



TOWN OF LEDYARD
CONNECTICUT
TOWN COUNCIL
HYBRID FORMAT

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Ledyard, CT 06339

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Roxanne Maher
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Chairman S. Naomi Rodriguez

MINUTES
FINANCE COMMITTEE
SPECIAL MEETING

Wednesday, February 7, 2024

4:00 PM

Annex Meeting Room - Video Conference

DRAFT

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** - The Meeting was called to order by Committee Chairman Councilor Saccone at 4:00 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**

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Location	Arrived	Departed
Jessica Buhle	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person	4:00 pm	5:12 pm
Tim Ryan	Town Councilor	Present	Remote	4:00 pm	5:12 pm
Tony Saccone	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person	4:00 pm	5:12 pm
S. Naomi Rodriguez	Town Council Chairman	Present	In-Person	4:00 pm	5:12 pm
Fred Allyn, III	Mayor	Present	In-Person	4:00 pm	5:12 pm
Matthew Bonin	Finance Director	Present	In-Person	4:00 pm	4:05 pm
Juliet Hodge	Director Planning & Development	Present	In-Person	4:00 pm	4:05 pm
Seumas Quinn	Building Official	Present	In-Person	4:00 pm	5:12 pm
Jason Harting	Superintendent of Schools	Present	In-Person	4:00 pm	4:29 pm
Ken Knight	BOE Finance Director	Present	In-Person	4:00 pm	4:29 pm
Alex Rode	Board of Education Chairman	Present	Remote	4:00 pm	5:12 pm
Branden Grabner	Board of Education	Present	In-Person	4:00 pm	5:12 pm
Nikoleta McTigue	CliftonLarsonAllen LLP	Present	In-Person	4:00 pm	4:29 pm
Eric Treaster	Resident	Present	In-Person	4:00 pm	4:05 pm
Roxanne Maher	Administrative Assistant	Present	Remote	4:00 pm	5:12 pm

Councilor Saccone stated without objection that he would like to change the order of the Agenda to address New Business Item #1 at this time, noting that Staff was present to answer questions this evening.

NEW BUSINESS

1. **MOTION** to recommend the Town Council acknowledge proposed revisions to Appendix pertaining to Ordinance #300-003 “An Ordinance Establishing Permit Fees for New Construction, Alternation, Removal, Demolition or Other Building Operation in the Town of Ledyard” as presented in the draft dated January 23, 2024.

APPENDIX
TOWN OF LEDYARD
PERMIT FEE AND INSPECTION FEE SCHEDULE
NEW CONSTRUCTION, ALTERATION, REMOVAL, DEMOLITION OR OTHER
BUILDING OPERATIONS

BUILDING PERMITS & TRADE PERMITS **FEES**, WHICH INCLUDE ELECTRICAL
PLUMBING AND MECHANICAL

~~Ten Fifteen Dollars (\$15.00) (\$10.00)~~ per Thousand Dollars (\$1,000), or part thereof, of
estimated value based on the present cost of material and labor. *Fee includes the State
Education fee of .26 per \$1,000 of construction value.*

CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY:

*Ten Dollars (\$10.00) (For Additions/New Homes/New Bathrooms or Bedrooms/Detached
Garages/Sheds > 200sf - Added to the initial Building Permit Fee at time of submission.)*

DEMOLITION PERMITS:

*For Residential structures, Two Percent (2%) ~~Ten Dollars (\$10.00) per Thousand Dollars
(\$1,000.00), or any part thereof,~~ of value computed on the Assessor's fair market value of the
structure to be demolished.*

*For Commercial or Industrial structures Five Percent (5%) of value computed on the
Assessor's fair market value of the structure to be demolished.*

**APPLICATION FEES WILL NOT BE REFUNDED REGARDLESS OF PERMIT STATUS OR
OUTCOME**

Acknowledged by the Ledyard Town Council on: _____

S. Naomi Rodriguez, Chairman

Revision: Appendix Acknowledged May 23, 1990; Acknowledged on October 28, 2020

History:

2024:

Paragraph 1: Increased Fee ~~\$10.00~~ to \$15.00

Added: *“Fee includes the State Education fee of .26 per \$1,000 of construction value.”*

Added New Paragraph: *“Certificate Of Occupancy”*

Demolition Permits Paragraph: Added the following language: *“For Residential structures, Two
Percent (2%)” “For Commercial or Industrial structures Five Percent (5%) of value computed
on the Assessor's fair market value of the structure to be demolished.”; “Application fees will
not be refunded regardless of permit status or outcome.”*

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: Councilor Buhle stated that Ordinance #300-003 “*An Ordinance Establishing Permit Fees for New Construction, Alternation, Removal, Demolition or Other Building Operation in the Town of Ledyard*” prescribed for the Establishment of Permit Fees. She also noted that per Section 3.1 of the Building Code that the Building Official is authorized to establish by approved rules a schedule of unit rates for buildings and structures of all use groups and types of construction as classified and defined in Articles 1, 3 and 4 of the Building Code. Therefore, she explained that the Building Official was increasing the Fee Schedule to reflect the costs to the Department relative to the processing of Building Permits and to implement software that would allow the public to apply for building permits on-line, and would streamline the approval process.

Councilor Ryan noted that the background information provided a comparison of Ledyard’s Building Permit Fees to neighboring towns. He stated in setting fees that he was always concerned about making sure Ledyard was not pricing themselves out of the market. He noted currently Ledyard’s Building Permit Fees were among the lowest in the area, however, he stated he stated that they did not want to prohibit people from investing in building. He stated that he was not sure if this Fees Schedule was the threshold that does that, but that this was something that they should keep in mind.

Mayor Allyn, III, stated the last time the Building Permit Fee Schedule was addressed was about five-years ago, noting that Elizabeth Burdick was the Land Use Director at that time. He noted that Ms. Burdick followed a similar process as was done this year by Director of Planning & Development Juliet Hodge and Building Official Seumas Quinn, noting that they conducted a review, comparison, and analysis of the Building Permit Fee Schedules of area towns. He stated five-years ago that Ledyard’s Fees were at the bottom in terms of cost for the area. He stated today, five-years later, that Ledyard was again at the bottom of the Fees. He stated although Ledyard has made adjustments, that their neighboring towns have also made adjustments. He stated while Ledyard does not want to have the most expensive Fees in the area, that they also do not want to be the least expensive, in terms of Permit Fees, etc. He noted as Councilor Buhle mentioned that increasing the Building Permit Fees would allow them to offset the costs associated with the Building Department. He stated Director of Planning & Development Juliet Hodge and Building Official Seumas Quinn were both present this evening to answer questions.

Councilor Ryan noted the background information included a Fee Calculator and he questioned whether the Calculation would be based on square footage. Director of Planning & Development Juliet Hodge responded *Yes*, the calculation would be based on the square footage.

Councilor Saccone noted the Permit Fees included .26 cents, which was required by the State for education. Director of Planning & Development Juliet Hodge stated they were currently charging the State’s .26 cents separately, however, she stated because they do not take on-line payments or credit card payments they found that people were not coming in with the correct amount and that they did not have the ability to make change. Therefore, she stated to make it simpler, they would now be including the State’s .26 cents as part of Fees; and then pay the education fee to the State from the total amount collected to keep the Permit Fees an even dollar amount. Councilor Buhle added that part of the increase in Building Permit Fees would allow the Department to upgrade the Permit software that would allow for on-line payments, making the process more efficient.

Councilor Saccone explained although the Town Council is not required to approve the Building Permit Fees, that it has been their practice to “*Acknowledge*” the Fee Schedule (Appendix).
3 – 0 Approved and so declared

VOTE:

RESULT: RECOMMEND TO APPROVE 3 – 0
MOVER: Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor
SECONDER: Tim Ryan, Town Councilor
AYES: Jessica Buhle, Tim Ryan, Tony Saccone

The Finance Committee thanked Director of Planning & Development Juliet Hodge and Building Official Seumas Quinn for attending tonight’s meeting.

Director of Planning & Development Juliet Hodge and Building Official Seumas Quinn left the meeting at 4:05 p.m.

III. RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS COMMENTS – None.

IV. PRESENTATIONS/INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Annual Audit Report Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2023 - CliftonLarsonAllen LLP - Nikoleta McTigue

Ms. Nikoleta McTigue of CliftonLarsonAllen LLP stated she was the Lead Auditor in conducting Ledyard’s audit noting that this was the fourth year they performed the Annual Audit for the Town of Ledyard. She proceeded by presenting the Annual Audit Report as follows:

• **Engagement Scope and Reporting:**

The Audit was performed under the following standards:

- Generally Accepted Auditing Standards (GAAS) in the United States of America.
- The standards applicable to financial audits contained on Government Auditing Standards, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States (GAGAS).
- Uniform Guidance (Formerly Federal Single Audit Act) and the Connecticut State Single Audit Act.
- Annual Audit Report Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2023.

• **Reporting Results in the Financial Statements**

- Reporting under GAAS (Generally Accepted Auditing Standards): Unmodified audit opinion.

Ms. McTigue explained an “*Unmodified Opinion*” was a *clean opinion*, which was the highest form of opinion they can give on financial statements. It meant that there were no findings that rose to the level of modifying their opinion.

Ms. McTigue explained in conducting the Annual Audit the following types of findings that could be identified during the audit process:

- (1) **Material Weakness** was a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control over compliance such that there was a reasonable possibility that material compliance with a type of compliance requirement will not be prevented or detected and corrected in on a timely basis.
- (2) **Deficiency** in internal controls exists when the design or operation of a control over compliance does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned function, to prevent, or detect and correct, noncompliance with a type of compliance requirements of a program.
- (3) **Other Deficiency** was a combination of deficiency, in internal control over compliance with a type of compliance requirement that was *less severe* than a material weakness in an internal control over compliance, but important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance.
 - Reporting under GAAS (Included in both State and Federal Single audit reports):
 - Reporting on Internal Control and Compliance at the Financial Statement Level:
 - (1) Under Internal Control:
 - No internal control findings or deficiencies were noted.
 - (2) Under Compliance:
 - No internal control over compliance/Compliance findings for the State and Federal Single Audits.

Ms. McTigue noted all the reports were clean stating that no Findings were identified.

• Financial Highlights

- Total Governmental activities expenses totaled \$79,899,326 as follows:
 - ✓ Board of Education activities expenses: \$46,427,136 or 63.8%
 - ✓ General government expenses: \$13,145,107 or 17.9%
 - ✓ Public Safety expenses: \$4,637,826 or 7.0%
 - ✓ Public Works expenses: \$2,869,738 or 6.1%
 - ✓ Library expenses: \$569,321 or 0.8%
 - ✓ Park and Recreation expenses: \$652,285 or 1.07%
 - ✓ Health and Welfare expenses: \$1,214,125 or 1.8%.

✓ Interest expenses: \$1,543,147 or 1.6 %

- Net Position at year end was \$91,234,127 (\$70,257,922 in government activities plus \$20,976,206 in business activities which includes sewer and water) a net increase of \$750,696 over the previous year.

Ms. McTigue explained that the Net Position was all the assets, less the liabilities on an accrual basis. This includes all the Town's funds: General Fund, Special Revenue Fund, Capital Project Funds, with the exception of the Trust and Agency- Pension Fund, along with the long-term assets such as roads, bridges, land, buildings, etc.

Ms. McTigue stated that Long Term Liabilities included the Pension, *Other Post Employment Benefits Other Than Pensions* (OPEB); Bonds, Notes, etc.

Ms. McTigue went on to explain that the accrual basis was different from the modified accrual basis (day to day basis) where long-term assets and liabilities were not included.

- Government Wide Financial Statements – Governmental Activities and Business Type Activities combined: Ms. McTigue explained that the Business Type Activities were things such as the Water & Sewer Fund.
 - Capital Assets \$111,631,877; net of accumulated depreciation. This was a decrease from the prior year, while the business-type capital assets.
 - Construction in-progress increased by \$1,247,227 for governmental-type activities for various town projects underway.
 - Business-type capital assets – there were no significant additions during the year.
 - Net pension liability was \$5,443,477 an decrease of \$1.1 million from the previous year.
 - Total *Other Post-Employment Benefits Other Than Pensions* (OPEB) Liability \$11,905,245. Ms. McTigue explained this was measured as of June 30, 2023 and was determined by an actuarial valuation as of that date. She stated the Discount Rate Discount rate virtually remained the same at 2.61%; and that the 20-year tax exemption rate was based on general obligation municipal bonds with an average rating of AA/Aa or higher. She noted that Ledyard received a rating of A/A stable from Standards and Poors.
- **General Fund – Fund Balance \$3,571,455**

- General Fund total fund balance \$3,571,455 a decrease of \$1,702,520 from the prior fiscal year.

- Unassigned fund balance of \$5,123,700 represented 7.3% of total general fund expenditures and transfers out. This was an increase of 750,696 over the previous year's Unassigned fund balance.
- Capital Projects Fund total negative fund balance increased by \$1,837,534
- General Fund balance \$5,341,097 an increase of \$370,000 from prior fiscal year
- Non-major governmental funds fund balance \$5,110,138

○ ***General Fund Highlights:***

- Property tax collections totaled \$42,464,155 ~ \$35,323 lower than budget.
- Total revenues and transfers-in \$62,934,154 were higher than budgetary estimates by \$4,000
- Total expenditures \$60,779,477 were lower than budgeted appropriations by \$1,070,483.

○ ***Business Type Activities (Water & Sewer) and Internal Service Fund:***

- Water – net position was \$16,540,295 a decrease of \$747,893.
- Sewer – net position \$4,435,910 an increase of \$157,460.
- Net position of the Enterprise Funds (Water & Sewer) totaled \$20,976,205 as of June 30, 2023; this was a decrease of \$590,433 from the prior year.
- Net position in the Internal Service Fund was \$53,758 a decrease from the prior year of \$200,000. This was a result of transferring money from the General Fund to the Internal Service Fund.

○ ***Fiduciary Funds – Pension Trust Fund***

- Net position was \$28.7 Million; increase of \$1.67 Million
- Employer contributions to the fund were \$1.6 Million and were in-line with actuarially determined contribution.
- Net investment earnings for the year were \$2,573,767
- Net Pension Liability \$5,443,447
- Benefit payments and administration expenses were \$1,924,510.

• **Federal awards expended - \$5.9M**

- Major programs tested:
 - ✓ Education Stabilization Fund (ESF)
 - ✓ COVID -19 Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (ARPA)

- ❖ ***Results:*** Unmodified or Clean opinion was issued on compliance for major programs tested.
No findings on internal controls over major programs tested

- State awards expended \$18.4 M, subject to test was \$4.5M.
- Major program tested:
 - ✓ Tiered PILOT and MRSA Pilot
 - ✓ Municipal Purposes & Projects
 - ✓ Early Care and Education
- ❖ **Results:** Unmodified report on compliance for major program.
No compliance or internal control findings

Ms. McTigue explained that the Reports CliftonLarsonAllen LLP issued for these Audits were based only on the Programs that they tested noting that it was not an overall report based on all of the grants the town receives or spends.

• ***Required Communications***

- Qualitative aspects of accounting practices:
 - Accounting Practices/Policies – No change
 - GASB 96 were applicable for the current year (Subscription Based Information Technology Arrangements) – Did not have any material effects on the Financial Statements. – No changes to add to the liability.
- Significant Estimates:
 - Net Pension Liability
 - Net OPEB Liability (Other Post Employment Benefits)
 - Capital Assets – Useful Lives
 - Allowance for Uncollectible Receivables
- New GASB Standards:
 - Implementation Year 2024
 - Statement 99 – Omnibus 2022 (various) – will not have an effect on financial statements of the town.
 - Statement 100 – Accounting changes and Error Corrections
 - Implementation Year 2025
 - Statement 101- Compensated Absences – Will clarify what should and should not be compensated absences liability and how it should be measured.
- Disagreements with Management – None.
- Corrected Misstatements – None.

Ms. McTigue explained *Uncorrected Misstatements* were items that were not material and did not present any deficiencies in control, however, CliftonLarsonAllen was required to present, if there were any entries that were not included in the Financial Statements. She continued by noting the following Corrected Misstatements:

- Deferred outflows for contributions subsequent to measurement date for OPEB Plan of June 30, 2023; OPEB Plan \$301,000
- Opening balance of net Pension Liability for Sewer Fund was understated by \$46,000. Ms. McTigue noted that the ending balance included the correct amount.

- Journal Entrees – None.
- Management consultation with other independent accounts – None.
- Significant issues discussed with management prior to engagement – None.
- Significant findings or issues that were discussed, or the subject of correspondence with management – None.

- Other information in documents containing audited Financial Statements:
 - RSI, Introductory and Statistical Information – No opinion.
 - Combining and Individual Financial Statement and Schedules, SEFA and SESFA – in relation to Financial Statements Opinion

- ***Management Advisory Letter***

❖ ***Matters Noted in the Current Audit s Year*** – No New Items noted.

❖ ***Matters Noted in the Previous Year***

General Government:

- Capital Assets

Capital assets information is currently being tracked within excel spreadsheets. As tracking such a large volume of information in this manner can lend itself to mistakes and be difficult to verify the propriety of the information.

Recommendation – CliftonLarsonAllen recommended the Town consider specific capital asset software or a capital asset module to track the information such as Munis Financial Software or other software to maintain capital assets.

Councilor Saccone questioned whether the Munis Financial Software had a module to track capital assets.

Finance Director Matthew Bonin explained that the Excel spreadsheet provides features that other software does not provide, noting that the Munis module did not provide a format that was useful and that he was looking at other software to track the town's Capital Assets. However, he noted it could be some time before a software has been selected and implemented.

Superintendent of Schools Jason Hartling stated that he agreed with Mr. Bonin's comments, noting that the Munis Financial Software had a lot of capabilities. However, he stated there were a lot complexities in setting it up; and that utilizing it as a system was a lot of work.

Board of Education:

- Education Grant Fund and School Lunch Fund Accounting

Several adjustments were required for Education Grant Fund and School Lunch Fund, which were provided by the Board of Education.

Recommendation – CliftonLarsonAllen recommended that the Board of Education’s Journal Entries and Reconciliation be done on-time and the Final Balances be ready at the time of the Annual Audit.

Ms. McTigue stated there were no new findings for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2023 noting that it was a good Report.

Councilor Saccone thanked Ms. McTigue for her informative report and presentation, and he opened the floor for questions.

Councilor Ryan requested Ms. McTigue expand on the following:

- ***Deposit Custodial Credit Risk \$15.4 million***

Ms. McTigue stated the *Deposit Custodial Credit Risk* was a required disclosure. She stated for every Bank Account there was the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) which covered \$250,000. She stated about 10% of the account balance would be collateralized and the rest of the money was subject to risk if the Bank were to fail. She stated that Ledyard was not the only town that had this type of disclosure or had this kind of risk on their books.

Councilor Ryan questioned whether there was something the Town should be doing. Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated the only way to mitigate the risk was not to have more than \$250,000 in one Bank, however, he stated that this was not practical. He stated the town used Dime Bank, noting that it was a strong bank.

- ***Net Pension Liability***

Councilor Ryan stated the Report indicated that Ledyard’s Pension was funded at 84% which was a decrease from last year, noting that it had been funded at 100%. Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated the Pension Fund Report was a combination of the Assets versus the Liability. He stated the Report was based a snapshot of what the Assets were doing on June 30, 2023, noting that the Stock Market was very different today.

Mayor Allyn, III, stated the Town’s Financial Advisors periodically provide the Retirement Board with an updated snapshot of the town’s assets. Mr. Bonin stated the Stock Market has rebounded; therefore, the assets have done much better since June. Therefore, he stated the Pension would be funded much higher than 84%. Councilor Ryan stated being funded at 84% was not bad, noting that there were many other towns that were funded much lower.

Councilor Ryan thanked Finance Director Matther Bonin, the Finance Department, and the Board of Education for doing a great job.

The Finance Committee thanked Ms. McTigue for attending their meeting this evening.

CliftonLarsonAllen Auditor Ms. McTigue, Superintendent of Schools Jason Hartling and Board of Education Business Manager Ken Knight left the meeting at 4:29 p.m.

RESULT: RECEIVED FOR FILE

V. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

MOTION to approve the following:

Regular Meeting Minutes of January 17, 2024

Special Joint Meeting Minutes of January 18, 2024

Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Buhle

VOTE: 3 – 0 Approved and so declared

VI. FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Finance Director Matthew Bonin reported on the following: (1) Finance Department Fiscal Assistant Position – Mr. Bonin stated that Ms. Nancy Michaud joined the Finance Department on January 29, 2024, noting that she previously worked in the Nursing Department. He stated because the position had been vacant since mid-November, that there was a lot of work to be done to catch-up on Journal Entries; (2) Grant Funding School(s) Consolidation/Improvement Projects (Middle School & Gallup Hill School) – Mr. Bonin stated he and Mayor Allyn, III met with the State Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to discuss the release of the next Progress Payment in the amount of \$8 million. He explained that the State indicated that they would release the \$8 million, thirty-days after they received the final body of evidence for the project that Colliers Project Leaders has been working to prepare. He stated this week Fiscal Assistant Nancy Michaud pulled all of the invoices (1,100) for the projects out of the Munis Financial System to be included in Collier's Packet. He stated that they hoped that Colliers would send Packet to the State by the end of February, 2024. He stated this \$8 million would be the last Progress Payment before the State conducted their Project Audit, at which time the State would release the 5% holdback to the Town. He commented that they were hopeful that the State would release the \$8 million Grant Funding before May, 2024, so the Town would not have to renew the Bond Anticipation Notes (BAN's) another time. Mayor Allyn, III, explained that if they do not receive the \$8 million dollars in Grant Funding from the State before May, 2024 that the Town would need to renew their Bond Anticipation Notes (BAN) stating that the temporary borrowing for the construction projects, which has been completed since 2019, has been costing the town \$100,000 to \$200,000 over the course of the year for the Short Term Borrowing; (3) Home Rehabilitation Revolving Loan Program – Mr. Bonin reported that the Town received the repayment of the Proctor's \$32,820.48 Home Rehabilitation Loan for their 33 Highland Drive home. He stated the money would go back into the Revolving Loan Program to be loaned to another income qualifying family in need of home repairs.

Councilor Saccone noted the Home Rehabilitation Revolving Loan Program relative to the repayment of Proctor's Loan and he questioned how those funds would be redistributed. Mayor Allyn, III, stated the Town consistently published the availability of the zero interest Home Rehabilitation Revolving Loan Program for qualifying individuals in the quarterly Events Magazine, on the town's website, and on the town's Facebook page.

Councilor Buhle stated at the Economic Development Commission's February 6, 2024 meeting it was reported that they were currently vetting a Home Rehabilitation Revolving Loan Applicant who needed a septic system replacement. She stated that the funds for the septic system Applicant became available because someone else had paid off their Loan. Therefore, she stated there appeared to be a list of Applicants that they were moving through.

Mayor Allyn noted that he agreed with Councilor Buhle's comments noting that there was a list Applicants seeking financial help for critical home improvements. He explained because their Home Rehabilitation Revolving Loan Program Consultant was located in Wilcott that they were working to get him a list of local contractors to solicit bids for the projects. He stated the Home Rehabilitation Revolving Loan Program continues to flourish, noting that it

was nice to see the money come back into the program so that they could continue to help Ledyard homeowners. He stated during the last month the town collected back about \$45,000, explaining that a homeowner who had borrowed money through the Home Rehabilitation Program was renting their property out, which was against the *Small Cities Promissory Note Agreement*, therefore, those funds recently came back into the Program as well, noting that they were already working to put the funds back out into the community. Councilor Buhle stated that it was nice to see the Revolving Program working as it was intended, noting that as the funds were being paid back that the town was able to help others in-need. Councilor Saccone noted the \$32,820.48 Loan that the Proctor's paid back could potentially help projects for two other families.

VII. FINANCIAL REPORTS

Finance Director Matthew Bonin provided an overview of the following Financial Reports:

- Expenditure Year-to Date Report- January 31, 2024

- ✓ Specially Approved Counsel was trending over budget. Mr. Bonin noted that the Town Council approved to overspend Account #10110205-53610 (Specialty Approved Counsel) through June, 30, 2023 at their January 10, 2024 meeting.
- ✓ Healthcare BOE – Mr. Bonin stated that he still had to do an Journal Entry for this Line from the Active Members to the Retirees

- Revenue Year-to Date Report- November 30, 2023

Mr. Bonin noted that the Finance Department was working to get caught up on the recording of revenue with the hiring of Ms. Michard. He noted that the Fiscal Assistant position had been vacant since mid-November; and therefore, there was a lot of work to be done.

Councilor Saccone questioned how long it would take to get caught up on the recording of the revenues. Mr. Bonin stated that it would take about two-weeks to get caught up, noting that they were focusing on getting all the revenues into the Munis Financial System up to date. He stated that Ms. Michard would then have to work on Bank Reconciliations, as well as the Water and Sewer Revenues. He stated once they get caught up that the journal entries would be done on a daily and weekly basis.

- ✓ Nursing Revenue – Mr. Bonin stated with the shutdown of the Nursing Department on June 30, 2023 that \$100,000 was included in the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget with the expectation that there would be some residual revenue that would come in. However, he stated this revenue was going to fall short of projected/budgeted \$100,000.
- ✓ Interest Income on Deposits - Mr. Bonin stated the Interest Income on Deposits was well over \$500,000 through the end of January, 2024 and that he expected that they would see another \$300,000 come in. He explained that the Town had one account at Dime Bank that was receiving 5.50% interest; and that the

funding they have with State Treasury Investment Fund (STIF) was also paying 5.50% interest, noting that the STIF Account had a balance of \$8 million. He explained that the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) Funding from the State goes directly into the STIF Account and that the Town's Bond Payments were paid out of the STIF Account.

- ✓ Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LOTICIP) – Mr. Bonin stated the Town received the \$3 million LOTICIP Funding upfront for the Multi-Use Pathway. He stated because there were no restrictions that the Town has deposited the funding into a savings account.
- ✓ Library Fees (Charges for Services) – Mayor Allyn stated the Library Fees were up 425%. He explained the Bill Library had previously owned their copier, which was about ten-years old, and was no longer producing quality copies and it was requiring maintenance. Therefore, he stated when Town Hall was updating their copier leases last year, they thought that it was a good time to put a new copier in the Bill Library. He stated because they were already into the budget year that he included the Bill Library copier in his budget for the first year of the lease. He stated for the coming year the Copier Lease expense would be included in the Library Budget. He stated the use of the new copier was going well, noting that the fees the Library charged patrons to make copies would be used to offset the cost of copier lease. He stated the Library Commission, and the residents were happy with the new copier.
- ✓ Dog Licensing (Charges for Services) – Mayor Allyn noted the revenue received from Dog Licensing has seen an increase. He explained that the State passed a Law that for dogs to be boarded at a facility that they must be registered by the town. He stated although it was a small amount of revenue that he wanted to explain the reason there was an increase.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

2. 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 Buhle suggested the Finance Committee set a date to review the List of ARPA Projects for the reallocation of surplus funds to consider and prioritize “*Add-On Projects*”. Councilor Ryan agreed with Councilor Buhle’s suggestion, noting that the town only had ten-months left to decide on how to allocate surplus funds and to get contracts in place, otherwise the funds would need to be returned to the US Treasury.

Councilor Ryan thanked Finance Director Matthew Bonin for adding the following two additional columns into the ARPA Projects Spreadsheet (1) Unobligated on Contract; (2) Projected end value (for services activities). He commented on the importance to have the most up-to-date spreadsheet numbers relative to their “*Uncommitted Balance*” in working to prioritize additional projects.

Mayor Allyn, III, noted the proposed Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) included the Juliet W. Long School Playscape.

LED Message Signs - \$70,000 - Mayor Allyn went on to note since June, 2022 that he has been working to obtain permission from the State Department of Transportation (DOT) to use one square foot of their property for the location of the Digital Message Sign in Ledyard Center by the Town Green. He stated he received an email from DOT this morning, which stated: *“Mayor: I will speak with my supervisor this today, again, but they were not keen about leasing one square foot encroachment and felt that the town should look for a different sign location.”* He stated that he has told the State that if the sign ever had to be moved for any reason, such as the State was looking to widen Route 117, that the Town would happily move the sign at their own expense. He stated this coming June would be two-years that he has been working with this particular DOT Department; and therefore, he was going to try to connect with someone higher up at the DOT so that they could get moving on the installation of the Digital Sign.

Councilor Buhle noted at the Town Council’s January 24, 2024 meeting they approved the to use the \$30,000 that was remaining from the \$75,000 ARPA Dispatch Project to upgrade the communication equipment to join the Connecticut Land Mobile Radio Network (CLMRN); noting that it made sense to use this surplus funding for the communication equipment upgrade because the use was for same type of purpose. Therefore, she stated that she would like to see surplus ARPA Funding stay within the Department that it was initially earmarked for. She noted as an example that if \$55,000 of ARPA Funding was allocated to a Parks and Recreation Project which came in \$45,000 under the initial appropriation, that she would like to see Parks & Recreation be able to use those surplus ARPA Funds for other projects they had on their list.

Councilor Buhle went on to state the previous Finance Committee put together a great ARPA Projects List in prioritizing their needs while working to meet the ARPA Program criteria/categories. She noted that the Sandy Hollow Road guiderails was a public safety infrastructure need; and therefore, she thought reallocating infrastructure funds toward that project would be appropriate. She stated keeping the ARPA funding in the same lane that it was initially allocated to would a fair balance. She stated this was a once in a lifetime opportunity in which Ledyard would have the opportunity to spend \$4.3 million improvements in their town. Therefore, she stated they should look to fund a lot of different projects and not look to put all of the ARPA into one area such as infrastructure; or the same types of projects.

Councilor Ryan stated that he thought they were all on the same page with regard to the use of the ARPA Funding. However, he stated his one concern has been that they do not use ARPA Funding for recurring expenses, which was the reason infrastructure projects were targeted. He explained by using the ARPA Funding for infrastructure improvement projects that it would help the town to defray capital costs.

Councilor Saccone stated that he has been talking with Department Heads about the status of their ARPA Projects and to see if they had other related projects. He noted the following:

- **Wastewater Treatment Plant:** Councilor Saccone stated Wastewater Supervisor Steve Banks stated the Plan could use an additional \$500,000 for additional expenses such as a portable generator, and additional control panel, etc.
- **Historic District Commission** – Councilor Saccone stated the Commission was working on repairs to their historic buildings.
- **Parks & Recreation** – Councilor Saccone stated the Parks & Recreation completed the installation of a new playscape on Winthrop Drive which came in about \$8,000 under the \$50,000 that was appropriate for the project.
- **Erickson Park Improvements \$55,000** - Mayor Allyn stated the stone dust path was put down this fall (2023). Therefore, he stated this spring (2024) that Parks & Recreation would need to proceed with the excavation work to create an additional fifteen parking spaces, and the other improvement work, which included installing a retaining wall.
- **Mental Health Balance \$150,000** - Councilor Saccone noted in speaking with Social Services Director Karen Goetchius that there has been some discussion about moving the remaining ARPA funding to the Board of Education to support mental health services for the youth. He stated that Chairman Rodriguez would like to see the funds also be used for Adult Counseling Services; and that Mrs. Goetchius believed that ARPA Funding could be used to support counseling services for both youth and adults. Mayor Allyn stated the one Counselor that was located at the Town Hall has been moved to the Middle School, based on the Board of Education’s recommendation. He stated the Counselor has been working at the school ten-hours per week at \$55.00 per hour. He explained that the Town would pay the Counselor based on the amount of hours the Board of Education reported that she was working at the Middle School. Councilor Buhle stated that she also supported using the ARPA Funding to provide counseling services for adults noting that most counseling therapist were not accepting new patients. She stated post Covid that both children and adults were struggling.
- **Pickel Ball Courts- 2 Courts \$82,000.** – Councilor Saccone stated based on a resident approaching him about constructing pickle ball courts in town he contacted the Highway Superintendent Joe Tillman to ask if the Pickle Ball Courts were to be approved, whether Public Works could do the site work to save on the cost. He noted that Mr. Tillman stated that they could do the site work, noting that Public Works had a concrete contractor that they worked with in town.

Mayor Allyn questioned where they were looking to install the Pickle Ball Courts. Councilor Saccone stated they would like to put the Pickle Ball Courts behind the Gales Ferry Community Center. Councilor Buhle stated that Pickel Ball Courts were already included in the Parks & Recreation Capital Improvement Plan. Councilor Saccone stated the Town was leasing the Gales Ferry Community Center Property from the Gales Ferry District. Mayor Allyn stated they had about 97 years left on the lease with the Gales Ferry District. He went on to explain in accordance with Ordinance \$200-009 *An “Ordinance Providing for the Transfer of Certain Revenue From the Real Estate Conveyance Tax to Specific Town of Ledyard Funds”* that Parks & Recreation receive 40% percentage of the Conveyance Tax from the Real Estate Transactions that are deposited into their Capital Account, noting this has been a tremendous asset for them.

Councilor Ryan noted that if they start building new facilities such as the Pickel Ball Courts that they would also need to consider the on-going maintenance costs. Mayor Allyn stated that the cost to maintain the Pickel Ball Courts would be the responsibility of the Parks & Recreation Department, and that they would need to understand what the

The Finance Committee agreed to discuss the prioritization of additional ARPA Projects for the use of remaining surplus funds at their February 21, 2024 meeting.

RESULT: DISCUSSED

Next Meeting: 03/06/2024 5:00 p.m.

3. 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 Buhle stated that she has been researching how other towns were spending their Nip Bottle Surcharge Revenues. She stated if the municipalities wanted to continue to receive the Nip Bottle Surcharge Revenues that they need to spend the money. She reviewed the following ideas:

- ***Adopt a Road Clean-Up Program*** – Councilor Buhle noted as the Finance Committee has been discussing the Town of Montville implemented the Adopt a Road Clean-Up Program in which they were paying non-profit organizations to clean up the roads. However, she stated they also hired a full-time person to clean up their roads from Memorial Day to Labor Day. However, she commented that she was not proposing Ledyard hire staff to clean up the roads.

Councilor Buhle went on to state that she spoke to Police Chief John Rich about providing Police Officers for safety purposes during the Road Clean-ups. She stated the cost would be \$96.00 per hour for a minimum of four hours at a cost of \$392.00. She noted Chief Rich recommended using the Police for cleanups on Route 12, Route 117, Route 214, and roads that potentially have a high crash data such as Christy Hill, Long Cove Road, Indiantown Road, Pumpkin Hill Road. Therefore, she stated when they think about implementing an *Adopt a Road Clean-Up Program* to pay non-profit organizations that would need to also include paying \$400.00 per day for Police presence to make sure our volunteers were safe and to protect the town from liability. She expressed concern that they would not be able to safely support the roads that needed to be cleaned-up the most, such as Route 214. She stated as much as she liked idea of cleaner roads, that in doing more research that the proposed program looked less appealing to her, noting that organizations such as the Ledyard Rotary would happily continue to clean up Route 12 without being paid.

Mayor Allyn stated that he thought that they should limit the Roadside Clean-up to Route 117 and Route 12 because they were the only two roads that were reasonably safe.. She also noted that organizations such as the Ledyard Rotary would happily continue to clean up Route 12 without being paid. Mayor Allyn stated he wanted to review the State’s Adopt a Highway Rules noting that there may be limited liability exposure based on an “Adopt a Highway” program. He stated he would not suggest implementing an Adopt a Highway Program throughout town noting that it would need to be limited to areas that were safe for volunteers.

Councilor Buhle stated it did not appear that the Beautification Committee was eager to take on the Adopt a Highway Program. Councilor Ryan, Liaison to the Beautification Committee, noted that he received an email from Clerical Assistant Christina Hostetler noting that the Beautification Committee was interested with getting involved with the Program.

Councilor Saccone stated on a regular basis the Ledyard Center and Gales Ferry Volunteer Fire Companies use a town pick-up truck to provide safety for events such as Kropp Walk or for events that may be held on Route 12, noting they only charge \$25.00 per hour.

Councilor Buhle stated the presence of the Police seemed to cause motorists to slow down, noting for safety reasons they would also need to address visibility, safety zones, signage, etc. Mayor Allyn stated Rotary puts out signs and cones when doing roadside clean up. He stated that the Surcharge Revenues could be used to purchase signs, cones, safety vests, and other related items for safety.

- **Solar Powered Trash Compactors** – Councilor Buhle noted that one of the uses for the Nip Bottle Surcharge Revenue that was provided in the Public Act No.21-58 was “*Environmental measures intended to reduce the generation of solid waste*”. She stated that Groton and East Lyme have put Solar Powered Trash Compactors (trash and recycling) in their Parks to reduce the amount of space that garbage takes up. She stated that the use of the trash compactors would reduce the Parks & Recreation staff costs to go around to empty the trash containers at the parks. She stated that she spoke to Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Director Scott Johnson, Jr. about the idea noting that he thought the solar powered trash compactors would be great at the Town Green because of the amount of trash that is generated by the Farmers Market. She stated that Mr. Johnson was researching the cost of the Solar Powered Trash Compactors. She stated that she thought this would be a great use of these Surcharge Funds because it would reduce staff time/cost to empty the trash cans and it would reduce the amount of space the trash takes up, however, it would not reduce the weight of the trash. She stated depending on the cost of the trash compactors and depending on whether they saw an improvement or savings, that if they purchased a couple trash compactors each time they received a disbursement from the State that they could potentially replace all of the trash containers at all of their parks within a couple of years. Mayor Allyn stated it was a good idea to phase-in the solar powered trash compactors, so that they would not all need to be replaced at the same time.

Councilor Ryan questioned should they decide to purchase solar power trash compactors whether the Surcharge Revenues could be used for the maintenance of the units. Mayor Allyn stated he believed the Surcharge Revenue could be used for the preventative maintenance, repair, replacement of the units.

- **Street Sweeper** – Councilor Ryan noted the town has been using some of the Nip Bottle Surcharge Revenues to lease a street sweeper. Therefore, he suggested because they cannot predict the amount of Surcharge Revenues the town would be receiving, that they factor in the cost to lease the street sweeper in considering other ideas for the use of the funds.

Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated the Nip Bottle Surcharge Revenues were already used to lease a street sweeper, and that funding has been encumbered to lease the street sweeper again.. Mr. Bonin stated that the town has been receiving about \$13,000 - \$14,000 every six-months.

Mayor Allyn stated the Nip Bottle Surcharge Revenues Account balance was about \$55,000 of which \$10,000 that was already encumbered for the street sweeper. He stated the town accumulated a couple of Surcharge Revenues disbursements before they started to use the funds, therefore, they were a little ahead.

Councilor Buhle questioned, although the litter they were talking about for the *Adopt a Road Clean-Up Program* was in the brush alongside the road, it would be helpful to use the street sweeper more than once a year , from an optic perspective. Mayor Allyn stated he would talk with Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin about whether it would be beneficial to lease the street sweeper twice a year.

RESULT: DISCUSSED

Next Meeting: 03/06/2024; 5:00 p.m.

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

IX. NEW BUSINESS

Item #1 was discussed earlier this evening (see above)

1. MOTION to recommend the Town Council acknowledge proposed revisions to Appendix pertaining to Ordinance #300-003 “*An Ordinance Establishing Permit Fees for New Construction, Alternation, Removal, Demolition or Other Building Operation in the Town of Ledyard*” as presented in the draft dated January 23, 2024.
2. Discussion regarding potential uses for the funding received from the National Opioid Settlement Payments.

Councilor Saccone noted in the interest of time, and if there were no objections that he would like to defer the discussion regarding the potential uses for National Opioid Settlement Payments to their February 21, 2024 meeting. The Finance Committee agreed.

RESULT: DEFERRED

Next Meeting: 03/06/2024; 5:00 p.m.

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

X. ADJOURNMENT

VOTE: Councilor Buhle moved the meeting be adjourned, seconded by Councilor Ryan.
3 - 0 Approved and so declared, the meeting was adjourned at 5:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony Saccone, Sr.
Committee Chairman
Finance Committee