



TOWN OF LEDYARD

741 Colonel Ledyard Highway
Ledyard, Connecticut 06339

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

Chairman
Kevin J. Dombrowski

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, April 5, 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/83407479266?](https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83407479266?pwd=WE0yTm94bU1oNEJHSG81MmhCWnBmQT09)

pwd=WE0yTm94bU1oNEJHSG81MmhCWnBmQT09

by Audio Only: Telephone: +1 646 558 8656; Meeting ID: 834 0747 9266; Passcode: 525836

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:

S. Naomi Rodriguez Town Councilor
Matt Bonin Finance Director
Steve Masalin Public Works Director/Town Engineer
Karen Goetchui Nursing Administrator
Scott Johnson, JD Director Senior Citizens & Parks & Recreation
Gary Schneider Permanent Municipal Building Committee Chairman
Joe Gush Permanent Municipal Building Committee
Wayne Donaldson Board of Education Director of Facilities & Grounds
Roxanne Maher Administrative Assistant

III. RESIDENTS & PROPERTY OWNERS COMMENTS

None.

IV. PRESENTATIONS / INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

None.

Board of Education Year-to-Date Report- 4/3/2023

RESULT: RECEIVED AND FILED

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION to approve the following:

- Fiscal Year Budget Work Session Minutes March 9, 2023
- Fiscal Year Budget Work Session Minutes of March 13, 2023
- Fiscal Year Budget Work Session Minutes of March 20, 2023
- Finance Committee Special Meeting Minutes of March 21, 2023.

Moved by Councilor Ingalls, seconded by Councilor Saums

VOTE: 2 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Andra Ingalls

SECONDER: Bill Saums

AYE: 2 Saums and Ingalls

EXCUSED: 1 Ryan

VI. FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Finance Director Matthew Bonin reported that Colliers Project Leaders have been continuing to assist the Town in working with the State to close-out the Schools Consolidation/Improvement Projects (Middle School & Gallup Hill School). He stated they expect the State to release \$6 - \$7 million of the \$10 million they owed to the town in the near future. Councilor Saums stated this was good news, noting that the grant reimbursement funding from the State has been a long time coming.

VII. FINANCIAL REPORT

None

Financial Reports

- Revenue Year to Date Report vs. Actuals- March 31, 2023
- Expenditure - Year to Date Report vs. Actuals - March 31, 2023

IX. 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.

No Action.

RESULT: NO ACTION

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

None.

VX. NEW BUSINESS

1. MOTION to approve appropriation from the receipt of sales of vehicles and equipment through GovDeals in the total amount of \$11,300 to the Public Works Small Truck CNR Account 21040101-57313.

Moved by Councilor Ingalls, seconded by Councilor Saums

Discussion: Councilor Saums stated the town received \$11,300 from the GovDeals on-line auction sale for the 2011 Ford E350 Van, which was formerly the Public Works Department Buildings & Grounds services vehicle.

Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin stated at their October 12, 2022 meeting the Town Council authorized the purchase (\$72,036.90) of a 2023 Ford Econoline Cutaway Truck with a utility body to replace the Buildings & Grounds 2011 Ford E350 Van. He stated this revenue was anticipated to make the account whole. He stated the Public Works Department has reduced their fleet by one vehicle.

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

2. Discussion and possible action to increase one Senior Center Van Driver to full-time.

Moved by Councilor Ingalls, seconded by Councilor Saums

Discussion: Senior Citizens Director Scott Johnson Jr., explained that the Senior Citizens Center has seen an increase in the demand for transportation services. He stated making one of the Van Drivers full-time would allow the Senior Citizens Center to increase their service hours and accommodate more medical rides. He stated should the merger of the Senior Citizens Commission and the Parks & Recreation Commission move forward, that they had initially proposed moving the funds from the Community Health & Welfare Programs Account into the Van Driver line to cover the cost for the increased full-time hours. However, he stated if the town received the Senior Resources Agency on Aging -Title 3 Grant funding that they would be able increase the Van Driver's hours to full-time without having to use

the Community Health & Welfare funds.

Mr. Johnson went on to explain that \$8,000 has been included in the upcoming Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget for the Van Driver, which they could use for the town's local match to receive the grant funding. He stated the town would be eligible to apply/receive the Senior Resources Agency on Aging -Title 3 Grant for three consecutive years with the percentage of the funding slightly decreasing each year (85%; 80%; 75%).

Councilor Saums questioned once the town has completed the three-year grant cycle whether they would be eligible to reapply for the grant program. Mr. Johnson explained that the Senior Resources Agency on Aging -Title 3 Grant was for *new* programs.

Councilor Saums questioned whether the Senior Citizens Center received any revenues for providing transportation for medical appointments, or whether it was strictly a service that they provided to the Senior Citizens. Mr. Johnson stated because the Van was purchased using Grant Funding that they were not allowed to charge for providing transportation to medical appointments. However, he stated they do accept donations for the rides; noting that some riders will give a dollar for the ride.

Councilor Ingalls stated using grant funding for wages was always tricky, noting that once the grant funding has been exhausted the cost then becomes the town's cost. Therefore, she questioned the funding plan for the full-time Van Driver once the Senior Resources Agency on Aging -Title 3 Grant has ended. Mr. Johnson stated once the Senior Resources Agency on Aging -Title 3 Grant ended that the Senior Citizens Center would like to continue the full-time Van Driver. Therefore, he stated they would add the wages for the full-time position into the annual budget.

Mr. Johnson went on to explain because they were uncertain of the outcome of the proposal to combine the Senior Citizens Commission with the Parks & Recreation Commission that for next fiscal year (23/24) he has submitted two separate budget and he explained the following:

- Senior Citizens programs were subsidized by taxpayers' dollars (a few years ago the budget was reduced from \$14,000 to \$10,000 per year); and the fees for the Programs were not breaking even. The cost of the Senior Citizens Health and Welfare Programs cost about \$14,000 per year; therefore, the Senior Citizens Center budget included \$14,000 for Senior Center Health and Welfare Programs.
- Parks & Recreation's programs were self-sufficient, with 80% of the program fees going to the instructor and 20% going to the Parks & Recreation Special Revenue Fund. The 20% of the Parks & Recreation program fees had been being used to pay for their independent quarterly magazine that advertised their Programs.

Mr. Johnson went on to explain because the quarterly Events Magazine was now

being paid for by the advertisements, that he proposed using the 20% collected from the Parks & Recreation programs, that was previously being used to independently advertise the Parks & Recreation Programs, to off-set the cost of the Senior Citizens programs that were currently not breaking even. He stated by using 20% collected from the Parks & Recreation programs for the Senior Citizens programs that the \$14,000 of taxpayer dollars that were being budgeted to support the Senior Citizens Health and Welfare Programs could be then used to pay for the full-time Van Driver for the Senior Center.

Councilor Saums provided an overview noting that the revenue received from the Parks & Recreation Programs could be used to support the Senior Citizens Health and Welfare Programs. The funding that was being budgeted to off-set the cost Senior Citizens Health and Welfare Programs would then be used to pay for the full-time Van Driver for the Senior Citizens.

VOTE: 2 - 0 Approved and so declared

Councilor Saums thanked Mr. Johnson, Jr. for attending tonight's meeting. Senior Citizens & Parks & Recreation Director Mr. Johnson, Jr. left the meeting at 5:13 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 STV Construction Inc. not to exceed \$91,496 due to receiving fewer than the required three bids in response to Bid #LPS 23-01 (Owner's Representative Services for Select Capital Projects,), in accordance with Ordinance #200-001 (rev 1) "An Ordinance for Purchasing".

Moved by Councilor Ingalls, seconded by Councilor Saums

Discussion: Councilor Saums explained when the town received fewer than the required three bids that a bid waiver was required. He stated in response to Bid #LPS 23-01 (Owner's Representative Services for Select Capital Projects) that only two bids were received. However, he stated that he had some questions regarding the process, noting that the PMBC has requested a bid waiver for STV Construction, Inc., whose original bid came in at \$141,470; but after several meetings the price was negotiated down to \$91,496. However, he stated the original proposal submitted by other Bidder, Colliers Project Leaders, came in at \$63,301, but the PMBC did not negotiate with that Firm.

Councilor Saums went to state that although they had the right to select the best value for the taxpayer, and not necessarily the lowest cost, that he had concerns with the mechanics of negotiating with the highest bidder, but not also negotiating the lowest

bidder. He stated when this has happened in the past the Finance Committee has rejected the request for the bid waiver because they had only negotiated with one of the bidders.

Mr. Gary Schneider, Permanent Municipal Building Committee (PMBC) Chairman, 101 Inchcliffe Drive, Gales Ferry, stated the PMBC via the Board of Education issued an RFQ/RFP for the “*Owner’s Representative Services for Select Capital Projects*” on January 13, 2023 for the Board of Education Roof Replacement Projects for the Central Office and the Juliet W. Long School. He explained the RFQ was a two-part request: (Part A) Qualifications; and (Part B) Dollar Value. He stated the dollar value part was kept in a sealed envelope that was held by Board of Education Director of Facilities and Grounds Wayne Donaldson.

Mr. Schneider stated the PMBC interviewed both Firms noting that they were both very qualified. He stated during the interviews the PMBC discussed with both Firms what their process/procedure would be; and he noted the following:

STV Construction, Inc. - Mr. Schneider stated STV Construction, Inc., was willing and included in their proposal having a full-time inspector on-site while the roof was being installed, noting that the roof was the most valuable piece of the building envelope.

Collier’s Project Leaders - Mr. Schneider stated Colliers Projects Leaders stated that since they knew both of the roofing contractors, and because they knew that both of the contractors were good, that their process would be to have a person drive/stop by to see that they were starting the work right, and then leave, noting that Colliers proposal included 2 - 4 hours of an inspector on each of the roof projects.

Mr. Schneider went on to state because they had issues with the roofs for the Schools Consolidation/Improvement Projects (Middle School & Gallup Hill School) that the PMBC was not comfortable with Colliers Project Leaders approach. He stated the PMBC did ask Colliers what the cost would be to have a full-time inspector on the roofs. However, he stated Colliers’s response was that a full-time inspector on the roofs was not needed and that they would not recommend it, and it was left it at that.

Mr. Schneider stated based on the interviews and not knowing the bid proposal prices, because they were in sealed envelopes, that the PMBC selected STV Construction, Inc. He stated the proposals were as follows:

- Collier’s Project Leaders \$63,301
- STV Construction, Inc. \$141,470

Mr. Schneider stated because the PMBC thought \$141,470 was high they authorized Board of Education Director of Facilities and Grounds Wayne Donaldson to invite STV Construction, Inc., back. He stated they had a good discussion, noting that the PMBC told STV Construction, Inc., that they did not think they needed the added

expense of having their Project Manager on-site, and so they came back with a lower price. He stated that the PMBC asked Mr. Donaldson to go back one more time to STV Construction, Inc., to ask what their price would be to have an inspector on the job full-time while the roofer was there, and having the Project Manger provide oversight to make sure the paperwork was correct. He stated STV Construction, Inc., came back with the \$91,496 proposal, which was higher than Colliers Project Leaders' proposal. However, he stated the STV Construction's, Inc., proposal included having the inspector on the job full-time.

Mr. Schneider went on to state that the PMBC was comfortable with how STV Construction, Inc., was going to move thru the projects, noting that the town would only be billed for the hours that the roofers were on the job. He stated the PMBC also asked Board of Education Director of Facilities and Grounds Wayne Donaldson to monitor the projects, monitor the time the roofers were on the job, and to work with the Firm to ensure they used the minimum amount of hours to do a good job in completing the projects.

Mr. Schneider stated to get an idea of what Colliers Project Leaders proposal would have been if they added a full-time inspector to their cost that he doubled their price for the 2-4 hours (8-hours) which came out to a little more than STV Construction Inc., proposal, noting that the two proposals would be about the same.

Mr. Schneider continued by addressing the cost for the Architect to watch the instruction portion of the project and to handle the paperwork for the roof projects. He stated although the Architect would have to be on-site to verify that the work was being done to the specifications, that they did not want to have duplicate inspections. Therefore, he explained by having a full-time inspector on-site that it would be less time that the Architect would need to be on-site minimizing the cost for the Architect. He stated that they have not solicited bids for the Architect work yet.

Mr. Schneider stated the PMBC believed that they gave Colliers Project Leaders every opportunity to come back with another price. He concluded his comments by stating that the PMBC selected STV Construction, Inc., based on all the reasons he explained this evening.

Councilor Saums stated that this was an interesting case noting that with the Schools Consolidation/Improvement Projects (Middle School & Gallup Hill School) they learned that the town should have had some professional oversight. Therefore, he stated for the Board of Education's Roof Replacement Projects they were looking to hire a company to oversee the contractor. However, he stated what makes this interesting was the following:

- Colliers Project Leaders - Councilor Saums stated Colliers was the Firm that was looking over the work that was done by O&G Industries on the Schools

Consolidation/Improvement Projects (Middle School & Gallup Hill School) to close out the Projects in preparation for the State's Audit as it pertained to receiving the Grant Reimbursement Funding. Councilor Saums stated Colliers Project Leaders was doing a good job for the town, noting that they were finding the errors that were made by not having a Project Manager on-site. He stated Colliers Project Leaders work was known by the town; however, they were not specifically asked to come back with a second or third proposal, as STV Construction, Inc., was. He stated he understands that PMBC Chairman Schneider did the calculation to add a full-time inspector to Colliers Project Leaders' proposed cost.

- STV Construction's, Inc., - Councilor Saums stated their work was not known by the town, but the PMBC asked them to come back with a second and third proposal.

Councilor Saums stated because the proposals were now made public that it would be difficult to ask Colliers Project Leaders to come back with a second price. He stated the process should have been to ask Colliers Project Leaders to provide a second proposal that included a full-time inspector on-site to provide a fair and equitable process. Mr. Schneider acknowledged that Colliers Project Leaders was doing an excellent job with preparing the Schools Consolidation/ Improvement Projects (Middle School & Gallup Hill School) for the State Audit, noting that they know everything about what was required for the filing of State Grants, etc. However, he stated in interviewing the two Firms for the Roof Replacement Projects (Colliers Project Leaders and STV Construction, Inc.) that the PMBC felt that STV Construction interviewed well, and the PMBC was more comfortable with how STV Construction, Inc. was going to manage the roof replacement projects.

Councilor Saums stated his experience with Requests for Proposals (RFP) was that some companies interview well, and some do not interview well; they respond to bids well and they do not respond to bids well; and they do jobs well and they do jobs poorly. Therefore, he stated because the town had experience with using Colliers Project Leaders that he would like to know what their price would be if the town gave them the same requirements to include a full-time inspector to bring the two bid specifications up to the same expectations. Mr. Schneider stated that they could go back to Colliers Project Leaders.

Councilor Ingalls questioned whether the initial Bid Specifications called for a full-time inspector on-site. Mr. Schneider stated in the Requests for Proposals that they were looking for the scope of work that the Firms would provide, stating that he did not believe the Bid #LPS 23-01 (Owner's Representative Services for Select Capital Projects) was detailed to specifically ask for a full-time inspector. Board of Education Director of Facilities and Grounds Wayne Donaldson stated the LPS Request was not specific and did not call for a full-time inspector on-site. He stated the LPS Request asked for the following:

- Inspect the work
- Attend the Construction Meetings
- Review the Plans
- Follow the Project thru to the State Audit

Mr. Donaldson commented on the issues they had with the new roofs for the Schools Consolidation/ Improvement Projects (Middle School & Gallup Hill School), noting that areas had to be cut out and replaced. Therefore, he stated although the roof manufacturer provided a 25-year warrantee, they have brand new roofs that look like they have already been patched.

Councilor Saums requested the PMBC ask Colliers Project Leaders to provide a second proposal that included a full-time inspector on-site to level the specifications and provide a fair and equitable process.

Mr. Donaldson stated Colliers Project Leaders' proposal included an inspector for 20-hours for each of the two roof projects (Board of Education Central Office and Juliet W. Long School).

MOTION to withdraw the

MOTION to recommend the Town Council grant a Bid Waiver to STV Construction Inc., not to exceed \$91,496 due to receiving fewer than the required three bids in response to Bid #LPS 23-01 (Owner's Representative Services for Select Capital Projects,), in accordance with Ordinance #200-001 (rev 1) "*An Ordinance for Purchasing*".

Moved by Councilor Ingalls, seconded by Councilor Saums

VOTE: 2 - 0 Approved to Withdraw

Councilor Saums thanked Mr. Schneider, Mr. Gush, and Mr. Donaldson for attending tonight's meeting.

PMBC Chairman Gary Schneider, PMBC Member Joe Gush, and Board of Education Director of Facilities and Grounds Wayne Donaldson left the meeting at 5:31 p.m.

RESULT: WITHDRAWN

4. MOTION to overspend account 10110205-53610 Specialty Approved Counsel through June 30, 2023.

Moved by Councilor Ingalls, seconded by Councilor Saums

Discussion: Councilor Saums stated that the Specialty Approved Counsel Account covered labor attorney fees, land use attorney fees, tax attorney fees and other specialty counsel. He stated the Fiscal Year 2022/2023 Budget included \$30,000 for these expenses. He stated to date the Account had an expended balance of \$31,086; which did not include the

outstanding invoices for February from both Shipman & Goodwin (labor); and Fahey & Landolina (land use).

Councilor Saums explained that the Land Use Department incurred significant costs this year for the rewriting of the Zoning Regulations as well as the Subdivision Regulation rewrite. He also noted that there were several technical applications that required legal counsel and that Labor Counsel was also required for several outstanding labor issues.

Councilor Saums went on to state although he did not like to overspend accounts that the town's practice for these types of expenses has been not budget everything they might spend because companies look at municipal budgets. He stated by authorizing to overspend an account, when needed, kept the law firms guessing on what the town was willing to spend and it kept everyone honest.

Councilor Ingalls stated she understood the strategy to not include an "up-to" amount to overspend an Account. However, she stated if Councilor Ryan was present this evening that his point would be that they were voting "yes" without stating a budget number; and therefore, she wanted to say it for him.

Councilor Saums stated that Councilor Ryan would also question where the additional funds to overspend the Account were coming from.

Finance Director Matthew Bonin explained that it was difficult to project what the costs would be to cover the expenses to the end of the fiscal year. He noted that the funds would come from under spent accounts at year-end.

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. MOTION to approve a tax refund in the amount of \$5085.18 exceeding \$2,400.00 in accordance with tax collector department procedures.

James & Valerie Hazlin - Double Payment - \$5,085.18

Moved by Councilor Ingalls, seconded by Councilor Saums

Discussion: Councilor Saums stated in accordance with policies established for the Tax Collection Department, that refunds to taxpayer exceeding \$2,400 need to be approved by the Town Council. He stated, as noted in the motion, that this was a case of a double payment in which both the property owner and the mortgage/escrow company paid the taxes. Therefore, he stated a refund was in order.

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

6. Continued discussion regarding potential uses of the revenue received from Public Act No.21-58 “An Act Concerning Solid Waste Management” in accordance with “Resolution Regarding Revenues Received from Beverage Container Surcharges” adopted on June 8, 2022.

Councilor Saums provided some background noting that the “*Bottle Bill*” (Public Act No. 21-58 - *An Act Concerning Solid Waste Management*”) implemented a five-cent surcharge on any beverage container containing a spirit or liquor of fifty milliliters. He explained that the State’s initial proposal was to place a .25 cent deposit on nip bottles. However, he stated the .25 cent nip bottle deposit failed because the Liquor Lobbyists successfully convinced the State to instead give money the towns to pay for the clean-up of the nip bottles that litter the sides of the roads.

Councilor Saums went on to explain that based on the “*Bottle Bill*” (Public Act No. 21-58 - *An Act Concerning Solid Waste Management*”) the State approved 0.5 cent surcharge on each bottle noting that every six-months the State would disburse the surcharge fee to the town in which the beverages were sold. He stated the last disbursement Ledyard received was in the amount of \$13,027.06 which was for the sale of 260,541 nip bottles during that period. He stated in accordance with *Public Act No.21-58* and Ledyard’s *Resolution #003-2022-June 8* the surcharge funds could only be used for the following purposes:

- (1) Environmental measures intended to reduce the generation of solid waste;
- (2) Reduce the impact of litter caused by such solid waste, including, but not limited to, the hiring of a recycling coordinator
- (3) The installation of storm drain filters designed to block solid waste and beverage container debris or
- (4) The purchase of a mechanical street sweeper, vacuum or broom that removes litter, including, but not limited to, such beverage containers and other debris from streets, sidewalks and abutting lawn and turf.

Councilor Saums went on to explain that the surcharge revenue was being appropriated to Account 21040101-57316 (*Beverage Container Surcharges*) and that the funds could accumulate in the Account until the town decided on a plan to spend the funds. He stated the purpose for tonight’s discussion was to discuss ideas on how to spend the funds.

The Committee discussed the following ideas for the use of the Bottle Bill Revenues:

- Collect the nip bottle and deposit them on the steps of the Capital in Hartford.
- Offer Residents 0.25 cents per nip bottle they pick-up from the roads, until the money was used up. The following was discussed regarding this idea:
 - Ask Southeastern Connecticut Regional Resource Recovery Authority (SCRRA) to provide the clear plastic bags for the town's roadside clean-up; which SCRRA has done in past years.
 - Ask Residents to put the nip bottles in the clear plastic bags.
 - Who would count the bottles, it's a dirty job.
- Street Sweeping - Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin stated in consultation with Finance Director Matthew Bonin that some of the Bottle Bill revenues were already being spent to rent a Street Sweeper, noting that this was one of the state statutory eligible uses. He stated it would take them about one month to sweep the entire town and the cost would use about one-third of the annual accrual Bottle Bill revenues. He stated in December, 2022 the town sold the 2000 Mobil Athey Sweeper for \$15,000 using the GovDeals on-line auction site. He addressed the cost to house and maintain a piece of equipment that the town only used for one month out of the year, noting that it may be more cost effective to rent a sweeper. However, he stated that this opinion may change now that the State Legislation would allow the town to use the Bottle Bill Revenue to purchase a sweeper. He stated with availability of an annual \$30,000 from the Bottle Bill Revenues that they may be able to finance a sweeper well within its replacement cycle along with the associated maintenance costs.

Councilor Saums stated that he liked spending the funding to pay for roadside sweeping, however, he stated that sweeping the streets did not fix the problem of nip bottles littering their roads.

- Town Sanctioned Community Roadside Clean-up Day - Councilor Ingalls stated a few years ago the Beautification Committee organized a Community Roadside Clean-up Event, noting that they asked for Street Captains, Neighborhood Captains, trash bags were provided, etc. She stated they had a great response noting the tremendous number of residents that turned out to participate in the event. She suggested the Community Clean-Up Day could concluded on the Town Green where prizes would be awarded for a variety of categories such as: Strangest Item Picked Up; the Most Number of Nip Bottles, etc. She stated the Event could be funded by the Bottle Bill Revenues. She stated that they could ask the Beautification Committee if they would like to organize this type of event.

Councilor Saums stated Earth Day was April 22, 2023, noting that they would not have enough time this year to organize a Community Clean-Up Day to happen on Earth Day. Councilor Ingalls stated the Beautification Committee had a lot of new members and that they were working to get themselves organized. She stated although Spring was a good time of year to have a Community Clean-Up Day because vegetation has not grown in yet, that the Community Clean-Up Day could be scheduled for any time noting that maybe it could be held in the Fall for this year.

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

Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin left the meeting at 5:52 p.m.

RESULT: CONTINUE

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

Councilor Saums stated the town has begun to receive payments from the National Opioid Settlement. He stated to date Ledyard has received \$53,134.19 (Perdue Pharma) from the Distributor Settlement and that they would be receiving additional payments from multiple sources such as the Janssen Settlement and from other sources such as Teva, Allergan, Walgreens, CVS and Walmart.

Councilor Saums stated the funding received from the National Opioid Settlement was being deposited into Account #20810201-58206-24206 (National Opioid Settlement) and that the funds could accumulate in the Account until the town decided on a plan to spend the funds. He stated like the Bottle Bill that the Opioid Settlement Revenues could only be used for specific opioid abatement purposes, including, but not limited to, expanding access to opioid use disorder prevention, intervention, treatment, and recovery options, etc.

Councilor Saums stated the purpose for tonight's discussion was to consider ideas on how to spend the Opioid Settlement Revenues.

The Committee discussed the following ideas:

- Ledyard Prevention Coalition
- Ledyard Public Health Nursing
- Ledyard Social Services
- Purchase Narcan for their Emergency Service Providers - It was noted that Narcan was already being provided for free to Emergency Services Providers.
- Donate funds to Addiction Organizations outside of Ledyard
- Work with Ledyard Public Schools
- Scholarship Fund for residents who were entering into a rehabilitation program.

The Finance Committee discussed the need to determine the best value in terms of helping people who were struggling with addiction. They noted the many families who have experienced and been touched by the loss of a child, parent, friend, etc. who became addicted to either prescription opioids and/or street drugs that may have been laced with fentanyl or other synthetic types of dangerous and harmful narcotics.

Nursing Administrator Karen Goetchius stated doctors were no longer prescribing pain medications for major surgeries such as a knee replacement at the same rate they

were 15-years ago.

The Finance Committee agreed to solicit ideas from Youth Services Coordinator Kate Sikorski-Maynard and Ledyard Prevention Coalition Kerensa Mansfield for the best use of the Opioid Settlement funding.

RESULT: CONTINUE

8. Continued discussion and possible action regarding the continuation of the Visiting Nurses Association in Ledyard.

Councilor Saums presented the Ledyard Visiting Nurse Agency (LVNA) Budget for the past eight years, noting that as a business their revenues have been steadily declining year after year.

Nursing Administrator Karen Goetchius questioned whether Councilor Saums was looking at the “*Projected Revenues*” versus the “*Actual Revenues*” or whether he was looking at their “*Actual Revenues*” versus their “*Expenses*” .

Councilor Saums stated he was looking at the *Actual Revenues* minus the *Expenses*.

Ms. Goetchius explained in preparing the LVNA annual budgets that she has been too optimistic and that she went too high in projecting their revenues. She also noted that there were a number of things that impacted the LVNA Operations, noting the following:

- Staff turn-over - Ms. Goetchius stated they had to turn some patients away because they did not have enough staff, which they had never done before.
- Implementation of the Emergency Medical Records Software (EMR) - Ms. Goetchius noted that there was a learning curve for the nurses to use the new software program.
- Changes in the Insurance - Ms. Goetchius stated the changes in the insurances were complicated and were happening quickly. She explained this coupled with the new Emergency Medical Records Software (EMR) that their Biller could not keep up with filing of the claims correctly; and therefore, they were being denied payment. She stated they currently had about \$100,000 in the queue coming to them.
- Billing Position - Ms. Goetchius stated this position was eliminated, which included benefits. She stated the LVNA was now contracting with the Emergency Medical Records Software Company to handling their billing. She stated the contract would pay the Billing Company 2% for the collection of Medicare Payments; and 4% for the collection of Private Insurance. She stated if they paid the Billing Company \$12,000 - \$13,000 per year, compared to Salary/Benefits

they were paying for the Biller position, that the LVNA would come out ahead. She stated last year (fy 2022) she gave money back to the Town.

Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated the LVNA expenses came in under the budgeted amount. He noted the LVNA Fiscal Year 2021/2022 as follows:

- ✓ Expenditure Budget: \$857,000
- ✓ Total Actual Expenditures \$723,000 (not including benefits)
- ✓ Actual Revenues: \$636,929.

Councilor Saums stated that they have to look at the LVNA from a Business Perspective. He stated the LVNA Revenues have been trending downward noting that they have been losing money since Fiscal Year 2017/2018.

Ms. Goetchius stated that she agreed that the revenues were not coming in as she had projected, explaining that around Fiscal Year 2017/2018 the large medical groups such as Yale New Haven Health and Hartford Healthcare started buying up all the Visiting Nursing Agencies.

Ms. Goetchius continued by noting that she has been with the town for 25-years and she questioned the reason the LVNA was the only Department that had to cover their expenditure budget. She stated no other Department had to generate revenues to cover their expenditure budgets. She noted the Emergency Dispatch Communications Department as an example, stating that their overtime was already over the amount budgeted for the year. She stated Ledyard could outsource the Emergency Dispatch Communications work.

Councilor Saums explained the town was required to provide certain services such as Police, Fire, Ambulance, and Dispatch Communications. He stated whether the town outsourced Dispatch Services or whether they handle this work in-house that the town would have to pay to provide those services. However, he stated that the town does not have to provide Visiting Nursing Services.

Ms. Goetchius stated the LVNA has about 15 residents who private pay to have a home health aide give them a shower once or twice a week. She stated no other Agency would provide these types of services for them. She stated by not offering LVNA services that the quality of services would not be there. Councilor Saums stated he agreed that LVNA provided great quality, noting that the work Ms. Goetchius and her team have done was phenomenal, noting the LVNA has been nationally recognized for being in the Top 25-VNA's in the country for the services they provided and in their patients satisfaction. However, he stated based on the decline in revenues that residents were making the decision not to use the LVNA, noting that the town had no control over their decisions.

Ms. Goetchius stated she was a one-man show noting that she oversees the entire LVNA operation. She stated that she had stopped the postcard mailings because the quarterly Events Magazine was going to reach every household in town. However, she stated the LVNA was not getting a good return from the Events Magazine. Therefore, she stated that she was planning to go back to doing separate mailings to inform residents about the services the LVNA provided. She addressed Councilor Saums' comment that *"it was the residents' decision to choose other visiting nursing providers, not the town's"*. Ms. Goetchius explained that it was not the residents' decision. She stated it was the doctors' decision when patients were being discharged from the hospital or from a surgical procedure. She stated the patients the LVNA was seeing were the people who had knee surgery and called them because they were not satisfied with the visiting nursing agency that the hospital, or the doctor arranged for them; and that they wanted to have the LVNA back. She stated by not offering the LVNA that they were taking away the patients' choice. She asked for one year to see if she could turn the tide again, noting that just 30 patients could make a difference in terms of revenues.

Councilor Saums stated the town was not taking the decision away from patients regarding which visiting nursing agency to use, noting that Yale New Haven Health, Hartford Healthcare, and United Healthcare have provided other Agency options, stating that these healthcare organizations have taken the decisions away from the patients. He stated the LVNA has done a phenomenal job however, he stated they have been talking about the large healthcare providers taking over the market for years; and that they all know that the doctors and healthcare organizations were directing patients to other visiting nursing agencies and they were not telling them that they had a choice. Ms. Goetchius stated the patients need to know that they have a voice and a choice in their visiting nurse services.

Ms. Goetchius asked for another year, noting that she would do more independent advertising and public relations and then see how the year goes.

Councilor Saums stated the Finance Committee was only discussing the issue noting that they did not have a motion to vote on this evening. He went on to state that it was his opinion that this was an unviable situation that could not continue, and that he did not know what they were going to do.

Councilor Ingalls asked Ms. Goetchius to present a Business Case to the Taxpayers of Ledyard that they should continue to cover a \$200,000-budget deficit to support the LVNA, noting that she was open to hear their Case. However, she stated that she agreed with Councilor Saums' that the LVNA was trending in the direction that was not viable. She stated VNA's across the State have gone on by the wayside.

Councilor Saums thanked Nursing Administrator Karen Goetchius for attending tonight's meeting

RESULT: CONTINUE

9. Any other New Business proper to come before the Committee.
None.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Saums moved the meeting be adjourned, seconded by Councilor Ingalls.
VOTE: 2 - 0 Approved and so declared, the meeting was adjourned at 6:28 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.