number of Clients*** - Mr. Doyle stated that he would be happy to provide monthly or quarterly reports to the Town Council and/or the Mayor, noting that they could then talk about the numbers and trends.
- ***How does Connecticut Recovery Support Center work with Community Speaks Out*** - Mr. Doyle stated Connecticut Recovery Support Cetner was a separate organization from Community Speaks Out. He explained in working to help individuals through the recovery process that he can make referrals to Community Speaks Out for the services they provide, such as Sober Living Housing.

Councilor Saccone noted that the proposal was for 2024/2025, and therefore, he questioned whether Mr. Doyle wanted to update it for the current calendar year. Mr. Doyle stated that should the Town Council accept his proposal that he would send an Invoice for his services.

Councilor Buhle stated that she would support allocating the requested \$10,000 from the National Opioid Settlement Funding, noting that if they do not try to help those in our community that they would not know if they were being successful. She also stated that providing training for family members would help them know how to address their concerns. She stated that she believed spending \$10,000 of the Opioid Settlement Funding to help 12 people turn their lives around was worth it.

The Finance Committee agreed to accept Mr. Doyle's Connecticut Recovery Services proposal for \$10,000, with the cavate that Mr. Doyle would provide quarterly reports to monitor the program's progress and their impact on their community.

VOTE: 2 - 0 Approved and so declared

Councilor Saccone thanked Mr. Doyle for attending tonight's meeting.

Mr. Doyle left the meeting at 5:14 p.m.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

2. 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.

The Finance Committee discussed the Capital Improvement Plan, and questioned the status of the projects that the Town Council approved at their December 11, 2024 meeting for the use of the ARPA Funding that was remaining from Projects coming in under budget.

Mayor Allyn, III, stated that all of the ARPA Projects that were approved at the Town Council's December 11, 2024 meeting have been signed off and were in-progress, with the exception of the concrete barrier wall for the High School Agri-Science Building as noted in **red font** below. He explained that the Board of Education was not able to obtain the required written quotes for that project to meet the December 31, 2024 Deadline:

- ✓ \$14,999 for Smart Projectors for the Board of Education @ \$3,000 each.
- ✓ **\$10,000 to install a concrete barrier wall in the Boiler Room at the High School's Agri-Science Building.**
- ✓ \$50,000 to install a Solid Playground Surface at the Juliet W. Long School.
- ✓ 10,000 to the Parks & Recreation Summer Camp Scholarships.
- ✓ \$2,500 to conduct an A2 Survey of the Spicer Homestead Ruins.
- ✓ \$20,000 to purchase CPR Devices.
- ✓ \$5,500 to purchase/install an ADA Compliance counter in the Town Clerk's Office.

Councilor Buhle questioned the dollar amount of the ARPA Funding that was reallocated to the Fairway Drive-Colby Drive sewer line. Finance Director Matthew Bonin explained because they had a number of on-going projects that they would not know what that dollar amount would be.

RESULT: CONTINUE

3. Continued discussion regarding upcoming potential Grant Opportunities.

Councilor Buhle noted that the Finance Committee would be discussing a Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) Grant under New Business Item # 4 later this evening. However, she noted the Application Process for the Congressional Spending Grants typically opens around February. Therefore, she stated in trying to plan ahead that she has spoken to Police Chief John Rich and others about upcoming/anticipated capital expenses that the Congressional Grant Funding could be used for. She stated that Senator Murphy and Senator Blumenthal's Office provides a webinar on the Grant Application process, stating that it was informative and helpful; and that she planned to attend the webinar again this year. She stated that she hoped they could put a plan together and have another great Grant Application

submission again this year.

RESULT: CONTINUE

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

None.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

1. MOTION to authorize the Land Use Department to over expend their Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget

In addition, transfer \$4,895.75 from CNR Account #210104301-53315 (GIS) to CNR Account # 21014301-57300 (New Equipment).

Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Saccone

Discussion: Director of Land Use/Town Planner Elizabeth Burdick provided some background regarding the request to overspend the Land Use Department Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget; and to transfer funds from the Land Use Capital Budget. She explained in past years that all the town's legal expenses were paid out of the Mayor's Budget, but in the preparing the current year's (fy 24/25) budget a decision was made to move the legal expenses to the department's budget that the legal fees applied to, noting that the Land Use Department Budget was already in-place when she rejoined the town.

Ms. Burdick continued by explaining the reason additional funding was needed as follows:

- Unanticipated expenses related to multiple complex land use applications; and multiple land use superior court appeals (attorneys' fees & legal notices). The \$10,000 legal fee budget was already at 300% and there were legal fees waiting to be paid.
 - ✓ Anticipate the Multi-Family Application in Gales Ferry will come back.
 - ✓ Appeal of a Wetlands Decision.
 - ✓ Appeal of Planning & Zoning Decision
 - ✓ Blight Property Collection Action.
- \$3,000 for underestimated costs for required professional training, meetings, dues for existing staff; including Connecticut Association of Zoning Enforcement Officials (CAZEO) Training for both their existing (continued education); and the two new staff persons to obtain and retain their certifications. This training would provide the following in the Land Use Office:
 - ✓ Certified Zoning Enforcement Official
 - ✓ Certified Zoning Technician
- Need to purchase office equipment/furniture for the office space formerly occupied by the Visting Nurse Association (VNA). The modular unit that was in

the Registrar's Office does not fit into the smaller cubicle offices, which was the reason new office equipment was needed. Ms. Burdick stated that she currently did not have a desk, noting that she was working on a table. She stated that the Mayor was going to look to sell the modular unit and that those funds would be used toward the purchase of new office equipment for the Land Use Office.

Ms. Burdick went on to report that she has used a small amount of the \$75,000 (new budget line Consultant Staff) that the Town Council approved at their September 12, 2024 meeting to hire Consultants to help with the Gales Ferry Intermodal Application in Gales Ferry (former Dow/Styrenics site- Cashman Project). She went on to note that she was also expecting to receive three new Development Applications that she would need to use Consultants for, noting that the Land Use Department does not have enough staff to handle all of the Applications, explaining that her staff was new and required her oversight. She provided an overview of the anticipated Applications as follows:

- ✓ Multifamily Housing former Ledyard Center School
- ✓ Age Restricted Housing former Ledyard Center School
- ✓ Habitat for Humanity Housing - 28 structures.
- ✓ Expected the CR Kulwin Application to come back.

Councilor Buhle questioned whether Ms. Burdick had a projected dollar amount that would be needed to cover the expenses she reviewed for the current fiscal year.

Councilor Saccone noted that they were beginning to prepare budgets for the Fiscal Year 2025/2026; and therefore, he questioned whether the Land Use Department would need to include more money for Legal Fees in the coming year. Ms. Burdick stated that the Land Use Department Budget for Fiscal Year 2025/2026 would see an increase to provide for the costs she discussed this evening. She stated that the current year's expenses for Legal Fees was unprecedented, noting that it was difficult to anticipate expenses because they cannot predict when Development Applications would be submitted and the level of support they would require.

Chairman Rodriguez questioned the Account the funding would come from to cover the Land Use Department's over expenditures for this year (fy 24/25). Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated the funding would come from Undesignated Fund Balance.

VOTE: 2 - 0 Approved and so declared

Councilor Saccone thanked Ms. Burdick for attending tonight's meeting.

Ms. Burdick left the meeting at 5:34 p.m.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

2. MOTION to approve an additional appropriation from undesignated fund balance in the

amount of \$87,055 to the following accounts to address the budgetary impact of hiring an additional mechanic in conjunction with the shared services agreement with the Town of Preston:

\$57,820 to account 10140105-51620 Public Works Employees - Vehicle Maintenance
\$21,800 to account 10110253-52201 Healthcare Teamsters
\$ 4,425 to account 10110253-52500 Social Security
\$ 3,010 to account 10110253-52310 Defined Contribution Plan

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Saccone

Discussion: Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin provided some background stating in May of 2024, the Town of Ledyard entered into a Shared Services Agreement with the Town of Preston to provide maintenance and repair services for their vehicles and equipment.

Mr. Masalin continued by explaining that Preston was struggling to get a mechanic, and beyond the logistics of managing a small crew with one mechanic and absences, it was a challenge for them. He stated in working together that Mayor Allyn, III, and Preston First Selectwoman Sandra Alan Gothier found a solution which was for Ledyard to provide mechanic services to maintain Preston's Fleet. He stated per the Agreement, the Town of Preston was being billed \$8,000 a month (\$96,000 annually) which was in addition to being billed for the cost of materials and parts for the services incurred that were associated with their vehicles and equipment. However, he stated they needed to create a new Mechanic II position, which was a lower paid position, to enable Ledyard to take on the additional fleet. He stated Ledyard now had a Maintenance Division of three employees, comprised of a Maintenance Forman, Mechanic, and a Mechanic II. He stated all of the three employees shared the workload regardless of the which town the fleet belonged to.

Mr. Masalin went on to explain because the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget had already been approved by the time the Agreement was entered into, that the requested budget adjustments were needed to provide for the additional mechanic that was hired to handle the increased workload.

Councilor Saccone questioned whether overtime costs were addressed in the Shared Services Agreement. Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin explained that overtime costs was a condition covered Agreement, noting that they have already had some overtime conditions. He explained, as an example, during Storm Needs that the mechanic would be deployed to Preston's crew so that he would be on-site to handle their storm needs costs. He stated because they have only had one storm this year, there has not been much overtime activity.

Councilor Saccone questioned how Workers Compensation for the Mechanic II was being handled. Mr. Masalin stated Workers Compensation was not directly addressed in the Shared Service Agreement, noting that he was not sure how employee issues were addressed.

Councilor Buhle questioned the following:

- The \$87,055 requested to address the costs associated with taking on Preston's fleet was coming from the Undesignated Fund Balance; therefore, she questioned whether the revenues received were going into the Undesignated Fund. Finance Director Matthew Bonin explained that revenues do not go directly into expense accounts. However, he stated the revenues received from Preston were offsetting the expenses associated with Agreement.
- Would the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget include a new line for the Shared Services Agreement with Preston (Mechanic Services). Mr. Bonin stated that a new line has been set up in the budget for these expenses.
- Would the Mechanic II receive defined pay increases. Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin stated the Mechanic II position was included in the Collective Bargaining Agreement with regard to his pay increases. Councilor Buhle questioned whether the Shared Services Agreement included provisions to cover increased costs such as salary increases. Mr. Masalin stated that the Agreement would be revisited to address needs such as salary increases, etc.

Mayor Allyn, III, stated that the Shared Services Agreement to maintain Preston's Fleet has been working well. He stated that this was the second Agreement Ledyard had with Preston, noting that Ledyard's Tax Assessor Adrianna Hedwall was providing services to Preston as well. He stated the Fleet Maintenance Agreement was also good for Ledyard because it provided the Maintenance Division with an extras set of hands, noting for safety reason it was good to have the extra person to handle work such as taking a 5 ½ foot wheel off a backhoe. He stated the Mechanic II that was hired has worked out well with the team at the Town Garage.

Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin also noted that they were currently working on a third Shared Services Agreement with Preston with regard to the purchase of a new Elgin Pelican Street Sweeper. He stated that Ledyard would be using their Surcharge Revenues received from the Nip Bottle Surcharge Bill to purchase a new Elgin Pelican Street Sweeper. He stated that this purchase would be a shared arrangement with the Town of Preston and would cover the annual scope of work for each town, explaining that the cost share would be allocated proportionally based on the town's paved road mileage which would result in 2/3 cost for Ledyard and 1/3 cost for Preston. He stated the Street Sweeper was due to be delivered in about six weeks.

Councilor Saccone noted that Share Service Agreements were beneficial, noting that the Gales Ferry Fire Department had a Shared Agreement with the Town of Groton for about 3 - 4 years to provide tune-ups on their fire trucks/apparatus, noting that Groton's labor cost was about \$50.00 per hour. He noted as a comparison that the labor costs at the Fire Truck Vendors was about \$140.00 per hour.

VOTE: 2 - 0 Approved and so declared

Councilor Saccone thanked Mr. Masalin for attending tonight's meeting.

Mr. Masalin left the meeting at 5:40 p.m.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

3. MOTION to approve appropriations from the receipt of sales of vehicles and equipment through GovDeals in the total amount of \$8,806.11 as follows:

- \$4,750 to the Public Works Large Trucks CNR Account #21040101-57312;
- \$3,046.11 to the Public Works Light Equipment CNR Account 21040101-57314; and
- \$1,010 to the Police Vehicle CNR Account 21020101-57510.

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Saccone

Discussion: Mayor Allyn, III, noted that the Town has been using the on-line auction site GovDeals to sell surplus equipment, noting that the amount of revenues received has turned out to be much better than the former sealed bid process that the town previously used. He went on to note that town received a total of \$8,806.11 from the sale of surplus equipment through GovDeals, as follows:

- 2001 Sterling L7500 Cab and Chassis - \$4,750
- 2013 Hustler Mower - \$2,826.11
- 2008 Nissan Altima - \$1,010 (Police obtained through a drug seizer)
- Milwaukee Fuel Power Tool Components - \$220

Mayor Allyn went on to explain that the past practice has been for Town Council to appropriate the revenues received to the respective capital reserve fund to supplement/offset direct budgetary appropriations in meeting lifecycle replacement costs, noting that this was what tonight's action would do.

VOTE: 2 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

4. MOTION to approve the proposed "Municipal Certification of a Resolution for Small Town Economic Assistance Program ~ STEAP 2025 ~ Ledyard Community Green Improvement Project; to Include the Replacement of the Playscape; as presented in the draft dated January 14, 2025.

In addition, the Parks & Recreation Commission shall review and approve the Conceptual Plan to be submitted as part of the Application;

And, if funding is approved, Town Council approval will be requested for the Town's local matching funds, when that amount is known, and before any contract is signed and the project is commenced.

Mayor Allyn, III, stated on January 9, 2025 the Governor announced a round of Small Town Economic Development Assistance Program (STEAP) Grants for this year,

noting that the Application Deadline was February 20, 2025.

Mayor Allyn explained that the STEAP Grant was for up to \$1 million and he stated in considering which projects were shovel ready, and would enable the town to meet the February 20, 2025 Application Deadline that he would suggest submitting the following projects:

- Town Green Improvements to include replacing the Playscape, which was an old relic from the Ledyard Center School, and
- Installation of the sewer lines on Fairway Drive and Colby Drive.

Mayor Allyn stated that he has talked with Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Director Scott Johnson, Jr., about obtaining cost estimates to replace/install a new Playscape at the Town Green.

Mayor Allyn went on to state that he has also asked Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin and Land Use Director/Town Planner Elizabeth Burdick to obtain written cost estimates to install the Sewer Lines on Fairway Drive and Colby Drive. He stated that he was also looking into whether the town could submit two projects under one STEAP Grant Application; or submit two Grant Application in this round of Grant of Applications. He also stated that although it was not required, a 20% local (town) match was preferred. He went on to state in talking with the State's Office of Policy & Management (OPM) about the 20% local match, that the towns who provide the 20% local match were more likely to receive the Grant Approval. He went on to explain that the town could use the \$110,000 Design and Engineering costs for the sewer lines on Fairway Drive and Colby Drive, which the town has already paid for, as their local match.

Therefore, Mayor Allyn stated that he was hoping that they could come back to the Finance Committee on February 5, 2025 with all the numbers to move forward with the STEAP Grant Application with one or with both of these projects, noting the short timeframe to get all this information together and to submit the STEAP Grant Application by the February 20, 2025 Deadline.

Chairman Rodriguez questioned whether the town had the cost estimates to install the sewer line on Fairway Drive and Colby Drive. Mayor Allyn stated that they currently did not have written cost estimates for this work, noting that written estimates were required to submit the STEAP Grant Application.

Councilor Buhle stated that she had the following comments, ideas, and concerns:

- ***Undesignated Fund Balance*** - At the Town Council's December 11, 2024 meeting they voted to reclassify the funding used for the Design and Engineering cost for the Sewer Line installation on Fairway Drive and Colby Drive from Undesignated to American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Councilor Buhle noted in accordance with the STEAP Grant Guidelines that federal funds could not be

used as their 20% local match for a State Grant program. Mayor Allyn stated that leaving funds classified as Undesignated would allow them to use the Design and Engineering costs for Fairway Drive and Colby Drive, as the local match, and would be a wash.

- **Replacing the Playscape at the Town Green** - Councilor Buhle stated replacing the town's playscapes has been one of her goals since she was elected in 2023. She stated the Town Green and its Playscape were the anchor of our town. She noted that Ledyard has an Award-Winning Farmers Market, and that events such as the Rotary Car Cruise, Annual Easter Egg Hunt, and many others were held at the Town Green. Therefore, she stated that it made sense for the town to have an amazing Playscape, noting that it would speak to the quality of life that our town has for our residents, especially our families. She stated that she has spoken briefly to Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Director Scott Johnson, Jr., about the town's parks noting that the STEAP Grant could be used to fund things like playscapes, where other grants programs do not.
- **Sewer Line Fairway Drive and Colby Drive** - Councilor Buhle stated that she was against spending STEAP Grant Funding on the planning of the Sewer Line at this point. She stated the Town has spent nearly \$2 million dollars of ARPA Funding for the Sewer Line Extension Project, which was about 50% of the ARPA Funding the town received. She noted that there were other grant funding opportunities the town could use for the sewer line such as the Community Investment Fund Grant (CIF), stating that the avenues to fund the sewer projects were greater than the avenues to fund other things in our town that would improve the quality of life for our residents.

Councilor Buhle went on to state that the town has funded the sewer line to spur development, however, they have not seen that development yet. She noted that the Land Use Department was saying that they had so much development happening right now, therefore, she stated putting in more sewer lines and asking for more Development Applications would vastly change the landscape of our town very, quickly. Therefore, she stated although she was not against the sewer line projects, that she was concerned about continuing to fund the sewer projects.

Chairman Rodriguez stated that she has lived in Ledyard for 25 years and has always wanted the town to construct a sewer line. Therefore, she stated that she was happy when the town decided to allocate the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding to install the sewer lines, noting that Ledyard has needed sewers for a long time.

Chairman Rodriguez went on to state that it was her understanding that Habitat for Humanity was going to pay for the sewer lines on Fairway Drive and Colby Drive to service the homes they were building. Mayor Allyn, III, stated that the Habitat for Humanity homes would be paying for grinder pumps at each location, explaining that they would have to pay to pump their sewage into the town's

system.

Chairman Rodriguez went on to state that she was 100% in favor of installing a new Playscape at the Town Green. She stated the last STEAP Grant was used for improvements to the Town Green, noting that it now looked beautiful. She also noted with the work that was done that the pavilion was American with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant. She commented that the Mary McGrattan Park in Ledyard Center also looked great. She stated replacing the Playscape would be the culmination of the work that was started in Ledyard Center several years ago. Therefore, she stated that she hoped that Ledyard could do both the Playscape and the Sewer Lines on Fairway Drive and Colby Driv Projects with this round of \$1 million STEAP Grant Funding. She stated that they need to ask their State Legislators to write letters in support for Ledyard to receive this STEAP Grant.

Councilor Buhle stated in talking with Parks, Recreation, & Senior Citizens Director Scott Johnson, Jr., that she asked him what he would do with a \$1 million Grant. She stated that Mr. Johnson explained that the Playscapes were reaching the end of life and that he would use the money to replace five Playscapes at the following town parks: Town Green, East Drive, Colonel Ledyard Park, Pfizer Park and one other park that she could not recall at this time. She noted that this would be a revitalization of their parks in town; and would be a huge opportunity that would speak to the quality of life; and would have the most impact for our families day to day. She stated that she has heard many people say that they live in Ledyard or Gales Ferry and that they had horrible parks. She stated that she did not want Ledyard to be that town, noting that parks were an investment in their people. She stated that there were so few opportunities to obtain grant funding for recreational activities for their residents. She stated if they used the \$1 million 2025 STEAP Grant for their Parks that she would happily help to write Grant Applications such as the Congressional Spending Grant, or the Community Investment Grant (CIO) for the Sewer Line Projects, and that she would work and attend every webinar and do all of the things required to make sure that the Fairway Drive and Colby Drive Sewer Lines happen.

Councilor Buhle went on to state that she knows that Ledyard's Mil Rate and taxes were high; and that it would be fine if what the town had was great. She stated personally that she did not mind the taxes that she pays, but that she wanted to have better parks, better town services, better schools, etc., stating that she wanted it to feel good.

Councilor Saccone stated that he appreciated Councilor Buhle's comments, noting that he liked the idea to use the 2025 STEAP Grant Funding to replace the Playscape at the Town Green, and for the sewer line project on Fairway Drive and Colby Drive. He stated this item was included on tonight's agenda for discussion only.

Mayor Allyn, III, stated they still had a lot of work to do before they decide which projects Ledyard would like to submit with their 2025 STEAP Grant Application. He noted that he would contact the State to ask about submitting a few STEAP Grant Applications, stating that he did not think that they would be able to package all of the Playscapes in Grant Application.

Councilor Buhle questioned the cost for sewer line project on Fairway Drive and Colby Drive. Mayor Allyn stated that he thought that these sewer lines would cost about \$700,000 which would leave about \$200,000 for the Playscape at the Town Green. Councilor Buhle stated a Playscape for Town Green would cost about \$350,000, without the solid service playground. She stated that the Town of East Lyme has received \$3.5 million in STEAP Grants, compared to Ledyard only receiving \$700,000. Therefore, she stated that Ledyard should apply for the full \$1 million STEAP Grant and make sure they use it. Mayor Allyn stated that Ledyard has received more than \$700,000, noting that they received multiple STEAP Grants for Ledyard Center, in addition to the STEAP Grants they received for the Town Green.

- ***Restroom Facility - Town Green*** - Councilor Buhle suggested constructing a permanent Restroom Facility at the Town Green, if they were going to have sewer in that area. Mayor Allyn stated once the Former Ledyard Center School Property was developed that a sewer line would be available in the area of the Linda C. Davis Food Pantry. He noted that he has discussed various options to provide Restrooms in that area, however, he stated because there was no access to a septic system it was impossible. He went on to note with the extension of the sewer line that Permanent Restrooms would be possible.

RESULT: CONTINUE

5. MOTION to approve a proposed "Amendment 2025-1 to the Retirement Plan for Full-Time Employees of the Town of Ledyard" pertaining to Section 5.06 (Suspension of Benefits) as presented by the Retirement Board in the draft dated December 17, 2024.

DRAFT: 12/17/2024

**AMENDMENT 2025-1
TO THE RETIREMENT PLAN FOR
FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES OF
THE TOWN OF LEDYARD
Amended and Restated July 1, 2012**

WHEREAS, The Town of Ledyard, hereinafter referred to as the "Employer" established a Plan which reserves in Section 10.01, the Ledyard Town Council's right and authority to amend the Plan; and

WHEREAS, the Employer desires to amend the Plan to provide for continuation of retirement benefits for any Member rehired by the Employer; and;

NOW THEREFORE, effective January 23, 2025, the Employer hereby amends the Plan as follows:

Section 5.06 (Suspension of Benefits) is hereby amended to read as follows:

Section 5.06 Rehired Employees

If a Member elects to retire under the Plan upon reaching his or her Normal Retirement Date, and is rehired by the Town, the rehired Employee shall be paid retirement benefits as prescribed by the plan as if he/she had not been rehired by the town.

Table of Contents is hereby amended to read as follows:

Section 5:06 Rehired Employees

Approved by the Ledyard Town Council on Date: _____

Naomi Rodriguez, Chairman
Ledyard Town Council

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Saccone

Discussion: Mayor Allyn provided some background stating in 2015 the Town Council adopted an Amendment to the Pension Plan Document to address town employees who retired and started collecting their retirement benefits from the town; and then later returned to employment in the same department. He stated in Amendment 2015-1 that the employee would not be able to collect their retirement benefit. However, he stated if the employee returned to the town in a different department, that the Plan Amendment 2015-1 (DB Plan) allowed the employee to continue to collect his/her retirement benefit without disruption.

Mayor Allyn went on to explain that the Retirement Board reviewed Amendment 2015-1 and its impact on retaining skilled/experienced workers in town employment after they have reached their Normal Retirement Age under the Defined Benefit Plan. He stated the Retirement Board found Amendment 2015-1 to be detrimental to this effort, noting that these individuals have years of experience in their positions, making them valuable to the town, especially during a difficult hiring environment. He stated with their experience, these individuals could easily go to a nearby town where they would get both Ledyard's retirement benefits and compensatory salary/pay and would be able to participate in a Defined Contribution plan. He noted as an example that Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin, Police Department Capitan Kenny Creutz; and former Firefighter now Public Works Department Jerry Watkins have reached retirement age, and have continued to work for the Town.

Mayor Allyn stated to address this issue the Retirement Board forwarded the proposed Amendment 2025-1 as presented in the draft dated December 17, 2024 which would allow town employees to receive retirement benefits under the Defined Benefit Plan after reaching their Normal Retirement age; and to be rehired in the same position with the ability to contribute to the Defined Compensation Plan.

Chairman Rodriguez noted that Amendment 2015-1 was original written when Michael Finkelstein retired from the Police Department and returned to employment

with the town when he was elected as Mayor.

VOTE: 2 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

6. MOTION to appoint CliftonLarsonAllen LLP to conduct auditing services for the General Government, WPCA, and Schools for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, in accordance with Chapter III, Section 11 of the Town Charter for a fee \$74,500.

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Saccone

Discussion: Finance Director Matthew Bonin explained in working to solicit bids for Annual Auditing Services he realized that the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024 would be the second one-year option that was provided in RFP #2022-09 (Auditing Services). Therefore, he stated that the town would not need to solicit bids for the this year's auditing work.

Councilor Saccone questioned whether CliftonLarsonAllen LLP cost would remain the same for their Auditing Services. Mr. Bonin stated the 74,000 cost included a 3% increase noting the Cost Breakdown as follows::

\$74,500 Breakdown:

General Government:	\$25,100
550	
Board of Education:	\$23,400
WPCA:	\$9,800
State Single Audit:	\$8,100
<u>Federal Single Audit:</u>	<u>\$8,100</u>
TOTAL:	\$74,500

Mr. Bonin went on to state that based on the current market, if the town had solicited bids the cost would have come in at around \$80,000.

It was noted in accordance with Chapter III, Section 11 of the Town Charter: "*The Town Council shall annually designate an independent public accountant or firm of independent public accountants to audit the books and accounts of the Town in accordance with the provisions of the General Statutes*".

In accordance CGS 7-396 and 4-232 the Office of Management and Policy (OPM) must be notified of the Municipalities Appointed Auditor 30 days (May 31st) before the end of the Fiscal Year.

Councilor Buhle questioned the difference between the Audit Work that was done for the Town and work that was done for the Board of Education. Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated that the Audit Work for both the Town and the Board of Education was done in accordance with Auditing Principles and Regulations. He stated that everything was audited under the town umbrella, which included the Town, Board of Education, and Water Pollution Control Authority. Councilor Buhle questioned whether CliftonLarsonAllen LLP would look at every single Board of Education Account. Mr. Bonin explained that they were not required to look at every Board of Education Account. He stated there was certain testing the Auditors were required to conduct. He stated that CliftonLarsonAllen LLP would present the Annual Audit Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2024 at the Finance Committee's February 5, 2025 meeting; and he suggested Councilor Buhle ask them her questions regarding the audit work for the Board of Education at that time.

Mayor Allyn, III, stated that the Auditors also interviews Management, and that they ask them questions about whether they have noticed peculiar behaviors of any employees, or anything that seemed to be out of the norm. He stated the answers the Auditors received would also help to guide them for areas to be tested.

VOTE: 2 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

7. MOTION to approve two tax refunds in the combined total amount of \$6,437.03 with each exceeding \$2,400.00 in accordance with tax collector departmental procedures.

- Dale & Joanna Waddell \$3,334.74
- Eric Carlson & Mary Peckhamor \$3,102.29

Moved by Councilor Saccone, seconded by Councilor Buhle

Discussion: Mayor Allyn, III, stated both of the tax refunds presented were double payments.

Councilor Saccone explained in accordance with the Tax Collector's Procedures that refunds over the amount of \$2,500 need to be approved by the Town Council. He stated because both the property owner and the lender paid the taxes that refunds were due.

VOTE: 2 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

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

None.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Saccone moved the meeting be adjourned, seconded by Councilor Buhle.
VOTE: 2 - 0 Approved and so declared, the meeting was adjourned at 6:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Anthony Saccone, Sr.
Committee Chairman
Committee

Finance

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