

Roxanne Maher

From: Kristen Chapman
Sent: Tuesday, June 3, 2025 4:02 PM
To: Naomi Rodriguez; April Brunelle; Carmen Garcia Irizarry; Gary St. Vil; Jessica Buhle; Kevin J. Dombrowski; Timothy Ryan; Tony Saccone; William Barnes
Cc: Fred Allyn, III; Roxanne Maher
Subject: May 27, 2025 Town Council Special Meeting

Members of the Town Council,

I am writing in regard to the Town Council Special meeting held on May 27, 2025. I would like to begin with stating I have the utmost respect for the work that our Administrators and Educators provide for our students in Ledyard Public Schools as well as my fellow Department Heads in the Town Government. Councilor Brunelle's statement "the pay is probably appropriate to what the education and skill level is" regarding the disparity between Board of Education Administrator salaries and Town Department Head salaries presented by Councilor Ryan is inaccurate and beyond insulting. These critical Department Head positions require not only education and a very specific skill set, but also various certifications required by the State of Connecticut to perform these roles. I am confident that you will find the pool of applicants for these positions is extremely small. I am fortunate to work every day with a talented, dedicated group of people working diligently to perform their job duties and provide services to our residents. We in the Town Government also wear many hats.

I would like to remind the Council the market rate salary increases in this budget for three positions (Finance Director, Town Clerk and Public Works Director) were a result of a 12-town salary survey conducted in 2023. In Fiscal Year 2025, this Council passed market rate increases for two positions (Executive Assistant to the Mayor, Town Council Administrator) with the intent to fund remaining positions warranting a market rate increase based upon the salary study in the Fiscal Year 2026 budget. At the August 14th, 2024 Town Council Meeting Mayor Allyn stated, "providing Department Heads with fair wages for the work that they do would cost about \$80,000 - \$90,000 per year, which is not a lot in the overall budget". Chairman Rodriguez, stated "she agreed with Mayor Allyn's comments, noting that she could attest that both of these two employees were committed, professional, hardworking and loyal to this town". This sentiment is an accurate reflection of every Department Head that I have the opportunity to work with on a daily basis, we are committed, hardworking and loyal to this town.

At the May 27th Special Meeting the Council reduced the market rate increase for Finance Director and Town Clerk, leaving the market increase in place for Public Works Director. The rationale presented for these reductions were that the voters have spoken. I agree the voters have spoken, 65% of voters felt the Board of Education Budget was too high and 70% of the voters felt the Town Government budget was too high. I do not believe that a 5% margin in these results indicates a mandate or the sole reason the budget failed was because three Department Heads were given fair market rate salary increases they so deserve. As not only an employee of this town, but as a resident in this community, I heard a multitude of reasons from residents as to why they voted "no" on this budget. I would be happy to share with you the feedback I received from residents.

I am also confused by the reduction in the positions of Human Resources Director and Land Use Director as Resolution: 001-2023/Feb 22 "*Resolution Establishing Administrator/Department Head Benefits*" states "wage increases may not be less than the percentage of the highest union contracted increase for that fiscal year". It is my understanding that Christine Dias, Human Resources Director, provided the Council with a list of current department head salaries. The amendment approved at the May 27, 2025 Town Council meeting does not in fact give all department heads in question a 4% increase but rather reduces the Land Use Director salary by 1.02% and provides the Human Resource Director a with a 1.5% increase on her current salary not 3% (not less than the percentage of the highest union contracted increase for that fiscal year) as stipulated in Resolution: 001-2023/Feb

22. These reductions are in violation of the Administrator/Department Head Resolution. Resolution: 001-2023/Feb 22 also states “Employees shall be paid at the rate as designated by the Mayor or contractually negotiated” and therefore such reductions to Town Clerk and Finance Director are also in violation of the Administrator/Department Head Resolution.

I respectfully request that the Town Council reinstate the salary increases for these individuals as they are deserving of these market rate increases that would merely place them slightly below the median salary range in their respective fields.

Sincerely,
Kristen Chapman, MBA

Kristen Chapman



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