



TOWN OF LEDYARD

741 Colonel Ledyard Highway
Ledyard, Connecticut 06339

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

Chairman S. Naomi
Rodriguez

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, January 17, 2024

5:00 PM

Town Hall Annex Building - Hybrid
Format

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/86924296964?pwd=KCBIXWE7bnD4bMsaue6FHbIUr5Qt23.1>

by Audio Only: Telephone: +1 646 558 8656; Meeting ID: 869 2429 6964; Passcode: 688854

I CALL TO ORDER

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

Councilor Saccone 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: Tony Saccone
Jessica Buhle
Tim Ryan

In addition, the following were present:

S. Naomi Rodriguez Town Council Chairman
Carmen Garcia-Irizarry Town Councilor
Fred Allyn, II Mayor
Matthew Bonin Finance Director
John Ricci Police Chief
Jim Man Director of Emergency Management

Steve Holyfield Administrator of Emergency Services
Jon ManiLedyard Center Fire Chief
Pamela Ball Farmers Market Committee
Matthew Proctor Resident
Destiney Proctor Resident
Roxanne Maher Administrative Assistant

III. RESIDENTS & PROPERTY OWNERS COMMENTS

Ms. Destiney Proctor, 33 Highland Drive, Ledyard, stated that she and her husband Matthew were in the process of remortgaging/refinancing their home and that they attended the Finance Committee's January 3, 2024 meeting to request the Town of Ledyard Subordination their no interest *Home Rehabilitation Loan*. She noted in response to the Finance Committee's request to obtain new estimated mortgage payments for a *Partial Subordination*, which would call-in 50% of the loan, (\$16,000 +/-), that they were present this evening to provide those numbers.

Ms. Proctor stated she obtained the following:

- Breakdown of what they were currently paying.
- Difference between the two different loan amounts as follows:
 - Subordinating 100% of the \$32,820.40+/- of the *Housing Rehabilitation Revolving Loan Program*;
 - Subordinating 50% of the \$32,820.40+/- or \$16,000+/- of the *Housing Rehabilitation Revolving Loan Program*.

Ms. Proctor stated by Subordinating 50% of their 32,820.40+/- *Housing Rehabilitation Loan* that they would be adding \$16,000 to their mortgage, causing their monthly mortgage payment to increase by \$100. She stated they would end up paying almost \$23,000 in interest on the additional \$16,000 over the period of the mortgage. She stated although they could pay the additional \$100 per month that it would put a burden on their family of six. She stated although \$100 per month might not seem like much to many people, that it was a significant amount for many Ledyard residents, noting that it was \$100 less per month that they would not have for groceries. She concluded by stating that "Yes" it was possible for them to handle the additional \$100 per month, but at the same time if the town wanted to help the residents of Ledyard, that they could help them.

IV. PRESENTATIONS / INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

None.

V. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION to approve the Finance Committee Minutes of January 3, 2024

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Ryan

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED AND SO DECLARED

VI. FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Financial Reports:

- Expenditure Report -Budget vs. Actual -Fiscal Year 2023/2024 January 31, 2024
- Revenue Report -Budget vs. Actual thru November, 30, 2023

VII. FINANCIAL REPORT

Finance Director Matthew Bonin reported on the following: (1) Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget Mr. Bonin stated budget preparations were underway, noting that all Departments submitted their proposed budgets by January 16, 2024, in accordance with the Town Charter; (2) American Rescue Plan Act Projects - Mr. Bonin stated he sent out an updated spreadsheet regarding the status of the American Rescue Plan Act Projects earlier this week, which was attached to tonight's Agenda packet ton the meeting portal. He stated that he added the following columns to the spreadsheet, as requested by Councilor Ryan: Unobligated on Contract; and Projected end value (for services activities); (3) Finance Department Fiscal Assistant Position has been filled; noting Ms. Nancy Michaud would be joining the Finance Department Staff on January 29, 2024.

Financial Reports:

Finance Director Matthew Bonin noted that he would provide the Budget verses Actuals Financial Reports at the Finance Committee's February 7, 2024 meeting.

This was ..

RESULT: .

VII. OLD BUSINESS

1. MOTION to remove from the Table and act on the

MOTION to recommend the Town Council authorize the Mayor to execute a "*Subordinate Agreement between the Town of Ledyard and Mr. Matthew Proctor*" pertaining to a Home Rehabilitation Loan in the amount of \$32,820.48 for 33 Highland Drive, Ledyard.

Moved by Councilor Saccone, seconded by Councilor Buhle

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved to remove from the Table

Councilor Saccone noted that they now have the Motion on the Table as follows:

A motion was made by Saccone, seconded by Buhle, that this be Approved and so declared. The

motion carried by the following vote:

MOTION to authorize the Mayor to execute a “Subordinate Agreement between the Town of Ledyard and Mr. Matthew Proctor” pertaining to a Home Rehabilitation Loan in the amount of \$32,820.48 for 33 Highland Drive, Ledyard.

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Saccone

Discussion: Councilor Saccone provided some background noting at their January 3, 2024 meeting the Finance Committee reviewed Mr. and Mrs. Proctor’s request asking for the Town to *Subordinate their \$32,820.48 Home Rehabilitation Loan* that they obtained in 2017 to make repairs and improvements to their home located at 33 Highland Drive. He stated as Ms. Proctor mentioned earlier this evening under “*Residents and Property Owners Comments*” (see above) in their effort to try to help Mr. and Mrs. Proctor the Finance Committee requested they obtain some additional information from their mortgage lender. However, he stated during the past two-weeks that he continued to review the *Housing Rehabilitation Revolving Loan Program*, noting that the *Housing Rehabilitation Program/ Small Cities Promissory Note* required the loan to be paid back to the Town of Ledyard when the property was sold, changes title, or the property was remortgaged/refinanced, to enable the Town to loan those funds on a revolving basis to another qualifying family in-need of assistance to make repairs or improvements to their home. Therefore, he stated by the Town *Subordinating* Mr. and Mrs. Proctor’s \$32,820.48 *Home Rehabilitation Loan* that they would not be complying with *Small Cities Promissory Note*.

Councilor Buhle stated that she understood Ms. Proctor’s comment that \$100 per month was grocery money; and was considered to be a lot of money for families. However, she stated at the Finance Committee’s January 3, 2024 meeting Ms. Proctor stated by remortgaging/refinancing their home that they would be saving \$1,500 per month in credit card payments. Therefore, she stated with \$1,500 being added back into their household budget that increasing their mortgage payment by \$100 should be doable. Therefore, she stated that she agreed with Councilor Saccone’s comments that the Town needed to comply with the terms of the *Housing Rehabilitation Program/ Small Cities Promissory Note Agreement* which required them to call-in the no interest loan in the amount of \$32,820.48 with the Proctor’s remortgaging/refinancing their home.

Ms. Proctor explained when they initially did the *Housing Rehabilitation Loan* the gentleman they spoke with said that if they were putting themselves in a better financial position, so that they would not default on their current loan obligations, that it would be one of the times that the town would be willing to consider subordinating the no interest *Housing Rehabilitation Loan*. She stated the *Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program* was meant to help homeowners who met certain income criteria; explaining in 2017 that they were a family of six, they had just bought their house, and they were trying to make ends meet, which was when the *Housing Rehabilitation Loan* option popped up. She stated it sounded great, noting that the loan could be used to fix a roof or a boiler, etc., and that the house they bought had all those issues. She stated by adding 50% of the \$32,820.48 *Housing Rehabilitation Loan* that they would end up paying almost \$23,000 in interest on the extra money that they would be adding to their mortgage. She stated that they were a struggling family of six and that they were trying to put themselves in a better situation. She stated that she left the January 3, 2024 Finance Committee frustrated and disheartened because they felt that they were sticking it to

them, while at the same time the Finance Committee was looking to help other residents. She stated if her family does not refinance their mortgage that the town would not be able to help another family through the *Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program* for another twenty years, noting that the current elected officials may not even be in office at that time. She stated that the Finance Committee was comparing her family to other residents who were not them, noting that the Finance Committee barely knew about the *Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program*. She stated that she loved the town, the people in it, and the programs like *Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program*. She stated that she now felt that the giving and caring was only if it was completely beneficial to their Agenda, which was to put more money into the grant program. She stated that she had concerns about whether she stated her frustrations, because it may cause the Finance Committee to vote in the opposite direction and require them to pay back all of their \$32,820.48 *Housing Rehabilitation Loan*. She stated that there was more depth to this noting that it was not just paying an additional \$100 per month on their mortgage and the \$23,000 of interest stretched out over the 30-year term of the mortgage. She stated that she did not understand the need for the town to have their *Housing Rehabilitation Loan* paid back right now.

Councilor Ryan stated he heard the resident's frustration; however, he stated the fact of the matter was that there was an Agreement between the Town and the Applicant. He stated if these funds were repaid, that the town would be using the funds to help out and pay forward to other residents, noting that he would like to keep the intent of the *Housing Rehabilitation Revolving Loan Program* in focus.

Mayor Allyn, III, stated he was discouraged to hear Ms. Proctor's comments, because the purpose of the *Housing Rehabilitation Revolving Loan Program* was to do just what the Proctor's did, which was to put money out to the public for critical home repairs. He stated in the Proctor's case that over \$30,000 in home repairs were done, interest free,. He explained when the town does not recover those funds, either when refinancing or a sale occur that the Program would run dry, and at that point the Program would be done. Therefore, he stated in this case the Mr. and Mrs. Proctor had seven years to use the \$32,820.48 through the *Housing Rehabilitation Loan*, interest and payment free. He stated he also reread the *Housing Rehabilitation Program/ Small Cities Promissory Note Agreement*, noting that it stated the Town may, but it does not say that the Town shall choose to take a second position to any mortgage. He stated anytime you are in a second position the likelihood of not being repaid in the future was higher. He stated he stood by his primary comments that he stated at the January 3, 2024 Finance Committee meeting, as he does this evening.

Councilor Saccone repeated the Motion on the floor as follows before calling for a vote:

MOTION to recommend the Town Council authorize the Mayor to execute a "Subordinate Agreement between the Town of Ledyard and Mr. Matthew Proctor" pertaining to a *Home Rehabilitation Loan* in the amount of \$32,820.48 for 33 Highland Drive, Ledyard.

VOTE: 0 - 3 - Motion Failed

RESULT: MOTION FAILED

MOVER: Jessica Buhle

SECONDER: Tony Saccone

NAY: 3 Saccone, Buhle and Ryan

Ms. Proctor questioned whether the full \$32,820.48 *Home Rehabilitation Loan* had to be paid back. She stated at the January 3, 2024 Finance Committee meeting the Mayor proposed that they consider a *Partial Subordination* to call-in 50% of the loan; noting that the Finance Committee then asked her to obtain estimated mortgage payments to repay half (\$16,000) of the loan, which she brought with her to the meeting this evening. Councilor Saccone explained that the motion on the floor was to Subordinate the full \$32,820.48 of their *Home Rehabilitation Loan*. He stated the Finance Committee did not approve the request, as presented; and therefore, the request was denied.

Ms. Proctor questioned whether an additional Motion was required to approve the proposed *Partial Subordination* to call-in 50% of the loan; or whether this part was forgotten. Mayor Allyn explained that it was the Finance Committee's prerogative to determine whether they would change the Motion; or accept any of his advice, or none of his advice. He explained the process stating that he signed Agreements based on the Finance Committee and ultimately the Town Council's decisions/authorization. He explained that the Finance Committee had the opportunity to either amend the Motion or not. He stated that based on the Motion that was presented the Motion was not amended; therefore, the amount that was requested to be Subordinated was the full amount of \$32,820.48.

Councilor Buhle stated that the Finance Committee did not forget about the proposal to authorize a *Partial Subordination* to call-in 50% of the 1 *Home Rehabilitation Loan*. She stated while Ms. Proctor was obtaining the additional mortgage numbers that they were also doing some additional research and looking into the *Home Rehabilitation Revolving Loan Program*.

Councilor Saccone stated that he had no further comments, other than noting that the Motion that was on the floor to *Subordinate the Home Rehabilitation Loan* in the amount of \$32,820.48 for 33 Highland Drive, Ledyard was denied. Mr. Proctor stated should they decide not to refinance their home that the town would not see their money for another twenty years. Councilor Saccone stated that was correct based on the *Housing Rehabilitation Program/ Small Cities Promissory Note Agreement*.

Mr.& Mrs. Proctor left the meeting at 5:21 p.m.

2. 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.

Councilor Saccone noted that Finance Director Matthew Bonin sent out an updated spreadsheet regarding the status of the American Rescue Plan Act Projects earlier this week, which was attached to tonight's Agenda packet on the meeting portal.

Councilor Buhle stated that the Finance Committee would be working to assess needs in an effort to develop a plan relative to the reassignment/reallocation of funding from the balance of completed projects, so that there would not be any unused funds that would have to be returned US Treasury. She stated that she understood that the Board of Education received its own American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding. However, she thought that improvement to the Juliet W. Long School Playground would be a good use of the ARPA Funds. She stated that she would be speaking to the school before she came forward with a proposal.

Mayor Allyn, III, provided some background explaining for the use of the General Government ARPA Funds that the Finance Committee put together the ARPA Projects spreadsheet based on the Federal Guidelines, Criteria, and Weighted Ratings to prioritize the projects. He stated the Town Council approved some immediate needs projects, and that the ARPA Projects List was presented as part of the Fiscal Year 2022/2023 Budget Referendum and was voted on by the residents, noting that Finance Director Matthew Bonin has been updating the Projects List spreadsheet to track the progress of the projects and the funding. He stated if there were surplus funds remaining that the Finance Committee should reconvene to consider and prioritize “*Add-On Projects*”, such as the Juliet W. Long School Playground or the replacement of the guiderails on Sandy Hollow Road that Councilor Saccone mentioned at the January 3, 2024. He stated the priority of the project, and the allocation of the surplus ARPA Funds would need to be voted on by the Town Council.

RESULT: CONTINUE

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, noted the key language was on 10-page of the Public Act which stated the Nip Bottle Surcharge Revenue could 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 as beverage containers and other debris from streets, sidewalks and abutting lawn and turf.

Mayor Allyn stated the use of the Surcharge Revenues was limited in scope. He stated because the town no longer owned a streetsweeper that Public Works leased a streetsweeper this year. He stated the Surcharge Account had a balance of about \$45,000; and that another disbursement from the State would be received in April, noting that the Surcharge Revenues were released to the municipalities quarterly.

Chairman Rodriguez questioned the cost for the town to lease the streetsweeper. Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated the cost to lease the streetsweeper was about \$14,000. Mayor Allyn explained although the streetsweeper helped, that it was only one component, noting that it was not able to clean the shoulder of the roads which was where many of the nip bottles were found.

Councilor Buhle stated that she would be working to develop a *Rubric* as discussed the Finance Committee discussed at their January 3, 2024 meeting.

RESULT: CONTINUE

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

None.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

1. MOTION to authorize the Mayor to submit a 2024 High Risk Rural Road Speed Enforcement Grant Application in the amount of up-to \$60,000 funded through the Federal Highway Safety Administration (FHWA).

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: Police Chief John Rich stated in a letter dated January 10, 2024 the Ledyard Police Department received notification that they were eligible to apply for a *2024 High Risk Rural Road Speed Enforcement Grant*. He stated that this opportunity would use Connecticut's grant monies that were being funded through the Federal Highway Safety Administration (FHWA) that were aimed to reduce the amount of speed related fatalities and injuries on Connecticut's High Risk Rural Roads. He stated the Enforcement Period would be from March 1, 2024 - May 31, 2024 and he noted eligible expenses included the following:

- Purchase of 4 speed measuring devices not to exceed a maximum of \$4,900 per device.
- Overtime wages and overtime fringe benefits.

Chief Rich explained although eligible Municipalities could receive a total of \$60,000 through this 100% Reimbursable Grant Program, that Ledyard would be seeking \$15,572.94. He noted because a *Statement of Interest* must be submitted to the State by January 31, 2024; that Sergeant Pudvah has been working to prepare the required documentation.

Chief Rich noted that Ledyard would be operating one radar location; and that their expenses would be as follows:

- Staffing would include thirty shifts - each shift would be four hours during the Enforcement Period (March 1, 2024 - May 31, 2024)

- Purchase of one speed measuring devices.

Chief Rich continued by noting that because this was a 100% Reimbursable Grant that the town would need to provide up-front funding and would then be reimbursed by the State. Therefore, he stated in speaking with Finance Director Matthew Bonin, that the Police Department's Grant Budget Account currently had a balance of \$5,000 that could be used toward its upfront funding, noting that the town would need to allocate another \$10,572.94 to cover the costs of the Enforcement Program, until the 100% Reimbursement Funds were received.

Councilor Buhle noted that the State's January 10, 2024 letter clearly stated that municipalities should not make purchases or start the Speed Enforcement Period until the Grant Application was approved. Therefore, she stated that she would assume the Police Department would not be moving forward until they received notification that their Grant Application was approved. Chief Rich stated that Councilor Buhle's understanding was correct.

Councilor Saccone questioned whether they needed to identify the funding source of the needed \$10,572.94 to cover the total \$15,572.94 cost to operate the Speed Enforcement Program at this time. Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated once the Grant was awarded that the Town would appropriate the funds to an Account to be expended from.

Chief Rich stated the purpose of tonight's Motion was to authorize the Mayor to submit the 2024 High Risk Rural Road Speed Enforcement Grant Application. He stated the Police Department and Town have done this process many times in the past.

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

MOVER: Jessica Buhle

SECONDER: Tim Ryan

AYE: 3 Saccone, Buhle and Ryan

2. MOTION to transfer funding to Account 21020103-57300 (Dispatch - New Equipment) for the purchase of communications equipment to accommodate emergency radio communications for Ledyard Police Department, Ledyard Fire Company, and Gales Ferry Fire Company on the Connecticut Land Mobile Radio Network (CLMRN) as follows:

- Up to \$14,513.00 from Account 21020103-57300 G0014 (Dispatch - New Equipment - AARPA Funds); and
- Up to \$30,000.00 from Account 21020401-57300 (AES - New Equipment).

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: Police Chief Rich explained in the aftermath of the Covid-19 Pandemic that with the support of the Mayor, that the Ledyard Police Department, Ledyard Fire Company, and Gales Ferry Fire Company have collectively engaged in a project to migrate all primary emergency radio communications to the Connecticut Land Mobile Radio Network (CLMRN) to provide interoperability and interpretive

communication among all the police departments and fire departments in the local area, noting that many of the towns were joining the State Radio System. He stated the Police Department was currently operating on one single channel. He stated that they do have other tactical channels and traffic channels, however, they were not operational because they currently do not have the equipment to support them.

Chief Rich stated this project would provide several benefits to the town, that would include the use of a robust and reliable State Radio Network which would enhance the safety of responders, interoperability with surrounding communities for mutual aid, and “*over the air*” update of their radios and software. He stated the other Department on the State system were as follows: Stonington, Groton Town, Groton City, Montville, Norwich, the Connecticut State Police, and Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). He noted that Waterford, New London, and East Lyme were also were submitting petitions to join the State System. He stated this would allow all of Southeastern Connecticut to talk to one another directly without having to go through their Dispatch Centers for any kind of emergency.

Chief Rich noted that the quote from Communications Plus in the amount of \$64,964.68 included equipment upgrades for the Ledyard Emergency Communications Center to support all the channels for communications for all three Departments on the Connecticut Land Mobile Radio Network (CLMRN) was attached to the Agenda on the meeting portal for tonight’s meeting.

Chief Rich went on to state that using a combination of grant funding, American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding (\$30,000); and annual budget funding (\$14,513), that the Departments would be able to obtain the necessary mobile and portable radios for all the town’s first responders to communicate on the State Radio System. He stated that he and Administrator of Emergency Services Steve Holyfield talked with both Fire Chiefs, and that they agreed to put forward the \$30,000 of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) that was remaining from the \$75,000 that was allocated to replace two Dispatch Communications Stations at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). He explained that each year the Police Department budgeted \$8,500 into their equipment replacement account, noting that they would be using some funding from this account for the equipment upgrades. He stated all these funds would be transferred to Account 21020103-57300 (Dispatch - New Equipment); to purchase the equipment.

Councilor Buhle questioned whether the town needed to solicit bids for equipment upgrades. Chief Rich stated that Communications Plus was included on the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Standing Bid Waiver List.

Councilor Ryan addressed the use of the \$30,000 ARPA funding that was remaining from the \$75,000 that was allocated to replace two Dispatch Communications Stations at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). He stated using the remaining ARPA Funds to upgrade their communications equipment to join the *Connecticut Land Mobile Radio Network* (CLMRN) was a great use of funds, and that he did not

dispute that. However, he stated he wanted to make sure that the Finance Committee continued their process to prioritize projects, with regard to the use/reallocation of the ARPA Funding, using the ARPA Projects Spreadsheet to reprioritize the projects, and for the redistribution of unspent funds. He explained that the way the Finance Committee has been handling the unspent ARPA Funds thus far, was for the unspent funds to go back into the Unobligated Balance. Therefore, he noted that they would be breaking the precedence by using the \$30,000 that was remaining from the \$75,000 ARPA Dispatch Project to upgrade the communication equipment join the Connecticut Land Mobile Radio Network (CLMRN); and that he wanted the Finance Committee to be aware of that. He stated that he was interested in Councilor Saccone's and Councilor Buhle's thoughts on this process.

Councilor Saccone stated that he 100% agreed with Councilor Ryan's comments regarding the need to prioritize projects as unspent ARPA Funds become available. However, he stated in this case because they needed to upgrade their communications equipment throughout town to join the *Connecticut Land Mobile Radio Network* (CLMRN) that he would be in-favor of using the remaining \$30,000 that was allocated for the Dispatch Upgrade toward this initiative because of the importance of the need.

Councilor Buhle stated that she agreed with Councilor Ryan's comments regarding the need to consider and prioritize other projects as unencumbered ARPA Funds become available. However, she stated although the upgrade of the communication equipment to join the *Connecticut Land Mobile Radio Network* was not exactly the same as the work that was done to upgrade the Dispatch Consoles at the Emergency Operations Center (EOC); however, she stated because the use of the remaining \$30,000 ARPA Funding would help the Police Department, Fire Departments, and Dispatch in a similar way that she was comfortable with the use of the remaining funds toward this effort. She commented that it would have made sense for this communication equipment upgrade to have been included in the original upgrade project to the Dispatch Consoles at the EOC.

Councilor Ryan questioned whether there was timeline in which the communication equipment upgrades needed to be purchased/installed; or whether they had some time to follow the process they have been using to reprioritize projects for the for the redistribution of unspent funds. Chief Rich stated that the Vendor Pricing for the communication equipment would increase on February 1, 2024; therefore, he stated the project would cost more if they waited.

Councilor Buhle questioned whether there was enough funding in the other accounts, without using the \$30,000 ARPA Funding to facilitate the communication equipment upgrade. Chief Rich stated the Police Department Equipment Replacement Account currently had a \$20,000 balance. However, he stated even if they used the entire \$20,000 from the Equipment Replacement Account that they would still be about \$8,000 short; and that the Equipment Replacement Account would not have any funding available; which would mean that they would not have funding should the

need arise during the fiscal year.

Councilor Ryan stated that he would vote “Yes” this evening on the basis that he wanted to secure the lower pricing for the communication equipment before the price increased on February 1, 2024.

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared

Councilor Saccone thanked Chief Rich for attending tonight’s meeting.

Chief Rich left the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

RESULT: RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

MOVER: Jessica Buhle

SECONDER: Tim Ryan

AYE: 3 Saccone, Buhle and Ryan

3. MOTION to authorize the expenditure of up to \$30,000 from Account #0210-21020401-54325 (AES - CNR -Fire Apparatus) for the purchase of a used Fire Command Vehicle and to grant a bid waiver for the same amount for the purchase.

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: Councilor Saccone suggested a “*Friendly Amendment*” to increase the dollar amount from ~~\$20,000~~ to “*up-to \$30,000*” noting that the used vehicles that were available for \$20,000 had high mileage and were in need of additional repairs. Therefore, he stated by increasing the dollar amount to “*\$30,000*” that the town would be able to obtain a better value in the purchase of a Fire Command Vehicle. Councilor Buhle stated that she would accept the “*Friendly Amendment*” to increase the dollar amount to “*up-to \$30,000*”.

Councilor Ryan questioned whether there was enough funding in the Fire Department’s Apparatus Replacement Capital Improvement Account to support the additional \$10,000. Administrator of Emergency Services Steve Holyfield stated that although the Account had adequate funding, that the additional \$10,000 would slightly impact the account, noting that they were currently waiting for the cost estimate to repair the Gales Ferry Fire Chief’s vehicle that was in an accident on January 1, 2024. However, he stated that they could make the Fire Apparatus Replacement Schedule - Capital Plan work. He stated that he agreed with Councilor Saccone’s recommendation to increase the appropriation to up-to-\$30,000, noting the value/condition of the vehicles and additional costs associated such as moving the equipment (radio, lights, etc.) from the current vehicle to the purchased vehicle.

Councilor Ryan stated he valued the work that Administrator of Emergency Services Steve Holyfield has done on the Fire Apparatus Replacement Schedule -Capital Plan; however, he wanted to make sure that using an additional \$10,000 would not upset his finely planned capital investments. Mr. Holyfield explained that the Fire Apparatus Replacement Schedule - Capital Plan does not include the actual sale

value of apparatus and equipment that the town surpluses at the end of its lifecycle. He noted as an example that the Ledyard Center Fire Department Brush Truck was next on the schedule for replacement. He stated although he may include \$25,000 as a revenue for the sale of that vehicle in the spreadsheet, that they may actually receive \$40,000. Therefore, he stated there were some tangibles in this dynamic Fire Apparatus Replacement Schedule document in terms of pricing, revenues, and expenditures.

Administrator of Emergency Services Steve Holyfield continued by noting that although he requested a Bid Waiver, he did not specify a vendor, explaining that he had some discussions with *Signal 5 Fire Apparatus* of Long Island New York, which was a company that sells pre-owned fire and emergency vehicles. He stated *Signal 5 Fire Apparatus* had some good leads on a variety of used Command Vehicles noting that the prices range from \$10,000 - \$20,000; and \$30,000 - \$40,000. He explained the difference between the two pricing levels, was that the higher priced vehicles would come pre-loaded with the command board, radio, lights, etc., which would actually be a cost savings.

Councilor Ryan noted at their December 13, 2023 meeting the Town Council approved to extended the Standing Bid waiver for Police Vehicles to include the purchase of general pool vehicles for the Town's fleet for various Departmental needs. He stated because this was for the Fire Department, that he did not know whether the purchase of the Command Vehicle would fall under that authorization. Mayor Allyn explained the Standing Bid Waiver List was for the purchase of vehicles from vendors that were on the State's bid contracts. Mr. Holyfield explained because they had a short-timeline to make a purchase when they do find a suitable used vehicle, that he included the request for a bid waiver. He stated the bid waiver would give him the ability to work with Ledyard Center Fire Chief Jon Mann to find a vehicle that would meet his needs, and to have the Mayor authorize the purchase, so that they would not lose out on an opportunity to purchase a vehicle.

Councilor Ryan provided a recap noting that the extended bid waiver that was approved by the Town Council on December 13, 2023 would not apply to the purchase of the Fire Department's Command Vehicle; and therefore, the bid waiver was required.

The Finance Committee agreed to increase the requested amount from ~~\$20,000~~ to **\$30,000** as a "*friendly amendment*" as noted in the Motion above.

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

MOVER: Jessica Buhle

SECONDER: Tim Ryan

AYE: 3 Saccone, Buhle and Ryan

4. MOTION to approve a revised Appendix A- Qualifying Income Schedule in accordance with Ordinance #200-005 (rev. 1) "An Ordinance to Provide Property Tax Relief for Certain Homeowners Age Sixty-Five or Over or Permanently and Totally Disabled (rev.1)" for the

filing period of February 1, 2024 - May 15, 2024.

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: Mayor Allyn, III, stated in addition to the State, the town provided tax relief to qualifying homeowners thru the adoption of Ordinance #200-005 (rev. 1) *“An Ordinance to Provide Property Tax Relief for Certain Homeowners Age Sixty-Five or Over or Permanently and Totally Disabled.”* He explained that the provisions of the Ordinance required the town to annually update the *“Qualifying Income Schedule”* to be consistent with the State’s Qualifying Income, which was based on the United States Social Security Administration Program.

Mayor Allyn went on to note that in accordance with Ordinance #200-005 (rev.1) Paragraph 3 *“Qualifications”*; paragraph (e) *“Persons qualified for tax credit or deferment benefits under this Ordinance are those whose maximum income during the calendar year preceding the year in which application is made for the tax credit does not exceed the Qualifying Income Schedule, as hereby incorporated in the ordinance as though fully set forth herein. A copy of the approved Qualifying Income Schedule shall be filed with the Town Clerk when established and when amended. The income guidelines provided in the Qualifying Income Schedule (Appendix A) shall be adjusted to reflect a cost-of-living increase issued by the United States Social Security Administration, pending the approval of the Town Council prior to the first of January of the year of application.”* He stated because the *“Qualifying Income Schedule”* was an Appendix to the Ordinance, and they were not changing the Ordinance itself, that a public hearing was not required. He stated annually updating the *“Qualifying Income Schedule”* for the town’s Tax Relief program was an administrative action.

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

MOVER: Jessica Buhle

SECONDER: Tim Ryan

AYE: 3 Saccone, Buhle and Ryan

5. MOTION to recommend the Town Council adopt a draft a “An Ordinance Establishing a Farmers Market for the Town of Ledyard” as presented in the draft dated January 17, 2024.

DRAFT:1/17/2024 ~~12/22/2023~~

Ordinance # 100-xxx

AN ORDINANCE
ESTABLISHING A FARMERS MAREKT COMMITTEE
FOR THE TOWN OF LEDYARD

Be it Ordained by the Town Council of the Town of Ledyard the Ledyard Farmers’ Market Committee is hereby established.

Section 1. Authority

Pursuant to Chapter IV, Section 5 of the Town Charter, there is hereby established a Farmers Market Committee for the Town of Ledyard.

Section 2. Purpose

The purpose of this Ordinance “*An Ordinance Establishing a Farmers Market for the Town of Ledyard*” is to is to codify, update and facilitate the “*Resolution Establishing a Farmers Market Committee*” adopted by the Town Council on May 9, 2018 and amended and adopted on October 10, 2019.

Section: 3. Objective

The Farmers’ Market is to create, promote, and operate a CT Grown (www.ctgrown.gov <<http://www.ctgrown.gov>>) Farmers’ Market in the Town of Ledyard that will provide residents access to fresh, nutritious food, encourage community activity in Ledyard, and stimulate public interest and awareness in local farm products, thereby supporting local agricultural producers and rural life in Ledyard, Connecticut. (what if something changes and we are not certified?)

The Farmers Market Committee may function with the support of the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Section 4. Membership

The Farmers Market Committee shall consist *of five (5) regular members and four (4) alternate members* who shall be electors of the town and appointed by the Town Council; and to the extent possible be representative of a broad cross section of the community which it serves, including but not limited to:

- CT Grown producer(s)
- Community Artisan(s)
- Community-at-Large

Quorum: A quorum shall consist of a majority of voting members.

Section 5. Terms of Appointment

Members shall be appointed by the Town Council for a term of three (3) years and shall commence to serve their terms immediately upon appointment and shall serve until they have been reappointed, their successor has qualified; or are removed by the Town Council.

Thereafter, vacancies shall be filled for a three (3) year term.

Any vacancy on the Committee, other than by expiration of term, shall be filled for the unexpired portion of the term by the Town Council with priority given to maintain the structure above.

The Town Council may remove members for cause and fill the vacancy per Chapter IV, Section 6 of the Town Charter. Cause for removal shall include, but is not limited to, unexcused absence from three (3) consecutive regular meetings and any intervening duly called special meeting.

Any member of the Committee who is absent from three (3) consecutive regular meetings and any intervening duly called special meetings shall be considered to have resigned from the Commission and the vacancy shall be filled as hereinbefore provided, except that the Commission may vote to waive the requirements of the section in each case where illness or other extenuating circumstances make it impossible for a member to meet the attendance requirements of this action

It shall be the responsibility of the Chairman of the Committee to notify the Town Council when a member has not properly performed his duties.

The regular members of the *Farmers Market Committee* shall elect a Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer. Any vacancy in any such office shall be filled from its membership.

Section 6. Implementation

With the adoption of this Ordinance current members of the Farmers' Market Committee shall be reappointed to designate regular members, alternate members and to adjust terms to provide continuity and eliminate all terms ending on the same date.

- Two Regular Members shall be appointed for three (3) years
- One Regular Member shall be appointed for two (2) years
- One Regular Member shall be appointed for one (1) year
- One Alternate Members shall be appointed for two (2) years
- One Alternate Member shall be appointed for one (1) year

Thereafter, vacancies shall be filled for a three (3) year term.

Section 7. Powers and Duties

- Oversee the operation of the market, and set policy for the Committee, including but not limited to:
 - Establish Market Rules and Guidelines;
 - Establish, review, and approve/disapprove applications for Vendor(s) and Community Organization(s) interested in participating in the Farmers'

Market;

- Establish and collect Market Fees;
 - Handle immediate situations concerning the market, including resolving conflicts among members/vendors, and resolving consumer complaints;
 - Ensure the market area stays clean and vendors abide by market rules;
 - Assist vendors in compliance with all State and Federal rules and regulations;
 - Establish and adopt Committee Rules of Procedure.
- Arrange all meetings of the general membership;
 - Administer the Committee's activities;
 - Create working group assignments (e.g., market theme days, children's activities, fundraising, advertising, etc.) and designate leads as necessary;
 - Investigate any suspicion of questionable practices or violation of market rules employed by any seller. If verified, the Committee is authorized to immediately enforce corrective action as necessary, up to and including revoking vendor's authorization to participate in the Farmers' Market without refund of Market Fees.

Section 8. Revenue, Funding, and Monetary Gifts

The *Ledyard Farmers' Market Committee* is authorized to accept Market Fees, gifts, or other monetary donations to further the mission of the Farmers' Market.

Monies received by the Town of Ledyard, from whatever source and by whatever means (e.g., Market Fees, gifts, donation, etc.) shall be deposited into a Farmers Market Fund 020810201-54201-24201. These funds shall be in the custody of the Town Treasurer. Annually, the Town Treasurer annually shall submit to the *Farmers' Market Committee* and the Legislative Body of the Town a complete and detailed report of the Farmers' Market Fund.

Upon the Farmers' Market Committee's authorization, money that has been received may be expended directly from this fund for the operation, development, promotion, and marketing of the Farmers' Market within the community. Funds that were designated for a specific purpose when received must be expended for that specific purpose.

The market may also keep a small cash reserve on hand to make change for donations, make change for vendors, issue payouts for small expenses such as water, ice, etc.

~~In addition, upon the annual approval of the Farmers Market Committee, stipends may be issued to the Market Manager and Committee Members. The~~

~~Committee shall annually determine and approve the amount of the stipends.~~

Other than In-Kind services provided by the town, the Farmers Market Committee shall not receive an operating budget supported by town funds.

Section. 9. Severability

If any section, or part of a section, of this Ordinance shall be held by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such holding shall not be deemed to invalidate the remaining provisions hereof.

Section 10. Effective Date

In accordance with the Town Charter this ordinance shall become effective on the twenty-first (21st) day after such publication following its final passage.

Adopted by the Ledyard Town Council on: _____

S. Naomi Rodriguez, Chairman

Approve/Disapprove on: _____
Fred B. Allyn, III, Mayor

Published on:

Effective Date: _____
Patricia A. Riley, Town Clerk

Revisions: Initially established under the *Resolution Establishing a Farmers Market Committee for the Town of Ledyard*” on May 9, 2018; Amended on October 9, 2019 to increase membership from seven members to nine members.

History:

“*Resolution Establishing a Farmers Market Committee for the Town of Ledyard*” was replaced by Ordinance # _____

12/22/2023:

When the Ledyard Farmers Market Committee was originally established in 2018 it was done using a Resolution.

The Farmers Market Committee has been very successful, and it was time to convert the authorizing document into an Ordinance.

Resolutions are used to establish short-term Committee for specific Projects, and therefore, terms all end at the same time, which was when The project was

completed.

Ordinances are used for long-term ongoing Committees, which would be more appropriate for the Farmers Market Committee.

The proposed Ordinance mirrors the *Resolution Establishing the Farmers' Market Committee* with the following updates:

- Members - Reduce the number of members from the current nine members to five Regular Members and four Alternate Members.
- The following language has been added to Section 6:

“The market may also keep a small cash reserve on hand to make change for donations, make change for vendors, issue payouts for small expenses such as water, ice, etc.

~~*In addition, upon the annual approval of the Farmers Market Committee, stipends may be issued to the Market Manager and Committee Members. The Committee shall annually determine and approve the amount of the stipends.*~~

Other than In-Kind services provided by the town, the Farmers Market Committee shall not receive an operating budget supported by town funds”.

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: Councilor Buhle stated that she attended Administration Committee's January 10, 2024 meeting at which they discussed the proposed “*An Ordinance Establishing a Farmers Market for the Town of Ledyard*” as presented in the draft dated December 22, 2023 and agreed to forward the proposal to the Finance Committee to review the following:

- Paying stipends to Volunteers - Section 6 “Revenue, Funding, and Monetary Gift”; paragraph 6, which stated:

“In addition, upon the annual approval of the Farmers Market Committee, stipends may be issued to the Market Manager and Committee Members. The Committee shall annually determine and approve the amount of the stipends.”

- Recording and Tracking of Funding (Revenues/Expenditures).
- Process/Ability/Authority to set Fees.

Councilor Saccone questioned the revenue source that the Farmers' Market Committee would use to pay the Market Manager's stipend. Councilor Buhle stated that the Farmers' Market Committee generated their own revenues through the fees they charged/collected from the vendors, food trucks, etc., noting that this was the revenue that was used to pay their expenses. She stated that the question regarding paying a stipend was raised because there were no other volunteer

committees/commissions, etc., that received stipends, and because the Farmers' Market funds were not part of the town's annual budget.

Ms. Pamela Ball, 674 Shewville Road, Ledyard, Farmers' Market Committee Treasurer and Chairman Pro-tem, stated that she was present to answer questions this evening. She stated the Farmers' Market Committee had no paid staff, noting that Administrative Assistant Roxanne Maher helped the Committee with the posting of their Agendas, Minutes, opening Purchase Orders and submitting invoices for payment. She stated currently the Farmers Market Committee volunteers have been handling all of the workings of the Market which included: Processing Vendor Applications and taking Payments, their Facebook page and website host, emptying the trash cans, scheduling of things such as the Porta-Johns, entertainment, etc. She stated this year the Farmers' Market Committee was going to try to work with the Parks & Recreation Department to take some of the burden off of the volunteers in areas such as Vendor Applications and taking payment. She stated as Councilor Buhle mentioned, all of the Farmers' Market Committee's money was generated from fees, donations, etc. She stated that the Committee followed the town's procedures with regard to depositing their money with the Town Treasurer, they open Purchase Orders, submit invoices for payment, etc. She stated the Farmers' Market Committee sends everything through Town Treasurer Ian Stammel and Finance Director Matthew Bonin as necessary. She stated they do not use taxpayers money to run the Farmers Market.

Councilor Saccone questioned how the Farmers' Market Committee determined the amount of the stipend. Ms. Ball stated that she did not think the Farmers' Market Committee was going to pay stipends in 2024; therefore, she stated it was a moot point. However, she stated if they did pay stipends that they could ask neighboring Farmers' Markets what they pay, noting that the stipend would also be determined based on what their cash flow could bear. She stated putting the Farmers Market on, which attracted over 1,200 visitors every week, was a lot of work, noting that the Market Manager spends about 30 hours per week. Councilor Saccone questioned how the Committee would pay the stipend if one year the funds were not there. Ms. Ball stated that they would not pay the stipend, noting that they understand that they were a Volunteer Committee. She stated one Committee Member proposed that the Market Manager receive a stipend; and because they had the funds the Committee voted to pay the stipend. She stated although she did not think they should take the stipend off the table as an option, that she did not see paying a stipend happening in 2024.

Councilor Ryan stated that they could revisit the payment of a stipend. Therefore, he suggested they strike the following language from the proposed Ordinance ~~*"In addition, upon the annual approval of the Farmers Market Committee, stipends may be issued to the Market Manager and Committee Members. The Committee shall annually determine and approve the amount of the stipends."*~~ and have the minutes reflect that they would revisit this language next year.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated the concern the Administration Committee had about paying a stipend to volunteers was that it would be in conflict with the Town Charter. Councilor Saccone stated that the Town paid stipends to the two volunteer Fire

Chiefs.

Chairman Rodriguez stated she attended the January 10, 2024 Administration Committee meeting and she explained that Councilor Dombrowski's concern regarding the Market Manager being paid a stipend was because no other volunteers who served on town committees were paid. She stated that Councilor Dombrowski was also concerned that if the town paid stipends to volunteers whether they would be liable to pay unemployment.

Finance Director Matthew Bonin explained that the Farmers Market Fund was handled outside the General Fund. He stated the Town Treasurer deposited the Farmers Market money into the Farmers Market Fund 020810201-54201-24201; noting that all the receipts and the money was tracked. He stated the Farmers Market could essentially spend what they brought in. He stated that was how their budget comes to be, noting that they do not use town funds. He stated as Farmers Market Committee Treasurer Ms. Ball explained, the Committee was following town procedures relative to opening Purchase Orders, etc. He stated the people who would receive stipends would not be town employees. Ms. Ball stated the person who received a stipend had to file a W-9 Form with the town and at the end of they year the received a 10-99 Form, noting that they would be similar to a contractor. Mr. Bonin stated at the end of the Fiscal Year the Farmers Market balance would be rolled over into the next season. He stated that balance ebbs and flows during the year noting that it would increase as they receive money and goes down as they spend the money. Mayor Allyn stated if the Farmers Market increased their Fees that their revenues would increase. Ms. Ball stated that the Farmers' Market Committee pays attention to what other Markets were charging; and they adjust their Fees accordingly, keeping in-mind the size of their Market, date of their Market, attendance at the Market; so that they could set a Fee that was fair.

Councilor Ryan proposed the Ordinance be amended to strike the following language: ~~*"In addition, upon the annual approval of the Farmers Market Committee, stipends may be issued to the Market Manager and Committee Members. The Committee shall annually determine and approve the amount of the stipends."*~~ and have the minutes reflect that they would revisit the language regarding the payment of a stipend next year.

The Finance Committee agreed to Councilor Ryan's amendment strike the following language from the proposed Ordinance ~~*"In addition, upon the annual approval of the Farmers Market Committee, stipends may be issued to the Market Manager and Committee Members. The Committee shall annually determine and approve the amount of the stipends."*~~ as a "Friendly Amendment" noting that the draft Ordinance they would be voting on this evening and forwarding back to the Administration Committee would be dated **January 17, 2024**, as noted above.

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL

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

None.

IX ADJOURNMENT

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

VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared, the meeting was adjourned at 6:08 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony Saccone, Sr.
Committee Chairman

Committee

Finance

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