



TOWN OF LEDYARD

741 Colonel Ledyard Highway
Ledyard, Connecticut 06339

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

Chairman
Kevin J. Dombrowski

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, March 1, 2023

5:00 PM

Town Hall Annex Building - Hybrid
Format

In -Person: Council Chambers, Town Hall Annex Building

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

[https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89631568603?](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89631568603?pwd=MjhyRGtYL0hEd2FpbEM2bGd6ODIFQT09)

pwd=MjhyRGtYL0hEd2FpbEM2bGd6ODIFQT09

by Audio Only: Telephone: +1 646 558 8656; Meeting ID: 896 3156 8603; Passcode: 246797

I CALL TO ORDER

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

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

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Councilor Bill Saums
Councilor Andra Ingalls

Excused: Councilor Tim Ryan

In addition, the following were present:

Mary McGrattan Town Councilor
S. Naomi Rodriguez Town Councilor
Fred Allyn, III Mayor
Matt Bonin Finance Director
Jennifer Smith Library Director
Jim Mann Director of Emergency Management
Wayne Donaldson Board of Education Director of Facilities & Grounds
Roxanne Maher Administrative Assistant

III. RESIDENTS & PROPERTY OWNERS COMMENTS

None.

IV. PRESENTATIONS / INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

None.

V. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION to approve the Finance Committee Regular Meeting Minutes of February 15, 2023

Moved by Councilor Ingalls, seconded by Councilor Saums

VOTE: 2 - 0 Approved and so declared

VI. FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Finance Director's Report

Finance Director Matthew Bonin reported that work continues on the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget preparation. He noted the State of Connecticut has revised their estimated increase for the Partnership 2.0 Healthcare Plan to 7.5% for next fiscal year. He also noted that Administrator of Human Resources Don Steinhoff has been talking with Brown and Brown Insurance, who was handling a consortium of towns that left the State's 2.0 Partnership Healthcare Plan. He stated if the Brown and Brown Healthcare Consortium Plan could provide a comparable insurance plan to what Ledyard currently had that the town may be able to join their Healthcare Consortium which would be about a 4% - 5% increase in healthcare costs for the town.

VII. FINANCIAL REPORTS

Financial Reports

Finance Director Matthew Bonin provided the following Financial Reports:

- ***Revenue Year to Date Report dated January 31, 2023***
 - Revenues received to date were at about 60% of what was budgeted.
- ***Expenditure Year to Date Report dated January 31, 2023***
 - Dispatch Overtime were trending over budget.

Councilor Saums noted that the Dispatch Overtime was trending over budget.

Mayor Allyn, III, explained that the Dispatchers have claimed that they were not fully staffed until November 1, 2022. He stated the jury was still out on the Pitman

Schedule Concept explaining that it was something that the Collective Bargaining Unit asked for in the last negotiation. He stated the Pitman Schedule was twelve-hour shifts and that he believed that they were finding that the shifts were too long. He went on to state as a result of the longer shifts that every two-weeks they were accumulating 4 hours of overtime. He stated this Labor Contract was up for negotiation this year and that he believed they needed to discuss what constituted appropriate staffing in the Dispatch Center.

- Retirement Cash Out \$75,000

Councilor Ingalls questioned the status of the Retirement Cash Out Account noting that to-date there has not been any expenditures out of this budgeted account.

Mayor Allyn explained the Retirement Cash Out Account was used to cash out sick-time, vacation time, and comp-time when employees retired. He stated quite often these expenses come up toward the end of the fiscal year. He noted as an example that MIS Director Regina Brulotte was retiring tomorrow (March 2, 2023) after twenty-years of service to the town. He stated the Cash Out Account would be used should there be any pay outs required.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

1. 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.

RESULT: NO ACTION

2. Any other Old Business proper to come before the Committee.
None

IX. NEW BUSINESS

1. MOTION to appropriate \$51,838 to Account #21050101-58790-G0015 (Library Capital - New Equipment - Misc. State Grants) upon the receipt of a State Library Grant for the same amount.

In addition, authorize the funds to be expended for the Gales Ferry Library E-fiber installation.

Moved by Councilor Ingalls, seconded by Councilor Saums

Discussion: Councilor Saums provided some background noting at their January 12, 2022 meeting the Town Council authorized the Mayor to submit an application for E-Rate funds and a matching State Library grant to cover the installation cost of a fiber network to the Gales Ferry Library along with a request for E-Rate funds to supplement up to 50% of the annual maintenance and internet cost, noting that the cost to install the fiber was about \$90,000. However, he stated since that time Frontier Communications has been installing fiber all over town. Therefore, he questioned whether they should discuss the option to connect the Gales Ferry Library

to the Frontier Communications fiber.

Mayor Allyn, III, stated Frontier Communications would be covering 100% of Ledyard with their fiber network. He stated although Frontier's work was supposed to be completed by December, 2022, that they were still working on the project. He went on to state because he had the same question as Councilor Saums, that he contacted the Frontier Communications Enterprise Manager to discuss the costs for the Gales Ferry Library to connect to Frontier. He explained although there would be no cost to install the equipment or to run the line to the Gales Ferry Library, that the monthly fee would be \$1,000. He stated for residential use the cost of Frontier communications would be \$79.00 per month for 1-Gigabyte of internet service. He stated it was great for residential users but very costly for commercial users. He stated in speaking to the Frontier Communications Enterprise Manager he told him that the Gales Ferry Library was part of a municipality and that he was told that municipalities fall under the Enterprise Division, noting that there was no special deals for small towns.

Mayor Allyn went on to explain that because the Grant funding would pay for the fiber installation for the Gales Ferry Library to connect to the Connecticut Education Network (CEN) and after the E-Rate discount, which would pay for 50% of fiber maintenance fee that the Gales Ferry Library's annual maintenance cost would be \$3,600 per year for now, minus the current annual \$828, (cable internet) that the Library's net annual cost would be \$2,772 for each year of the 20-year CEN Contract, noting that there would not be a monthly fee. Therefore, he stated moving forward with this grant opportunity was the best option for the Gales Ferry Library.

Councilor Saums stated the Grant Funding would pay for 100% of the installation of the fiber. Library Director Jennifer Smith stated that was correct, noting that both parties have signed off on the Connecticut State Library Grant totaling \$51,838. She stated as Mayor Allyn mentioned, this funding included half of the expense for the 20-year Dark Fiber IRU Lease, and the full cost of all network equipment, fiber operations and maintenance, along with any additional equipment needed. She stated the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) has committed \$36,950 to this project for the remaining half of the fiber lease. These funds would be paid directly to the Connecticut Educational Network (CEN) and would not flow through the town. She went on to explain with the E-Rate discount, which would pay for 50% of fiber maintenance fee that the annual cost for the Gales Ferry Library for the annual maintenance would be \$3,600 per year. She stated they were currently paying about \$75.00 per month (\$828 annually) for the Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) internet service. It was noted that minus the current annual \$828 for the DSL internet service that the net annual cost for the CEN service was about \$2,772 or \$231 per month.

Ms. Smith stated the Bill Library has been using the Connecticut Educational Network (CEN) for 5 - 6 years and that they have not had any issues with the fiber network. She stated it worked well and the patrons were able to connect and were not

getting kicked off the internet. However, she stated at the Gales Ferry Library they have internet connection issues, noting that it was better in some areas of the building than in other areas of the building and patrons as well as staff have had issues with the current Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) line. She stated that the internet service the Gales Ferry Library was currently providing to its patrons was problematic, noting at times staff has not been able to attend on-line meetings because they could not connect to the internet. Councilor Saums stated with the new equipment and new router that he believed the Gales Ferry Library would be happy with the CEN fiber line.

Councilor Ingalls stated that all of these requests were good improvements. However, she stated that she was nervous about the budget overall. Councilor Saums stated that he believed that there would be better news on the upcoming budget preparation than what was reported last week. Mayor Allyn stated that he previously reported that the Department Heads Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget requests came in higher than what he would have liked to have seen. However, he stated that the numbers were starting to polish up well. Councilor Saums stated although the Town Council would have some difficult decisions to make on the upcoming proposed Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget that he was comfortable with moving forward with these Grant opportunities to connect the Gales Ferry Library to the CEN Fiber line.

VOTE: 2 - 0 Approved and so declared

Councilor Saums thanked Ms. Smith for attending tonight’s meeting.
Library Director Ms. Smith left the meeting at 5:15 p.m.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

MOVER: Andra Ingalls

SECONDER: Bill Saums

AYE: 2 Saums and Ingalls

EXCUSED: 1 Ryan

- 2. MOTION to appropriate \$13,000 to Account #21020301-57300-G0015 (Fire Marshall - New Equipment - State Grant).

In addition, authorize the expenditure of up to \$13,000 for replacement of copper cable running to the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) with fiber cable.

The funding source for this project is the Town of Ledyard’s FY 2023 Nuclear Safety Emergency Program Funding Allocation (2022-44).

Moved by Councilor Ingalls, seconded by Councilor Saums

Discussion: Director of Emergency Management Jim Mann explained that last year

they received Nuclear Safety Emergency Funding for the Emergency Operations Center Technology (EOC) Upgrades. However, he stated they were still having issues with the data flow to the Connecticut Educational Network Fiber (CEN) connection in the school's main data room. He stated their investigation found that about ten-years ago when they moved the School's Management Information Systems Room (MIS) to its new location to provide space for the relocation the Emergency Operations Center at the High School that for some unknown reason staff did not complete this section in fiber but instead used copper cable for a 165-foot section, which was the source of their data flow problems with the CEN connection to the EOC.

Mr. Mann went on to explain they were only able to get two vendors to come look at the project to provide a quote to replace the copper cable with fiber for the entire run from the data room to the EOC. However, he stated only one vendor, CBS Company, provided a quote, noting that the second vendor stated because they would not interface with other persons work they were not willing to take this project, explaining that they had proprietary equipment.

Mr. Mann continued by noting in a letter dated February 23, 2023 he appealed to the Nuclear Safety Emergency Program (NSEP) to request \$13,000 for the necessary upgrades to replace the copper cable with fiber in the Emergency Operations Center. He stated that he included some contingency in the request in case other issues were found during project. He stated the NSEP Region 4 replied to his letter in an e-mail stating that they would provide 100% reimbursement the town for the cost to correct the issue.

VOTE: 2 - 0 Approved and so declared

Councilor Saums thanked Mr. Mann for attending tonight's meeting.
Director of Emergency Management Jim Mann left the meeting at 5:48 p.m.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

MOVER: Andra Ingalls

SECONDER: Bill Saums

AYE: 2 Saums and Ingalls

EXCUSED: 1 Ryan

3. MOTION to grant a Bid Waiver to Marineland, Spectrum Brands Pet, LLC of Blacksburg, Virginia in the amount of \$32,590 due to receiving fewer than the required three bids in response to Bid #LPS 22-10 (Ledyard Public Schools Agricultural Science Small Animal Habitat), in accordance with Ordinance #200-001 (rev 1) "An Ordinance for Purchasing".

Moved by Councilor Ingalls, seconded by Councilor Saums

Discussion: Councilor Saums stated Board of Education Director of Buildings and Facilities Wayne Donaldson solicited Requests for Proposals Bid #LPS 22-10 (Ledyard Public Schools Agricultural Science Small Animal Habitat) and did a lot of work in calling and sending e-mails to vendors to try to obtain proposals to purchase equipment and cabinets to house small animals such as birds, ferrets, reptiles for the Agri-Science Program (Vo-Ag). However, he stated only one vendor, Marineland, Spectrum Brands Pet, LLC., replied, but that they only sent price lists. He stated after talking with Mr. Donaldson last week, that Mr. Donaldson went back to the vendor and confirmed that their pricing was as contained in the Pricing Sheet and that they would honor those prices. He also explained that in researching the equipment needed that Mr. Donaldson found that Marineland, Spectrum Brands Pet, LLC., was the only vendor that made enclosures that would fit into the classroom. Therefore, he stated the Board of Education has requested a Bid Waiver to purchase the necessary equipment to house the small animals in the Agri-Science Lab.

Board of Education Director of Buildings and Facilities Wayne Donaldson explained the Agri-Science Lab had a limited low ceiling and the doorway was narrow. Therefore, he stated to get the equipment into the room that it had to be a certain size. He stated the other two companies he contacted would not provide a bid proposal, noting that the units they sold were too high to fit into the space. He stated this equipment would be paid for from the Agri-Science Grant funding noting at their September 14, 2022 meeting the Town Council authorized the Board of Education to spend up to \$146,558 from Account #21070101-5826 (BOE CNR ASTE) as outlined in the Board of Education Fiscal Year 2021/2022 Supplemental Spending Plan for Agri-Science Program. He stated in addition to the \$32,590 listed on the pricing sheet that there would freight and pallet charges.

Councilor Saums stated if the Vendor, Marineland, Spectrum Brands Pet, changed their pricing that the Board of Education would need to come back to request another bid waiver.

Councilor Ingalls questioned whether this equipment was replacing old units or whether this was a new project. Mr. Donaldson stated the small animals was a new Agri-Science (Vo-Ag) Project explaining that they have done away with the large animals such as the horses and cows program and have replaced it with the small animal program. He stated the small animal program would teach the Agri-Science students how to groom dogs and take care of reptiles and birds, etc. He stated this equipment would house the small animals.

VOTE: 2 - 0 Approved and so declared

Councilor Saums thanked Mr. Donaldson for attending tonight's meeting.

Board of Education Director of Buildings and Facilities Wayne Donaldson left the meeting at 5:23 p.m.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

MOVER: Andra Ingalls

SECONDER: Bill Saums

4. MOTION to set the Mayor's salary at \$107,000 Retroactive to July 1, 2022.

Moved by Councilor Ingalls, seconded by Councilor Saums

Discussion: Councilor Saums stated setting the Mayor's Salary was governed by Article XIX of the Connecticut Constitution (amending Article XI.), which was passed in 1982, noting that it stated the following:

"The compensation of an elected official of a political subdivision of the state whose term of office is four years or more may be increased once after such official has completed two years of his term by the legislative body of such political subdivision."

Councilor Saums stated the Mayor's Salary has not been increased since 2019; explaining that per Article XIX of the Connecticut Constitution because the Mayor in serves a four-year term, the compensation may be increased only once after the completion of two years of a term. He stated the requested salary represented a 3.1% increase per year for a total 12% increase during the course of four year term.

Mayor Allyn, III, explained as an elected Mayor that the salary could only be adjusted one-time halfway thru the four-year term, which should have been in 2021. He stated the Mayor's salary could be adjusted two-years into the next term. He stated that he supported the request not just for himself, (though he would benefit) but also for those that seek this role after his term. He stated that it was important to have a wage that would garner interest from the most qualified parties for the role as Mayor. He noted that there were six other positions in town that were being pay above the Mayor's Salary, setting aside any salaries for the Board of Education.

Councilor Ingalls stated that Ledyard's Mayor was underpaid, noting that during the time someone was elected and serving as the Mayor there was never a minute that they were "*Not the Mayor*", noting that they were the Mayor 7-24 stating that they do not get the weekends off. Councilor Saums stated he agreed with Councilor Ingalls' comments noting the many evening meetings the Mayor attended as well as the many events he attended on weekends.

Mayor Allyn stated with this annual 3% increase on each of the previous years that the \$107,000 salary would remain at this rate until at least Fiscal Year 2025/2026.

VOTE: 2 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

MOVER: Andra Ingalls

SECONDER: Bill Saums

AYE: 2 Saums and Ingalls

EXCUSED: 1 Ryan

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

None

X. ADJOURNMENT

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

VOTE: 2 - 0 Approved and so declared, the meeting was adjourned at 5:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

William D. Saums
Committee Chairman
Committee

Finance

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