Chairman Gary St. Vil

TOWN OF LEDYARD
CONNECTICUT
TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES
PUBLIC HEARING
LEDYARD TOWN COUNCIL
COUNCIL CHAMBERS - ANNEX BUILDING
HYBRID FORMAT

DRAFT
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES 5:00 PM; SEPTEMBER 24, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER – Chairman St. Vil called to order the Public Hearing at 5:00 p.m. regarding a proposed *"An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics And Ethics Commission"* as presented in the draft dated September 10, 2025.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. PROCEDURE OF THE PUBLIC HEARING

Chairman St. Vil welcomed all to the Hybrid Meeting. He stated for the members of the Town Council and 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.

Chairman St. Vil provided an overview of the procedure of the Public Hearing, and he asked those attending remotely to put their name and address in the "*Chat"* noting that they would be called upon during the Public Comment portion of tonight's meeting.

Chairman St. Vil stated they should all appreciate their differences in perspectives and viewpoint; and therefore, he asked that they all respect one another as they express their viewpoints this evening. He stated if something was out of bounds, that he would preempt it.

IV. CALL OF THE PUBLIC HEARING

The following call of the Public Hearing was read by Town Council Administrative Assistant Roxanne M. Maher:

LEGAL NOTICE
TOWN OF LEDYARD

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Ledyard Town Council will conduct a Hybrid Format Public Hearing
(In-Person & Video Conference)
on Wednesday, September 24, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.
to receive comments/recommendations regarding a Proposed

"*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics And Ethics Commission"*

Please join the Public Hearing in-person or remotely as follows:

In-person attendance will be at the
Council Chambers, Town Hall Annex Building
741 Colonel Ledyard Highway, Ledyard, Connecticut

Please join the video conference meeting from your computer, tablet, or smartphone at:

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86939760385?pwd=DHa2p2bE3BeJWMNbr1HqRBmGzO5CxR.1

or by audio only dial: +1 646 558 8656 Meeting ID: 869 3976 0385; Passcode: 723306

At this hearing interested persons may appear and be heard and written communications will be accepted at towncouncil@ledyardct.org.

Dated at Ledyard, Connecticut this 11th day of September, 2025.

For the Ledyard Town Council
s/s Gary St. Vil, Chairman

Please Publish on Monday, September 15, 2025

V. PRESENTATIONS

Chairman St. Vil called upon Councilor Buhle to present the proposed "*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics And Ethics Commission*" as contained in the draft dated September 10, 2025.

DRAFT: 9/10/2025

Ordinance # XXX-XXX

AN ORDINANCE
ESTABLISHING A TOWN OF LEDYARD
CODE OF ETHICS AND ETHICS COMMISSION

Be it ordained by the Town Council of the Town of Ledyard:

Section 1. Authority

In accordance with Chapter III of the Town Charter, there is hereby established a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission.

Section 2. Declaration of Policy and Purpose

The trust of the public is essential for government to function effectively. The proper operation of the Town government requires that Town officials, and Town employees be independent, impartial, and responsible to the people; that governmental decisions and policies be made in the proper channels of governmental structure; that public office and employment not be used for personal gain; and that the public has confidence in the integrity of its government.

Therefore, herewith is an established Code of Ethics for all Town officials and Town employees. The purpose of this code is to establish standards of ethical conduct for all such officials and employees, and for those who serve or conduct business with the Town of Ledyard, to assist those parties under the jurisdiction of the Ethics Commission by establishing guidelines for their conduct in order to maintain a tradition of responsible and effective public service; and to establish rules of procedure to be followed by the Ethics Commission in receiving, adjudicating, and reporting on alleged violations of the Code of Ethics.

Section 3. Applicability

The Code of Ethics shall apply to all Town officials, including members of the Board of Education, and all Town and Board of Education employees.

Section 4. Definitions

As used in this ordinance, the following words or phrases shall have the meanings indicated:

1. *"Complainant"* means any person who signs a complaint under penalties of false statement alleging a violation of this Code.

2. *"Confidential Information"* means information acquired by a Town official or Town employee in the course of and by reason of performing an individual's official duties and which is not a matter of public record or public knowledge.

3. *"Financial Interest"* means:

a. any interest that has a monetary value of more than one hundred dollars ($100.00) in any calendar year and is not common to the other citizens of the Town;

b. pecuniary or material benefit accruing to a Town official or Town employee, spouse or minor child of an official or employee of the Town as a result of a contract, transaction, zoning decision or other matter which is, or may be, the subject of an official act or action by or with the Town of Ledyard except for such contracts of transactions which by their terms and by the substance of their provisions confer the opportunity and right to realize the accrual of similar benefits to all persons and/or property similarly situated;

c. shall be deemed to exist if any Town official, Town employee, immediate family of a Town official or employee might, directly or indirectly, derive financial gain or suffer loss from any purchase, contract, transaction, zoning decision, or other matter involving any such Town office, board, commission, authority or committee, and shall also be deemed to exist if a business or professional enterprise in which the Town official or employee has any financial interest as owner, member, partner, officer, employee or stockholder or has any other form of participation which will be affected by the outcome of the matter under consideration.

4. *"Gift"* means anything of economic value in excess of one hundred dollars ($100.00), including but not limited to entertainment, food, beverage, travel, and lodging. A gift does not include:

   a. A political contribution that is otherwise reported in accordance with the law.

   b. Services provided by persons volunteering their time.

   c. A commercially reasonable loan that is made on terms not more favorable than loans made in the ordinary course of business.

   d. A gift received from a member of a person's immediate family or fiancé.

   e. Goods or services which are provided to the municipality and facilitate government actions or functions.

   f. A certificate, plaque, or other ceremonial award.

   g. A rebate or discount on the price of anything of value made in the ordinary course of business, without regard to that person's status.

   h. Printed or recorded information germane to municipal action or functions.

   i. An honorary degree.

   j. Costs associated with attending a conference or business meeting and/or the registration or entrance fee to attend such conference or business meeting in which the Town official or Town employee participates in his or her official capacity.

   k. Any gift provided to a Town Official or Town Employee or to an immediate family member of a Town Official or Town Employee for the celebration of a major life event provided any such gift provided to an individual does not exceed one thousand dollars ($1,000.00) in value. A major life event shall include, but not be limited to, a ceremony commemorating an individual's induction into religious adulthood such as a confirmation or bar mitzvah; a wedding; a funeral; the birth or adoption of a child; and retirement from public service or Town employment.

5. *"Immediate family"* means spouse, fiancé, child, parent, grandchild, brother, sister, grandparent, niece, nephew, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, mother-in-law, father-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, or anyone living in the same household.

6. *"Respondent"* means any person accused of violating this Code.

7. *"Town Official"* means any person holding elective or appointive office in the government of the Town, including members of the Board of Education.

8. *"Town Employee"* means any person receiving a salary, wages, or stipend from the Town or the Board of Education for services rendered, whether full-time or part-time.

Section 5. Conflict of Interest Provisions

1. A Town official, Town employee, or any member of his or her immediate family shall not engage in or participate in any business or transaction, nor have an interest, direct or indirect, which is incompatible with the proper discharge of that person or persons' independent judgement or action in the performance of that person or persons' official duties.

2. A Town official or any member of his or her immediate family shall not have a financial interest in any contract or purchase order for any supplies, materials, equipment or contractual services furnished to or used by the board, agency or commission of which that person is an elected or appointed member.

3. A Town employee or any member of his or her immediate family shall not have a financial interest in any contract or purchase order for any supplies, materials, equipment, or contractual services that is within the purview of such Town employee.

4. The Mayor of the Town of Ledyard and members of the Town Council of the Town of Ledyard, members of the Board of Education of the Town of Ledyard, and any members of their immediate family shall not have a financial interest in any contract or purchase order for any supplies, materials, equipment, or contractual services furnished to or used by the Town of Ledyard.

5. A Town official or employee shall refrain from voting upon or otherwise participating in any matter on behalf of the municipality if he or she, a member of his or her immediate family, or a business with which the person is associated has a financial or personal interest in the transaction or contract, including but not limited to the sale of real state, material, supplies, or services to the municipality. If such participation is within the scope of the Town official's or Town employee's responsibility, he or she shall be required to provide written disclosure, that sets forth in detail the nature and extent of such interest.

6. A Town official or Town employee shall not accept or receive, directly or indirectly, from any person or business to which any contract or purchase order may be awarded by the Town of Ledyard or any of its boards, agencies, or commissions any money, rebate, or gifts, or any promise, obligation, or contract for future reward or compensation.

7. No Town officials or employees shall accept a gift or engage in private employment or render services when the gift, employment, or services are incompatible with the proper discharge of the official duties of the Town official or Town employee, or could tend to impair independence of judgement or action by the Town official or Town employee, in the performance of his or her official duties. If a prohibited gift is offered to a Town official or a Town employee, he or she shall refuse it, return it, or pay the donor the market value of the gift.

8. To avoid even the appearance of impropriety or creation of a situation that would be contrary to the declared policy and purpose of this Code, a Town official or a Town employee, not otherwise restrained by the Code, shall exercise care when appearing before other Agencies and shall disclose whether he or she is appearing in his or her official capacity or as a private citizen.

9. A Town official or employee who have a financial or personal interest in any transactions or contract with the Town, including but not limited to the sale of real estate, materials, supplies, or services to the Town, on which that person or persons may be called upon to act in that persons official capacity shall not vote or otherwise participate in the transaction on behalf of the Town. The Town official or employee shall declare on the record that he or she has or have a conflict of interest.

10. No Town official or Town employee shall solicit or accept a gift from any person or business entity which is interested directly or indirectly in any business transaction or pending matter that is within the purview of such Town official or Town employee.

11. Town officials and Town employees shall not use Town owned vehicles, equipment, facilities, materials, or property for personal convenience or profit.

12. No Town official or Town employee shall disclose or use confidential information acquired in the course of and by reason of his or her official duties for personal or financial gain or for the personal or financial gain of a member of his or her immediate family.

13. No Town official or Town employee may directly hire or supervise a member of his or her immediate family or participate in influencing the appointment or hiring of his or her immediate family.

14. No former Town official shall represent anyone before any Town agency, board, commission, council, or committee in which he or she was formerly an elected or appointed member for a period of one (1) year following the end of such former member's service on such agency, board, commission, council, or committee.

15. No former Town employee shall represent anyone before any Town agency or department for which he or she was formerly employed for a period of one (1) year following the end of such former employee's employment with the Town.

Section 6. Disclosure of Interests Required

1. Any Town official or Town employee who has a private financial interest in any action, legislative or otherwise, by any Town agency and who is a member of, participates in discussion with or give an official opinion to such Town agency shall disclose on the written records of such agency the true nature and extent of such interest. This section shall not apply to:

a. Contracts awarded to the lowest responsible bidder after public advertisement.

b. Unpaid appointed officials during a declared state of emergency.

c. Matters requiring disclosure to or approval by a court.

d. The Town Attorney, Town Engineer, or similar Official, who is participating in or offering an opinion on behalf of said agency, and whose financial interest is merely in being paid for such services.

2. All Town Councilors, Board of Education members, and the Mayor shall, on or before January 1st each year, file with the Town Clerk, on a form to be prepared by the Town Attorney, a statement, under oath, containing the following information:

a. All real estate located within the Town of Ledyard owned by such elected official or held under a lease for a term exceeding five years, excluding, however, his or her principal residence. The foregoing shall also apply to real estate owned or leased, as aforesaid, by a corporation, trust or partnership in which any such elected official is the legal or equitable holder of at least 5% of the legal or equitable interest in said corporation, trust, or partnership.

b. The names of any firm, proprietorship, partnership, or corporation of which said elected official is an employee or in which such elected official holds at least a five (5) percent interest, and which firm, proprietorship, partnership, corporation, or limited liability corporation has sold or supplied goods or services in excess of ten thousand dollars ($10,000) per annum to the Town of Ledyard during the two years immediately preceding such official's election to office.

c. Any income, fees, salary, or wages directly or indirectly, received by such official from the Town of Ledyard or its political subdivisions during the two years immediate proceeding such official's election to public office.

Section 7. Establishment of an Ethics Commission

1. Membership

The Ethics Commission shall be comprised of five (5) regular members and two (2) alternate members. All members of the Ethics Commission shall be electors of the Town.

a. No more than two (2) Regular Members may be affiliated with any one political party. Both Alternate Members may not be affiliated with the same political party. At least one Regular Member shall be registered as an unaffiliated.

b. No regular member or alternate member of the Ethics Commission shall:

i. Be a Town official or Town employee of the Town of Ledyard or be a member of the immediate family of any Town official;

ii. Have held any elected Town or State office for a period of one (1) year prior to being appointed to the Ethics Commission.

iii. Be a member of a Town committee or commission.

iv. Serve as a member of another Town agency, board, commission, council, or committee.

v. Have been employed by the Town for a period of one (1) year prior to being appointed to the Ethics Commission.

vi. Have any financial interest in matters before the Town or the Board of Education;

vii. Have been found in violation of any federal, state, municipal, or professional Code of Ethics.

2. Terms of Appointment

a. Members shall be appointed by the Town Council for a term of three (3) years and shall serve until their successor has qualified or is removed by the Town Council.

b. In making the original appointments under this ordinance, the Town Council shall designate two (2) regular members to serve for three (3) years; two (2) regular members to serve for two (2) years; one (1) regular member to serve for (1) year; one (1) alternate member to serve for three (3) years; and one (1) alternate member to serve for two (2) years. Thereafter, vacancies shall be filled for a three (3) year term.

c. Inaugural members shall be eligible to serve two (2) additional three (3) year term beyond his or her initial appointment.

d. Any vacancy on the Ethics Commission, other than by expiration of term, shall be filled for the unexpired portion of the term by the Town Council.

e. The Town Council may remove members for cause and fill the vacancy in accordance with the Town Charter. Cause for removal shall include, but is not limited to, an unexcused absence from three (3) consecutive meetings. It shall be the responsibility of the Chairman of the Ethics Commission to notify the Town Council when a member has not properly performed his or her duties.

f. Within thirty (30) days of the appointment of the Ethics Commission, an organizational meeting shall be held at which members shall choose a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and a Secretary.

3. Authority/Duties

The Town of Ledyard Ethics Commission shall be authorized to perform the following:

a. To consult with the Town Attorney or another attorney hired by the Ethics Commission if so authorized by the Town Council.

b. To request that the Town Attorney provide advisory opinions.

4. Filing of Complaints

A complaint alleging any violation of the Code of Ethics shall be made on a form prescribed by the Ethics Commission and signed under penalty of false statement. The form shall be delivered to the Town Clerk who shall transmit a copy of the complaint to the Chairperson of the Ethics Commission and the respondent within five (5) days of receipt of the complaint. The Ethics Commission shall also notify the respondent that it will conduct a probable cause determination and invite the respondent to provide any information the respondent deems relevant to the Ethics Commission's determination of probable cause.

No complaint may be made under the Code of Ethics unless it is filed with the Ethics Commission within three (3) years after the violation alleged in the complaint has been committed.

The Complaint shall include:

a. Name of the person accused (respondent)

b. Name of the person filing the complaint.

c. The specific acts alleged to constitute a violation of the Code of Ethics and when said actions occurred.

In the application of this Code of Ethics, care will be given to distinguish between concerns of management of Town employees and violations of the public trust. The daily management of employee performance is the responsibility of the Mayor or School Superintendent in the case of the employees of Ledyard Public Schools. Personnel policies should be the first guide in those areas where applicable. Similarly, the routine activities of the Commission should be governed by its rules and regulations.

5. Evaluation and Acknowledgement

a. Within sixty (60) business days of the receipt of a complaint, the Ethics Commission shall review and determine whether there is probable cause that a violation of the Code of Ethics has occurred. A finding of probable cause means that based on a review of the available information the Ethics Commission determines that reasonable grounds exist to believe that the respondent engaged in prohibited conduct by the Code of Ethics. If the Ethics Commission does not make a finding of probable cause, the complaint shall be dismissed and a copy of its decision shall be mailed to both the complainant and the respondent. Unless the Ethics Commission makes a finding of probable cause, a complaint alleging a violation of this Code of Ethics shall be confidential except upon the request of the respondent.

b. If the Ethics Commission makes a finding of probable cause which shall require four (4) affirmative votes, it shall so advise both the complainant and the respondent within ten (10) business days of its finding and begin a formal investigation process.

6. Hearings

If the Ethics Commission decides that probable cause of a violation of the Code of Ethics exists, it will conduct a public hearing to determine whether or not a violation occurred in accordance with Uniform Administrative Procedure Act ("UAPA") (See Chapter 54 of the Connecticut General Statutes). At the hearing, the respondent will have the right to be represented by legal counsel, to present evidence and witnesses, and compel attendance of witnesses and the production of books, documents, records, and papers, and to examine and cross-examine witnesses, and inspect and copy relevant and material records, papers, and documents not in such person's possession. Hearings are not governed by the legal rules of evidence, and any information relevant to the matter may be considered. The Ethics Commission will respect the rules of privilege recognized by the law. Not later than ten (10) days before the start of the hearing, the Ethics Commission will provide the respondent with a list of its intended witnesses. The Ethics Commission will make a record of the proceedings.

7. Final Decisions

a. Decisions by the Ethics Commission that a person is in violation of the Code of Ethics must result from the concurring vote of four (4) of its members.

b. The Ethics Commission must render its decision within sixty (60) days of the closing of the hearing.

c. Such finding and memorandum will be deemed to be final decision of the commission for the purposes of the UAPA. The respondent may appeal to the superior court in accordance with the provision of Section 4-183 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

d. If the Ethics Commission determines that the Code of Ethics was violated, it will provide the respondent, the Mayor, and the Ledyard Town Council with a copy of its findings and memorandum within ten (10) days after its decision. It will also advise the respondent of his or her right to appeal the decision pursuant to Section 4-183 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

8. Penalties for Violations of the Code of Ethics

A violation of the Code of Ethics may lead to any one or a combination of the following penalties:

a. Order to cease and desist the violation;

b. Pay a civil penalty of up to the maximum amount permitted by State law;

c. Censure;

d. Suspension without pay;

e. Demotion;

f. Termination of employment;

g. Restitution of any pecuniary benefits received because of the violation committed;

Section 8. Severability

If any part of this Code or 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.

Adopted by the Ledyard Town Council on: _____

_____
Gary St. Vil, Chairman

Approve/Disapprove on: _____

_____
Fred B. Allyn, III

Published on: _____

Effective Date:_____

_____
Patricia A. Riley, Town Clerk

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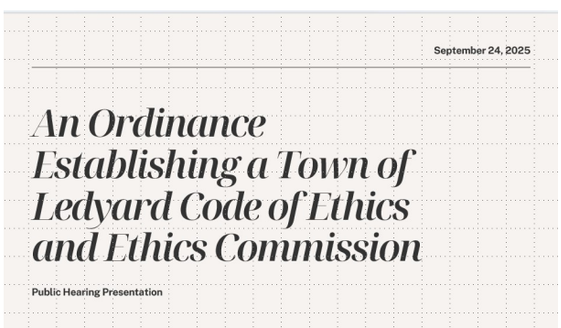
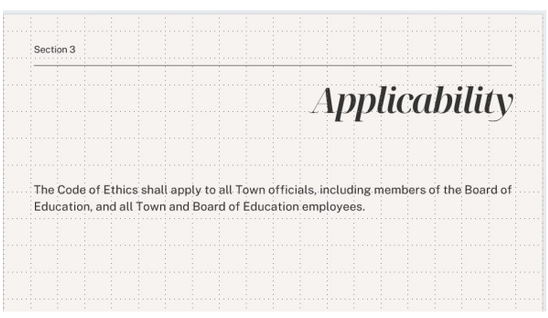
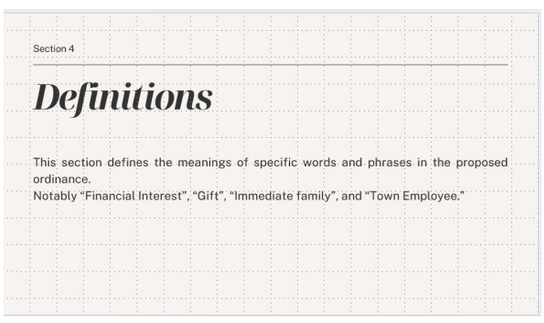
History: Based on the public's interest to establish standards of ethical conduct for all town officials, employees, and for those who serve or conduct business with the Town of Ledyard, this Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission was developed to establish guidelines for the conduct of those in public service; and to establish rules of procedure to be followed by the Ethics Commission in receiving, adjudicating, and reporting on alleged violations of the Code of Ethics.

Councilor Buhle reviewed the following PowerPoint Presentation







Section 5

Conflict of Interest Provisions

The Conflict of Interest Provisions in the proposed ordinance define specific situations that constitute a conflict of interest. These definitions remove ambiguity and uncertainty regarding what is and is not considered a conflict of interest.

Section 6

Disclosure of Interests

This section has two parts, which I've summarized below:
Part one requires all Town officials or Town employees who have a private financial interest in any action, legislative or otherwise, that they participate in discussion on or are a part of to disclose the true nature and extent of such interest.

Part two requires all Town Councilors, Board of Education Members, and the Mayor to file a statement under oath containing property they own in Ledyard outside of their principal residence, any companies they own at least 5% of that have done business with the town of Ledyard in the amount of over $10,000, and any income received directly or indirectly from the Town of Ledyard.

Section 5

Conflict of Interest Provisions

The Conflict of Interest Provisions in the proposed ordinance define specific situations that constitute a conflict of interest. These definitions remove ambiguity and uncertainty regarding what is and is not considered a conflict of interest.

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Part two requires all Town Councilors, Board of Education Members, and the Mayor to file a statement under oath containing property they own in Ledyard outside of their principal residence, any companies they own at least 5% of that have done business with the town of Ledyard in the amount of over $10,000, and any income received directly or indirectly from the Town of Ledyard.

Section 7.1-2

Establishment of an Ethics Commission

The Ethics Commission shall be comprised of 5 regular members and 2 alternate members.

- No more than 2 regular members may be affiliated with the same political party. Both alternate members may not be affiliated with the same political party. At least one regular member must be registered as unaffiliated.
- Members may not be a town employee, on any town committee, be elected or immediate family of an Town official, may not be a past elected official or employee for a period of 1 year, and may not have been found in violation of any Code of Ethics.
- Terms of 3 years, with staggering first appointments. Other terms follow the same standards as other existing commissions.

Section 7.3-5

Establishment of an Ethics Commission

The Commission can seek advisory opinions from the Town Attorney or another attorney to provide consultation for complaints.

Complaints are filed under penalty of false statement and include the complainant's name, the respondent's name, and the specific acts alleged to constitute a violation of the Code of Ethics and when said actions occurred.

The Ethics Commission must determine probable cause within 60 days of the receipt of a complaint. Unless the Ethics Commission makes a finding of probable cause, a complaint alleging a violation of this Code of Ethics shall be confidential except upon the request of the respondent.

Section 7.6-7

Establishment of an Ethics Commission

If the Ethics Commission decides that probable cause of a violation of the Code of Ethics exists, it will conduct a public hearing.

The respondent has the right to legal counsel, to present evidence and witnesses, and to compel attendance of witnesses and the production of books and records. The Commission must render its decision within 60 days of the closing of the hearing. The Commission will provide the respondent, the Mayor, and the Town Council with a copy of its findings and memorandum within 10 days after its decision, and will advise the respondent of their rights to appeal to the Superior Court.

Section 7.8

Establishment of an Ethics Commission

A violation of the Code of Ethics may lead to any one or a combination of the following penalties:
a. Order to cease and desist the violation;
b. Pay a civil penalty of up to the maximum amount permitted by State law;
c. Censure;
d. Suspension without pay;
e. Demotion;
f. Termination of employment;
g. Restitution of any pecuniary benefits received because of the violation committed.

Section 8

Severability

If any part of this Code or 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.

Why an Ethics ordinance?

"Ethics is not about the way things are, but about the way they ought to be."

John Rawls
Political Philosopher

79% ↑

133 towns in Connecticut (79%)
have a Code of Ethics, an Ethics Ordinance, an Ethics Commission, or a Board of Ethics, with two more currently in progress (Ledyard and Goshen).

Inspiration

The following towns' ordinances were read to collaborate ideas and inspiration for an ordinance that reflects the needs of Ledyard.

- **Glastonbury**
- **Simsbury**
- **Norwich**
- **Stonington**
- **Essex**
- **Madison**
- **and more...**

Councilor Buhle concluded her presentation by providing an overview of the timeline to present the proposed "*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics And Ethics Commission"* dated September 10, 2025 at tonight's Public Hearing as follows:

- Administration Committee drafted the proposed Ordinance.
- June 23, 2025 - Administration Committee forwarded the draft Ordinance to Town Attorney Matt Ritter for a legal review and recommendations.
- June 24, 2025 Councilor Buhle and Attorney Ritter spoke by telephone regarding the proposed Ordinance.
- July 14, 2025 Town Attorney provided a red line document with recommendations to Councilor Buhle. In the July 14, 2025 draft Attorney Ritter removed parts of the proposed Ordinance, even though he had verbally advised Councilor Buhle that they were admissible.
- August 6, 2025 Administration Committee reviewed Attorney Ritter's recommendations and agreed to provide comments at their September 10, 2025 meeting.\
- September 10, 2025 Councilor Buhle stated she provided a revised draft Ordinance dated September 8, 2025, which included some parts that Attorney Ritter had removed (July 14, 2025 draft) for the Administration Committee to review.
- September 10, 2025 Administration Committee provided additional revisions to the proposed Ordinance; and forwarded the draft dated September 10, 2025 to the Town Council for tonight's Public Hearing.

VI. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman St. Vil thanked Councilor Buhle for her prestation regarding the proposed "*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics And Ethics Commission".* He stated at this time he would open the floor to residents comments; and he asked residents to keep their comments to 3 minutes or less. He also asked that if residents have already submitted written comments to the Town Council, that they not read their written communication, because the Town Council has already received their comments, and to allow time for all those who would like to speak this evening. He stated the written communications were already part of the record, noting that residents were welcome to provide other comments that they have not already been submitted. He also asked for those attending on-line to please put their name and address in the "*Chat"* and they would be called on in the order that they were signed up.

Mr. Eric Treaster, 10 Huntington Way, Ledyard, stated that he was only representing himself this evening. He stated that he provided written communications this afternoon. He stated that he would not review the twelve points in his written communication; however, he would like to identify the following:

- ***Enabling State Statute*** – Mr. Treaster stated the proposed "*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics And Ethics Commission"* should reference the enabling the State Statute for Ethics Boards.

- ***Section 6 "Disclosure of Interests Required"*** Mr. Treaster noted that he believed that this Section should be deleted, because he thought that it would discourage people from running for elected office.

  ✓ Section 6; Paragraph (1) – Mr. Treaster pointed out that this text allowed a town official or town employee ***to participate in a discussion; or give an official opinion if he/she disclosed the nature and extent of his/her financial interest in the issue being decided.*** However, he stated in Section 5 "*Conflict of Interest*"; Paragraph (5) the ***elected official was not allowed to participate if he/she had a financial interest in the issue.*** He stated the text of these two Sections were in conflict with each other because Section 6; paragraph (1) does not permit participation, even with disclosure. Therefore, he stated that these types of things within the proposed Ordinance needed to be resolved before the Town Council moved forward to consider the adoption of the proposed Ordinance.

- ***Hearings*** – Mr. Treaster stated everywhere the proposed Ordinance talked about "Public Hearing" there should be an option for an Executive Session, noting that the Executive Session should come first, because he thought that it was only fair to the respondent to first discuss the matter in an Executive Session.

- ***Section 7 "Final Decision:"*** – Mr. Treaster noted that the maximum of each Phase of the process would take 155 days for something to happen.

- ***Section 8 "Penalties for Violations of the Code of Ethics***" – Mr. Treaster stated that it was unclear whether the Penalties issued by an Ethics Commission were *Orders* or *Suggestions.* He noted for example:

  ✓ Order to cease and desist the violation - Mr. Treaster questioned whether there was an opportunity to make restitution of community benefits; if appropriate.

  ✓ Pay a civil penalty of up to the maximum amount permitted by State law – Mr. Treaster noted that there were unanswered questions about the civil penalty. What would happen if the civil penalty was not paid.

  ✓ Censure.

  ✓ Suspension without pay – Mr. Treaster stated there were questions regarding suspension without pay.

  ✓ Demotion - Mr. Treaster stated there were questions regarding *Demotion;* noting that it should be a suggestion.

  ✓ Termination of employment - Mr. Treaster stated there were questions regarding *Termination;* noting that it should be a suggestion.

- ***Section 7; Subsection 2 "Terms"*** – Mr. Treaster stated the three-year term limit was too short, noting that there should not be a term limit. He stated if everyone was doing a good job they should let them go on forever; in 3-year increments, but be allowed to continue to serve on the Ethics Commission.

  Mr. Treaster concluded his comments stating that he favored an Ethics Commission, noting that the proposed Ordinance was about 90% there. He stated that it needed to be amended so that non-financial issues would be included in the Ordinance.

Ms. Kristen Chapman, Executive Assistant to the Mayor stated that she was present this evening to read into the record a letter from Mayor Allyn, III; as he was already scheduled to be out of town before this September 24, 2025 Public Hearing was scheduled. Ms. Chapman read the following:

"Councilors,

I write in opposition to the proposed "An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission" for the following reasons:

1) CT General Statutes 7-148(h). A municipality in Connecticut can cite this section to incorporate the state's ethical conduct rules into local investigations of misconduct by officials or employees.

2) *The Town Charter, Chapter III, Section 9 grants this power to the Town Council to investigate, call witnesses, appear before the Town Council and testify. The electors of this town have vested this power with the Town Council, not another group.*

3) *Town of Ledyard Fraud Policy. Dated May 28, 2014 clearly outlines no less than eight (8) different actions that constitute fraud. It is noted the language also include the words "….but not limited to".*

4) *Town of Ledyard Employee Handbook. The handbook includes Nepotism (page 20), Conflict of Interest (page 20), Outside employment (page 21) and Vehicle Use Policy (appendix 8). Every Town employee received a copy of the handbook and are required to sign and accept the obligations contained in said handbook.*

5) *Though the draft ordinance, dated 6/11/25 did receive a legal review, the Council has not requested a legal review for the draft dated 9/7/2025. At the September 10, 2025 meeting, Councilor Buhle states "…the draft for tonight incorporates probably 80% of the Town Attorney's language." That statement would imply the newly revised ordinance would be approximately 20% shorter, however the proposed document is now 2+ pages longer than the 6/11/2025 draft. In an ordinance where substantial liability exposure to the Town may exist, I would certainly think a second legal review of the 9/7/25 draft should be mandatory.*

6) *There is no budget line for this new commission. The Town Attorney has suggested a minimum of $20,000 annually for legal fees, with some towns spending as much as $200,000. Keep in mind, if the aggrieved party does not agree with the outcome, the next stop for the town and the aggrieved party does not agree with the outcome, the next stop for the town and the aggrieved is Superior Court. Sincerely, Fred B. Allyn",*

Ms. Kristen Chapman, Executive Assistant to the Mayor stated as the Administrator of Liability-Auto-Property (LAP) Insurance Claims on the behalf of the Town, that she would like to make the Town Council aware of the potential costs related to the proposed "*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission*" . She stated per CGS 7-101a ***Protection of Municipal Officers and Municipal Employes from Damage Suits:*** *"Each municipality shall protect and save harmless any such municipal officer or municipal employee from financial loss and expense, including legal fees and costs, if any, arising out of any claim, demand or suit instituted again such officer or employee by reason of alleged malicious, wanton or willful act or ultra virus act, on the part of such officer or employee while acting in the discharge of his duties".* Ms. Chapman stated that the insurance deductibles related to such claims range from $1,000 to $10,000 per claim.

Ms. Patricia Riley, Town Clerk, thanked the Town Council for the opportunity to provide comment this evening regarding the proposed *"An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission"* noting that she wanted to discuss the following concerns regarding the proposal as it would directly affect her and the Town Clerk's Office:

- ***Section 7; Paragraph 4***, The Town Clerk shall transmit a copy of the Complaint Form to the Chairperson of the Ethics Commission and the respondent within 5 days. Ms. Riley stated that this was a major problem noting the following:

  - ✓ Ms. Riley questioned what would happen if she was on vacation for a week, the 5 days would have already passed. If the Town Clerk's Office cannot accept the Complaint Form; while she was out of the Office would the person need to come back when she returned to the office; and she questioned how this type of situation be handled.

  - ✓ Ms. Riley noted if that she was not available or out of the office and unable to receive the initial Complaint Form; that she had concerns that this would cause complaints against her.

  - ✓ Ms. Riley questioned whether Town Staff (Herself or Assistant Town Clerk) should have knowledge of complaints of other employees.

  - ✓ Ms. Riley questioned what if the complaint was about an Ethics Commission Member. What would that process be.

- ***Section 6; Paragraph 2,*** - All Town Councilors, Board of Education Members and Mayor shall file each year by January 1st a form with a statement under oath. Who will give that oath? Ms. Riley stated that it would be a conflict of interest for the Town Clerk to give the oath since she was also going to be the only one accepting the Complain Forms. She suggested that perhaps the Complaint Form should be notarized by someone other than the Town Clerk's Office.

- ***Not a matter of public record or knowledge unless a probable cause exists***.

  Ms. Riley stated after some research, it appeared for the towns that have an Ethics Commission that their Ordinance/Code of Ethics was written so that all the Complaint Forms would go directly to the Ethics Commission. She stated that she thought this made sense because she was also an employee and she should not have access to those confidential records.

- ***FOIA Concerns vs. Ethics Exemptions*** – Ms. Riley questioned the following:

  ✓ What about the Ethics Commission Members emails.

  ✓ What happens to the paperwork/emails when they come off the Commission relative to the FOIA/Retention requirements.

  ✓ Where would she as Town Clerk store the confidential records away from staff. She stated her Assistant Town Clerk had access to all locked and unlocked spaces in the Town Clerk's Office. .

  ✓ As Town Clerk that she did not have access to the Board of Education Members to send notifications in the event of a complaint. Would the MIS Director be required to get all Board of Education Members into the Town's Outlook email system.

- ***Record Retention Schedule Requirements*** – Ms. Riley questioned whether anyone researched the Record Retention for ethics documents with the State Library.

- ***Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Requirements –*** Ms. Riley questioned whether anyone researched FOIA Laws against Ledyard's Town Charter, Employee Handbook & Union Contracts regarding Ethics Commission vs any exemptions. She stated that she would have liked the opportunity to research other towns and to consult with the State FOIA Commission about these concerns.

  Ms. Riley stated that she strongly recommended that if the Town Council wished to proceed with an Ethics Commission that they consider one of the following:

  1. Consider a Code of Ethics that refers the ethics complaints to be submitted under the Mayor for Town employees, Superintendent for Board of Education employees, and elected officials under Town Council. This would align with the official documents already in place such as the Town Charter, Employee Handbook, and Union Contacts.

     -OR-

  2. Refer all ethics complaints to the Ethics Commission directly.

Ms. Riley concluded her comments by stating on September 10, 2025, she attended the Administration Committee to bring forward these concerns. However, she stated that no member from the Administration Committee or Town Council has reached out to her to have a conversation. She stated that she would have hoped that there would have been a discussion on these topics; and that she was disappointed that her concerns were not acknowledged.

Mr. Jeff Eilenberger, 2 Village Drive, Ledyard, noted the Town Clerk's concerns and he questioned whether this was the first time the Town Council heard about all of the concerns the Town Clerk had with the proposed "*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission"*. Councilor Buhle stated that Ms. Riley provided comments at the Administration Committee's September 10, 2025 meeting. Chairman St. Vil interjected explaining that this was a Public Hearing; and that Mr. Eilenberger was free to speak this evening and that his comments would be entered into the record. However, he stated that they were not going to get into discourse. Mr. Eilenberger continued by questioning and commenting on the following:

- ***Town Clerk's Concerns –*** Mr. Eilenberger questioned whether anyone talked to the Town Clerk during the last fourteen-days to try to iron some things out.

- ***Legal Fees -*** Mr. Eilenberger noted the $4,000 cost for the Town Attorney to provide a legal review and recommendations regarding the proposed "*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Ordinance*", noting that it did not make sense to disregard the Attorney's recommendations.

- ***Budget to Support the work of the Ethics Commission*** – Mr. Eilenberger questioned the budget for the first year; and the cost per year to maintain. He stated if there was no budget to go along with the proposal that anyone would be insane to vote for it.

Mr. Scott Johnsion, Jr., Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Director, stated that he hoped he could provide his comments in the three-minute allotted time, noting that he would try to fit it all in. He stated as a Parks & Recreation Professional, equity and inclusion were at the forefront of every decision they make. Whether it was ensuring fair play in sports or equal opportunities in programming, noting that ethics played a vital role in our profession and was something they take very seriously.

Mr. Johnson noted that he has held this position in Ledyard for six- years; and every Town Council except the current one has consulted with Department Heads on various ordinances and decisions being made, especially when it would affect the department they oversee. He stated the town's Directors were experts in their respective fields, they were versed in laws, regulations, and industry standards within their disciplines. He stated the Department Heads were one of the greatest tools at the town's disposal and he urge the Town Council going forward to utilize this tool to ensure they were making informed decisions.

Mr. Johnon went on to state that previous Town Councils would have emailed a draft of their proposed Ordinance to all the Department Heads to ask for their input or concerns long before a bringing the proposal to a Public Hearing. He stated this process was not only a professional courtesy but would ensure that taxpayers' dollars were not being wasted like they were in this situation. He stated having this type of dialog would have allowed Town Councilors and Department Heads to work together to develop and draft a proposed Ordinance that would have been worthy of being sent to the Town Attorney. He noted as they say in the Parks & Recreation Department "*Teamwork makes the Dream work*".

Mr. Johnson stated he was present this evening to strongly oppose the proposed *"An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission"* . He stated the Town already had measures in place through the Town Charter, Employee Handbook, Policies & Procedures, and most importantly Connecticut General Statutes. He stated that these measures have proven to protect the town in the past without affecting town operations or eliminating services for residents.

Mr. Johnson noted as he mentioned this evening, that if a simple email was sent, that he would have provided all these concerns prior to the town wasting over $4,000 in attorney fees. He stated that he would like to believe that no one wrote the proposed Ordinance with the intention of eliminating recreational programs, raising summer camp fees, or creating a significant loss of revenue for the Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Department. He commented that signing the proposed Ordinance would instantly eliminate more than 15 programs that were enjoyed by over 500 residents, noting that those Programs generated $30,690 in Program Fes last year increasing the in revenue into their Department's Special Revenue Account. He stated this revenue was used to help keep summer camp costs down for parents who were already struggling to make ends meet. He stated this revenue provided an opportunity to subsidize the Senior Center Programs using $10,000 from their General Fund. He stated a town Commission was eliminated when they merged the Parks & Recreation Commission with the Senior Citizens Commission, explaining that merger saved the town money, which this proposed Ordinance would add right back. He stated this proposed Ordinance would undo the three-years of hard work he has put into saving the Town thousands of dollars.

Mr. Johnson continued by stating that members of the Town Council may be asking themselves "*How an Ethics Ordinance would have such a catastrophic effect on the Parks, Recreation, & Senior Citizens Department's operation?"*. With that he would ask them the following question: "*What type of person makes the best Program Instructors?* He stated the answer was "*The Parks & Recreation Professionals, Summer Camp Staff, Teachers, and Coaches"*. He stated these individuals were town employees in some capacity that Parks & Recreation then contracts with to teach many of their Programs.

Mr. Johnson explained at the end of each summer, the Parks & Recreation Department surveys their staff to see if they have any skills that could be used for Programs and if they would be available during the school year. He stated for those interested they then pay them as a Contractor to offer some of their Preschool Sports Programs such as T-Ball, Little Tykes' Soccer and Peanut Basketball. He stated that all of these Programs would disappear if this proposed Ordinance were to pass because it would eliminate the Feeder Programs for Ledyard's Youth Sport Leagues. He stated that they have Parks, Recreation, & Senior Center union employees that run the Rowing and Fencing Programs. He explained that both of these Programs were something their Department brags about offering, as they were unique. He stated over the years they have put in a lot of effort to develop and grow these programs. Whether it was the countless hours coordinating with the Board of Education to have participants dropped off at the Boat Launch after school, to the thousands of dollars spent on equipment needed to start the Fencing Program, noting that these Programs would also disappear if this proposed Ordinance were to be enacted.

Mr. Johnson went on to note that his next concern was with their Coaches. He questioned *"Did this proposed Ordinance only pertain to staff working directly for this department*?" He explained that the Parks & Recreation Department works with the High School Coaches to offer Clinics and Camps during the off seasons. He stated the CIAC, the State's Body that oversees High School Sports Ethics, makes it very clear "*That no coach can hold team practices in the off season as it was an unfair advantage"*. However, he explained that those coaches could offer clinics or camps through the local Recreation Department in the off season. He stated the State Organization responsible for High School Sports Ethics not only allows for clinics and camps to be offered, but encourages them. He stated because the proposed Ethics Ordinance would deem this practice unethical they would potentially lose all Clinics provided by High School Coaches simply because they were already paid to coach through the Board of Education.

Mr. Johnson stated that one of his biggest concerns was that this proposed Ordinance would eliminate all the town's current inclusive programing. He stated in Connecticut it was illegal for a public entity to remove inclusive recreation programs unless it was due to non-discriminatory budget cuts, low participation, or safety concerns.

Chairman St. Vil stated that Mr. Johnson's three-minutes were up. Mr. Johnson stated he was almost done with his comments and asked if he could finish. Chairman St. Vil explained that they had to allow time for everyone present this evening that would like to speak.

Mr. Jay Pealer, 48 Highland Drive, Ledyard, stated that he would be reading comments provided by his son, Daniel, who could not be present this evening.

"Dear Mr. Chair and Members of the Council:

Thank you for the opportunity to address you. I write to express my strong opposition to the proposed ordinance titled "An Ordinance Establishing A Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission," dated September 10, 2025.

This ordinance raises serious legal concerns. It risks violating existing union contracts and intrudes upon personnel matters already governed by collective bargaining agreements. To be clear, this is not a question of values—it is a question of law.

Key Legal Issues:

- ***Conflict with Labor Law:*** *The ordinance appears to grant investigatory and disciplinary authority to the Ethics Commission over unionized employees, disregarding the grievance procedures and protections enshrined in their contracts. This directly conflicts with Connecticut labor law, which guarantees just cause standards, progressive discipline, and arbitration rights. These are binding and enforceable—not optional.*

- ***Unfair Labor Practice:*** *By introducing new oversight and penalties outside the scope of negotiated agreements, the ordinance effectively alters terms and conditions of employment without bargaining. This constitutes an unfair labor practice and exposes the Town to legal liability.*

- ***Failure to Differentiate Roles:*** *The ordinance does not distinguish between classified civil service positions and appointed or at-will roles. It treats all Town employees uniformly, ignoring the contractual protections unionized workers depend on. Disciplining union members outside the grievance procedure may be legally indefensible.*

- ***Lack of Due Process:*** *The Ethics Commission is empowered to impose penalties - including suspension and termination—without specifying representation rights, evidentiary standards, or appeal mechanisms. For union members, this omission bypasses contractual safeguards and invites arbitrary enforcement.*

- ***Statutory Conflict:*** *The ordinance conflicts with Connecticut General Statutes §7-474, which require municipalities to negotiate in good faith with recognized bargaining units over employment conditions. Applying the ordinance broadly to "Town employees" disregards this statutory framework and risks preemption by state law.*

Specific Concern: Town Clerk's Role

The ordinance assigns the Town Clerk sole responsibility for receiving and transmitting ethics complaints within five days, without naming an alternate or providing a backup mechanism. This creates a structural bottleneck that effectively prevents the Clerk from taking any leave longer than five days. Such a provision may violate the Clerk's rights under the collective bargaining agreement and imposes unreasonable work conditions. In cases of illness, emergency, or protected leave, the Ethics Commission's operations could be paralyzed—undermining the very governance the ordinance seeks to uphold.

Conclusion
This ordinance is legally insufficient. It places the Town at risk, undermines negotiated contracts, and imposes undue burdens on unionized employees. I respectfully urge the Council to reconsider. Please engage in meaningful consultation with union representatives, legal counsel, and the public.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Sincerely, Daniel Pealer"

Mrs. Sharon Pealer, 48 Highland Drive, Ledyard, stated that she attended the September 10, 2025 Administration Committee at which the proposed *"An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission"* to listen. She noted that what she heard from the people who were both for and against the proposal such as Mr. M. Dave Schroeder, Jr., Councilor Dombrowski and Councilor Ryan: "*That the proposed Ordinance was not ready"*. She went on to state that drawing a line through the strictest penalties would not do away with the violation of the union labor contracts and it would not fix the fact that no one bothered to talk to the Town Clerk, the one person that would be most affected by the stipulations written in the proposed Ordinance. She noted at the September 10, 2025 Administration Committee meeting that Councilor Buhle said: "*She was concerned about letting perfect get in the way of good enough*". However, Mrs. Pealer stated the Town should be concerned with "*Unfinished getting passed"*. She stated the proposed Ordinance as presented in the draft dated September 10, 2025 was incomplete and as such was not ready for passage.

Ms. Christine Dias, Director of Human Resources, stated although the Employee Handbook has already been brought up this that she would bring it up again. She stated that the Town Employees were already required to follow the *Employee Handbook*, which was last revised and approved by the Town Council on April 26, 2023; noting that she was sure that the Board of Education had their own Policies and Handbook. She explained that the Employee Handbook included the following Sections and Appendices:

- ✓ Conflict of Interest
- ✓ Nepotism Policy
- ✓ Outside Employment

Ms. Dias stated that she was very concerned with the Section 7; Subsection 8 " *Penalties and Violations of the Code of Ethics"*. She explained that the Town had seven Collective

Bargaining Agreements, and the Board of Education had six Collective Bargaining Agreements. She stated the following penalties as listed in the proposed Ordinance may conflict with their Collective Bargaining Agreements:

- ✓ Pay a civil penalty of up to the maximum amount permitted by State law.
- ✓ Censure.
- ✓ Suspension without pay.
- ✓ Demotion.
- ✓ Termination of employment.

Ms. Dias stated while the Town Attorney reviewed the prior draft Ordinance, that his review was as it related to Connecticut General Statutes; not how it related to these 14 Collective Bargaining Agreements and the Employee Handbook, noting that the Town's Labor Attorney had not reviewed the proposal. She stated the town already had ways to handle employees, so maybe the proposed Ordinance needed to be just be for the Town's Elected Officials and Volunteers.

Mrs. Pamela Ball, 674 Shewville Road, Ledyard, noted that she had more than three-minutes of material, therefore, she asked if there was time at the end of the Public Hearing that she hoped the Town Council would allow her time to finish her comments. Mrs. Ball proceed with her comments noting that she has submitted four letters in opposition to the proposed Ordinance. She stated that they would not be discussing this proposed *"An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission"* if people were not disappointed in what was going to happen with the Sweet Hill Farm Property. She stated that she thought if people were happy with the proposal for the property that they might not be discussing this proposed Ordinance. She stated that she thought having a Code of Ethics laid out in an Ordinance was fine; however, she stated that she thought having an Ethics Commission was a terrible idea. She stated just because 30 of Connecticut's 169 towns have an Ethics Commission was not a reason for Ledyard to have one. She stated only 30 of Connecticut towns had a Mayor-Town Council form of government, noting that the other 139 towns had a form of governance that was not or different from a Mayor-Town Council structure.

Mrs. Ball continued by addressing the following:

- ***Volunteers*** – Mrs. Ball stated Volunteers should be excluded from the proposed "*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission"*. She stated that the town's volunteers donate hundreds and hundreds of hours of time to this town. She stated as an example, that all it would take to turn someone's whole life upside down was for somebody to say, "*Oh, I saw somebody take money out of the donation jar at the Farmer's Market".*

- ***Ethics Commission*** *Members* – Mrs. Ball stated the volunteers serving on the Ethics Commission were not a jury of peers, noting that a jury and a judge were trained people. She stated that juries were vetted for every single instance when they were needed. She stated that she would use the Farmers Market again as an example, questioning: *What if somebody complains to the Farmer's Market; and what if there were people on the Ethics Commission that know people on the Farmer's Market, or they were familiar with the situation. Would those volunteer Ethics Commission Members be removed, and would new people be vetted to serve on the Ethics Commission?*

- ***Complaint Form*** – Mrs. Ball stated that the Complaint Form and proposed Ordinance should state which issues would be excluded. She state the proposed Ordinance should not be voted on without the Complaint Form, because it was an integral part of the process.

- ***Financial*** Matters – Mrs. Ball stated that she understands that it was implied that only financial things would be addressed under the Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission. However, she stated that the Compliant Form and Ordinance should list the types of things that were not applicable.

- ***Conflict of Interest***- Ms. Ball suggested outlining all the details of what constituted a "*Conflict of Interest*" in Chapter IX; Section 6, of the Town Charter to include the text in the proposed Ordinance. She stated that the town should fix the Town Charter; so they would not have neighbors sitting in judgment of neighbors.

- ***Town Charter*** – Mrs. Ball stated that she believed that all this could be addressed by a Charter Revision. She stated if they had the time and energy to form an Ethics Commission and to educate the town, then she thought that they had time to revise the Town Charter, and educate the people about the amendments to the Town Charter.

- ***Impartiality*** – Mrs. Ball addressed a comment about the Town Council struggling to be impartial, noting that as the Town's Elected Officials that the Town Council had a duty to be impartial. She stated that she did not think that if the Town Council was struggling with impartiality, they could see an impartial Ethics Commission. She stated that there was no guarantee that an Ethics Commission would be impartial, because so many people know so many other people in their small town.

- ***Legal Costs*** - Mrs. Ball stated that all it would take was one lawsuit from somebody who was accused of something to have their life ruined. She stated although the accuser could file the *Form Under Penalty of False Statement*, and they could truly believe their accusation was true; that the accusation still might not be right. She stated that it does not have to be a deliberate lie to be untrue.

- ***Frequently Asked Questions and Answers –*** Mrs. Ball noted the *Frequently Asked Questions and Answers* included the following Questions: "*Why do we need this*?" She stated that she did not think the town needed the proposed "*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Comission*". She stated that she believed that they needed to make the Town Charter more clear. She stated that she thought it was awful for people in town to be judging other people in town or judging town volunteers, or judging town employees; and then making recommendations about their employment.

- ***Commission Member Terms*** – Mrs. Ball stated the Section 7; Paragraph 2 in the proposed "*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission*" stated that members would be removed if they missed three consecutive meetings. She stated what Ethics Commission members bullied people; or; or harassed people on Social Media. She stated that none of those reasons were listed as reasons to be removed from the Commission; noting the only one reason listed was for missing three consecutive meetings. She stated if they were going to have an Ethics Commission that passes judgment on people in their community that they need to have better guidance as to what it would take to get them kicked off the Commission.

  Mrs. Deborah Edwards, 30 Bluff Road West, Gales Ferry, stated that she would try to be brief as she has spoken on the topic of an Ethics Commission previously. She stated that this has been a long process and not the first time their Town has been requested to create a Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission, noting that the systems that were in place have failed to address any issue of misconduct, and she thought that it was important to note. She stated that there were many people who have come forward to roll up their sleeves and put in the work to help get this established, so that their Town has very clear guidance on their values of both ethical conduct and transparency. She stated that she was in full support of getting this across the finish line and moving forward with confidence in town operations. With that said, that she did not believe the draft "*Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission"* presented tonight accomplished that goal. She stated that she did not think it was far off, and with a few thoughtful modifications that it could be achieved. She noted that an example was a review that was submitted by Mr. Schroeder that illuminated some of the potential loopholes that exist in the current draft, and he also offered suggestions on how to close those gaps. She stated the town needed a strong and clear Code, as well as an impartial Commission that could support it. She stated that she did not believe leaving Ethics issues to be addressed by the Town Council was in the town's best interest or in the best interest of their Council members. She stated the Town Council does a wonderful job and at your personal expense of time, but the Town Council was a political body and showed itself in discussions on serious matters. Further, she stated that Town Councilors interact with employees and other committee members frequently as part of their duties. She stated that she thought it was unfair to put them in the difficult position of handling sensitive ethics issues regarding "co-workers" and that she was not sure the results would satisfy the impartiality required to instill confidence in the outcome. She stated for that reason, she was here today to urge the Town Council to forgo a vote tonight, to take in all the information presented, make modifications where suggested, and then present and

vote upon a document that closer achieved the stated goal of forming guidance that was explicit in its intentions to help prevent questionable actions, as well as to receive, investigate and advise on questions of ethics when they arise. She concluded her comments by stating that she was in full support of a clear Code of Ethics and the creation of a strong Ethics Commission, when they have a proposal before them. She noted that Councilor Buhle stated; "*She does not want to see "**perfect**" getting in the way* of "***good***". However, Mrs. Edwards stated that they can do better. Thank you.

Mr. Bruce Edwards, 30 Bluff Road West, Gales Ferry, stated that he wanted to be clear; that there was a standing need for an Ethics Commission, commenting that they were about 40-50-years late. However, he stated that he was grateful for the efforts that were being put into drafting the proposed "*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission".* He stated to keep this simple, the Town needed a kind of a bumper system to protect it from wrongdoing. He stated that his comments were not to suggest that there was wrongdoing, but that if something arises the Ethics Commission was a way for the public to question things. He stated that tonight was a good example, noting not that there was anything wrong, but that he cannot come before the Tow Council and ask questions; such as "*How do I handle an ethics question?"* He questioned whether he should pick one Town Councilor and pull them off to the side, noting that he did not know. Therefore, he stated that they just need an avenue for the public to ask questions.

Mr. Edwards continued by stating that he has been a resident and or landowner in this town since 1965, noting that he was 73 years old, which was a long time. He stated that there have been ethics violations in this town; some of them serious, noting that he knows that was an absolute fact. He stated at one time his family was subject to an ethics violation, and that he was not going to get into the details this evening, but that it does happen. He stated for anybody to sit around here and paint a pretty picture like it does not happen in Ledyard that he would tell them that they were naive. He stated that he was sorry to say that, but it was the truth, it was naive. He stated that there were motivations in this world that we conceive all around us and they were not right; and the public had a right to question it. He stated the public has a right for an impartial Ethics Commission to look at ethics issues. Thank you

Mr. Brandon Sabbag, 16 Nutmeg Drive, Gales Ferry, stated that he was definitely opposed to the proposed "*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission"* for the following reasons:

- ***Small Town – Small Government*** – Mr. Sabbag stated that Ledyard was a small town, and therefore, he believed they we should have small government. He stated adding more things that were already covered by the Town Charter, which many have said this evening, would just adding more money and more time, which were two valuable things to all of them.

- ***Taxes -*** Mr. Sabbag stated that Ledyard just saw the highest tax increase in 20 years. He stated the townspeople voted on the Budget two times, and the Town Council completely negated the votes of the townspeople.

- ***Staff Concerns*** - Mr. Sabbag stated today they have heard comments from the Mayor, the Mayor's Executive Assistant, the Town Clerk, the Director of Human Resources and the Director of Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens. He stated their comments and concerns were very clear that they were against the proposed "*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission".* He stated that these were people that work full-time every day for their town and that he thought their concerns were something they should strongly consider.

- ***Local Election*** – Mr. Sabbag stated that Ledyard was literally one month away from an election. Therefore, he stated if anything else, that maybe they should wait to let the townspeople speak and see the results of the November 4, 2025 Election before they move forward with the proposed Ordinance, noting that there might be some new appointments to see what that Town Council would say.

Mr. Sabbag stated in closing that he if possible, he would like to yield the rest of his time to the gentleman from the Parks & Recreation Department to complete his comments.

Chairman St. Vil stated that he would allow Mr. Sabbag to yield the remainder of his time which was 1minute and 42 seconds to the Director of Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Scott Johnson, Jr.

Mr. Scott Johnson, Jr. Director of Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens thanked Mr. Sabbag and Chairman St. Vil for the opportunity to finish his comments that he started earlier this evening (see above) noting that this was the most important part of what he had to say. He stated the provisions in the proposed "*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission"*, would be a direct violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Connecticut General Statutes 46a-64. He stated enacting an Ordinance that restricted the town from hiring the individuals that were the most qualified to teach inclusive programs was not an allowable situation because it would eliminate inclusive programing.

Mr. Johnson stated everything he explained tonight was not only ethical but the Industry Standard in the Parks & Recreation field. He stated that he would use himself as an example, noting that when he was working for the City of New London that he was on payroll as the Recreation Supervisor, while he was also being paid as a contractor to instruct their Kids Marathon Program, Youth Triathlon Team, Kindergarten Fitness Enrichment Classes, and an Adaptive Sports Class for Children on the Autism Spectrum. He stated in accordance with the proposed "*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission"*, to do this would be an ethics violation.

Mr. Johnson stated that he wanted to reiterate that passing this proposed Ordinance in its current form would have a detrimental effect on the Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Department and the residents of Ledyard, because it would result in a loss of Programs, Registrations Fees, and Revenue, while increasing Camp Fees, requiring moneyto be added back into the general fund, and creating staffing challenges across their entire operation. He stated that it was important for the Town Council to have the full picture.

Mr. M. Dave Schroeder, Jr., stated he was present this evening to speak in support of suggested amendments titled "*Citizens Concerns to the proposed "An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission"* because they thought the draft dated September 10, 2025 was insufficient.. Mr. Schroeder stated that he provided written communication that included suggested Amendments that were put together by Concerned Citizens and they also provided Justifications that provided the arguments to support their suggested amendments. He explained his name was attached to the documents because he was presenting the *Concern Citizens Suggested Amendments*, noting that they were not solely his suggestions. He stated the residents wanted to attend tonight's Public Hearing essentially to review their a Point-by-Point Arguments, and the reasons as to why they thought the current draft Ordinance dated September 10, 2025 was insufficient. However, he stated because Chairman St. Vil has stated that the Town Council has received a copy of the *Concerned Citizens Suggested Amendments and Justifications* and that they would read them, that instead of him reading what the Concerned Citizens submitted that he would like to point out a couple of things as follows:

- ***Monitor the adequacy of the Ordinance*** – Mr. Schroeder suggested the proposed *"An Ordinance Establishing a Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission*" include a Section for the Ethics Commission to monitor the adequacy of the Ordinance and to report back and advise to the Town Council when they think amendments needed to be made. He stated they were going to come up with a 100% amazing thing right from the get-go. He stated as others have already mentioned the people that would serve on the Commission were going to be fully invested in this, and would be able to advise the Town Council.

- ***Advisory Role*** – Mr. Schroeder noted that it was his understanding that the Ethics Commission was going to essentially be an Advisory Role. He stated the Ethics Commission was not going to be the Judge, Jury, and Executioner. He stated that the Commission's role would be to investigate complaints; and to come up with a decision, and then they would advise the proper authority, whether that was the Town

Council or the Mayor, or the Superintendent of Schools, as proposed in the Ordinance. He stated it was important to point out that they were not setting up some kind of an inquisition or something like that. He stated the Ethics Commission would be advisory, and ultimately the Town Council would retain all the power as the authority to change anything they want in the ordinance. However, he stated the current September 10, 2025 draft Ordinance does not yet achieve that. He stated that he was hoping by reading the suggestions, that they would be included as part of the town's records, that they would convince and show the Town Council a way to remedy that. He stated Ledyard citizens deserve a Code of Ethics and an Ethics Commission that was fair and workable.

- ***Transparency and Accountably*** – Mr. Schroeder addressed the need for Transparency and Accountability, noting there was no reason and no need to accept anything less.

Mr. Schroeder concluded his comments by stating that he broadly supported everything that Mrs. Deborah Edwards said this evening. He asked that the Town Councilwork on the proposed "*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission*" to consider the suggested amendments and give Ledyard the best Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission they can.

Mr. Carlo Porazzi, 30 Chapman Lane, Gales Ferry, stated although he did not have any prepared comments, that in listening to other residents comments that he has been making some notes. He stated pointed out the following:

- ***Town Charter-Chapter IX; Section 6 "Conflict of Interest"*** – Mr. Porazzi stated that it was not sufficient.

- ***Advisory Role*** – Mr. Porazzi noted as Mr. Schroeder mentioned the Ethics Commission would be Advisory; and that he believed that it would only be used for Grievous Reporting and Grievous Conduct.

- ***Impact on Programs*** – Mr. Porazzi stated that he personally cannot see how having an Ethics Commission would impact Programs. He stated if he was not well educated on that, that he would like to be.

- ***Fees*** – Mr. Porazzi stated if there was a fee for something like this, that he thought that it would be small, and irrelevant in the big picture of the town budget.

- ***Government Transparency*** – Mr. Porazzi stated that he thought having an Ethics Commission would go a long way for governmental transparency. He stated that he felt strongly that there needed to be an impartial panel to vet suspected violations; or else the public would be left with possible partisan local Town Councils; and any existing biases. He stated that this would mean that someone could complain all day and it was only going to go so far depending on the channels available.

Mr. Porazzi stated that Mr. Schroder mentioned that the Town Council has received all the written submissions; and that Chairman St. Vil mentioned the Town Council has received the written communications that were submitted for tonight's Public Hearing and that they would be included as part of the record; therefore, he stated let's not go other those again. Mr. Porazzi stated as he alluded to earlier, and to be quite honest, that he did not believe the current channels for Ethics, where there were Conflicts of Interest, were working; and that he would leave it at that, noting that Mrs. Deborah Edwards also alluded to that as well.

Mr. Porazzi concluded his comments by stating, that if the proposed "*An Ordinance Establishing a Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission"* does not go any further that he believed that it would go to vote, so the people of the town will have the final say. Thank you.

Mr. Samuel Roudebush, 63 Hurlbutt Drive, Gales Ferry, began by stating that Mr. Edwin Murray, 26 Devonshire Drive, Gales Ferry, provided written comments and although he would not read them this evening, that he would submit them for the record on Mr. Murray's behalf.

"Ledyard Town Council: 09/24/2025
Public Hearing on Adopting a Code of Ethics

Good evening Councilors,
A Code of Ethics provides clear expectations for how our town officials, employees, and volunteers should conduct themselves. By formally stating these values, we make it clear that public service in Ledyard requires honesty, accountability, and integrity.

It is surprising that our town—despite its educated and engaged leadership—has not yet adopted a Code of Ethics when roughly 87% of Connecticut municipalities already have one. Corporations, nonprofits, and governments at every level rely on such codes. They are not window dressing; they are public commitments to ethical behavior.

The draft before you is a worthy start, but it falls short of its purpose. Residents have identified specific weaknesses and offered constructive options for improvement. These deserve serious consideration before moving forward.

I'm also concerned about the process. Eighteen months of limited public input is not enough, and the public hearing tonight is scheduled for only two hours—hardly sufficient for a decision of this importance. Likewise. if the Council approves a ballot question, the proposed 40-day window is too short to educate thousands of voters and allow meaningful discussion.
For these reasons, I urge the Council to revise the ballot question. Instead of asking residents to vote yes or no on this draft, ask whether they support forming an ad hoc committee to develop a stronger Code of Ethics and bring that final document back for public approval.

A code of ethics is not something to fear. It is simply a pledge to accountability—something every resident has the right to expect. If there is confusion or opposition, let's take the time to resolve it and get this right.

Ledyard deserves a clear, thoughtful, and truly effective Code of Ethics. Please give our community the time and process it needs to achieve that goal.
Thank you.
Edwin Murray
26 Devonshire Drive, Gales Ferry, Connecticut"

Mr. Samuel Roudebush, 63 Hurlbutt Drive, Gales Ferry, continued by stating the comments he prepared for tonight were no longer relevant. However, he stated what he has heard this evening was that there was not much disagreement with the concept of having an Ethics Commission, but that there was a sort of a reaction to the process. He noted as an example Director of Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Director Scott Johnson, Jr., brought up some excellent points about the way the Parks & Recreation Programs were run that leverage other capabilities already within the town. He stated that these opportunities would be considered in conflict with the current language of the proposed "*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission"* as presented in the draft dated September 10, 2025. However, Mr. Roudebush stated that it was an easy fix so the Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Department would not have to lose $30,000 in the revenue for the 12 or 16 Programs. He stated that they could create exemptions that they could work into the proposed Ordinance, where appropriate. He stated the same would go for the Town Clerk, noting that he thought those procedures may take some discussion and negotiation, but that they could be worked out and that it would be worth it. He stated the pushback they were getting on the proposed Ordinance reminded him of when the Federal Inspector General Act was passed post-President Nixon. He stated at that time there was a lot of pushback saying that Departments that could manage their own discipline. However, he stated that during the last 40 years, 50 years, that he believed that it has been proven that the Inspector General Program at the Federal Level had merit and has worked well.

Mr. Roudebush went on to state that having an independent commission that was politically independent was critical for the integrity of the process. He stated if the proposed Ordinance moves in that direction that he was in support of having a Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission. He noted that others already mentioned that Ethics was already addressed in several places within the Town Charter, within the Employee Handbook, and so forth. He stated that those Policies were important and should not be in overlooked or in the way of what the Ethics Commission does. He stated the proposed *"An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard a Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission*" would create a process that would allow those policies to be implemented properly, fairly, and without undue interference from the existing structure.

Mr. Roudebush continued by noting a comment made earlier this evening regarding the process for adjudicating complaints and that it would violate the current Human Resources processes in terms of Union Labor Contract Agreements. He stated that the proposed Ordinance could also address this. He stated as one speaker mentioned this evening that the proposed Ordinance provided an Independent Investigation, Recommendations, and then then Actual Actions that would be taken by those who have the Authority.

Mr. Roudebush concluded his comments by stating that there has been a tremendous amount of work done on this document. He stated that he supported the concept and the majority of the language that was in the current draft Ordinance. However, he stated that he did think they could do better, noting that the decision whether to go forward was up to the Administration Committee and the Town Council. He suggested that it may be better to move forward with the proposed Ordinance and fix it later, than not to enact it because it may be dropped or forgotten, or left untouched. Thak you,

Ms. Angela Cassidy, 62 Hurlbutt Road, Gales Ferry, stated that she read some posts on Social Media today in which a few stated that having an Ethics Commission would be a witch hunt. She noted that she was hearing so many injectors tonight that were just not true; however, she stated that it makes her raise an eyebrow and ask, "*Why would anybody even think that".* She stated if they were having those thoughts, then maybe there was a problem, and they need an Ethics Commission, and a Code of Ethics even more. She questioned why anybody would fight against having a Code of Ethics, noting that she thought the draft "*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission*" that Councilor Buhle and many others worked so diligently on was almost there. She stated that they should all be questioning "*Why Ledyard would not want that"*. She stated that over 80% or about 150 of Connecticut's 169 towns already have a Code of Ethics, noting that this information was on the Connecticut State website, if anyone was questioning her numbers. She stated that both Republicans and Democrats have been strongly calling for an Ethics Commission for more than 18-months, noting that it was not partisan, it was about Accountability, Trust, and Protecting their community. She stated the proposed draft "*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission"* has been reviewed by experts, including their Town Attorney, noting that several experts have already examined the draft Ordinance to make sure it was fair; and that some of those people were here tonight. She stated that she would ask any concerned citizens to please read the proposed Code of Ethics before making judgments. She stated that she did not think the response she was hearing from the public was what this Code of Ethics was about; and that she doubted that many have read the Code of Ethics. She stated that if she was running a personal business and she wanted to volunteer as a commissioner, that she just needed to disclose her properties, and possibly anything that she was receiving a large amount of over 10% from an investment. She stated that it seemed to be fair game for anybody who was playing honest. She stated that there was no reason they should not want this from their politicians and from people working for their community. She stated the proposed "*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission*" only required town officials, town employees, and town volunteers to disclosure their potential *Conflicts of Interest* and recuse themselves if necessary. Therefore, she stated if people think there might be a *Conflict of Interest*, that as long as it was disclosed, and people decided that it was okay, they could still do that, noting that it was not necessarily stopping the person. She went on to state that as far as the money situation goes, she

thought that the town would be paying attorney's fees anyway; whether there was a Code of Ethics or not. She stated that unfortunately she thought that they would need some training for the Ethics Commission members; as well as annual trainings. She stated that a Code of Ethics was not just a formality, noting that it was a promise to their citizens where decisions would be made with honesty, openness, and fairness. She stated that it would protect their town and would strengthen their public trust. She stated that she thought the general message that has been online and everywhere else was not what they were making it out to be. She stated the proposed "*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission"* was fair and it was simple. . She noted as Mr. Roudebush stated the Ethics Commission would provide an opinion and recommendations to the Town Council and/or Mayor; and then the Town Council and/or Mayor would make the decision.

Mr. Jacob Hurt, 6 Nugget Hill Drive, Gales Ferry, stated that he was speaking for himself tonight. He stated that he strongly support the adoption of "*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission"*; noting that the Ordinance was not just an unfunded mandate from the State. He stated the last budget cycle showed that their town needed to urgently and responsibly grow their Grand List and reduce the tax burden on their property owners; so they could stop having to cut everything. He stated that there were people who might exploit the town's need to benefit for themselves. In other words, he stated some people may use public office to benefit privately. Therefore, he stated that an Ordinance like this meets the state requirements and was an important way to deter; and if necessary, hold accountable, anyone who used their position of public trust to benefit themselves. He stated that Ledyard simply had too much history of elected officials failing to hold each other accountable, no matter how strong the case for doing so. He stated the proposed Ordinance was necessary to provide a way to confidentially raise a question, and not have to hope that the right people won the last election in order for the right thing to be done. However, he stated more than that, they have plenty of examples of government officials obstructing investigations, blocking efforts of transparency, and interfering with the process to benefit themselves.

Mr. Hurt went on to state that he wanted to register his disappointment with the Mayor tonight. He noted the Mayor's letter that was read into record and he stead that they just saw him use his Office, and the knowledge it gives him, to obstruct and play *gotcha* with the creation of this Ordinance and the Commission; instead of collaborating with the Town Council and to ensure stakeholders got involved to get the best outcome for the town. He stated the Mayor's letter was a shining example of why they need this Ordinance and why they needed this process. He stated that people who have to win popularity contests cannot be trusted to tell on themselves, noting that they now have another great example as to why.

Mr. Hurt stated that he has talked a lot about the number of towns that have Ethics Ordinances in place, and have functioning Ethics Commissions, noting that it was large number. He stated that the Ethics Commission in the many other towns do not appear to be detrimental or deterring anyone from entering public service. He stated that there was also no apparent evidence that these Ethics Commissions were being weaponized against individuals. He stated in fact the proposed Ordinance was one way to deal with those potential issues instead of allowing mis-information and gossip to fill an information void; and then it becomes a question. He stated instead of letting gossip go around, that the issue would either meet the threshold to fille a Complaint Form, or not. He stated in summary, that he did not find any argument against adopting a Code of Ethics to be sound. He stated although he did support some of these proposed changes, that he did not see any of them as showstoppers, just improvements. He noted as Mr. Schroeder mentioned earlier this evening that he was also very curious to see what feedback the first Commissioners provide, and hope they would have a way to hear and address those ideas as well. Thank you.

Mr. Steve Munger, 12 Nutmeg Drive, Gales Ferry, began by stating as he always says when he addressed the Town Council that he appreciated all of their time that they were putting into the proposed *"An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission*". He stated whether they agree or disagreed on the outcome, that he would still appreciate the people that contributed their talents for the electorate.

Mr. Munger went on to state that it was his understanding that there were a few issues that occurred in town some time ago and they were taken care of. He stated if he was wrong about this information than he would admit that for some who were on the other side of the aisle.

Mr. Munger noted that the problem was that a lot of people complained about the increase of their taxes, noting that he was one of them, but they had a low voter turnout. He noted the number of residents present this evening because of their concerns about the proposed *"An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission*", stating that he has not seen some of these residents before. Therefore, he stated if all of these people were really concerned about the things that happen in a town then they need to get involved.

Mr. Munger continued by stating that he wanted to address the following:

- ***If it's not broke don't fix it*** – Mr. Munger stated that he uses common sense, noting that he does not look at numbers or statistics. He stated "*If it's not broke don't fix it.* He stated that he has done this his whole life, and it has been pretty successful.

- ***A Committee that doesn't lean one way or the other*** - Mr. Munger stated that they need to look at the climate in the country right now, noting that it was pretty much split. Therefore, he stated that he would find it really hard to believe they could find 3 people who say, "O*h, I won't, I won't, I won't."* He stated if the proposed *"An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission*" does get passed that he would like to make sure that those people would be very strongly looked at before being appointed to the Commission, and that he would follow what they decide after each incident.

- ***80% of Connecticut Towns have an Ethics Commission*** - Mr. Munger stated that he did not care about what other towns were doing. He stated this was Ledyard and that they should be concerned about what happens in Ledyard. He questioned because 80% of Connecticut Towns have an Ethics Commission would that also mean if 100 people stand at a cliff and 80 people jump over; should the rest of them jump over the cliff too; commenting "*No we do not have to jump over the cliff*" . He stated he was not saying the 80% towns were right or wrong. However, he stated he did not see any reason why they keep bringing those other people into a Ledyard issue. He stated this was something they have to discuss, argue, and fight about; and the decide amongst themselves in Ledyard and do what was best for their town.

- ***Just pass the Ordinance, we will fix it later*** – Mr. Munger noted comments made this evening that they should pass the proposed "*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission"* and fix it later. He stated although he did not like to bring federal politics into this, that the best analogy he has was when House Representative Nancy Pelosi said: " *Oh let's just pass this, we'll read it later".* Mr. Munger stated what they got was terrible. Therefore, he stated if they were going to move forward with an Ethics Commission, noting that he would support whatever way it goes; that they do not rush it and they should make sure it was right before they adopt the Ordinance, so they do not run into problems later. He stated let's not have a cavalier attitude, like, "O*h, let's just pass it, and we'll worry about it later.* He stated that was not the way they should operate. He stated that they need to make sure they have it right the first time, and then pursue it, noting that he personally did not want to see the town form an Ethics Commission.

Mr. Mike Cherry, 5 Whippoorwill Drive, Gales Ferry, provided for the record:

- Connecticut General Statutes -Chapter 124 – Zoning
  - Section 8-11 "*Disqualification of Members of Zoning Authorities*"

- Connecticut General Statutes - Chapter 128 – Municipal Planning Commission
  - Section 8-21- "*Disqualification of Planning Commission Members"*

- Connecticut General Statutes - Chapter 440 – Wetlands and Watercourses
  - Section 22a-42(c)

- Connecticut General Statutes - Chapter 98- Municipal Powers
  - 7-148t- *Conflict of Interest for Members of Land Use and Purchasing Commissions*

- Connecticut General Statutes - Chapter 113 – Municipal Employees
  - Section 7-479 "*Conflicts of Interest*"

- Ledyard Town Charter
  - Chapter III; Section 9 "*Investigation*"
  - Chapter IV; Section 9 "*Appointments and Removals"*
  - Chapter IX; Section 6 "Conflicts of Interest"

Mr. Cherry continued by noting in February, 2025 he stated that he was ambivalent about an Ethics Commission; however, he stated that now he was in support of the town having an Ethics Commission. However, he stated that tonight he wanted to talk about the deficiencies in the proposed draft "*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission"* in terms of fixes noting the following:

- ***Code of Ethics*** – Mr. Cherry stated although he saw the words *Code of Ethics* that he did not see a *Code of Ethics* in the draft Ordinance dated September 10, 2025, noting that what he saw was a *Conflict of Interest List.* He explained that a Code of Ethics was something they could hang on the wall listing the positive things that they want to live by. He noted that the a good example of a *Code of Ethics* was provided in the Board of Education's Handbook as Attachment A "*Policy Notes*" and on the next page, it provided *Conflict of Interest Rules*. He stated the proposed draft "*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission"* dated September 10, 2025 was missing this type of information. He stated during his lifetime he has been part of Government Organizations which included the Engineers Nuclear Society, noting that event the Military has a Code that they live by.

- ***Does the proposed "An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission" apply to the Board of Education*** – Mr. Cherry stated the Board of Education has their own *Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest List*; therefore, he questioned whether the proposed Ordinance would conflict with what the Board of Education has published and had in place for a while.

- ***Section 5 "Conflict of Interest Provisions"***- Mr. Cherry stated Connecticut General Statute Section 7-479 says that the town can establish an ordinance saying what a *Conflict of Interest* is; noting that it was covered by state statute.

- ***Section 7 "Establishment of an Ethics Commission" Paragraph 1 (b)*** **-** Mr. Cherry stated he was not sure what they were talking about noting that it looked like there was a difference between what the Town Attorney said, in what they published. He suggested this section be looked at.

  Mr. Cherry noted the language "*serve as a member of any other town agency, board, commission, council, or committee*". He questioned whether they were being redundant, or whether he missed something in the definitions.

  Mr. Cherry stated that Mr. Schroeder suggested some good words that solved problems with the proposed draft Ordinance, noting that Mr. Schroeder added words to give the Commission some duties and responsibilities other than calling a lawyer. He noted the language was in the original draft Ordinance; however, it came out with the Town Attorney's red line lawyers markup, and the Administration Committee did not vote to put the language back in. Therefore, the language in Section 7; Paragraph (3) "*Authority/Duties*" was for the Ethics Commission to contact one of two lawyers.

- ✓ ***Section 7; Paragraph 6 "Hearings"*** Mr. Cherry stated these sections and others in the proposed "*An Ordinance Establishing a Code of Ethics and Ethics Ordinance*" mentions public hearings or executive sessions and he questioned whether they were talking about labor things, or individuals. He stated for privacy that he was not sure that a public hearing was the right answer. He suggested the Town Council talk with the Director of Human Resources.

- ✓ ***Section 7; Paragraph 7 Final Decisions*** – Mr. Cherry stated that Mr. Schroeder did a good job with the wording that would require the Ethics Commission to write a report, and make recommendations to provide to the people with the authority to implement the recommended actions. He noted that Mr. Schroeder indicated that the words needed to be workable and clear and to improve existing draft Ordinance.

- ***Sunset Clause*** – Mr. Cherry suggested they think about including a Sunset Clause to force the Town Council in 2 or 3-years to review the Ordinance.

- ***Training*** – Mr. Cherry stated that he agreed with the comment to require training for the Ethics Commission. He suggested that they also require training for all those who were covered by the proposed "*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission"* including all the employees, all the volunteers, all the board members. He stated if they're covered by the Ordinance, they ought to be trained in what the Ordinance says.

  Mr. Cherry concluded his comments by stating that although the proposed "*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Ordinance"* was not ready for a vote tonight, because it does not give the Ethics Commission a job, other than tell them to contact the Attorney. He stated with the suggested words that were provided tonight that he thought the Ordinance was getting close to being done. Thank you.

Mr. Dan Pealer, 48 Highland Drive, Ledyard, stated that he comes before the Town Council this evening having recently submitted comments by email. However, he stated that he would not focus on the written communication he already submitted. He proceeded by urging the Town Council not to factor the cost fallacy into their decision regarding the adoption of a "*Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission"*. He noted the hours that have been spent drafting, debating, and refining the proposed Ordinance does not make it a good policy. He stated the time invested was not a reason to proceed. He stated, "*The amount of effort poured into making a mud pie does not make it anything other than a mud pie"*. He stated labor does not transform substance; and sentiment does not substitute for scrutiny. He stated the Town Council's job tonight was not to defend the process; and not to factor in the process that was used to get here, noting that it was to evaluate the product of that process. He stated the Town Council must weigh the proposed Ordinance on its actual merits and its demerits, not on how much work has already gone into it, or how hard it would be to change. He stated that good intentions are not actions; and they do not shield anybody; and they do not correct any flaws that were present in the proposed Ordinance, noting that only clear-eyed governance could do that. He stated that he was pleading with the Town Council not to be the stewards of the effort, but to please use their sound judgment to choose what was right; and not to mistake momentum for wisdom. Thank you.

Chairman St. Vil thanked all those who spoke this evening. He explained that unfortunately, as it stands at this moment, the Town Council does not have a quorum this evening for their 7:00 p.m. Regular Meeting, and therefore, they were going to have to cancel the meeting. He stated the Town Council would revisit the topic of the proposed *"An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission"* at their October 8, 2025 meeting.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman St. Vil stated hearing no further public comment, that the Public Hearing was adjourned at 6:27 p.m.

_____
Transcribed by Roxanne M. Maher
Administrative Assistant to the Town Council

I, Gary St. Vil, Chairman of the Ledyard Town Council,
hereby certify that the above and foregoing is a true and correct
copy of the minutes of the Public Hearing held on September 24, 2025

Attest:_____
Gary St. Vil, Chairman