



Chairman Gary St. Vil

TOWN OF LEDYARD CONNECTICUT

741 Colonel Ledyard Highway
Ledyard, Connecticut 06339-1551
(860) 464-3203
towncouncil@ledyardct.org

March 19, 2026

Sergeant Ryan A. Foster
President
Ledyard Police Union
737 Colonel Ledyard Highway
Ledyard, Connecticut 06339

Dear Sergeant Foster,

I am writing in response to the letter that was provided to the Town's negotiations representative during the initial collective bargaining session between the Town of Ledyard and the Ledyard Police Union. Your correspondence raised concerns regarding the participation of two members of the Town Council in matters related to the upcoming police union contract and requested that those members refrain from involvement in the process. For clarity and transparency, a copy of the correspondence referenced above is attached as Attachment A.

I appreciate the Union bringing its concerns forward and believe it is appropriate to address them thoughtfully and in a manner consistent with applicable law and the collective bargaining process. Because the letter was delivered during the course of ongoing negotiations, I believed it appropriate to review the matter carefully before responding. After consulting with legal counsel, I have been advised that there is no legal basis under Connecticut law, municipal labor law, or the Town Charter that would require or permit the recusal of an elected Town Council member based solely on publicly expressed views or political speech.

As Chairman, I have a responsibility to ensure that matters brought before the Town Council are addressed in accordance with the law and the institutional responsibilities of elected officials. Elected officials have a duty to fulfill the responsibilities entrusted to them by the voters they represent, including participating in the consideration and ratification of collective bargaining agreements that may ultimately come before the Council.

It is also important to note that the concerns raised in your letter do not relate to the substance of the ongoing contract negotiations themselves, which are conducted by the Town's designated negotiating representatives at the bargaining table. The role of the Town Council, as established by law and longstanding municipal practice, is to review and vote on any final agreement that may be reached through that process.

I recognize that the discussion surrounding this issue has clearly generated strong feelings. The meeting during which these concerns were first raised was an emotional one for many involved, and it is understandable that statements made in that environment may be interpreted

differently depending on perspective. It is important, however, that the work of both the Town Council and the Ledyard Police Department continue to be guided by professionalism, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to serving the residents of Ledyard.

The officers of the Ledyard Police Department perform a vital and demanding role in maintaining public safety, and their service to the community is deeply valued. For that reason, I believe it is also important to recognize that the members referenced in your letter have been clear in both their actions and their public statements that they support the Department, and have demonstrated that support in meaningful and tangible ways.

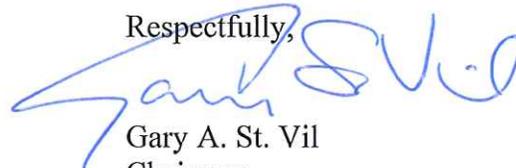
Councilor Jessica Buhle recently worked closely with Chief John Rich in advocating for and helping secure a \$229,000 federal Community Project grant to support the replacement and modernization of the Police Department's computer-aided dispatch and records management system. Leveraging outside funding to improve public safety infrastructure benefits both the officers who rely on these systems and the residents they serve. Councilor Buhle continues to collaborate with department leadership on additional opportunities intended to strengthen the Department's capabilities and resources.

Similarly, Councilor April Brunelle has volunteered her personal time to assist a local law enforcement officer in our community—an example of the kind of neighborly support and respect for those who serve that reflects the spirit in which many elected officials approach their relationship with the Police Department.

The responsibilities of elected officials, including participation in matters that come before the Town Council for consideration, are governed by law and by the obligations those officials have to the residents who elected them to serve. Those responsibilities cannot be set aside absent a legal requirement to do so. As negotiations continue, my hope is that all parties remain focused on the substantive issues before us and on reaching an agreement that fairly supports the officers of the Ledyard Police Department while also serving the broader interests of the Town and its residents.

Thank you for taking the time to share the concerns reflected in your correspondence.

Respectfully,



Gary A. St. Vil
Chairman
Ledyard Town Council

cc: Mayor Allyn, III
Police Chief John Rich
Officer Kyle Dugas #735
Officer Kyra A. Gries # 728
Officer Kyle G. Gleason #727
Town Council

Attachment A: Letter from the Ledyard Police Union dated February 24, 2026

Attachment A
Letter from the Ledyard Police Union
Dated February 24, 2026

Ledyard Police Union

AFSCME Co. 4, Local 2693L

To: Gary St. Vil, Chair – Ledyard Town Council

Re: Jessica Buhle and April Brunelle – Ledyard Town Council Members

February 24, 2026

It has been brought to the Union's attention that a sitting Council member, Ms. Buhle, has publicly made disparaging remarks concerning ICE and law enforcement on her social media page. While the Union supports Ms. Buhle's right to freedom of speech, as well as her right to her personal opinions and beliefs, we feel her choice to publicly make her feelings known was unprofessional and unacceptable.

Any person holding an elected position on the Town Council has been entrusted to set their personal beliefs and bias aside and to objectively make decisions that are in the best interests of the Town and all the Town's citizens. These officials must be trusted to represent the interests of all who reside here, not just those who share the same beliefs. It is clear based on the extreme language and tone of Ms. Buhle's post that she is absolutely incapable of setting aside her personal beliefs for the good of the Town.

This is problematic for the Union and members of the Ledyard Police Department. As a union, we find Ms. Buhle's words to be classless, distasteful, and not representative of the Town of Ledyard. We believe these comments show not only bias, but also extreme resentment and even hate towards law enforcement. We believe these comments have painted us in an unfair and unwarranted light that may put us and our families in danger. In recent years, there have been numerous incidents where rhetoric like this emboldens bad actors.

On February 18, 2026, the Union met with Ms. Buhle in an attempt to clear the air and come to an understanding. Our Union was seeking some reassurance from Ms. Buhle that she understood her obligation to separate her personal opinions from her official duties as they pertain to our officers. Councilwoman Brunelle was also in attendance and made it known she shares Ms. Buhle's disdain for law enforcement. This meeting was not successful and ended up creating more tension between the Ledyard Police Union and the Town Council.

Because of the extreme emotions and bias Ms. Buhle and Ms. Brunelle hold against sworn officers, the Union believes they are incapable of remaining objective when making decisions concerning the Ledyard Police Department. For this reason, we respectfully request that neither Ms. Buhle nor Ms. Brunelle be allowed to participate in or vote on our upcoming contract negotiations.

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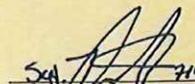
Ledyard Police Union

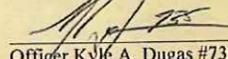
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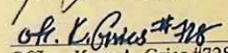
Furthermore, as police officers tasked with protecting the life and property of all citizens of the Town of Ledyard, we would go further and call for Ms. Buhle and Ms. Brunelle to recuse themselves from any involvement and proceedings between the Town Council and the Union regarding the upcoming contract negotiations. Town Council members have an obligation to represent the Town of Ledyard in a professional, unbiased, and bipartisan manner. It is very clear from Ms. Buhle's public rant, that she acknowledged she was not sorry for, and Ms. Brunelle's anti law enforcement views that both councilwomen are incapable of remaining objective.

We thank you for taking the time to consider our requests.

These are the views of the Ledyard Police Department Union, AFSCME Co. 4, Local 2693L. These views do not represent the views of the residents of Town of Ledyard, Mayor Fred Allyn III or Chief of Police John J. Rich


Sergeant Ryan A. Foster #714
Union President


Officer Kyle A. Dugas #735
Union Vice President


Officer Kyra A. Gries #728
Union Treasurer


Officer Kyle G. Gleason #727
Union Secretary

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