



TOWN OF LEDYARD

741 Colonel Ledyard Highway
Ledyard, Connecticut 06339

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

Chairman
Kevin J. Dombrowski

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, July 19, 2023

5:00 PM

Town Hall Annex Building - Hybrid
Format

In -Person Location: Council Chambers - Town Hall Annex Building

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

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87614460165?pwd=NUJ6VFZleU1ua0dBSE5DWkIyNytjUT09>

by Audio Only: Telephone: +1 646 558 8656; Meeting ID: 876 1446 0165; Passcode: 403666

WORKING DRAFT

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Councilor Bill Saums
Councilor Andra Ingalls
Councilor Tim Ryan

In addition, the following were also in attendance:

Fred Allyn, III Mayor
Matt Bonin Finance Director
John Rich Police Chief
Steve Holyfield Administrator of Emergency Services
Roxanne Maher Administrative Assistant

III. RESIDENTS & PROPERTY OWNERS COMMENTS

None.

IV. PRESENTATIONS / INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Councilor Saums addressed the condition of the guiderails along Sandy Hollow Road. He stated the guiderails needed to be replaced, noting that they were currently the steel ribbon type guiderails. He stated because Sandy Hollow Road was

designated as a Scenic Road that the guiderails should be post and cable, however, he noted it would cost twice as much to install the post and cable guiderails than to install the steel ribbon guiderails. Mayor Allyn, III, stated traffic records indicated that only one vehicle has gone off the road and into the shallow end of the reservoir and he noted the individual was able to get out of the vehicle. He stated Lieutenant Allan Muench went into the water to look the individual, who was hiding in a nearby attic.

Police Chief John Rich noted that he was aware of one other vehicle that went off the road, in 2005, however, he stated the truck did not go into the reservoir.

Councilor Ingalls questioned whether there was any grant funding related to the protection/preservation of Scenic Roads that could be obtained to help offset the cost to install the post and cable guiderails. Mayor Allyn noted Councilor Ingalls' suggestion and he stated it would be worth looking into the availability of grant funding to replace the guiderails. He noted the last time Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin obtained cost estimates that it was going to cost about \$250,000 for the steel ribbon guiderails. He went on to state as Councilor Saums has suggested in the past, that perhaps Groton Utilities (GU) would be willing to fund the replacement of the guardrails, noting that there were some changes in the Groton Utilities Leadership.

Councilor Ryan stated in 2022 there was a Federal Highway Authority National State Highways Program offering \$22 million in grant funding that the States could apply for to make improvements such as Highway Facilities, safety improvements, etc.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION to approve the Finance Committee Regular Meeting Minutes of June 21, 2023

Moved by Councilor Ingalls, seconded by Councilor Ryan

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

MOVER: Andra Ingalls

VI. FINANCE DIRECTOR REPORT

Finance Director's Report

Finance Director Matthew Bonin reported on the following: (1) Fiscal Year 2022/2023 Close-Out - Mr. Bonin stated the Finance Department was continuing their work to close-out the Fiscal Year 2022/2023 Budget; (2) Schools Consolidation/Improvement Projects (Middle School and Gallup Hill School) State Funding - Mr. Bonin stated that he was waiting for the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to schedule a meeting to discuss the next release of the state grant funding to Ledyard.

Mayor Allyn, III, addressed the release of state funding for the Schools Consolidation/Improvement Projects (Middle School and Gallup Hill School). He noted that he recently spoke with the Waterford Selectman Rob Brule and North Stonington Selectman Robert Carlson regarding the timing for the State to release the grant funding for their school projects. He stated that Waterford has been waiting five years and North Stonington has been waiting three years for the State to complete their Audit and release the promised grant funding. Therefore, he stated when he does have the opportunity to meet with the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) that he planned to discuss the number of years the State has been holding back grant funding and burden that this has placed on the municipalities, because the towns have to carry the debt along with the short-term non-refundable borrowing costs year after year. He stated this was totally unreasonable.

VII. FINANCIAL REPORTS

Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated he would provide the Financial Reports at the Finance Committee's August 16, 2023 meeting.

Financial Reports

VII. 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: CONTINUE

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

No Action

RESULT: NO ACTION

3. 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.

Mayor Allyn, III, stated that Montville recently implemented a program that local non-profit organizations could participate in to use some of the Opioid Settlement Funding for roadside cleanup. He stated he spoke to Montville Mayor Ronald McDaniel this afternoon about their program, noting that it was similar to the "*Adopt a Highway*" program. He stated Mayor McDaniel sent him some information regarding on how Montville was going to organize/structure the program. He

explained that Montville was asking groups to “Adopt a Highway” which involved a roadside clean-up to pick-up litter as well as the nip bottles. He stated that Montville was asking the Groups/Organizations to keep the nip bottle separate, explaining that they would be compensated for the collection of the nip bottles. He stated if Montville finds the program to be effective that he would share the Montville’s Program with the Finance Committee to consider for implementation.

RESULT: CONTINUE

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

IX.. NEW BUSINESS

1. MOTION to transfer up-to \$21,027.00 from Police Capital Vehicle Account 21020101-57510 to Police Capital New Equipment Account 21020101-57300 to allow for the purchase of new Glock 9mm Handguns for Ledyard Police Department.

Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Ingalls

Discussion: Councilor Saums stated the background information regarding the funding request for the Police Department to change from the current 45 caliber handgun to the 9mm handgun platform noted the improvements in the 9mm handgun included an optic system commonly referred to as a “*red dot*” and that the ammunition costs would be reduced by approximately \$1, 000 per order. He addressed the importance of the red dot optic system for shooting accuracy and for liability.

Police Chief John Rich explained in accordance with recent trends in law enforcement, including changes to standard issue firearms for the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Connecticut State Police, that Ledyard’s Firearms Training Staff has conducted the testing of handguns with the intention of transitioning to a 9mm platform. He explained that the selected handgun, the Glock G45 MOS 9mm pistol, would be equipped with an optic system commonly referred to as a “red dot” sight. He stated the use of *red dot* sights has been shown to improve shooting accuracy at all distances in varying light conditions.

Chief Rich went on to explain the following factors considered in the Firearms Training Unit Proposal included:

- Handgun frame size with consideration to varying hand sizes within the department.
- Shooting accuracy and marksmanship at all distances and in varying light conditions (Red dot vs fixed sights).
- Availability to use one’s peripheral vision while shooting (both eyes open).
- Reduced Ammunition Cost - 9mm versus 45 caliber
- Additional capacity per magazine (17 rounds vs. 13 rounds)
- Officer performance under stress conditions (Bristol).
- Age of current equipment - typically keep handguns about 8 - 10 years

- Credit for equipment trade in (\$10,850.00 or \$310 per unit)
- Available State Contract Pricing

Chief Rich stated as Councilor Saums mentioned that the ammunition costs would be reduced by approximately \$1,000 per order, explaining that the 9mm held 17 rounds per magazine versus the current 13 rounds per magazine with the 45 caliber handgun.

Councilor Saums questioned the gun manufacturer they would be purchasing the handguns from. Chief Rich stated that they would continue to use the Glock noting they manufactured a high-quality product, noting that the *red dot* sights would come installed on the handgun.

Councilor Ryan noted during the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget Work Sessions the Finance Committee decided not to include funding in the Police Capital Account for the purchase of the new handguns, as requested. He went on to note that the Police Capital - New Equipment Account (#21020101-57300) only had a balance of \$1; and that the requested \$21,027 would be transferred from the Police Capital Vehicle Account to purchase the 9mm handguns. Therefore, he questioned how this transfer would impact the Police Department relative to their vehicle replacement schedule. Chief Rich explained that when the Police Department provides traffic services at construction sites, etc., that the Contractor pays for the Police Officer, the use of the Police Cruiser, etc. noting that the funding received for the police cruiser was allocated to their Vehicle Capital Account. He stated because they had a lot of work this year with Eversource replacing the transmission lines, Frontier Communications installing the fiber network throughout the entire town, tree work, and other projects, that the Police Department has received more revenue than they have typically received in past years. Therefore, he stated the transfer of these funds and for the next item (#2) on tonight's agenda would not adversely impact the funding for the cruiser replacement schedule for Fiscal Year 2023/2024. He noted they were scheduled to replace one Administrative Vehicle and one Cruiser this year (fy 23/24).

Councilor Ryan questioned in preparing the annual budget whether they included estimated the revenues for the Police Vehicle Replacement received from the Police Construction work. Finance Director Matthew Bonin explained the budget included an expense item and corresponding revenue item for the Police Vehicle Replacement.

Councilor Ingalls questioned whether Police Officers would require more training relative to the *red dot optic sight* platform; and whether seeing the red dot would change a person's behavior. Chief Rich explained the lead time to receive the 9mm handguns/equipment was about four-months. He stated during that time the Police Department would be obtaining new qualifications. He stated went on to explain that only the Police Officer would see the *red dot*, and that the person would not see the *red dot*. However, he stated with the Tasers the person does see the *red dot* and that it could change the person's behavior.

Councilor Saums noted they had good questions; and received good answers. He stated the town had the funds to purchase the new handguns. He stated the 9mm handgun with the *red dot optic sight* and four more rounds was a lifesaving platform.

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

MOVER: Tim Ryan

SECONDER: Andra Ingalls

AYE: 3 Saums, Ingalls and Ryan

2. MOTION to transfer up to \$8,863.00 from Police Capital Vehicle Account 21020101-57510 to Police Capital New Equipment Account 21020101-57300 to allow for the replacement of critical accident investigation and reconstruction equipment for Ledyard Police Department.

Moved by Councilor Ingalls, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: Councilor Saums stated the Ledyard Police Department has an Accident Investigation/Reconstruction Team that investigates fatal and serious injury crashes in the area. He stated because their equipment has become outdated the department was requesting \$8,863.00 be transferred from the Police Capital Vehicle Account (#21020101-57510) to Police Capital New Equipment Account (#21020101-57300) to replace the failing equipment. He noted as discussed in New Business Item #1 (see above) that the transfer of these funds would not adversely impact the Police Department's vehicle replacement schedule.

Police Chief John Rich provided some background noting in 2017, Ledyard's Police Department led the formation of the Southeast Connecticut Regional Traffic Unit in partnership with the Stonington and the Town of Groton Police Departments. He stated this Unit was comprised of specially trained officers that uses special measuring devices such as lasers for the accurate mapping and the reconstruction of fatal crash scenes. He stated recently they experienced a total failure of the data collector which delayed the completion of a fatal crash investigation. He also explained that the new laser equipment had a Bluetooth type of communication that would talk with the other end of the equipment, which their current equipment does not have. Therefore, he stated the updated equipment, although it would be the same type of evidence collection process, that it would greatly improve the integration of the digital data, inspections, maps/overlays of the scene that would produce presentations/reports that could be used in court process. He stated this equipment could tell them when the brakes went on, the speed of the vehicle, etc. He stated this \$8,863.00 would purchase the critical mapping equipment that would reproduce the accident scene as it was when the Police Officers were doing the investigation.

Councilor Ryan questioned Ledyard received revenue from the other towns who were part of the Southeast Connecticut Regional Traffic Unit. Chief Rich stated that

Ledyard was currently partnering with the Town of Groton and North Stonington; and that he anticipated that the new Police Chief of the City of Groton would like to also join the Regional Unit. He explained should there be a fatal accident in one of the Regional Unit Towns that Ledyard would send Police Officers to that town to operate the reconstruction equipment. He stated although Ledyard did not receive revenue from the other Regional Unit Towns that they received “*In-Kind*” services such as a Canine Unit, etc. that Ledyard would not pay for. He concluded by stating as part of the Regional Traffic Unit that the Towns shared resources and personnel.

Mayor Allyn stated VN Engineers completed a county wide traffic safety study, which showed the most dangerous intersections. He stated that he would share the Report with the Town Council.

Councilor Ryan reiterated as mentioned during New Business Item #1, that Chief Rich anticipated that use of the \$8,863.00 from the Police Capital Vehicle Account would be covered by the additional revenue from the Police services provided for construction contractors. Chief Rich stated that was correct.

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared

Councilor Saums thanked Police Chief John Rich for attending tonight’s meeting. Chief Rich left the meeting at 5:22 p.m.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

MOVER: Andra Ingalls

SECONDER: Tim Ryan

AYE: 3 Saums, Ingalls and Ryan

3. MOTION to appropriate \$298,211 to Account #21020401-57300-G0015 (Admin Emerg. Services - New Equipment - Misc. Grants).

In addition, authorize the expenditure of up to \$298,211 for purchase of new radio equipment for the fire departments. ..end

Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Ingalls

Discussion: Councilor Saums provided some background noting that Administrator of Emergency Services Steve Holyfield has been diligently submitting Applications for the Assistance to Firefighter’s Grant from FEMA over the past few years to purchase new radio equipment for the Fire Departments.

Councilor Saums went on to note at their March 24, 2023 meeting the Town Council authorized the Mayor to submit a grant through the FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program in the amount of \$298,210.52 with the local matching amount of \$14,200.52 for the acquisition of new portable and mobile radios for the fire departments and the Town has received notification that this year’s Grant Application

was approved. He stated this item was to allocate the \$298,210.52 grant funding to the *Admin Emerg. Services - New Equipment Account* and to authorize the purchase of the new radio equipment.

Administrator of Emergency Services Steve Holyfield stated the original quotes for the mobile and portable radios, chargers, carry cases, batteries, etc., was obtained in January, 2023. He stated the cost per radio was about \$4,200 and included the installation of the mobile radios and all the associated programming.

Councilor Saums noted the backup information indicated at that the Viking-Kenwood Radios have not been accepted for the use on the State's system. Mr. Holyfield explained at the time of the original quote was received in January, 2023 that the State had not yet approved the Viking-Kenwood radios. However, he stated that he believed that the State was now very close to accepting this radio model. He stated he received a revised quote today from J&S Radio of Willimantic, which included the State of CT Contract Bid Number, which was a clear indication that the State has approved their selected radio model.

Councilor Saums questioned the likelihood of the State changing its radio/communication platform again. Mr. Holyfield stated that he did not believe the State would be changing its communications platform, noting that they were currently using less than 1% of the total capacity and that they were continuing to grow. He stated that Waterford's communications system would be converting to the State's communication system. Therefore, he did not see the State making changes to the communication platform.

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

MOVER: Tim Ryan

SECONDER: Andra Ingalls

AYE: 3 Saums, Ingalls and Ryan

4. MOTION to authorize the Mayor to enter into a Real Estate Listing Agreement for the sale of the single family house located at 332 Colonel Ledyard Highway.

Moved by Councilor Ingalls, seconded by Councilor Saums

Discussion: Councilor Saums provided some background explaining in 2006 the Founders Preserve property was subdivided into a 36-lot subdivision with about 3,000 linear feet or two-thirds of a mile of new road and approximately forty new drainage structures. He stated because the road was never constructed none of the building lots were sold. However, the property was zoned R-60 and tax bills were generated for the 36 approved building lots. He continued to explain around 2015, the town foreclosed on the property and at a Special Town Meeting held on October 28, 2020 the Townspeople voted to convey the parcel to Avalonia Land Conservancy. However, he stated with the new boundary lines that the Developer had made for

the Subdivision, the property was essentially landlocked, and Avalonia Land Conservancy has not been able access the property. He stated the Town has since corrected (or restored) the boundary lines to their original lines. By correcting the boundary lines, the street address of the former Founders Preserve has become 334 Colonel Ledyard Highway and the adjacent property with the house on it has reverted back to its original address of 332 Colonel Ledyard Highway.

Councilor Saums went on to explain that the Town acquired the house at 332 Colonel Ledyard Highway thru a foreclosure in June 2017; noting the property was formerly known as the “*Founders Preserve Subdivision*” and included 46 ± acres. He explained because there was a small title issue regarding the boundary line the Town did not have a clear, saleable marketable title at that time. Therefore, he stated the Town has been leasing the house for about \$15,600 in rent per year, until they could get the title issue resolved, at which time the town planned to dispose of/sell the house. He stated with the corrected boundary lines they were now able to sell the property. He stated the site plan and survey has been completed, and the boundary lines have been corrected, so that the detached garage was now within the property boundary lines of 332 Colonel Ledyard Highway, and therefore, the property was ready to be sold. He noted that Avalonia Land Conservancy paid for the site plan and survey.

Mayor Allyn, III, stated the house located at 332 Colonel Ledyard Highway has been cleaned out and the Planning & Zoning Commission conducted and approved an 8-24 Review at their June 29, 2023 meeting. He stated a Market Analysis for the Valuation of the property has been conducted; and the offering price would be 255,000. He stated with the Deed in Lieu of Foreclosure recorded for 334 Colonel Ledyard Highway, the sale of 332 Colonel Ledyard Highway would allow the Town to recoup the most of the unpaid tax dollars and blight lien fees (\$277,000) associated with the 334 Colonel Ledyard Highway, while also removing the Town as a Landlord, and getting the home (332 Colonel Ledyard Highway) back on the tax rolls.

Mayor Allyn went on to note the smaller parcel to the north of the Founders Preserve property was the condemned house. He stated as he has been reporting during previous Town Council Meetings, (January 25, 2023; March 8, 2023; April 12, 2023; April 26, 2023; May 24, 2023; June 14, 2023) that the town has obtained the demolition permit and quotes to demolish the structure. He explained before they could demolish the house that there was a small amount of asbestos mastic in the location of the chimney that had to be removed.

Councilor Ryan questioned the process for the town to select the real estate broker to handle the town’s business for the sale of 332 Colonel Ledyard Highway. Mayor Allyn stated for the previous sale of a commercial piece of property that he selected a commercial practitioner, who was not in-town. However, he stated for residential properties, that he has been using different residential practitioners who reside in town. He stated when the town has business that he has been trying to spread it around to people who were town residents. Councilor Ryan stated that he wanted to ensure that the town was defensible in selecting a broker.

Once the Town received an offer to purchase the property, that in accordance with CGS 7-163e a Public Hearing would be held; and in accordance with the Chapter VII; Section 9 of the Town Charter a Special Town Meeting would be held at which the Townspeople would be asked to vote on the sale of 332 Colonel Ledyard Highway.

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

MOVER: Andra Ingalls

SECONDER: Tim Ryan

AYE: 3 Saums, Ingalls and Ryan

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

None.

X. ADJOURNMENT

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

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared, the meeting was adjourned at 5:40 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.