



TOWN OF LEDYARD

Town Council Meeting Minutes

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

Chairman S. Naomi
Rodriguez

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, February 12, 2025

7:00 PM

Town Hall Council Chambers

In-Person: Council Chambers Town Hall Annex

Remote: Information noted below:

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

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82850410065?pwd=Q3aZtOBvoZ3Nbxma1E60QKiabhgv7k.1>

Audio Only: Telephone: +1 646 558 8656; Meeting ID: 828 5041 0065; Passcode: 960864

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. at the Council Chambers, Town Hall Annex Building.

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

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL

Present: Councilor William Barnes
Councilor April Brunelle
Councilor Jessica Buhle
Councilor Kevin Dombrowski
Councilor Carmen Garcia-Irizarry
Chairman S. Naomi Rodriguez
Councilor Tony Saccone
Councilor Gary St. Vil
Excused: Councilor Tim Ryan

IV. PRESENTATIONS

None.

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

Mrs. Eleanor Murray, 26 Devonshire Drive, Gales Ferry, stated that she was present this evening to address the following issues:

- **Ethics Commission** - Mrs. Murray stated she was in-favor of the Town establishing an Ethics Commission. She stated of the 169 Connecticut towns that Ledyard was one of the 20 or so towns that does not have an Ethics Commission. She stated that every town needed to have an Ethics Commission because there were things going on that the town could take care of themselves. She noted that Councilor Garcia-Irizarry has taken an incredible amount of abuse regarding the proposed Ordinance she drafted to establish an Ethics Commission, stating that Councilor Garcia Irizarry kept her cool and that she admired her efforts.
- **Public Benefits Charge**- Mrs. Murray stated that tonight's Agenda included a discussion regarding the Public Benefits Charge that has been included on their electric bills. She stated that she did not know what the Town Council could do about the additional charge because it was in the hands of the State Legislature. She stated the Public Benefits Charge was passed to help with the Covid-19 Pandemic; however, she noted the law did not have a sundown, noting that it has been in place for over three-years. She stated her electric bill included a \$400 Public Benefit Charge this month. She stated Eversource advertises that they would come to your house to tell you new ways to save money, but they never do anything about collecting their own bills. She stated that Eversource needed to spend money to get their own bills collected and not put their lack of collecting bills on the backs of the people who were paying their bills.

Chairman Rodriguez thanked Mrs. Murray for her comments regarding the Public Benefit Charge that were on the electric bills. She explained because the Councilor who was going to discuss the Public Benefit Charge was ill this evening that they would defer the discussion to their February 26, 2025 meeting.

Mayor Allyn, III, stated that they were all feeling the impact of the Public Benefit Charge and he presented electric bills from homes that had electric heat and heat pumps noting that their bill were over \$1,000 a month.

Mr. Steve Munger, 12 Nutmeg Drive, Gales Ferry, stated that he respected that the members of the Town Council were investing their time; however, he stated that he disagreed with some of the things they were doing. He noted twelve years ago when there was a fire at his home Ms. Naomi Rodriguez organized a fundraiser for his family. He stated at that time he did not know Ms. Rodriguez but that they have since become good friends, noting that she did so much for his family. He stated although he and Chairman Rodriguez may not always agree that he valued their friendship. Mr. Munger continued by stating that he was present this evening to address the following:

- **Ethics Commission** - Mr. Munger questioned the following:
 - ✓ Does Ledyard need an Ethic Commission?

- ✓ Does the town have data showing how many issues have occurred in the past ten years that would have benefited by having an Ethics Commission?
- ✓ Does Ledyard have 100 issues every month for the town to need an Ethics Commission to look at them?
- ✓ Is an Ethics Commission a mechanism to use against the people someone did not like ?

Mr. Munger stated that Ethics Commissions were abused by the people in power. He stated Ledyard has not had an Ethics Commission all this time; and therefore, he questioned how did the town handle other incidents over the years. He stated an Ethics Commission was just one more committee that could cause more problems than it might actually solve. He stated that he was not saying that there may never be a reason in which they might need an Ethics Commission. He stated although he has not done much research on the need for the town to establish an Ethics Commission, but because of what he has seen, that he was against the town having an Ethics Commission. He stated if the town does move forward with establishing an Ethics Commission that he hoped that it would be used for the right reasons, and not for the reasons he thought they wanted to set up the Commission.

- ***Flying Third Party Flags on Town Property*** - Mr. Munger stated he was once again present to address the flying Third Party Flags on Town Property. Mr. Munger stated that he was against flying any flag other than the US American Flag on town property. He stated that he was not against the Pride Flag or any Flag; but that he was against flying any flag on town property other than the US American Flag. He stated that we were all Americans, noting that was the one thing left in this country that we were all part of. He stated that we were not all part of this flag or that flag, and he commented by flying third party flags that the town would upset some people. He stated the town's Elected Officials were responsible for keeping the community together. He stated his decision to live in Ledyard was based on the great schools and the town's great reputation. He stated the support he received from the community when his home burned twelve years ago was the reason he would do anything for this town. He stated that he believed in taking care of the people who took care of him and his family; and that he thought the Elected Official's job was to keep the community this way.

Mr. Munger continued by stating the Pride Flag was not the issue. He stated by flying other flags that they would be creating a problem that did not exist. He noted the Supreme Court decision in Boston. He stated although he did not know all the facts that it was his understanding that Ledyard would be losing some income from the Casino and from some other things. Therefore, he stated he did not think Ledyard needed to expose themselves to lawsuits down the line because of flying other flags. He questioned who would decide which flags go up, and which ones do not go up. He questioned why create the potential for a problem and that would involve a lot of financial issues down the line. He stated we should remember that we are Ledyard; and we were all together. He stated all he could see that would come from flying other flags was fighting and arguments between people who actually like each other. He stated the issue of flying third party flags should be a dead issue. He stated that they did not need to divide the community any more than it was already. He concluded his comments by stating that his comments were not about the Pride Flag, it was about flags in general. Thank you.

Mr. Kevin Blacker, 11 Church Road, Noank, stated the he also owned personal property at 483 Shewville Road, Ledyard “*The 97 Farm*”. Mr. Blacker questioned the order of the Agenda noting that when he looked at tonight’s agenda he thought that the Water Pollution Control Authority Chairman Ed Lynch’s Report was going to take place before “*V. Residents Comments*” so that the public could ask questions. Chairman Rodriguez explained that WPCA Chairman Ed Lynch would be providing his Report under “*VI. Committee/Commission/Board Reports*”. Mr. Blacker stated that perhaps he misunderstood the Agenda noting that he was under the impression that the public would be able to address the Council after the Sewer Presentation. Chairman Rodriguez stated that they would play it by ear.

Mr. Blacker stated he was present to comment on the following:

- ***Ledyard Sewer Line Extension Project*** - Mr. Blacker stated in addition to the Ledyard Sewer Line Extension Project that he hoped that WPCA Chairman Mr. Lynch would also touch on the watermain breaks in the Highlands area, and the need to replace those watermain. Mr. Blacker stated the cause of the watermain breaks were unknown, although Groton Utilities seemed to think that one plausible reason could be related to the fires that occurred up there, and it could be related to closing the hydrant. Mr. Blacker recommended the Fire Departments receive training on how to open and close the fire hydrants from the Water Treatment Plant Operator so that they understood how a water system worked and the importance of communication and properly closing the water lines to avoid costly breaks. He also suggested the town think about how they were going to pay to repair the watermain breaks without impacting the town’s taxes, noting that he heard that Ledyard was looking at a potential 4 mil increase for the upcoming budget year 2025/2026; with 3.7 of the mil rate increase coming from the Board of Education.

Stonington’s Solar Array Project - Mr. Blacker noted the Solar Array proposal that was currently with the Siting Council. He explained that the solar project would be on top of Ledyard’s aquifer; however, he stated Ledyard did not submit a comment to the Siting Council regarding the proposed project. He stated although the solar array proposal was not going to be withdrawn that the aquifer was an important asset of the town; and that Ledyard should keep a close eye on it.

- ***Ethics Commission*** - Mr. Blacker questioned, in absence of an Ethics Commission, whether any Town Officials have alerted the Commission on Human Rights; or the Department of Justice regarding the alleged Civil Rights Complaint concerning a former Town Official or Officials. He stated that there might be some type of Ethical responsibility here.

- ***Gales Ferry District*** - Mr. Blacker noted the issues he has raised regarding the Gales Ferry District, because what he has observed them doing was concerning. He stated that Town Council Chairman Rodriguez said that the Town Council does not have any jurisdiction over the Gales Ferry District; and so there was nothing they could do. Mr.

Blacker stated the actions of the Gales Ferry District were going to have a large impact on this town; particularly related to the Gales Ferry Intermodal (GFI) - Cashman Development (former Dow Chemical Styrenics site); noting that he thought this development would be good for Ledyard.

Mr. Blacker went on to note that he filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request regarding the Gales Ferry District based on what he has observed. He explained at 1:00 p.m. the Gales Ferry District called a public meeting for a select group to take place at 7:00 p.m. that same evening; which was illegal. He stated there were members voting who were not present; and he commented that this was just blatant Red Flags. He stated the Gales Ferry District's actions were going to have a very large impact on the future of Ledyard; and at the very least the Town Council should be paying attention. Thank you.

Mr. Mike Cherry, 5 Whippoorwill Drive, Gales Ferry, attending remotely via Zoom, stated that he was planning to attend the Administration Committee's meeting at 5:30 p.m. this evening, however, he stated the Zoom Link was broken. He stated he was interested in seeing how the Administration Committee's new Chairman Jessica Buhle did at her first meeting, and he noted that it was his understanding that she did well. Mr. Cherry continued by addressing the proposed Ordinance to establish an Ethics Commission. He suggested that residents read the proposed Ordinance and understand it. He stated the proposed Ordinance deals with Fiscal Conflicts of Interest; however, it does not address all the other things that people have been talking about. Therefore, he stated that people should thoroughly read the proposed Ordinance, because they may need to do something else; before the proposal is presented at a Public Hearing. Mr. Cherry continued by noting that a couple of people have asked if Ledyard had problems. He stated during the 40-years he has lived in town that there were two problems, and he stated by using the procedures that were in place that both people ended up in jail. He stated that he would look forward to the Public Hearings regarding the proposed Ethics Commission Ordinance, and he congratulated Councilor Buhle for making it through her first meeting as a Committee Chairman.

Ms. Angela Cassidy, 62 Hurlbut Road in Gales Ferry, attending remotely via Zoom, stated that surprisingly, she somewhat agreed with Mr. Mike Cherry regarding the proposed Ordinance to establish an Ethics Commission. She stated that she agreed that the proposal was orientated towards Fiscal Conflicts and Ethical Conflicts, which she believed was already addressed in the Town Charter. However, she stated that the Town Charter does not provide consequences or outline a process. She suggested that the town rethink the proposal, noting that she submitted a letter that included more details. She thanked the Town Council for the opportunity to address them this evening, and she stated that she hoped they would come to a good decision.

Chairman Rodriguez thanked the residents for their comments this evening.

VI. COMMITTEE COMMISSION AND BOARD REPORTS

Water Pollution Control Authority Chairman Ed Lynch - Ledyard Center Sewer Line

Extension Project.

- Water Pollution Control Authority Chairman Ed Lynch - Ledyard Low-Pressure Sewer Main Extension Project.

Chairman Rodriguez welcomed Water Pollution Control Authority Chairman Ed Lynch to give his Report regarding the Ledyard Low Pressure Sewer Main Extension Project.

Water Pollution Control Authority Chairman Ed Lynch thanked the Town Council for the opportunity to present a report regarding the progress of work to date on the Ledyard Low-Pressure Sewer Main Extension Project. He continued by reviewing the following PowerPoint Presentation:

❖ Project Overview

Mr. Lynch described the original Plan for the Ledyard Center Low-Pressure Sewer (LPS) Line Extension Project stating that it was a low-cost opportunity for the town, noting that no tax dollars have been used to date. He proceeded to review the Low-Pressure Sewer (LPS) Line Extension Project as follows:

- ✓ Phase I Initial Phase - Town to Construct a Low-Pressure Sewer (LPS) to run under the Multi-Use Pathway from Ledyard Center to the High School.
- ✓ Phase II Center Phase- Extend the Low-Pressure Sewer (LPS) Line across parcels. This would involve Developers Investment.
- ✓ Phase III - Town would replace the current 3-inch sewer pipe where it bottlenecks along Gallup Hill Road from the High School to the Pennywise Lane with a larger pipe to the Wastewater Treatment Plant.
- ✓ Future Build-out
 - Cost to be determined
 - Private Developers to extend the Low-Pressure Sewer (LPS) Line west on Route 117.

Mr. Lynch went on to explain that the Low-Pressure Sewer (LPS) Project would alleviate the need to maintain the 25-year-old Pump Station at Lakeside, noting the Lakeside Pumpstation was falling apart and would cost \$35,000 to \$50,000 upgrade.

❖ Wastewater Treatment Plant Facility

Mr. Lynch noted in 2014 the townspeople authorized funding to make significant upgrades to the Wastewater Treatment Plant making the Facility fully automated. He provided an overview as follows:

- Recent Plant \$1.3 Million Upgrades included:

- Screen Plant
- Decanters
- Blowers
- Piping
- Pumps
- Thickener
- Controllers

- Opportunity:
 - Construction of the Multi-Use Pathway Trail / Development and
 - American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding

- Multi-Phase Approach - Low-Cost Operational Design for the Town (LPS)

Mr. Lynch reviewed the Wastewater Treatment Facility Capacity as follows:

❖ **Present Wastewater Facility Capacity**

- ✓ Immediate Plant Capacity 54,000 Gallons Per Day (GPD)
- ✓ Phase II - Center Phase estimated Wastewater Flow 49,000 Gallons Per Day (GPD)
- ✓ Ultimate Optimal Treatment Capacity 154,000 Gallons Per Day (GPD)
- ✓ Future Build-Out estimated Wastewater Flow 110,000 Gallons Per Day (GPD)
- ✓ Realist Max Available at the Wastewater Treatment Capacity 104,000 Gallons Per Day (GPD)
- X Future Build-out Estimated Wastewater Flow 110,000 Gallons Per Day (GPD)

Mr. Lynch explained that the Wastewater Treatment Plant Facility was currently only running around 83,000 Gallons Per Day, noting that they have a permit for about 220,000 Gallons Per Day. However, he stated in the springtime the Plant runs at 500,000 Gallons Per Day. He stated if they used the Plant at its full capacity they would receive more funds, putting less pressure on their rate payers.

Mr. Lynch went on to provide an overview of the Flow of the Wastewater Treatment Plant as follows:

● ***Water Discharged from the Wastewater Treatment Plant***

Mr. Lynch addressed concerns he has heard about the quality of the water that was being discharged from the Wastewater Treatment Plant. He explained the Ledyard WPCA has a “*Screening Plant*” and he reviewed process as follows:

- ✓ water comes into the Plant. - Mr. Lynch stated people throw all kinds of things down the toilet such as Baby Wipes, etc. He stated these types of things do not work well with the plugs and pumps, which was the reason they have a *Screening Plant*.
- ✓ Screening Equipment takes those kinds of things out of the waste stream, compacts it, dewateres it, and then sends it to the incinerator.

- ✓ Pumps then sends the waste to Single Batch Reactors (SBR); where they adjust the ph (potential for hydrogen). The ph for water was 7; which was neutral and pure water.
- ✓ Blowers aerates the waste, it reduced the nitrates to reduce all the bio burden where they balance each of the two aerators.
- ✓ Solids were then settled out, and they decant; and take liquid.
- ✓ Sand Filters then take out all the solids, and they get recycled back.
- ✓ Drum Thickener - The solids then go to the Drum Thickener to be dewatered; and the solids go to the incinerator, and then they recycle the bugs back. Mr. Lynch stated that the bugs were good.
- ✓ Ultraviolet Process then sterilizes the water, making the water that comes out safe to drink. Mr. Lynch noted that was how safe the water discharged from the Wastewater Treatment Plant Facility was.

Mr. Lynch stated because Ledyard's wastewater was so pure the Department of Health likes them to recharge the groundwater. He stated the water goes into the ponds, and that the water also percolates down into the groundwater; noting that the farmers have asked them to discharge their water during a drought. He noted septic systems stating that it was truly amazing with what happens when that water percolates down in the ground.

❖ Development

WPCA Chairman Ed Lynch explained that the Low-Pressure Sewer Line Project (LPS) was a Multiphase Plan that would address the following:

- Fixed Costs and a Static Customer Base - Increasing customer base would also help to increase tax revenues.
- Proven to Increase Capacity

❖ Phase I - Multi-Use Pathway Trail from Ledyard Center to the High School

- Phase I cost \$1.2 Million and was paid using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding. (Red Line on map above)

❖ Phase II - Gallup Hill- Developers Investment

- Cost to be determined. (Yellow line on map above)
- Private Developers would pay for the costs to extend the sewer line across parcels.

Mr. Lynch explained that Grinder Pumps would be installed for Habitat for Humanity

Homes that would be built on Colby Drive.

- Habitat for Humanity usage 11,600 gallons/day
- 2 Colby Drive

❖ Phase III from the High School to Pennywise Lane

- Cost \$950,000 - This would replace the current sewer pipe where it bottlenecks along Gallup Hill Road from the High School to the Pennywise Lane with a larger pipe to the High School Pump Station and then onto the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Mr. Lynch stated that he would be happy to give them a tour of the Wastewater Treatment Plant Facility so folks could see how it worked, noting that the Plant operated 24/7.

Mr. Lynch noted that this concluded his Report and he offered to answer questions regarding the Low-Pressure Sewer Line Extension Project this evening or anytime after tonight, noting that residents were also welcome to attend the WPCA Meetings.

The Town Council and Mr. Lynch discussed in further detail the following:

• ***How often does the Wastewater Treatment Plant's discharge water***

Mr. Lynch stated the discharge water was tested every day. He explained that they sample for various components, but most particularly nitrates. He stated for other things such as heavy metals they test on a weekly basis or monthly basis. He stated their biggest concern was nitrates.

• ***How does the Wastewater Treatment Plant regulate the Nitrates***

Mr. Lynch explained that they use blowers to regulate the Nitrates, which oxygenates the water. He also noted that the aerobic folks (bugs) like to eat nitrates; and he stated that they were not too concerned about the Nitrates because they charge the groundwater.

Build the Sewer System and they will Come - How much more sewer infrastructure does the town need to build?

Mr. Lynch stated because of the current upfront equipment, pumps, screening, etc., that the Wastewater Treatment Plant can handle a higher capacity. He stated to support a lot of Development they would probably need to build another Single Batch Reactor (SBR), which was basically a square concrete tank with some pipe underneath to aerate the water. He stated the additional piping would significantly increase the output. He stated as he mentioned earlier that they run those things differently in the springtime, because of the increase of water, noting that they run continuously. He went on to explain because they were getting ground water incursion into the sewer system, that one of their projects would be to find out where the water was coming from. He explained when it rained a lot and the groundwater comes up that it was getting into their sewer system, making the processing more challenging. He stated if they could reduce some of the water incursion, they could increase the Plant's capacity.

Mr. Lynch stated if a big developer came in, that the WPCA would talk to them about the

need to add another Single Batch Reactor (SBR). He stated that he did not know the cost to add another Single Batch Reactor (SBR) but that he would research it and get that information back to the Town Council.

Mr. Lynch went on to explain that the WPCA would need to go back to the State Department of Public Health (DPH) add another Single Batch Reactor (SBR) to increase the Wastewater Treatment Plant's capacity and to change the license they currently have. Mr. Lynch stated that they already have signed Agreements with Developers to tie into the sewer system on Colby Drive.

Phase I from Ledyard Center past the Bill Library to the High School

Mr. Lynch stated Phase I was done simultaneously with the Multi-Use Pathway Trail. He stated Phase I has been completed

Phase III from the High School to Pennywise Lane

Mr. Lynch stated the High School now has its own Pump Station and with the installation of the larger 6-inch sewer line that was installed on top of the existing line that they have a high-pressure line. He stated that the installation of the sewer line was going well, noting that they were only about 80 feet away from Pennywise Lane.

Odor Control

Mr. Lynch stated that the old Pump House on Gallup Hill would be used for Odor Control, explaining with low-pressure systems they have to address Odor Control because the sewage would not always be flowing.

Phase II Private Developers

Mr. Lynch stated that Private Developers would pay for the costs to extend the sewer line across parcels and to Fairway Drive and Colby Drive. He noted the following:

- ✓ Habitat for Humanity - Colby Drive - Mr. Lynch stated the WPCA has signed an Agreement with Habitat for Humanity with the usage of about 11,600 gallons per day.
- ✓ Proposed Development for about 150 apartments or condominiums
- ✓ Age 55+ Apartments - Mr. Lynch stated there was a proposal to turn the lower wing of the former Ledyard Center School into 12 one-bedroom apartments for residents who were Age 55+.

Wastewater Treatment Plant Staffing

Mr. Lynch stated with expanding the sewer system and the additional development that they would not need to hire additional staffing. He stated although he would like them to have more than one Plant Operator because things do happen on weekends or holidays, so it would be good to have additional coverage.

Highlands Water Lines

Mr. Lynch stated the water lines were cast iron, and were initially put in during the early 1960's. He stated the same Developer built the developments in the Highlands, Lakeside Condominiums, and Fox Run Apartments, noting that with the higher development some things may not have been right. He also noted because of the age of the pipes that they were going to run into issues.

Councilor Saccone noted as a Firefighter that he could say that it would take a lot for the Firefighters to shut down a hydrant or a nozzle quick enough to disturb pipes downstream. He also noted that there was no fire anywhere in the Highlands downstream of where he lived, and he explained that they have pressure reducers on their lines. He stated that they were seeing almost 150 pounds of pressure, which he not did like to see, and therefore, they drive the water pressure back to 120 pounds. He stated there was a lot of water pressure in the Highlands, noting that he has not heard anyone complain when they turn on their showers.

Available Grants for Water and/or Sewer Systems/Wastewater Treatment Plants

Mr. Lynch stated that he would be interested in seeking any Grant Funding to support the Low-Pressure Sewer System in Ledyard Center or for projects such as the rehabilitation of sewer pipes or water lines.

Chairman Rodriguez thanked Mr. Lynch for his thorough Report this evening and she asked him to share his email address for folks to contact him after tonight's meeting if they had questions. Mr. Lynch stated his email address is: wpca@ledyardct.org. He also noted that the WPCA meets each month on the fourth Tuesday at 6:30 p.m.; and that the public was welcome to attend their meetings.

Chairman Rodriguez thanked WPCA Chairman Ed Lynch for attending tonight's meeting.

RESULT: READ INTO THE RECORD

VII. COMMENTS OF TOWN COUNCILORS

Councilor Barnes stated that he would like to thank Chairman Rodriguez and all of the Town Councilors for the warm welcome. He stated that he and his wife have enjoyed raising their children in the wonderful town of Ledyard. He stated that it was his honor and pleasure to be a part of the Town Council, and that he looked forward to many educational and rewarding experiences in the months to come. He stated that he wanted to extend a warm *thank you* to all of you, and of course, to his dear friend Mayor Fred Allyn, III.

Councilor Barnes continued by stating on the morning of January 13, 2025 an employee of Ledyard Congregational Church was robbed and assaulted on church property. He stated that he wanted to express his deepest appreciation to the Ledyard Police for the prompt and thorough response, which included a sweep of the property with police dogs from a nearby town. He stated that they reviewed the video footage of the limited cameras they have at the facility noting that the Police were there within minutes. He stated although the Police department was not far from the Church that they arrived with all the personnel you would expect, and you would want in a situation like that. He stated the response was tremendous; and that he wanted to express his deepest appreciation to all of the Ledyard Police who were involved. Thank you.

Councilor Saccone recognized the town's Public Works Department noting that the snow

removal went well. He stated that his street was usually one of the last to be plowed, but that it was actually done relatively soon after the storm passed. He noted that the snow came down in bursts for three to four hours.

Councilor Buhle commented on the recent snowstorm, and she noted that her own personal public works crew, that being her son Declan, did an amazing job shoveling the driveway and cleaning off her car today, noting he did an awesome job.

Councilor Buhle stated when she was preparing for the Administration Committee meeting that was held earlier this evening, that when she opened the Town Charter on the town's website she realized that it was in a pdf format, and so it was not searchable. She stated that she emailed MIS Director Justin Dube and asked if the Town Charter could be made searchable with a click. She stated within 15 minutes a searchable Town Charter was uploaded to the town's website. She stated although this did not seem to be a big deal that it actually was because it was important for the town to create environments that were accessible and inclusive for residents who use screen readers, or who have difficulty reading things, or need to be able to enlarge text or search for information. She stated that when we take small changes that were not huge, that they were making a difference in their town. She noted that she appreciated the responsiveness of MIS Director Justin Dube and Administrative Assistant Roxanne Maher.

Chairman Rodriguez thanked everyone who comes out to the Town Council meetings and those who attended the Administration Committee meeting earlier this evening. She stated that the Town Council welcomes their comments, that they liked to hear from the residents.

VIII. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION to approve the Town Council Regular Meeting Minutes of January 22, 2025.

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Dombrowski

VOTE: 8 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: April Brunelle

SECONDER: Kevin Dombrowski

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

IX. COMMUNICATIONS

Communications List - February 12, 2025

Chairman Rodriguez stated a Communications List has been provided on the meeting portal for tonight's meeting, and she noted referrals were listed. She also noted that she and Mayor Allyn, III, sent a letter to State Senator Martin Looney, State Senator Cathy Osten and others

in the Legislature regarding Public Act 24-46 *“An act establishing a property, exempt tax exemption for veterans who have a service-connected, permanent, and total disability rating”*. She noted that they hoped to receive a response soon.

X. REFERRALS

XI. COUNCIL SUB COMMITTEE, LIAISON REPORTS

1. Administration Committee

Councilor Buhle stated the Administration Committee met earlier this evening and in addition to forwarding several appointments to the Town Council that the Committee also discussed the subject of an Ethics Commission for the town. She noted the appointments would be on the Town Council’s February 26, 2025 Agenda.

RESULT: .

2. Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

Councilor Brunelle stated the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion met on January 15, 2025 and discussed the following: (1) Upcoming events which included a Black History Month Poetry Slam at Lucille's Restaurant on February 17, 2025. Councilor Brunelle stated that other events were being planned throughout the year; (2) Farmers Market - Councilor Brunelle stated that the Committee would be reaching out to reserve two dates for this summer to host booths at the Farmers Market to provide information to residents.

Councilor St. Vil stated that the Committee has been working to roll-out the 2025 Black History Month Activities which would include the following: (1) Poetry Slam at Lucille’s Restaurant, as Councilor Brunelle noted; (2) Student Black History Month Essay & Poster Contest - Councilor St. Vil stated that the Committee has again partnered with the schools to facilitate the Contest. He stated the Program included the following: Poster Contest for Elementary School Students; and an Essay Contest for the Middle School and High School Students. He stated if you know a child in the District who would like to participate in the Program that information regarding the Contest was available at all of the schools and on the town’s website at www.ledyardct.org <<http://www.ledyardct.org>>. He stated prizes would be awarded to the winners at a future Town Council Meeting; (3) New Life Christian Church will be holding a Black History Month Celebration on February 28, 2025 at 6:30 p.m. He noted all were welcome to attend.

RESULT: .

3. Finance Committee

Councilor Saccone stated the Finance Committee met on February 5, 2025 and have a couple of items on tonight’s agenda.

RESULT: .

4. Land Use/Planning/Public Works Committee

Councilor St. Vil stated the LUPPW Committee met on February 3, 2025 and have two items on tonight's Agenda to accept two new streets into the Town's Road Inventory.

RESULT: .

Liaison Reports

Historic District Commission

Councilor Barnes stated he attended the Historic District Commission's January 27, 2025 meeting. He stated the Commission was making progress regarding the historic designation of the Spicer Homestead Ruins, noting that the A2 Survey has been completed.

Chairman Rodriguez stated that she planned to attend the Historic District Commission's February 24, 2025 meeting to deliver the Spicer Homestead Ruins A2 Survey.

RESULT: .

Conservation Commission

Councilor Barnes noted the Conservation Commission met on February 11, 2025 and discussed the transfer of two parcels to Avalonia Land Conservancy for future stewardship and management.

RESULT: .

Permanent Municipal Building Committee

Councilor Brunelle stated that she attended the PMBC's February 3, 2025 meeting via Zoom because she has been sick. She stated the PMBC discussed the Juliet W. Long School HVAC Project noting that because the one bid that was received came in higher than the authorized budget amount that they would need to rebid the project; and that they hoped to receive more bids. She went on to explain that they may also need to increase the Bond Authorization. However, she stated because of the time involved the project may be delayed for another year.

RESULT: .

Gales Ferry Fire Department

Councilor Saccone stated the town's Fire Departments were their own organizations explaining that they handle the administration to operate the Fire Department as well as manage the emergency fire response. However, he stated the fire trucks and other apparatus were purchased by the town. He stated the Gales Ferry Fire Department's Brush Truck was 22 years old and has reached the end of its useful life. He stated these vehicles were expensive and he explained

because the town keeps their fire trucks for a long time that they would want to make sure the new Brush Truck was State-of-the Art. He stated within the next few month the Gales Ferry Department would be coming to the town for funding to replace the Brush Truck.

RESULT: .

Retirement Board

Chairman Rodriguez reported that the Retirement Board will be meeting on February 18, 2025.

RESULT: .

Ledyard Farmers' Committee

Chairman Rodriguez stated the Ledyard Farmers' Market Committee has been planning for the 2025 Summer Market.

Councilor Buhle stated that the Farmers Market Committee would be writing a letter of support to include the 2025 Small Town Economic Assistant Program (STEAP) Grant Application to replace the playscape at the Town Green.

RESULT: .

Library Commission

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated the Library Commission met on January 27, 2025 and she reported that Library Director Jennifer Smith has submitted her resignation, noting that she has taken a job closer to her family. She stated that the Library Commission was disappointed noting that Ms. Smith brought a lot of new life and new programs to Ledyard Libraries. Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated that she wished Ms. Smith all the best in her new position., stating that Ms. Smith would be missed.

RESULT: .

Board of Education

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated the Board of Education met on February 11, 2025 and she reported on the following: (1) Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget - Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated last week the Board of Education held a Budget Workshop; (2) Reviewed the Town Council's February 6, 2025 letter requesting additional information be provided regarding: (a)

What is the increase in the Labor Contract Agreements for Fiscal Year 2025/2026; (b) What Labor Contract Agreements are due for renegotiation.; and (c) Budget Salary Lines - asking that the Board of Education provide the number of staff that will be paid from each salary line. Councilor Garcia-Irizarry noted that the Board of Education indicated that they did not understand the questions, and were going to ask for clarification. She stated that she explained that in accordance with the Chapter VII of the Town Charter that the Board of Education "...shall annually prepare a budget submission to include the information required by the Town Council..... The Board of Education budget will be submitted via the Mayor so that the budget

document submitted to the Town Council represents the total fiscal requirements of the Town no later than the 4th Monday in February. The Budget document shall be in a format that is compatible with the budget..." Councilor Garcia-Irizarry noted that the Board of Education stated that the information the Town Council was requesting was easily accessible, and that it was already in the Munis Report. She also noted that some members of the Board of Education commented that perhaps they needed to teach the Town Council how to read the Munis Report; (3) Juliet W. Long HVAC Project - Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated as Councilor Brunelle reported during her Permanent Municipal Building Committee (PMBC) Report this evening, the Board of Education was concerned that they may lose the Grant Funding because the Project keeps getting delayed for a number of reasons which included having to redesign the HVAC System to comply with changes the State made for HVAC systems in schools which increased the cost; and because they only received one bid which came in higher than the approved amount of the Bond Authorization.

RESULT:

Economic Development Commission

Councilor Buhle stated the EDC met on February 4, 2025 and discussed: (1) Route 12 Corridor Study; (2) Connecticut Main Street Grants - Councilor Buhle stated that they were looking at all options to make the town's main street areas better.

RESULT:**XII. REPORT OF THE MAYOR:**

Mayor Allyn, III, reported on the following: (1) Ledyard Center Sewer Line Extension Project - Mayor Allyn noted that Phase III would tie into the system within the next week to ten-days; (2) Lantern Hill Road Bridge Replacement - Mayor Allyn stated the work to replace the Lantern Hill Road Bridge which was between Stonington and Ledyard would begin on April 1, 2025 with a December 1, 2025 completion date. He noted that traffic would be impacted with some closures; (3) Bottle Bill - Mayor Allyn noted that the State increased the bottle/can deposits from 0.5 cents to 0.10 cents and also started to include other beverages such as sports drinks and juices. He reported that the increase for the bottle returns has proved to be positive noting that the redemption rate for the 3rd Quarter of 2023 was 45%; the redemption rate for 3rd Quarter of 2024 was 72.4%; and that they were waiting for the results of the 4th Quarter for this year; (4) General Dynamics - Electric Boat February 3, 2025 Meeting - Mayor Allyn stated he attended the meeting, noting that the USS DC (Columbia class) was 53% complete. He stated during the last three years that General Dynamics invested \$2.2 Billion in Groton and Quonset Point. He stated that 800 High School Graduates were hired in the last two-years, noting that the hiring was lower for 2024 & 2025; however, he stated that there were 3,000 people in pipeline. He stated that the supply chains were in 48 states (not AK, ND), with 333 suppliers in Connecticut. Mayor Allyn stated Electric Boat continues to press for Southeastern Connecticut to step up to increase housing opportunities; (5) Ledyard Center Development - Mayor Allyn stated on February 4, 2025 he met with a Developer who has submitted a Plan to build 12 Rental Units for Age 55+ in the lower wing of the former Ledyard Center School. He stated the Plan would be

reviewed at the Planning & Zoning Commission's February 13, 2025 meeting; (6) Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget Preparation - Mayor Allyn stated that work continues on the budget. He stated based on the Department Head's budget request and the Board of Education's draft budget that the budget would require a 5 mil increase. However, he stated that he has been working through the budget submittals line by line and has been able to lower the projected increase to 3.48 mils (0.53 General Government and 2.95 Board of Education) which was still too high. He stated that the Governor's budget proposal represented an increase of a 6 tenths of 1% in funding to Ledyard; which was effectively flat funding. He stated that this was discouraging because the Governor touts tax reductions across the board for residents; however, he stated this was generally untrue, because it just passed a tax increase to the lower tier of government. He noted the following examples: (a) Motor Vehicle Tax - Senate Bill # SB1276 - Mayor Allyn explained that this was a major contributor to the loss in the Grand List; which was now a tax increase to town residents.; (b) Public Act 24-46 "*An Act Establishing a Property Tax Exemption for Veterans Who Have a Service-Connected Permanent and Total Disability Rating*" - Mayor Allyn stated the Veterans Tax Exemption has created a .46 mil gap in Ledyard's budget, noting that this was another place that would have to be made up with a local tax increase. He stated that he fully supported the Legislation for Veterans who were 100% totally and permanently disabled and could not work. He presented 92 Veterans Tax Exemption Applications, noting that some of the Applicants were fully employed earning very good six figure salaries, working every day; and were receiving this benefit. He stated what concerned him was the question "*Are you unemployable due to the service-connected disabilities?*" and the response was "Yes". He stated 84 of 92 the Applications claim they were "*permanently and totally disabled*" therefore, he did not think adding "*100%*" to the "*permanently and totally disabled*" language would make a difference; (c) Third Party Taxation Proposal - Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation - Mayor Allyn explained that the Third-Party Taxation Proposal would take away the town's ability to collect taxes from third party (non-Indian) business operating at the Mashantucket Pequot Foxwoods Casino. He stated if this Bill was signed into law that Ledyard would see another \$600,000 loss in tax revenue or 0.48 mils; resulting in an additional tax increase for Ledyard residents. He noted that the State has had the benefit of 7-years of budget surpluses, yet they continue to flat fund the municipalities. He stated that he would be submitting an updated Org Chart for the Town Council's reference, noting that the Org Chart was always included in the Annual Budget Handout Book for residents, noting that the Org Chart showed that the General Government Staffing was quite lean. Therefore, he stated the question was "*Where do we go from here?*" He stated for the General Government side of business that the next question was: "*What department or departments do we need to close?*" He stated the Electric Public Benefit Charge (PBC) was harming hundreds of Ledyard households. He stated the United Way Asset Limited Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) Report, which documents the poverty rates, showed that Ledyard's ALICE numbers were increasing; (7) Library Director - Mayor Allyn announced that Library Director Jennifer Smith has taken a job closer to her family in Central Connecticut. He stated that he was sorry to see her go after being in Ledyard for three years, noting that Ms. Smith implemented positive changes and additional programs in our libraries. He stated the job has been posted, and applications were coming in; (8) Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) Legislative Committee February 6, 2025 Meeting - Mayor Allyn stated he attended the meeting noting that there was "*Not a lot of good in the Governors proposed budget*". He reported that there was \$1 Billion in new spending, which was up 4.4%. He stated the Motor Vehicle tax was hurting all towns, noting the following: Windsor's motor vehicle taxes would go down 10%, Guilford's motor vehicle taxes would go down 12%, Ledyard's and Watertown's

motor vehicle taxes would go down 13%, Norwich's motor vehicle taxes would go down 15%, and Bristol's motor vehicle taxes would go down by \$2.1 Million. He stated that he submitted Written Testimony regarding Senate Bill # SB1276; (9) Mayor Appointments - Mayor Allyn stated for the Town Council's awareness, that he recently made appointments to the following Committees: Economic Development Commission (EDC); Connecticut 250 Committee (CT250); Social Services Board; and the Conservation Commission. He stated all Mayoral Appointments are included in the Correspondence List as they happen; (10) Southeastern Connecticut Regional Resource Recovery Authority (SCRRA) February 12, 2025 Meeting - Mayor Allyn stated he attended the meeting earlier today, noting that there have been no changes at the State level to address the disposal of trash. He stated that Connecticut was still trucking 40% of their solid waste (850,000 tons/year) to landfills in other states. He stated Tipping Fees (tonnage cost) will increase in the upcoming Fiscal Year 2025/2026 to \$78.39 per ton. He stated their SCRRA Contract was in place through December 31, 2030; however, he stated after that, the tonnage price would go to increase to Market Rate, which was projected to be \$135-\$145/ton (+175% over current). He stated in response to SCRRA's Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for an Organic Operator they received four responses. He stated that he would provide more information as it becomes available; (11) Prides Corner Nursery - Mayor Allyn stated Prides Corner Nursery would like to make a donation in the Name of the Town of Ledyard to a charitable organization of the Town Council's choosing. He asked the Town Council to consider Prides Corner Nursery's request and plan to have a charitable organization in mind for their February 26, 2025 meeting.

Questions to the Mayor

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry questioned whether Southeastern Connecticut Regional Resource Recovery Authority (SCRRA) has received the Permit for the Preston Facility. Mayor Allyn stated that the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) has not yet issued the Permit. He stated that DEEP was probably the single slowest moving government entity in the State of Connecticut. He stated the Department of Transportation (DOT) was probably the next slowest.

Councilor Barnes noted Mayor Allyn's comments regarding the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP), and he stated during the time he served on the Historic District Commission they received American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding to make some repairs at the Up-Down Sawmill. He noted the time constraints involved to meet ARPA deadlines and he stated that they received DEEP's approval within a week. Therefore, he stated that he wanted to recognize that occasionally DEEP does come through.

Councilor Buhle stated because the Town Council would be deferring their discussion regarding the Public Benefit Charge (PBC) on their electric bills to their February 26, 2025 meeting that she wanted to ask whether Municipalities and Boards of Educations were also being impacted by the Public Benefits Charge. Mayor Allyn stated that Municipalities and Boards of Educations were also being impacted by the Public Benefits Charge, and that the cost for the schools was astronomical. Councilor Buhle stated that 77% of the Public Benefits Charge was being used to pay for the 2017 Millstone-Dominion Agreement; and 23% was being used to pay Paste Due

Accounts. She stated the Public Benefit Charge was put in place July 2024 and was supposed to be a ten-month Plan. Therefore she stated that hopefully there was an end in-sight. Mayor Allyn stated that he hoped it would end soon, noting that he would look into when the Public Benefit Charge was scheduled to end. Councilor Buhle stated that it would be good to know when the Public Benefit Charge was going to end so that they could plan for the costs in the upcoming Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget.

Councilor Saccone addressed the upcoming Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget preparation, and he stated that he, Councilor Buhle, and Councilor Ryan would diligently go through the budget. However, he stated that the taxpayers need to understand that much of the budget was out of their control. He noted as Mayor Allyn, III, reported that the town would see reduced funding from the State as well as a 13% reduction in motor vehicle taxes; and other losses in revenue. He stated although it does not sound like a lot that it all adds up to be a lot; and that these things were significantly impacting towns; however, he stated the town still had to provide services and pay their bills.

RESULT: .

XIII. OLD BUSINESS

None.

XIV. NEW BUSINESS

MOTION to amend the Agenda to add the following:

MOTION to adopt a proposed “Municipal Certification of Resolution ~2025Office of Policy and Management Neglected Cemetery Account Grant Program” as presented in the draft dated February 12, 2025.

Moved by Chairman Rodriguez, seconded by Councilor Buhle

VOTE: 8 - 0 Approved and so declared

Chairman Rodriguez noted the Resolution would be added under “General Items” as Item #6

A motion was made that this be Approved and so declared. The motion carried by the following vote:

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: S. Naomi Rodriguez

SECONDER: Jessica Buhle

AYE: 8 Barnes, Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Rodriguez, Saccone, and St. Vil

EXCUSED: 1 Ryan

Finance Committee

1. (a) MOTION to rescind the following, as approved by the Town Council at their February 12, 2025 meeting:

MOTION to approve the proposed “Municipal Certification of a Resolution for Small Town Economic Assistance Program ~ STEAP 2025 ~ Ledyard Playscape Improvement Projects as presented in the Plan dated February 5, 2025; with the exception not to exceed \$1 million.

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

And, if Grant 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.

Res. 003-2025/Feb 12

MUNICIPAL CERTIFICATION OF RESOLUTION
SMALL TOWN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
~STEAP 2025 ~
LEDYARD PLAYScape IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

I, Patricia A. Riley, Town Clerk of the Town of Ledyard, a municipality organized and existing under the laws of the State of Connecticut, hereby certify that the following is a true copy of the resolution adopted by the Ledyard Town Council of said municipality at its Regular Meeting held on _____.

RESOLVED, that Mayor Fred B. Allyn, III, be, and hereby is, authorized to accept on behalf of the Town of Ledyard, a 2025 Connecticut STEAP Grant in the amount of \$1 Million for the *Ledyard Playscape Improvement Projects* for the following Town Parks: Town Green, Aljen Heights, ~~Blenders Park~~, East Drive/Christy Hill Park; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that Mayor Fred B. Allyn, III, is hereby authorized to enter into and execute any and all agreements, contracts and documents necessary to obtain said 2025 STEAP Grant with the State of Connecticut.

Approved by the Ledyard Town Council on: _____

S. Naomi Rodriguez, Chairman

I DO FURTHER CERTIFY that the above resolution has in no way been altered, amended or

revoked, and is in full force and effect.

AND I DO FURTHER CERTIFY that Mayor Fred B. Allyn, III is the Mayor of the Town of Ledyard, and has been since May 1, 2017.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of the Town of Ledyard this _____ day of _____, 2025.

(Seal)

Patricia A. Riley, Town Clerk
Town of Ledyard

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Saccone

Discussion: Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Director Scott Johnson, Jr., stated that he would first like to mention that the STEAP Grant required the Town to identify their 20% Local Funding before the Grant Application was submitted. However, he noted that tonight's motion stated that the Town's 20% Local Funding would be identified after they received notification that the Grant was approved. Therefore, he stated that he thought that they would need to update the language in the motion to identify the Town's Local Match. He stated because the STEAP Grant needed to be submitted by February 20, 2025 that he has been working to get the Plans and Costs together in-time to meet the Application deadline.

Mr. Johnson continued by presenting the plans to replace the following Playscapes:

- \$600,000 - Town Green ADA Park included new equipment, installation, Poured In Place (PIP) Surfacing, R&D of existing equipment.
- \$250,000 - Colonel Ledyard/Blonders Park included new Playground Equipment, installation, Poured In Place (PIP) Surfacing under new equipment and under existing swings and R&D of existing equipment.
- \$150,000 - Aljen Heights Park included new Playground Equipment and swings, installation, Poured In Place (PIP) Surfacing under new equipment and swings and R&D of existing equipment
- \$200,000 - Christy Hill Park includes new Playground Equipment and swings, installation, Poured In Place (PIP) Surfacing under new equipment and swings, and R&D of existing equipment.
- \$1,200,000 Total Cost for all four Playscapes. Mr. Johnson stated although these were rough numbers, that he should be able to operate within these budgetary numbers.

Councilor Dombrowski stated although he was not opposed to the Playscape Projects that he had concerns about them not following the process. He stated tonight's motion does not identify the funding source for the Town's 20% Local Match, and he questioned the amount of the 20% Local Match and the funding source. Mr. Johnson stated that based on a \$1,200,000 Grant Application that the Town's 20% Local Match would be about \$200,000; and that they would need to discuss the funding source this evening.

Mayor Allyn addressed the Town's 20% Local Match, and he explained that in accordance with Ordinance # 200-009 "*An Ordinance Providing for the Transfer of Certain Revenue From The Real Estate Conveyance Tax to Specific Town of Ledyard Fund*" ".....*A sum equal to forty percent (40%) of the money received through conveyance tax shall be deposited to Fund 0203; the Parks and Recreation Capital and Non-Recurring Expense Fund*". He provided some background regarding Ordinance #200-009 explaining when real estate was sold in Ledyard, that by way of the State's taxation, the town collects a fee for the sale. He stated in many towns the Conveyance Tax goes directly into their General Fund. However, he stated 1967 Ledyard decided to take 40% of the Conveyance Tax and set it aside in a Capital Account for Parks & Recreation; set aside 40% for Public Works Capital Expenses; and in more recent years decided to set aside 20% for Open Space.

Mayor Allyn went on to explain that the Parks & Recreation Capital Fund 0203 currently had an unencumbered balance of \$401,000 noting that this Fund has gained about a \$100,000 each year for the last three-years. He explained that if the 2025 STEAP Grant gets approved that they would essentially be removing \$1 million of projects from the Parks & Recreation's Capital Plan. Therefore, he stated that he did not think it was unreasonable to take at least a portion of the \$200,000 Local Match from the Parks & Recreation Capital Fund 0203.

Chairman Rodriguez noted that the 2025 STEAP Grant was for \$1 million, however, she noted the Playscape Plans Mr. Johnson presented this evening totaled \$1,200,000; noting that the \$200,000 would be the town's local share. Therefore, she questioned whether the Mayor was proposing that half of the \$200,000 come from the Parks & Recreation Capital Fund 0203. Councilor Dombrowski stated if all of the Town's \$200,000 Local Match came from Fund 0203 that it would be half of the \$401,000 balance in the Parks & Recreation Capital Fund 0203.

Councilor Buhle stated when they were preparing the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget that she wanted the town to allocate \$100,000 to use as the town's matching funds to apply for grants this year. However, she stated they chose not to allocate those funds, noting that she was specifically told that the town would use funding from the Undesignated Account as the town's local matching funds, when the time came to apply for a grant. She stated in attending several Parks, Recreation, & Senior Citizens Commission meetings that she was aware of several capital projects that needed to be done. Therefore, she stated that the Town's 20% Local Match should not come from Parks & Recreation Capital Fund 0203; because she did not want to cripple Parks, Recreation, & Senior Citizens Commission's ability to take care of other capital needs in the upcoming year.

Mr. Johnson stated that the Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Commission currently had \$302,826.65 of open projects; and that they proposed \$165,000 for Capital Projects in the upcoming Fiscal Year 2025/2026; which would bring the balance of the Parks & Recreation Capital Fund 0203 to about \$40,000. He went on to explain to use money from Fund 0203 that in accordance with Ordinance 200-012 "*An Ordinance Creating a Municipal Park and Recreation Capital and Non-Recurring Expense Fund for The Town of Ledyard*" that "*authorization by the annual budget meeting of the Town or upon authorization by a special Town meeting of the Town, the monies in said fund may be used for capital and non-recurring*

expenditures”. He stated because of the February 20, 2025 Grant Application submission date that they would not have time to approve to appropriate the \$200,000 from Fund 0203 for the Town’s 20% Local Match.

Chairman Rodriguez questioned whether Parks & Recreation Commission has reviewed the Playscape Plans and approved them. Mr. Johnson explained that the original Plan was only to replace the Playscape at the Town Green, and that the Commission has reviewed and approved that Plan. However, he stated for the other three Parks (Aljen Heights, Blonders Park, and East Park) that the Commission would review them at their February 18, 2025 meeting.

Councilor Dombrowski stated that they were not following the process; which was the reason they were jumping through hoops now to make the February 20, 2025 Grant Application deadline. He stated that Mr. Johnson was asking the Town Council to approve a motion that does not identify the funding source for the Town’s \$200,000 Local Match, and for a Playscape Projects Plan that the Parks, Recreation, & Senior Citizens Commission have not yet approved. He stated this request should have gone to the Finance Committee with the funding identified, before it came to the Town Council.

Councilor Buhle stated that the Parks, Recreation, & Senior Citizens Commission’s role was to vote on the “Conceptual Plan” not the funding source for the Town’s 20% Local Match, noting that was where the disconnect was. She stated the Finance Committee voted to move the item forward to the Town Council as presented this evening. She stated based on the motion the Finance Committee was saying that they would figure out where the Town’s Local 20% Match would come from, if the town received the grant.

Mr. Johnson stated the original Conceptual Plan was to replace the Playscape at the Town Green, which was approved years ago; explaining that Blonders Park, Aljen Heights, East Drive was Phase II, noting that last week he was tasked with adding these Parks to the Plan for the STEAP Grant Application. .

Chairman Rodriguez suggested they amend the Motion to identify the funding source for the Town’s 20% Local Match; and she questioned the balance of the Undesignated Fund. Mayor Allyn noted that currently the Town’s Undesignated Fund Balance was 7.5% of their expenditure budget. However, he stated at the recommendation of the Auditor the Town Council adopted a “*Town of Ledyard Fund Balance Reserve Policy*” which called for the town to increase its Undesignated Fund to 15% to help with the town’s Bond Ratings and to receive more favorable interest rates when they bond/borrow money. However, he stated they keep whittling down the Undesignated Fund Balance.

Councilor Dombrowski stated that he supported the Playscape Projects; however, he stated that Mr. Johnson was now saying the Grant Application Rules have changed; and now the town has to approve the matching funds to apply for the grant. He also stated that the Parks, Recreation, & Senior Citizens Commission has not done their part to allow the Town Council to move forward on the request. He stated because the process was not followed that he did not know what they could do this evening.

Councilor Buhle stated the 20% Local Match was not required, but that it was highly recommended. Therefore, she questioned the reason they could not move forward with the Motion as written this evening. Mr. Johnson stated because the four Playscapes totaled \$1,200,00; which was \$200,000 over the \$1 million grant, that they had to provide the local match.

Mayor Allyn stated that they could submit their STEAP Grant Application for the Playscape Projects without a 20% Local Match. However, he stated that he did not know how their Application would be graded within the state's evaluation rubric. He stated that Ledyard would be competing with 143 Municipalities that qualify to apply for STEAP Grants, noting that this year there was \$30 million that would be awarded, noting that everyone would not be receiving \$1 million in grant funding. Therefore, he questioned whether they wanted to try to lower the cost of their projects to make their Grant Application more appealing. He stated that they may be more likely to receive the grant if they were looking for \$600,000 instead of \$1 million. Chairman Rodriguez stated submitting their STEAP Grant Application for a lower amount may be a good plan. Therefore, she asked Mr. Johnson which Parks he would take off the list.

Councilor Buhle stated if the Town were to submit their STEAP Grant Application for \$1 million; which three Parks would Mr. Johnson submit. Mr. Johnson stated that he would cut Colonel Ledyard Park from the List.

The Town Council stated if they remove Colonel Ledyard -Blonders Park off the List that the “*not to exceed \$1 million*” would not have to change. They asked that Colonel Ledyard -Blonders Park be removed from the Resolution before it was signed.

VOTE: 8 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

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

****POST MEEETING NOTE**: 2/19/2025** At the Town Council's Special Meeting of February 19, 2025 Item 1(a) was rescinded “*Municipal Certification of a Resolution for Small Town Economic Assistance Program ~ STEAP 2025 ~ Ledyard Playscape Improvement Projects*” and a corrected Resolution was adopted.

Chairman Rodriguez explained that Item #1(b) was included on tonight's agenda as an “*Alternate Plan B*”, in the event they were not ready to move forward with the Playscape Projects. Therefore, she stated with the approval of Item #1(a) that no action was necessary for the next item.

Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Director Scott Johnson, Jr. questioned whether it would be a good idea to act on Item #1(b) as a backup just in case the cost estimates for all the Playscapes do not come in on time. He stated that a separate Grant Application would need to be submitted for the two projects.

Mayor Allyn, III, stated the Town Green Playscape and the sewer line on Fairway Drive and Colby Drive would exceed the \$1 million grant.

The Town Council agreed not to act on Item 1(b).

- 1 (b)** MOTION to approve the proposed “Municipal Certification of a Resolution for Small Town Economic Assistance Program ~ STEAP 2025 ~ for the Sewer Line Installation on Fairway Drive and Colby Drive” as presented in the draft dated January 22, 2025 with the exception not to exceed \$610,000.

And, if Grant 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.

RESULT: NO ACTION

- 2.** MOTION to authorize the Registrars to overspend Account #10110303-51710 Other Wages for the 2024/2025 Fiscal Year to cover expenses related to Early Voting, Regular Elections, and Budget Referendum. The overspend is expected to be approximately \$3,200.

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Saccone

Discussion: Mayor Allyn, III stated the Registrar’s request for additional funding was related to the Early Voting for the Primary Elections that were held in August and for the 2024 Presidential Election.

Councilor Saccone questioned whether these funds were in addition to the \$10,000 they received from the State. Registrar of Voters Diana Mann stated that Councilor Saccone was correct, noting that the \$10,000 received from the State was to purchase equipment and to prepare the lower level of the Town Hall to be used as a voting location for referendums and for early voting. Councilor Saccone questioned whether the Registrars would include expenses in their 2025/2026 Budget to cover these costs. Mrs. Mann explained that the State was considering reducing the Early Voting from 14-days to 7-days; therefore, the cost would not be quite as much going forward because they would not need as many Poll Workers.

VOTE: 8 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Jessica Buhle

SECONDER: Tony Saccone

AYE: 8 Barnes, Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Rodriguez, Saccone, and St. Vil

EXCUSED: 1 Ryan

Land Use/Planning/Public Works Committee

3. MOTION to accept Marty's Way into the Town's Road Inventory in accordance with Ordinance #300-025 "An Ordinance Regulating the Addition of Any New Street or Highway to the Highway System of the Town of Ledyard"; including its infrastructure, that was approved as part of Application PZ#22-8SUB; Eagles Landing 24- Lot Open Space Subdivisions, 79 Vinegar Hill Road, Ledyard, Connecticut, on August 11, 2022, along with written recommendations of the Director of Public Work's dated December 19, 2024, and all supporting documentation, including warranty deeds with the following condition:

(1) The warranty deeds shall be reviewed and approved by the Director of Public Works and/or Town Attorney prior to acceptance.

Moved by Councilor St. Vil, seconded by Councilor Dombrowski

Discussion: None.

VOTE: 8 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Gary St. Vil

SECONDER: Kevin Dombrowski

AYE: 8 Barnes, Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Rodriguez, Saccone, and St. Vil

EXCUSED: 1 Ryan

4. MOTION to accept Village Drive Extension into the Town's Road Inventory in accordance with Ordinance #300-025 "An Ordinance Regulating the Addition of Any New Street or Highway to the Highway System of the Town of Ledyard"; including its infrastructure, that was approved as part of Application PZ#21-10RESUB, Fire Side Farm 4-Lot Resubdivision, 34 Village Drive, Ledyard, Connecticut, on December 19, 2021, along with written recommendations of the Director of Public Work's dated December 19, 2024, and all supporting documentation, including warranty deeds with the following conditions:

(1) The warranty deeds shall be reviewed and approved by the Director of Public Works and/or Town Attorney prior to acceptance; and

(2) The Applicant shall submit P.E. and Utilities Certification per Section 3.A(1) (2) &(3) prior to acceptance.

Moved by Councilor Dombrowski, seconded by Councilor Garcia-Irizarry

Discussion: None.

VOTE: 8 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Kevin Dombrowski

SECONDER: Carmen Garcia-Irizarry

AYE: 8 Barnes, Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Rodriguez, Saccone, and St. Vil

EXCUSED: 1 Ryan

General Business

5. Discussion and possible action on a Resolution Concerning Public Benefits Charges on Electric Bills to Consumers.

Chairman Rodriguez noted that Councilor Ryan asked that this item be included on tonight's agenda. Therefore, she suggested they defer this discussion to their February 26, 2025 meeting so that Councilor Ryan can participate in the discussion.

RESULT: NO ACTION

MOTION to adopt a proposed "Municipal Certification of Resolution ~2025 Office of Policy and Management Neglected Cemetery Account Grant Program" as presented in the draft dated February 12, 2025.

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Dombrowski

Discussion: Mayor Allyn, III, explained the Office of Management & Policy (OPM) was accepting Grant Applications to assist Municipalities with the maintenance of neglected burial grounds and cemeteries. He stated the Grant amount was \$5,000 and does not require any local funding. He stated the Cemetery Committee has developed a Plan for the use of the funding which included removing brush, fixing gravestones, repairing fences and a number of other maintenance items. He stated the Application due date was February 13, 2025.

VOTE: 8 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Jessica Buhle

SECONDER: Kevin Dombrowski

AYE: 8 Barnes, Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Rodriguez, Saccone, and St. Vil

EXCUSED: 1 Ryan

XV. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Buhle, moved to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Brunelle.

VOTE: 8 - 0 Approved and so declared. The meeting adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

Transcribed by Roxanne M. Maher
Administrative Assistant to the Town Council

I, S. Naomi Rodriguez, Chairman of the Ledyard Town Council,
hereby certify that the above and foregoing is a true and
correct copy of the minutes of the Regular Town Council
Meeting held on February 12, 2025.

S. Naomi Rodriguez, Chairman

DISCLAIMER:

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

The Town Council's Official Agenda and final Minutes will be on file in the Town Clerk's Office.