



Chairman Gary St. Vil

TOWN OF LEDYARD
CONNECTICUT
TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES
LEDYARD TOWN COUNCIL – REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2025; 7:00 PM
HYBRID FORMAT
VIDEO CONFERENCE VIA ZOOM

DRAFT

- I. CALL TO ORDER – Chairman St. Vil called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Council Chambers, Town Hall Annex Building.

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.

- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

- III. ROLL CALL –

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Location
William Barnes	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
April Brunelle	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
Jessica Buhle	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
Carmen Garcia-Irizarry	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
Kevin Dombrowski	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
Adrienne Parad	Town Councilor	Excused	
Tim Ryan	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
Tony Saccone	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
Gary St. Vil	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person

- IV. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS/PRESENTATIONS

- Registrars of Voters – Early Voting

Chairman St. Vil stated at the Town Council’s September 29, 2025 meeting they authorized the Mayor to accept the Connecticut Secretary of the State Early Voting Grant in the amount of \$10,026.07. He stated that because there were questions regarding the Early Voting Laws the Town Council invited the Registrars to attend tonight’s meeting to provide some information and to bring more awareness to the guidelines. He welcomed Registrar Diana Mann to come up to the Podium to talk about this important subject.

Registrar Diana Mann stated that she and Deputy Registrar Patricia Carman Frost were present this evening to provide an overview of the Early Election Laws and the Secretary of the State’s Early Voting Grant in the amount of \$10,026.07. Ms. Frost passed out the following handouts regarding the upcoming November 4, 2025 Election and Early Voting Information:

NOVEMBER 4, 2025
GENERAL ELECTION

A General Election is where all eligible voters elect candidates to office. In Connecticut, there is a general election every year.

14
DAYS

EARLY VOTING
OCTOBER 20 – 31
NOVEMBER 1, 2

10 am – 6 pm
8 am – 8 pm on October 28 and 30

ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT VOTER REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Friday, October 17, 2025

Deadline for voter registration by mail to be post-marked

Deadline for voter registration at the DMV by close of business

Deadline for voter registration online by 11:59 pm

Deadline for voter registration in person by 8:00 pm

Same Day Voter Registration

If you are not registered, but want to vote during the early voting period, you may register in person every day of Early Voting at the early voting location

If you are not registered, but want to vote on Election Day, you may register in person on Election Day at your Election Day Registration site

To receive important election updates text VOTE to 860.321.4221

To find your Early Voting location, and for all you need to know about elections in Connecticut, visit MyVote.CT.gov or call 860-509-6200

Stephanie Thomas, Connecticut Secretary of the State

Follow us @CTSOFS:

EARLY VOTING

YOUR SAY. YOUR DAY. IN PERSON.

WHAT is Early Voting?

Early Voting allows you to vote in person safely and securely before Election Day.

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT at the Early Voting location?

When you arrive at the Early Voting location, you will check in and be verified as an eligible voter. You will then receive your ballot with an envelope. You will complete your ballot at a privacy booth and seal it in the approved envelope. Before you leave, place the sealed envelope in the secure receptacle as instructed by the election officials. Ballots will be secured (unopened) until Election Day.

HOW MANY EARLY VOTING LOCATIONS will be in each city or town?

Each town or city will have at least one Early Voting location. If the population is 20,000 or more, the local legislative body will decide whether to have additional locations. Additionally, registrars will designate an additional early voting location on the campus of certain public colleges that meet population requirements for students living on campus or in campus-owned housing. Check your municipality's website for its Early Voting location(s) or visit MyVote.CT.gov.

WHEN will ballots be counted?

Ballots cast during Early Voting will be sealed and stored securely in each town. They will be opened and counted on Election Day.

HOW DOES EARLY VOTING DIFFER from voting by absentee ballot?

Absentee Ballot voting requires a reason (from a list of six, found at MyVote.CT.gov). Early Voting is available to every eligible voter without a specific reason. Early Voting may be done only in-person, not via mail or drop box.

CAN I VOTE on weekends?

Yes. Early Voting includes Saturdays and Sundays for most elections (see calendar for specific dates).

HOW IS IT ENSURED people do not vote twice?

The election official at your Early Voting location will record that you have cast your ballot, preventing you from voting early at any other location, submitting an absentee ballot, or voting on Election Day.

MAY I REGISTER TO VOTE during the Early Voting period?

You may register and vote on the same day during the Early Voting period before regular general elections. For Primary Election details, see detailed instructions on MyVote.CT.gov.

DOES EARLY VOTING EXIST in other states?

Although new to Connecticut this year, 46 other states already offer some form of Early Voting.

WHAT hasn't changed?

You can still vote via Absentee Ballot or on Election Day as usual. Elections in Connecticut are still safe and secure.

VIEW YOUR SAMPLE BALLOT
WHEN IT IS AVAILABLE
MyVote.CT.gov/sampleballots

REGISTER TO VOTE OR
UPDATE YOUR REGISTRATION
MyVote.CT.gov/register

GS/rm

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Mrs. Mann explained in a letter dated September 19, 2025 the Town received notification that pursuant to Public Act 25-168, the Connecticut Secretary of the State would again provide grant funding to each municipality this year in the amount of at least \$5,000; for costs related to conducting early voting. She stated based on the Secretary of State's formula Ledyard was scheduled to receive \$10,026.07; and that the grant funding would be distributed starting in September 2025 contingent on municipalities detailing their intended use of the funds.

Mrs. Mann continued by explaining that the Connecticut Early Voting Laws were initially passed by Public Act 23-5 in 2023, noting that these Early Voting Law would apply to elections and primaries that occur on or after January 1, 2024. She also explained that the in accordance with Public Act 23-5 every municipality had to create at least one early voting location and had the option to establish more, noting that Ledyard's Early Voting Location was in the Lower Level of the Town Hall.

Early Voting provisions were as follows:

- General Elections: 14 days of early voting
- Primaries: seven days ahead
- Special Elections: four days

Mrs. Mann stated for the November 4, 2025 General Election Early Voting would begin on October 20, 2025 and would run for fourteen days ending on November 2, 2025. The hours would be from 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. every day including the weekends. She stated on the last Tuesday, and Thursday, the hours would be from 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Mrs. Mann stated that Municipalities were surprised that the Secretary of State Office was providing grant funding this year. She stated the Registrars Office planned to use the grant funding for the following:

- Printing of Ballots
- Tabulators – Mrs. Mann stated for the July 8, 2025 Referendum regarding the one Question pertaining to Juliet W. Long School Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning System (HVAC) Project the cost was \$700 for the thumb sticks. Therefore, she stated that they did not know what the cost was going to be for twelve candidates that were on the November 4, 2025 Ballot.

Deputy Registrar Patricia Carman Frost addressed the Registrar's budget noting that the estimate was based on minimum cost for the eleven tabulator machines. She stated the machines would not work without the executable file they receive from ES&S and that each voting machine had to have its own file. She stated the Programing piece cost was over \$7,000. She stated this cost did not include the cost for each line on the Ballot. She stated last year they only had one machine, and the cost was over \$5,000. She stated because the Secretary of State was not allowing Municipalities to use the voting machines for Early Voting that all those ballots would need to be counted by hand. However, she stated for Election Day (November 4, 2025) that they would have all eleven voting machines available. Mrs. Mann added that the Same Day Registration Ballots would need to go through one voting machine tabulator; and Absentee Ballots would need to go through one voting machine tabulator; and then they would have voting machine tabulators for the three Voting Districts. Ms. Frost stated that they would also have to have a back-up Voting Machine tabulator for each District.

Ms. Smith stated because the Early Voting would be carrying into Election Day that some of the Grant Funding would be used for the work that has to be done on Election Day. She stated because ES&S would not provide a cost estimate that they were not sure what their total costs were going to be for Early Voting and Election Day, noting that the \$10,026.07 grant funding could be fully expended just for the cost of the tabulators.

Councilor Barnes questioned whether the town's MIS Department could do the work that ES&S does for the Elections. Ms. Smith stated that the town's MIS Department could not do this election work. Mrs. Mann stated that they had to use ES&S because the information goes to the Secretary of State's Office. Councilor Barnes questioned whether there were other vendors the Town could use. Ms. Smith explained per the Secretary of State's Office ES&S was the only vendor they could use. Councilor Barnes stated that he

did not mind being required to do something, however, he stated it was problematic. because ES&S could not give the town a quote.

Councilor Dombrowski stated that he agreed with Councilor Barnes' comment that ES&S not being able to provide the town a quote was problematic. However, he stated the Municipalities were locked-in.

Councilor Ryan requested clarification, noting that ES&S was the only vendor that Municipalities could use in the State. Mrs. Mann and Ms. Smith replied stating that was correct. Mayor Allyn, III, explained that the State makes the deal and then tells the Municipalities what they have to do.

Councilor Buhle stated that she understands that in Election Security that the State wanted to make sure all citizens had a safe and secure way to vote. However, she stated that it was a problem when a vendor/organization had no incentive to provide a competitive rate. She stated realistically it does not cost ES&S that much to program a thumb drive.

Councilor Dombrowski stated that the frustration was not that the State has told Municipalities that they had to use a particular vendor to support the election. He stated the frustration was that they were less than a month away from the election, they know what the Ballot was going to contain, however, the vendor that was supplying the secure software to support the tabulators could not tell them the cost.

Councilor Ryan questioned whether the Registrars have experienced this in the past with ES&S not being able to provide cost estimates for their services. Mrs. Mann stated that they have; and she noted for the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget Referendum that she was shocked when they received the ES&S \$700 Invoice for a simple "Yes or No" Question. Therefore, she stated every time they had the Referendum the cost was \$700 resulting in a total cost of \$2,100 for the three Referendums (May 20, 2025; June 10, 2025 & July 8, 2025 (JWL School HVAC Project).

Chairman St. Vil questioned whether ES&S costs were fairly consistent from year to year; or whether they were surprised each year when they receive ES&S Invoice. Mrs. Mann stated that the costs were not consistent from year to year, and that they were surprised.

Councilor Dombrowski stated for this year they were using a new tabulator. Mrs. Mann stated Councilor Dombrowski was correct, noting that they used the new tabulators for the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget Referendum; and that the November 4, 2025 Election would be the first time they were using the new tabulators for a General Election. She stated for the Budget Referendum they only used two tabulators one at voting location and one tabulator as the backup. However, she stated for the November 4, 2025 General Election that they would be using all eleven tabulators because of the three Voting Districts, Early Voting Ballots, Absentee Ballots, Same Day Registration, plus backup tabulators. Councilor Dombrowski stated that he did not think the \$10,026.07 Secretary of State's Grant Funding would cover all these costs.

Chairman St. Vil questioned whether the Registrars included enough funding in their General Government Budget for these costs. Ms. Mann stated in preparing their Department's Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget they included funding to support the workers at the Polling Locations, and \$10,000 to support the tabulators for the November 4, 2025 Election, which included the maintenance fee. She stated because their old tabulators cost \$2,500 that she included \$3,800 for the new tabulators based on the information that was provided. However, she stated that this was based on the November 4, 2025 General Election, explaining that they did not plan on the cost to run the three Referendums that were held for the Fiscal Year Budget (2 Referendums) and Juliet W. Long Heating Ventilation & Air Conditioning (HVAC) Project (2 Referendums).

Councilor Buhle stated the permitted use of the \$10,026.07 Secretary of State's Grant Funding was for costs directly tied to Early Voting; examples include but were not limited to: labor costs, printing costs, location, equipment and supplies. Therefore, she questioned whether the Registrars were planning to use the Secretary of State's Grant Funding to pay for the labor to staff the Early Voting and then move budgeted labor costs to pay for the tabulators, noting that the tabulators at Districts 1, 2, & 3 were not related to Early Voting;

stating that she believed these would be Same Day Voting Expenses. She stated the labor costs for Early Voting, would be their Early Voting Costs. She stated because money was fungible, that they could move the money that was allocated in the General Government budget for labor costs money over to pay for the tabulators; and then use the Grant Funding to pay for the labor costs.

Mrs. Mann stated that Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated that they could not use the \$10,026.07 Secretary of State's Grant Funding to pay for labor costs, because those costs were already budgeted for.

Councilor Buhle stated that she had concerns that the Secretary of State was going to say that paying for the tabulators for Districts 1, 2 & 3; or the tabulators for Same Day Registration were not related to Early Voting expenses; and that she wanted to be sure that the use of the Grant Funding was not conflicting with the way the State anticipated the funds to be used.

Ms. Smith responded stating that she did not think Councilor Buhle was understanding how this all worked. She explained that Same Day Registration would be occurring during Early Voting; however, this would be done manually. She stated when they get to Election Day that all of the Ballots have to go through the tabulators (Absentee Ballots, Same Day Registration Ballots, etc.) at the Central Location, which was District 1; just like every other election. Therefore, she stated that it was all part of Early Voting.

Councilor Buhle stated that she was appreciative of Early Voting noting that her husband would have been disenfranchised during the last election, if not for Early Voting.

Chairman St. Vil thanked Mrs. Mann and Ms. Smith for attending tonight's meeting and for the information regarding Early Voting and the upcoming November 4, 2025 General Election.

V. RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS – None.

VI. COMMITTEE COMMISSION AND BOARD REPORTS – None.

VII. COMMENTS OF TOWN COUNCILORS

Councilor Barnes stated October was National Cybersecurity Awareness Month. He stated that this was important to him in his day job; and it was important to him in the role he serves on the Town Council. He encouraged the town to continue to consider the deployment of the multi-factor authentication capability within the Microsoft Cloud for access to Teams. He stated that the multi-factor authentication was the single most important thing the town could do to avoid the possible compromise of a town member's email box; and whatever information may be disclosed. He stated that he appreciated these efforts were continuing and that hopefully they could see that activated within the next few months.

Councilor Brunelle reminded everybody that as the weather started to turn and storms start coming in, that it was a great time to make sure they were signed up for "Notify Me" to receive notifications. She stated for those who were not already signed up that they could visit the town's website at: www.ledyardct.org to sign up to receive email and/or text messages. She stated that it was a good way to know about road closures or other problems they should be aware of.

Councilor Ryan stated that he had comments related to a specific agenda item this evening. Therefore, he would reserve his comments for later this evening.

Councilor Saccone stated the heating season was upon them and that he wanted to remind residents if they were heating their homes with wood, pellets, or coal this season to be careful. He stated the Fire Departments would be responding to numerous house calls because residents think the ashes from their wood stoves were extinguished when they dump them into a plastic container and putting them on the side of the house, and then they end up burning the house down. He stated ashes and charcoal can take up to 72-hours to cool off. He stated if residents take their ashes outside that they take them away from the house and soak them in water. He asked residents to please be careful this winter season.

Councilor Dombrowski stated in keeping with the comments regarding Fall weather that the leaves were beginning to fall from the trees. He urged motorists to drive with caution noting that wet leaves make the roads slippery. He went on to state that the deer were now active, noting that they are out at dusk and dawn. He stated every year Ledyard has a number of deer/vehicle strikes and he asked that they be mindful of the deer when driving in the area. He also asked that motorists obey the Stop Signs, noting that they were not optional and did not mean Yield. He stated although he has not seen this in Ledyard that he has seen in other towns that Red Lights mean to “*Curtsey and Go*”. He stated that it was concerning when he sees someone pull up to a Red Light and then go straight through the traffic light. He stated a Red Traffic Light means “*Stop*”.

Councilor Buhle stated October was Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month. She expressed her empathy to all those in their community who has experienced pregnancy and infant loss. She stated that she knows how isolating and heartbreaking the experience was and she was sending love to those in their community who were or have gone through the experience.

Chairman St. Vil stated this past weekend he was out and about town talking with residents and he noted that spoke with Mr. Bruce Garstka who was the Chairman of the Agricultural Commission. He noted that Mr. Garstka brought to his attention an email the Town Council received regarding the Clark Farm Lease. He explained that the Agricultural Lease for a portion of the Clark Farm Property would terminate in March, 2026 and to ensure that the property would not go fallow that the Agricultural Commission was requesting a process to vet a new lessee for the property. He stated in talking with Mayor Allyn, III, that this matter should be addressed by the Land Use/Planning/Public Works Committee. Councilor Garcia-Irizarry, LUPPW Committee Chairman, stated that the Committee met with Mr. Garstka at their October 6, 2025 meeting and discussed his request.

VIII. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

MOTION to approve the following:

- Special Town Council Meeting of September 10, 2025 (Executive Session)
- Regular Meeting Minutes of September 10, 2025
- Public Hearing Minutes of September 24, 2025

Moved by Councilor Dombrowski, seconded by Councilor Garcia-Irizarry

VOTE: 7 – 0 - 1 Approved and so declared (Brunelle abstained)

IX. COMMUNICATIONS

Chairman St. Vil stated a Communications List has been provided on the meeting portal for tonight’s meeting, and he noted there were referrals were listed.

X. COUNCIL SUB COMMITTEE, LIAISON REPORTS

Administration Committee

Councilor Buhle stated the Administration Committee met earlier this evening and forwarded a few appointments to the Town Council for consideration at their October 22, 2025 meeting.

Community Relations Committee for Diversity Equity & Inclusion

Councilor Brunelle stated the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion met on September 17, 2025; and also held a Special Meeting on September 29, 2025 to discuss putting together a little message to the town to encourage listening, working together and collaborating. She stated the overall environment in the State was a little elevated and hot. Therefore, the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion wanted to make sure they were aware of; and that they were helping to make it a little more tolerable in their town. She noted that the Committee had an item on tonight’s agenda regarding their proposal that she would further discuss later this evening.

Finance Committee

Councilor Saccone stated although the Finance Committee has not met since the last the Town Council meeting they have one item on the Consent Calendar this evening regarding tax refunds.

Land Use/Planning/Public Works Committee

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated the LUPPW Committee met on October 6, 2025 and discussed the following: (1) Status of work to designate the Spicer Homestead Ruins, located within the Clark Farm property, as a Registered Historical Site – Councilor Garcia-Irizarry noted that the Historic District Commission Members Mrs. Karen Parkinson and Mr. Doug Kelley attended the meeting and explained that they were continuing their work on the initiative; and would most likely not be ready to present a Report to the LUPPW Committee until December or January. She noted that the LUPPW Committee agreed to keep the Spicer Homestead Ruins on their Agenda; (2) Agricultural Leases of Town-Owned Land – Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated that Agricultural Commission Chairman Bruce Garstka attended the meeting to discuss his Memo dated August 27, 2025 regarding the Commission’s interest to create a List of Criteria for the Leasing of Town-Owned Land such as Clark Farm and former Norwich State Hospital Property to encourage the properties be used for Agricultural purposes and to prevent them from going fallow. She stated the LUPPW Committee authorized the Agricultural Commission to develop a List of Criteria for the leasing of Town-Owned Land that would encourage agricultural use; and they asked Mr. Garstka to come back to the LUPPW Committee once they have developed the List; (3) Transfer of Town-Owned Open Space Land to Avalonia Land Conservancy – Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated that Avalonia Land Conservancy President Dennis Main, Conservation Commission Chairman Michael Marelli, and Land Use Director/Town Planner Elizabeth Burdick attended the meeting to provide some background regarding the transfer of the following Town-Owned properties to Avalonia Land Conservancy: (a) 19 Avery Hill Road Extension, Ledyard, known as the “Kettle Hole” property; and (b) 13 Applewood Drive, Ledyard. She explained that the Conservation Commission was in-favor of transferring these properties to Avalonia Land Conservancy and that the Planning & Zoning Commission conducted an 8-24 Review and has provided a “Favorable Recommendation” with some conditions. She stated the town owned properties would be combined with other Avalonia Land Conservancy properties to remain open to the public for passive recreation and to be protected in perpetuity. She noted the LUPPW Committee asked Avalonia Land Conservancy President Dennis Main to provide a letter to the town requesting the transfer of the properties to their Organization prior to presenting the request to the townspeople. In addition, the LUPPW Committee forwarded recommendations for the Town Council to schedule a Public Hearing in accordance with CGS 707-163e and a Special Town Meeting in accordance with Town Charter, Chapter VII; Section 9 to be held on November 12, 2025. Councilor Dombrowski noted that setting the Public Hearing and Special Town Meeting would be on the Town Council’s October 22, 2025 Agenda.

Permanent Municipal Building Committee

Councilor Brunelle stated the PMBC met on Monday, October 6, 2025 and they basically discussed an installation at the Ledyard Central Office, and the Solar Array Installation at the Juliet W. Long School which has been completed. Eversource had to reschedule turning the solar array on, noting that a date has not yet been provided. The Gales Ferry School was in a holding pattern and they were waiting for more information regarding the Roof Installation.

Public Safety-Emergency Services

Councilor Saccone stated on September 25, 2025 their Police and Firefighters conducted a water rescue after a vehicle went into the Thames River near the Yale Boat Launch in the Gales Ferry Village. He stated on September 10, 2025 the Town Council recognized Chief Dispatcher Paul Smith, and he stated the September 25, 2025 incident tied into the importance of their Emergency Dispatchers being the ultimate First Responders. He stated the Caller, who was probably disturbed, told the Dispatcher what he was going to do; and immediately crews were dispatched to the location, however, he stated when they arrived it was too late as the vehicle was already 90% under the water. He stated one of their Police Officers and Gales Ferry Firefighters jumped into the water and broke through the windows and got the individual out, noting that they were alive today. He stated he wanted to bring to light all that their First Responders do for their community.

Board of Education

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated although the Board of Education met last night she was not able to attend the meeting.

Library Commission

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated the Library Commission met on September 17 and September 22, 2025. However, she stated because she was in Puerto Rico that she was not able to attend.

Economic Development Commission

Councilor Buhle stated she was not able to attend the EDC's October 7, 2025 meeting.

XI. MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Allyn, III, reported on the following: (1) Deer Strikes – Mayor Allyn stated to date this season Ledyard has had 39 Deer Strikes. He stated a few years ago they had 126 Deer Strikes, which was extremely high. He stated as Councilor Dombrowski mentioned earlier this evening that he hoped that motorists would pay attention to their peripheral vision, noting that often the Deer will be standing on the side of the road and will suddenly decide to enter the road; (2) Gales Ferry School Roof Project – Mayor Allyn stated that Town would be entering into Mediation with the Roofing Contractor, which would be scheduled for December, 2025 or January 2026. He stated that he would keep the Town Council apprised of the situation; (3) Library Director has resigned her position – Mayor Allyn stated the position was posted on Monday (October 6, 2025) and to date the town has received two applications; (4) Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LoTCIP Grant – Mayor Allyn stated yesterday he met with Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments to discuss a new LoTCIP Grant Application to seek funding for a bridge located on Lantern Hill Road that was not rated high. He stated they would be meeting with an Engineering Firm and SCCOG to review the Plan to see if they were confident the Project would be eligible for the LoTCIP Grant Program. He stated if they find that the Project was eligible for the LoTCIP Funding that it would save the Town about \$1.2 million; (5) Economic Development Commission October 6, 2025 Meeting – Mayor Allyn stated at the EDC Meeting they discussed a Small Town Economic Assistance Program Grant (STEAP) for the construction of sidewalks in Gales Ferry. He stated the STEAP Grants usually come out in late February, and that they would have to have their engineering and design work completed. He also explained that because Route 12 was a State Road that they would have to obtain Encroachment Permits from the State Department of Transportation (DOT). He stated if the town was going to seek to do some development in Gales Ferry, that would be similar to what was done in Ledyard Center, that they would need to start allocating funds to conduct the design and engineering work and then look for a LoTCIP Grant, noting that he did not think that the STEAP Grants would provide enough funding for the project; (6) Elks Police Appreciation Dinner – October 10, 2025– Mayor Allyn stated that he would be attending the Dinner on Friday evening, noting that two Award Recipients would be from the Ledyard Police Department. He stated that he would report back on who the two recipients were at the October 22, 2025 Town Council Meeting.

Questions to the Mayor

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry addressed Food Waste Composting, and she questioned the status of Southeastern Connecticut Regional Resource Recycling Authority (SCRRRA) Organic Composting Facility. Mayor Allyn stated that SCRRRA has picked up where Blue Earth Composting left off. He stated that SCRRRA was still waiting to receive their Permit from the State for their Organic Waste Composting Facility. He stated once SCRRRA obtains their State Permit that it would be a huge catalyst for the whole area.

Councilor Saccone noted the weight load for the Bridge on Lantern Hill Road, and he noted that the Gales Ferry Ladder Truck weighed 42-tons. He stated if the Bridge could not support the weight that the ladder truck and tanker trucks would have to be diverted, which would result in a significant time delays in responding to fires in that area. Therefore, he stated that including this in the Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LoTCIP) Grant Application may be an

important factor to note. Mayor Allyn thanked Councilor Saccone for mentioning the weight of the fire apparatus stating that the Lantern Hill Road Bridge Design Rating would need to be 50-tons. He stated the other Lantern Hill Road Bridge was currently out of service, therefore, he stated the Desing Rating for the two bridges on that road would need to match.

Councilor Barnes questioned whether the Lantern Hill Road Bridge being out of service would affect the homeowners and fire insurance for the adjacent property owners. Mayor Alllyn stated the adjacent communities were aware that the bridge was out of service. He stated the Lantern Hill Road Bridge was shared between Ledyard and Stonington, noting the other side of the bridge was in Stonington. Councilor Barnes stated with the bridge being out of service that it would affect Mutal Aide in responding to fires. Mayor Allyn stated that Councilor Barnes was correct, explaining that it would be a problem, because Ledyard’s Mutual Aide comes from the Olde Mystic Fire Department on that end of Lantern Hill Road, stating with the Bridge being out of service the Olde Mystic Fire Department currently cannot get up that way. Therefore, he stated that they would have to look for alternatives, noting that the Mashantucket Pequot Fire Department would probably be a good alternative because they would come in from this side of the Lantern Hill Road Bridge.

Chairman St. Vil questioned the reason some of the Stop Signs that were on the galvanized posts in the Highlands area were taken out and sandwich board stop signs were currently in place. Mayor Allyn stated that he was not aware of the Stop Sign situation in the Highlands and that he would look into the matter and get back to Chairman St. Vil.

XII. OLD BUSINESS – None.

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

CONSENT CALENDAR

- *1. MOTION to reappoint the following members the Inland Wetland & Water Courses Commission for a two (2) year term ending October 31, 2027:
 - Mr. Michael Marelli (D) 4 Lee Brook Drive 193 Iron Street, Ledyard
 - Mr. Justin DeBrodt (U) 5 Erins Way, Ledyard

- *2. MOTION to reappoint the following members to the Library Commission for a two (2) year term ending November 7, 2027:
 - Mr. John Bolduc (U) 14 Monticello Drive, Gales Ferry
 - Ms. Ellin M. Grenger (D) 15 Bittersweet Drive, Gales Ferry
 - Ms. Cynthina Wright (D) 6 Larule Leaf Drive, Gales Ferry
 - Ms. Elizabeth Rumery (D) 2 Bluff Road, Gales Ferry

- *3. MOTION to approve the following two tax refunds in the combined total amount of \$6,393.90 each exceeding \$2,400.00 in accordance with tax collector departmental procedures:
 - Lereta Tax Service for Kin Chan & Cuihua Zheng \$3,291.61
 - Eric Carlson \$3,102.29

Moved by Councilor Dombrowski, seconded by Councilor Garica-Irizarry

VOTE: 8 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT:	APPROVED 8 – 0
MOVER:	Kevin Dombrowski, Town Councilor.
SECONDER:	Carmen Garcia-Irizarry, Town Councilor
AYES:	Barnes, Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Ryan, Saccone, St. Vil
EXCUSED:	Parad

Administration Committee

4. MOTION to appoint Mr. James Thompson (D) 6 Pennywise Lane, Ledyard, to the Inland Wetland & Water Courses Commission to complete a two (2) year term ending October 31, 2026 filling a vacancy left by Ms. Lynmarie Thopmpson.
Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Brunelle
Discussion: None.

VOTE: 8 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT:	APPROVED 8 – 0
MOVER:	Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor.
SECONDER:	April Brunelle, Town Councilor
AYES:	Barnes, Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Ryan, Saccone, St. Vil
EXCUSED:	Parad

Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

5. MOTION to endorse the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion’s message to be distributed in the form of a Digital and possibly a Printed Flyer “*We Encourage all Ledyard Residents to Listen, Collaborate, and Find Common Ground. Progress comes from Teamwork*”; as presented in the draft dated September 29, 2025.
Moved by Councilor Brunelle, seconded by Councilor Buhle
Discussion: Councilor Brunelle stated that this was basically the *Elephant in the Room* noting that tensions in the country have gotten a little heated. She stated that they like to think of their Town as our home, our neighbors, our friends, and our family. So the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion felt that it was important to put forth a message to remind everybody that we are all here together and that progress does come from teamwork. She stated that it was a good message to put out there digitally and in a flyer form. She stated it was just a little thing and something nice noting that to encouragement was always good, rather than negativity.

Councilor Buhle stated that she pictures the Flyer with inspirational photos, stating that she wanted the background to be really pretty pictures of Ledyard with a great positive message. She stated before tonight’s meetings that she and Councilor Dombrowski were discussing the many things where we were all very similar and alike; and the many shared experiences. She stated that recently things have been so divisive that it was nice to have situations where the y could recognize that they have common ground.

Councilor Barnes stated during the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity,& Inclusion’s meeting that they talked about one of the ways the town has come together in an incredible way was the Farmers Market. He stated that they talked about a photo of the Farmers Market being the center of the flyer; and he questioned whether Councilor Brunelle was able to obtain authorization to use a Farmers Market photograph.

Councilor Brunelle stated the Farmers Market did not want to associate themselves with DEI (Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion) for fear of retaliation and angering people, which was the whole point of the message, which she found very disappointing, but that was their right. Therefore, she stated that she did not want to use a picture they were not comfortable with.

Councilor Barnes stated the message was provided by Councilor Parad and the idea was that it would not just be a sheet with words, but that it would also include a photograph. He stated if they had a photograph they could use that he thought that it would make the flyer more impactful. He stated there were things that happen every day in town that show teamwork, collaboration and community. He stated that this message would ring more true if these things were expressed on whatever they produced.

Chairman St. Vil stated that he agreed with the sentiment of the message, noting before tonight’s meeting they were having a discussion around life. He stated that sometimes they forget that they were not just Councilors working together, but that they were coworkers, they

were neighbors, they were friends. He stated to reinforce that sentiment whether it was in written form or digitally that it was one of those things that it could not hurt especially in the divisive climate they were in today.

VOTE: 6 – 2 Approved and so declared (Dombrowski, Ryan not in favor)

RESULT:	APPROVED 6 – 2
MOVER:	April Brunelle, Town Councilor.
SECONDER:	Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor
AYES:	Barnes, Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Saccone, St. Vil
NAYES:	Dombrowski, Ryan
EXCUSED:	Parad

General Items

6. Discussion and possible action to review and consider text amendments to the proposed “*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics And Ethics Commission*” in preparation to present at a Public Hearing.

MOTION to adopt a proposed “*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission*” as presented in the draft dated ~~September 10,~~ **October 8,** 2025.

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Brunelle

Discussion: Councilor Buhle stated that she would like to Amend the proposed “*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics And Ethics Commission*”.

Councilor Ryan questioned whether the proposed amendments that Councilor Buhle was presenting this evening were attached to the Agenda Packet. Councilor Buhle stated that they were not; and that she would send them to him.

Councilor Dombrowski stated that he would not be ready to vote on the proposed amendments without seeing them. Councilor Ryan stated that they could not engineer these changes at a Town Council meeting.

Chairman St. Vil stated that the proposed amendments were not engineering, noting that they were clarifications to the existing Ordinance. He stated if Councilors did not feel comfortable voting that they could “*Abstain*”, noting that they could not stop the vote. Councilor Dombrowski stated that he could vote “*No*” explaining that the issue he had was that they were making changes to a proposed Ordinance that was being discussed for the first time by the Town Council; without providing any documentation prior to tonight’s meeting. Chairman St. Vil stated the proposed clarifications were fairly benign to the original intent of the Ordinance. He stated that he respected Councilor Dombrowski’s opinion; and he asked Councilor Buhle to proceed.

- ❖ MOTION to amend the “*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics And Ethics Commission*” as presented in the draft dated September 10, 2025 as follows:
- **Section 4, paragraph 3b,** ~~remove~~ the phrase “~~spouse or minor child~~” and replace it with “***or immediate family of***”.
- **Section 4, paragraph 8,** Town Employee definition will be modified to add the phrase, “***including outsourced administrative or executive professionals, including but not limited to consultants and the Town Attorney***”
- **Section 5, paragraph 3,** add the phrase, “***unless the contract or purchase order is awarded through the traditional bid or quote process and conflict is disclosed.***”
- **Section 5, paragraph 4,** add the following sentence, “***This provision does not apply to Town employees or Board of Education employees providing recreational services including but not limited to classes, coaching, camp counseling through Ledyard Parks and Recreation or Ledyard Board of Education***”.
- **Section 7, paragraph 1b6,** add the phrase “***unless disclosed to the Ethics Commission.***”

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Brunelle

Discussion: Chairman St. Vil that he expected that there would be some significant discussion this evening. Therefore, he proposed that they start with an orderly fashion beginning with Councilor Barnes so that everyone had a chance to present their initial opinion on the matter; and then he would open the floor discussion for debate.

Councilor Buhle stated that she had a draft with the proposed changes and marked-up that she would send to Administrative Assistant Roxanne Maher.

Councilor Barnes stated that he wanted to be clear, noting that in terms of having a Code of Ethics that he thought that there was unanimous support by all Town Councilor Members that it was something they need. He stated that he did not want anyone to see a vote whether it was from him or another member of the Town Council and think that they were against the need for a Code of Ethics. He stated that they absolutely needed it and that they should have had one sometime ago; and that whatever happens that they would have a Code of Ethics in the future.

Councilor Barnes continued by addressing the proposed “*An Ordinance Establishing a Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission*” in its entirety noting that he had three areas of concern; and one concern that may make it possible not to proceed. He stated that some of Councilor Buhle’s proposed amendments addressed some of his concerns; however, he stated that he wanted to share what his concerns were before this evening. He stated by not seeing the proposed edits that it was not possible for him to know that all of his concerns were raised:

- **Public Hearing – September 24, 2025** – Councilor Barnes stated from the Public Hearing there were a number of town officials that did not have a chance to review the proposed Ordinance or participate in the discussion. He stated based on Councilor Buhle’s edits that it sounded like for at least the Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens they captured some of that.

Councilor Barnes questioned whether Councilor Buhle followed up with all of the town officials that expressed concerns at the September 24, 2025 Public Hearing.

Councilor Buhle stated that she followed up with:

- Parks & Recreation Director Scott Johnson, Jr.
- Town Clerk Patricia Riley – Councilor Buhle stated that she had a meeting on the calendar with Town Clerk Patricia Riley; however, she stated Ms. Riley was not available that day and they had to reschedule.
- Director of Human Resources Christine Dias – Councilor Buhle stated that she did not follow-up with Ms. Dias. However, she stated that she thought the process made sense; and it was her opinion that for any Ethics Complaints involving town employees that they be handled by the Human Resources Department.

Councilor Barnes stated that his concern was that they incorporate the feedback from each of the town officials. He thanked Councilor Buhle for one of the edits she suggested, noting that it at least covered the Parks & Recreation. He stated that he believed there was a need to make sure all town officials, at least from the Director level, had a chance to review the suggested edits and to provide comments. However, he stated that they have not had that opportunity.

Councilor Barnes continued to note his concerns as follows:

- **Exemptions for Certain Situations** - Councilor Barnes stated it sounded like Councilor Buhle captured the exemptions for the Parks & Recreation Activity Leagues with her proposed edits this evening.
- **Residents Feedback** – Councilor Barnes noted all the detailed feedback from the residents, stating that nearly all of the residents who were in-favor and opposed to the proposed Ordinance commented that the proposed document needed substantial updates. He stated that Mr. Schroeder may have provided the best example; and that he thought that Councilor Buhle may have captured many of those.

- ***Town Charter*** - Councilor Barnes stated that his biggest concern regarding the proposed “*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission*” as written, was that it was inconsistent with the Town Charter. He stated the Town Charter empowers the Town Council for all Investigation Matters. He stated if the proposed Ordinance was to provide a recommendation for the Town Council for further investigation; that they need to say that. However, he stated as the proposed Ordinance was currently written the Ethics Commission was the Investigative Authority; and he stated that could not be established in an Ordinance because it was inconsistent with the Town Charter at this time.

Councilor Brunelle asked whether Councilor Buhle’s proposed changes could be printed and passed out, so that everyone would have the chance to see them, noting that she did not have her laptop this evening.

Councilor Brunelle commented on the following:

- ***Proposed Changes were Not Substantial*** – Councilor Brunelle stated that she agreed that the proposed changes were for clarification to make the intent clear, stating that they were not substantial changes.
- ***Existing Documentation and Procedures*** - Councilor Brunelle stated that they received comments that they have things in place and they did not need the proposed Ordinance, because they handled situations in the past without having this. She stated the two situations that occurred in the past were Legal Matters. She stated that they were Illegal Embezzlements; and that was not ethics. She stated if someone was embezzling money that they would not go to the Ethics Commission, noting that they would call the police. Therefore, she stated that those two circumstances do not really apply, because if it was a Legal Issue you would obviously follow the legal course.
- ***Ethics Committee*** – Councilor Brunelle stated that she agreed with Councilors Barnes that they needed to have an Ethics Committee.

Councilor Barnes corrected Councilor Brunelle stating that he wanted to be clear, that what he said was that they needed a Code of Ethics. Councilor Brunelle stated that was fine.

Councilor Brunelle stated that she believed they needed to have an Ethics Committee; an this has been being worked on for a very long time, months, and months, and months.

- ***Town Official Comments*** – Councilor Brunelle stated as far as town officials reviewing and providing comments that she had a question for the Mayor. She stated that the Mayor knew that they were working on this for months, and months, and months. She questioned whether the Mayor ever contacted the town officials and let them know that this was happening so that they had a chance see the reviews and comments, because they have been in the minutes and things like that.

Mayor Allyn, III, stated that the Department Heads were made aware of the proposed “*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission*” the day following the draft that was introduced on September 8, 2025; which was when they finally had a working draft. Councilor Brunelle stated the Mayor did not let them know ahead of time. Mayor Allyn stated prior to the September 8, 2025 draft that there had been several iterations, therefore, he stated it would not have been helpful for the Department Heads to review the many different changing drafts as the document was being developed. Councilor Brunelle stated that their comments could have helped mold it in the future. She stated that she would have taken it upon herself to let them know ahead of time, so that their comments could have come in ahead of time before the irritations, so that it would have been more cohesive with their comments a head of time. Mayor Allyn stated that it would have been equally important for this group to reach out to those employees and communicate with them, noting that has been a huge problem. Councilor Brunelle stated that was the Mayor’s role, noting that they were underneath him. Councilor Barnes stated that he did not think Councilor Brunelle’s comment were appropriate. Councilor Brunelle stated that she thought it was appropriate because he was putting blame on us, when she did not think it was our responsibility for that as a Committee, as they were making up a draft, stating that they cannot contact everybody in town. Mayor Allyn stated the Administration Committee worked on the draft for 22-months.

Councilor Brunelle went on to state the reason she abstained from approving the Minutes this evening was because the Minutes were not accurate. The Minutes did not capture her sentiments and there were a lot of typos in the Minutes; and she did not want to make a fuss, and that was why she abstained. Councilor Barnes stated that Councilor Brunelle should have voted “*No*”. Councilor Brunelle stated it was her choice to abstain, so that it was on the record; because she thought that some of the stuff that was printed in the Minutes misinterpreted what she said; and her intention.

Councilor Brunelle stated for example one of them was that she addressed the “*Question why some people were saying that she did not understand why some people could be against such a thing*” and she stated “*That was a naïve question because there has been tons of reasons why people have said they have been against it; and that I understand and I listen to them; and at the same token you cannot sit there and say I don’t understand why anyone would be for it, because there has been a lot of comments and statements why they were for it. So you have to look at both sides, you have to see the Pro’s and Con’s and you have to say what is the best route for the town*”. So that was the reason she abstained because she did not feel that it correctly portrayed what she said at the meeting and there was no video; so she could not go back to verify. So with that being said, she felt that this was very important; she believed they have been working on it for a very long time; and she believed that it should be pushed forward.

****POST MEETING NOTE:** The following Minutes were listed for approval this evening:

- Special Town Council Meeting Minutes - September 10, 2025 Executive Session – No dialogue was recorded;
- Regular Town Council Meeting Minutes - September 10, 2025 – only discussion regarding the proposed Ethics Ordinance was to set a Public Hearing Date;
- Public Hearing Minutes - September 24, 2025 Councilor Brunelle was not present

Councilor Ryan stated that he thought Councilor Brunelle’s comments toward the Mayor were accusatory and rude. Councilor Brunelle stated that she was sure he did. But he that Councilor Ryan has said a lot of rude things to her in the past and written, so its *Touche*. Councilor Ryan stated that he was referring to the comments Councilor Brunelle said to the Mayor. She stated that it was also rude when everybody was saying that they did it wrong; it was the same thing back.

Council Ryan stated that he did not support the proposed Ordinance under Agenda Item #6 for the following reasons:

- The draft that was before Town Council includes additional language that has not been reviewed by the Town Attorney; due to the sensitive nature of this proposed Ordinance, the Town Attorney should review the final draft and provide their opinion to the Town Council to consider.
- The current draft ignores previous recommendations made by the Town Attorney, an individual who was paid to protect the town from liability.
- The development of this draft proposal did not involve the Town Clerk, although he understands that Councilor Buhle did try to schedule meetings; as well as the Human Resources Director and other stakeholders, noting that he understood that Councilor Buhle was able to talk with the Parks and Recreation Director Scott Johnson, Jr., and yet the proposed Ordinance invokes additional responsibility on the Town Clerk’s Office not accounted for currently, in terms of resources. Additionally, at a prior Administration Committee meeting (September 8, 2025), the Town Clerk also outlined some execution concerns. The Town Clerk should be given the opportunity to review the document and provide input on impacts to their department for the Town Council to consider.
- As noted by the Mayor and the town’s Human Resources Director, the proposed draft was in conflict with the town’s collective bargaining agreements.
- This proposed draft was in conflict with the Town Charter; and that he would expand on this later in his comments.

Councilor Ryan stated that based on just the above reasons, that this draft was not ready for Town Council consideration, and it feels like it is being rushed over the finish line for reasons that he could not comprehend. He noted a comment was made at a prior Administrative Committee meeting regarding a concern about “*perfect getting in the way of good*”. He stated that was a phrase that should be used with caution, and while he would agree with that sentiment in certain circumstances, an Ordinance that opens the town up to additional legal liability and has the potential to personally and professionally affect individuals was not one of those circumstances.

Councilor Ryan went on to state, Additionally, what has not been made clear to him was what problem this was addressing. He stated that they were potentially exposing the town to significant additional expenses – at least \$20,000 in additional annual legal expenses according to the town attorney – and for what purpose. He stated there were multitudes of existing documents that ensure ethical conduct by employees was enforced, including:

- CT General Statute 7-148h – Outlines ethical conduct rules for officials and the ability for a municipality to bestow the power to investigate allegations to a body.
- Chapter III, Section 9 of the Town Charter – Provides the Town Council with the power of investigation, and therefore, invokes the powers/provisions inherent in CGS 7-148. He noted that this power cannot be explicitly delegated; and, per Section 4 of the Town Charter, the Town Council cannot create an ordinance that was inconsistent with the provisions of the Town Charter. As such, there was an inherent disconnect between the Town Charter and the proposed Ordinance.
- Town of Ledyard Fraud Policy – Outlines multiple examples that constitute employee fraud.
- Town of Ledyard Employee Handbook – Outlines detailed examples of behavior considered unethical, including nepotism and multiple examples of conflicts of interests.

Councilor Ryan stated that given the aforementioned, that he questioned why the town needed anything else – especially something potentially contradictory to existing town documents as noted above – to handle the exceedingly rare instances the town has had regarding ethical misconduct by employees. Rare instances, that he would note, have been successfully handled using existing policies and procedures.

Councilor Ryan went on to state that what was especially worrisome was what this proposed Ordinance implied - that the Town Council does not have the capacity to use the powers bestowed to them by the Town Charter to objectively act in the best interests of the town. He stated that he would remind everyone that they were elected to do just that - put the town first, ahead of any personal, partisan or special interests.

Councilor Ryan stated that he wanted to clarify that he was not debating the need to enforce ethical behavior, noting that he was simply pointing out that they have procedures and policies currently in place that are time tested and proven to work.

Councilor Ryan stated that if there was an interest in creating a Code of Ethics, or updating an existing document, to act as a comprehensive ethics reference, and would perhaps expand on some of the definitions already provided, that he would support that effort, provided all the necessary stakeholders were involved in developing it from the beginning, which has not been the case with what was before them, as they have seen. He stated to be clear, that would be absent the establishment of an Ethics Commission, for reasons he stated previously.

Councilor Ryan stated in the end, if the Town Council was going to pass an Ordinance with the power to change people's lives and obligate additional town resources and taxpayer money, that it needed to perfect – not just “good enough”. He stated the proposed Ordinance, which was in conflict with their Town Charter, should go back to Committee for additional work.

Councilor Saccone provided the following comments:

- ***Town Charter*** – Councilor Saccone questioned when the Town Attorney reviewed the proposed “*An Ordinance Establishing a Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission*” whether he found any conflict with the Town Charter.

Councilor Buhle stated the draft Ordinance that Town Attorney Matt Ritter returned to her also included an Ethics Commission investigation. She stated that she would imagine that their Town Attorney, that was representing them, would not provide language that was in conflict with the Town Charter, or that he would not provide them with a draft Ordinance that does not comply with the Town Charter. Councilor Saccone noted that he would agree with Councilor Buhle's comment.

- ***Need for an Ethics Commission-*** Councilor Saccone stated he has lived in town 37 years and that he has seen illegal things happen in town and the people were punished for what they did. He stated the proposed Ordinance would not have stopped those people from stealing town funds. However, he stated that the proposed Ordinance brings to light that their elected officials and their employees are ethical.
- ***Draft Ordinance*** – Councilor Saccone stated that he supported the proposed “*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission*”. He stated that he reviewed Ethics Ordinances from three other towns noting that he did not like some of the things that were in the Town of Waterford’s Ethics Ordinance as it dealt with how their Representative Town Meeting (RTM) people could do things. However, he stated that he agreed with the rest of Waterford’s Ordinance, noting that it brought to light what their needs would be as a town as well. He stated that he has read over the proposed “*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission*” numerous times.
- ***Good Enough versus Perfect*** – Councilor Saccone stated that the United States Government had laws that go on the books that were never perfect. He commented that he was not saying the proposed “*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission*” needed a correction. However, he stated should they find years down the road that there were things they needed to add or subtract to enhance any law or regulations, that they could do that, noting that they see it happen every day in the laws that were written across the country.

Councilor Saccone stated that he was in-favor of the proposed “*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission*” and that he would vote “*Yes*”.

Councilor Dombrowski stated that some of the things they talked about tonight regarding an Ethics Commission he brought up when they first began discussing the subject such as:

- ***Conflict with Town Charter*** – Councilor Dombrowski stated during their early discussions regarding establishing an Ethics Commission that he said that he thought they needed to have a Charter Revision first.
- ***Code of Ethics – Ethics Commission*** – Councilor Dombrowski stated the Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission needed to be separate; for the same reasons others have presented this evening. He stated that they could take the Code of Ethics out of the proposed Ordinance and adopt it as a Policy Document, explaining that could be done without a Public Hearing.

Councilor Dombrowski stated could a Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission be put together in one document “*Yes*”. Should they be in one document “*No*”.

- ***Substantive Changes-*** Councilor Dombrowski stated although some have said the proposed changes Councilor Buhle presented were to provide clarification; and they were not substantive, that he thought some of them could be substantive enough, to require a new Public Hearing.
- ***Attorney Legal Review*** – Councilor Dombrowski stated the draft Ordinance dated September 10, 2025 that was presented at the September 24, 2025 Public Hearing; and the proposed changes presented this evening have not gone back to the Town Attorney for a legal review; after the Administration Committee added some portions back into the proposed Ordinance that were specifically struck out by the Town Attorney. He stated that he thought they were putting themselves in a position for liabilities because they added language in without getting the appropriate level of legal review.

Councilor Dombrowski stated that he did not think the draft “*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission*” was ready; noting that he has been saying this right along.

Councilor Buhle provide the following comments:

- ***Changes from Town Attorney Draft dated 7/14/2025*** - Councilor Buhle stated that she wanted to be clear that the only significant change to the Town Attorney’s July 14, 2025 draft Ordinance and the draft that was before them this evening, was to Section 6 with regard to ***Disclosure for Public Officials and those Working in the Town***. She stated as she has said in

all of her previous comments that the bulk of the telephone conversation that she and the Town Attorney had regarding the proposed *“An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission”* was regarding Section 6. She stated that the Town Attorney advised her multiple times that it was admissible and legal and they could keep it. She stated that she responded to the Town Attorney stating *“Yes that was an important part of the draft Ordinance to her and that she wanted to keep it; and that she wanted that in there”*. She stated the Town Attorney said *“You can have that.... That was fine”*; and then the Town Attorney returned the draft Ordinance without it; and with no explanation as to why it was removed. She stated that was extremely frustrating to her; because being told *“Yes, it was legal and admissible”*, noting that the Town Attorney said *“It may deter people from running from office; and it was going to deter your volunteers”*. Councilor Buhle stated that she said *“It was only going to apply to elected officials”* and that the Town Attorney said *“Oh, okay, you can have that ”*; and she said *“Okay”*.

Councilor Buhle stated that was the only portion of that she would say was relevant. She stated the Town Attorney’s reassurance it was legal and acceptable; but the Town Attorney removed it.

Councilor Dombrowski stated that unfortunately for the public record the only draft he had before him this evening was the Town Attorney’s redline draft Ordinance; and not the conversation between Councilor Buhle the Town Attorney. Councilor Buhle stated that she understands; and that she learned that she would not have telephone conversations with attorneys.

Chairman St. Vil questioned whether Councilor Dombrowski was doubting Councilor Buhle’s statements or her interpretation of her conversation with the Town Attorney. Councilor Dombrowski stated that he did not have anything to back-it up; stating that he was not doubting the conversation Councilor Buhle had with the Town Attorney; and he was not doubting what she believed; or what she was saying was not correct. However, he stated the problem was that the interpretation the Town Attorney provided back to Councilor Buhle struck that language out.

Councilor Ryan questioned whether the draft Ordinance that Councilor Buhle was referring to was reviewed by the Town Attorney. Councilor Buhle responded stating *“No”*. Councilor Barnes questioned whether a review by the Town Attorney was possible and he questioned the reason they would not do that. Councilor Buhle that she did not feel that any of the changes were so substantial that they changed the document. Councilor Ryan questioned whether the version of the Ordinance that Councilor Buhle was making amendments to this evening had been sent to the Town Attorney for his review, noting that there has been plenty of time to pass that version through the Town Attorney. Councilor Buhle replied stating *“That it has not”*; noting that the Town Attorney took almost 4-weeks to return the previous draft. Councilor Ryan stated had they given the Town Attorney the updated version then, that they could have come back and had a Special Meeting to talk about this after they gave it another legal review; especially for an ordinance, noting that it was law. Councilor Buhle stated that she understood; and that she did not think that any of the changes from the Town Attorney’s advisory draft were substantial enough to warrant another legal review at this time. Councilor Ryan stated that he did not understand the reason they would not let the Town Attorney make that determination; noting that was what an Attorney does. Councilor Buhle stated sure. Councilor Ryan stated that Councilor Buhle was not an Attorney. Councilor Buhle stated that she was not; and she stated that every change that was made to the Attorney’s advisory draft Ordinance was verified through the Connecticut General Statutes; and they were in several other towns’ ordinances. Therefore, she stated that she was not concerned, noting that furthermore; there was a Severability provision in there, so if something was not valid that it did not invalidate the entire draft. She stated that she did not think that they have presented an illegal draft with unenforceable expectations.

Councilor Barnes stated that they have expressed concerns that the proposed *“An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission”* may be inconsistent with the Town Charter. He stated that he did not refute that the prior comments did not include that. However, he stated given the concern that was first shared by the Mayor that they ought to ask the Town Attorney, given the totality of all the revisions, whether this draft was proper. He also stated that they owed an ask as to whether it was inconsistent with the Town Charter as they interpret it to be a concern. Councilor Buhle stated that she thought Councilor Barnes had a fair question. But as she mentioned, and she was going to blunt, if everybody wanted to say they have already spent \$4,000 on the Attorney Review, why would the Attorney return a draft that was inconsistent with the Town Charter; and if he did why they would pay \$4,000 for an Attorney to review something and give them back something that was inconsistent with their Town Charter. Councilor Barnes noted that the Town Attorney removed language; Councilor Buhle interjected stating that the Town Attorney did

not remove the Investigation portion. Councilor Barnes stated that he was not an Attorney, and therefore, he could not see why at this point, when they were about to put an Ordinance in-place, they would not ask the Town Attorney the following questions: (1) What he thought of the final revision; and (2) Whether it was inconsistent with the Town Charter; as they identified a concern. He stated maybe it was not inconsistent with the Town Charter, noting that maybe there was a legal premise in Connecticut General Statutes that would supersede that, stating that it would be great to know. However, he stated that they owe it to themselves, and to the citizens to conduct their due diligence, and not to go into this without that awareness. He stated that it was not that the work was not valid, it was just not complete.

Councilor Ryan stated that he would be blunt, noting as Councilor Brunelle stated, the proposed *"An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Ordinance"* had been worked on for two-years. However, he stated that it felt like it was being rushed to get over the finish line, noting that the timing was conspicuous. He stated that he disagreed with the comments that they could put the Ordinance in-place and then they could massage it, noting that he was not trying to misinterpret the words. However, he stated that if they put something in-place that it would have the power, and that they were seeing what was happening in Waterford; where people were getting negative publicity. He stated that he could go on-line and get all the complaints that have been lobbed at the Waterford RTM Officials. He stated if they were going to people on notice that they owed it to their town employees and elected officials that were going to be subject to the proposed Ordinance and to do their due diligence to make sure they had something that was as close to perfect as possible, noting that it worried him.

Councilor Ryan stated that he wanted to be clear that he does support a Code of Ethics. He stated a Code of Ethics was a great thing; noting that they could aggregate and make a comprehensive reference, or do a policy, noting he was fine with that; and he would support that 100%. However, he stated as he has discussed with Councilor Buhle, that he was worried about the Ethics Commission part, because of the way the proposed draft Ordinance was written; and because they did not involve the right stakeholders, within the town, to develop the draft right from the beginning; and that the process still has not involved them, especially the ones that it was going to directly affect, which was also worrisome. He stated that the proposal needed to go back to the Committee to be reworked and to take the time to address all of the input they have gotten multiple times now from Town Department Heads that were going to be directly affected by this proposed Ordinance who were at the September 24, 2025 Public Hearing and at the Administration Committee meeting.

Councilor Buhle state that she wanted to make the following clarifying statements:

- ***Ethics Commission itself as a process conflicting with the Town Charter*** - Councilor Buhle stated that she had a concern that if they take the proposed *"An Ordinance Establishing a Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission"* to the Town Attorney and he says *"Oh, Yea, that conflicts with your Town Charter"* that she would quite frankly be upset, because he returned a draft Ordinance that conflicted with their Town Charter. She stated the entire Hearing portion of the proposed draft Ordinance was written by the Town Attorney. She stated that the Town Attorney struck their entire Hearing Section and added a new Hearing Section. She stated this Ethics Commission was essentially *advisory* to the Town Council. She stated that it takes the Investigation Vote out of the public eye. She stated that hypothetically it would allow Councilor Ryan to say *"I think Councilor Buhle was participating in unethical behavior"* and to file an Ethics Complaint that would remain confidential until Probable Cause was determined. Councilor Ryan asked whether Councilor Buhle has seen what was happening in Waterford. Councilor Buhle replied, *"Yes, they had to change their ordinance, so that if someone divulged confidential information that it was a problem"*. Councilor Ryan asked whether Councilor Buhle realized that he could go on-line, right now, and see the full text of Waterford's Complaints from the Waterford website. Councilor Buhle questioned whether they found Probable Cause yet. Councilor Dombrowski stated that they have not even had the hearing yet. Councilor Ryan stated that Waterford's Ethics Commission did, but that the RTM did not; which would be the corollary. Councilor Buhle stated that when the Complaint goes to the Ethics Commission it was entirely confidential, unless you also go to facebook and say *"I filed an ethics complaint against Jessica Buhle"*; explaining that nobody would know about that until the Ethics Commission confidently determines Probable Cause. Councilor Dombrowski and Councilor Ryan both stated that it did not happen that way in Waterford. Councilor Buhle stated that was the requirement of the proposed draft *"An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission"*. She stated the proposed draft Ordinance was written to protect those who may be falsely accused; and that four out of the five votes were required for a Probable Cause vote. She stated that it had to be substantial to move the Complaint; and it also required four out of five votes for a Final Hearing vote at which time it would come to the Town Council with a Memorandum

and the Town Council would determine the consequence. Therefore, she stated that the Town Council was not going to vote to enforce a penalty that would break a labor law, that breaks an agreement, or that violated the laws, because the Ethics Commission does not determine the penalty associated with the violation. Councilor Ryan stated the Town Council should not have to make that decision, noting that they should not have anything in-place that could put them in a position, where they were violating a Collective Bargaining Agreement; or anything like that. Councilor Buhle stated that they should be able to terminate employees who were unethical, but not subject to a Bargaining Agreement. Councilor Ryan stated that they were now using a Commission that had the power to change people's lives. Councilor Buhle stated that the Town Council was making that choice, not the Ethics Commission. Councilor Ryan stated that the Ethics Commission was providing an Advisory Opinion to the Town Council. Councilor Buhle stated "Yes" the Ethics Commission was providing an Advisory Opinion about the Investigation. Councilor Ryan asked whether Councilor Bule thought that the Town Council would go against the Ethics Commission's Advisory Opinion. Councilor Buhle stated that she did not think the Town Council would choose consequences that would put the town in legal jeopardy; stating that she thought that this was the primary focus. She stated that it would require a Super Majority of the Ethics Commission after the Investigation and Hearing. Councilor Ryan stated that he thought that they were getting into the weeds of the operations of the Ethics Commission. Chairman St. Vil stated that he thought getting into the weeds was good. Councilor Ryan stated getting back to one of his original statements this evening, which was that they should not be engineering the proposed Ordinance at a full Town Council meeting.

Chairman St. Vil stated that he did not think that they were engineering the proposed draft "*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission*" noting that the draft was done. He stated that the draft Ordinance has been available for everyone to read; and for the folks that have read the proposal that they would be aware of what Councilor Buhle was saying this evening. Councilor Ryan stated that they have not had the draft Councilor Buhle was presenting this evening to read. Chairman St. Vil stated the final draft Ordinance was published on September 10, 2025; which was about a month ago. Councilor Barnes stated the draft with the amendments Councilor Buhle presented this evening have not been made available for folks to read. Chairman St. Vil stated the proposed amendments to the draft Ordinance do nothing but provide clarification, noting what they were talking about were substantive things that were embedded within the proposed Ordinance. Councilor Ryan stated the final version dated September 10, 2025; as Chairman St. Vil said, has not gone through a final Town Attorney's review. Chairman St. Vil stated that the proposed Ordinance has had a final Attorney review. Councilor Ryan stated it has not had a final legal review, stating that it has not been through the Human Resources Director for review; and it has not been through the Town Clerk for review. Chairman St. Vil stated the reviews/comments were not provided to Councilor Buhle when they were in subcommittee; although there was ample opportunity to do so, for two-years. He stated that he found a letter dated 2007 from Mayor Fred Allyn, Jr., in which he said they needed to take a look at having an Ordinance and a Commission. However, he stated that he would not focus on that; and instead focus on their most recent effort that began in July, 2024, stating that there was ample opportunity. He stated that he would leave his comments with that; noting at the September 24, 2025 Public Hearing the full staff came and provided comments publicly, for which he offered his fellow Councilors the opportunity to provide proposed Amendments that incorporated the feedback from either the residents or from the department heads, which they could discuss this evening. He stated the only Amendments he was hearing were from author of the document, which was Councilor Buhle. He stated if he was not going to change Councilor Ryan's mind that it was not beneficial to go in circles. He stated if they had something to discuss with Councilor Bule, please debate it, but let's not go in circles or make statements that were unsubstantiated; or were actually opinions. Councilor Ryan stated the statement Chairman St. Vil made about the Mayor Allyn, Jr., should be struck from the record. Chairman St. Vil stated that it should not be struck from the record, because he could produce the record. Councilor Barnes provided clarification noting the letter Chairman St. Vil was referring to was from Mayor Allyn, Jr. from 2007. Councilor Ryan stated that the letter was not from anybody in the room this evening; and it was not from anybody currently employed by the town.

Councilor Ryan stated what he was trying to get across this evening was that certain members of the Town Council were rushing to approve the proposed Ordinance. Chairman St. Vil stated that Councilor Ryan's comment was an unsubstantiated statement. Councilor Brunelle stated that she would say the opposite, that you guys were stalling. Councilor Ryan stated that they were not stalling, that they actually wanted the proposed draft Ordinance to be reviewed by the people it should be reviewed by. He questioned whether Councilor Brunelle had an idea of what the proposal was going to cost the Town Clerk. Councilor Brunelle questioned whether Councilor Ryan knew how much it was going to cost to have another review by the Town Attorney, when it has already had a review. Councilor Ryan questioned whether Councilor Brunelle could answer a question without asking another question. Councilor Brunelle stated that she could, but that Councilor Ryan just did it too.

Councilor Ryan stated that they do not know the full impact of what this proposed draft Ordinance was going to do. He stated that they have not had final reviews on this, and they have had ample time to have final reviews. He stated the timing was conspicuous for trying to push this across the line, three quarters baked, noting that the proposed Ordinance was not ready to be passed. He stated that he wanted to clarify, stating that he was not saying that they were going to kill it; that he was saying that it should go back to Committee to be reworked, to have the right stakeholders involved, and to have a final legal review; and then bring it back to the Town Council. He stated that they should take away all of the reason that this should not be passed. Chairman St. Vil stated people that have something to fear would always have a reason. Councilor Ryan stated now Chairman St. Vil was making unsubstantiated statements.

Councilor Buhle stated that she was going to repeat her earlier comment, noting that this was her strongest statement and what she feels was absolutely the most important thing. She stated they went through several meetings over, and over, and that she, Councilor Dombrowski, and Councilor Brunelle all submitted their own drafts to Administrative Assistant Roxanne Maher, who worked tirelessly to compile the things that they focused on into one draft to send the Town Attorney. She stated that she would be frank, that every single town that has an Ethics Commission or Ordinance, had significant Town Clerk involvement, noting that was a part of their job. Councilor Ryan thanked Councilor Buhle stated that she just proved his point. Councilor Buhle stated that she was not dismissing that; and that was the reason that she tried to meet with the Town Clerk. Councilor Ryan questioned when Councilor Buhle asked the Town Clerk to meet. Councilor Buhle stated that she sent the Town Clerk an email the night of the Public Hearing (September 29, 2025); and they set a meeting date for October 7, 2025; and on October 6, 2025 the Town Clerk rescheduled the meeting. Councilor Buhle stated that she respected boundaries and that she understood that the Town Clerk had things going on and that was fine; and they rescheduled a date to meet. Councilor Ryan stated that Councilor Buhle was still proving his point that the proposed Ordinance was not reviewed by the right people. Councilor Buhle stated that what she was telling them was that the Town Clerk's input was important, but that her duties and job of the proposed Ordinance would not be eliminated no matter how many times she asked the Town Clerk for her opinion, noting that had to be a part of the Town Clerk's job. Councilor Ryan stated that they did not have the person whose job was going to be the most directly affected involved in the development of this document during the last two-years. Councilor Buhle these items were on the Agenda for a year; and she knew that Mayor Allyn knew the proposed Ordinance was going to the Town Attorney. She that she could not tell town employees what to do; as she had been asked not to, when she asked for the Town Charter to be updated on the website. She stated that she was not going to step in and overstep, she was not the liaison between the town employees, stating that was not her job.

Chairman St. Vil stated let's have a meaningful discussion. He stated that Councilor Ryan was making his point clear, that there was inadequate review of the proposed Ordinance, unless he had a different point. He stated in summary that was the point that Councilor Ryan was trying to make; and that Councilor Buhle was trying to refute that. Councilor Ryan stated that was not his point. He stated that he already made his points; and that he did not want Chairman St. Vil to paraphrase what his points were. Chairman St. Vil stated that he wanted to make sure that his fellow Councilors have the opportunity to express their thoughts. He asked that if he summarized Councilor Ryan comments incorrectly that would ask Councilor Ryan to correct him. He asked whether Councilor Buhle had anything to add. Councilor Buhle responded that she had nothing to add, but that Councilor Garcia-Irizarry has not spoken yet.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry commented on the following:

- ***Town Charter – Power of Investigation-*** Councilor Garcia-Irizarry noted as an example that if there was a Planning & Zoning Commission violation; or Inland Wetlands and Water Courses Commission violation that those investigation would be done by Planning & Zoning Commission or the Inland Wetlands and Water Courses Commission. However, stated if the Town Council was the only one that was allowed to do an investigation, why these violations were being delegated to those Commissioners.

Councilor Dombrowski addressed Councilor Garcia-Irizarry's examples of the Planning & Zoning investigations for a violation; and the Inland Wetland and Watercourses investigations for violations, and he explained that because they were land use matters that the State Statute strips that authority from the Town Council. He noted that State Statutes specifically state that once the Town Council established an Independent Zoning or Planning Commission that the Town Council could have zero input or influence on those matters.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated that basically then they were in violation of the Town Charter. Councilor Dombrowski stated that it was not a violation of the Town Charter, explaining that they have to considered Connecticut State Statue Section 128 "*Municipal Powers Act*" which was calls out the specific sections for the duties of the Town Council and local Town Government; versus Section 8 of the General Statutes which talks about what

Land Use Matters were. He stated that those powers were initiated by different sections of the State Statutes.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated that the Town Charter does not specifically say what kinds of investigations the Town Council was allowed to do, and what kind they were not allowed to do. Councilor Dombrowski stated that it does specify that the *Municipal Powers Act* was what grants the Town Council its authority.

- **Past Fraud Matters-** Councilor Garcia-Irizarry questioned who did the past investigations. Mayor Allyn stated that the Town Attorney and Forensic Auditor conducted the investigations. Councilor Dombrowski stated that they were hired by the Town Council.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated for the past issues, that the Town Council asked somebody outside of them to do the investigation; and to then report back to them. She stated that it would be the same as the Ethics Commission doing the investigation, and then reporting to the Town Council. She stated that they do that for many things. She stated that there were a lot of different investigations going on here in the town, that were not done by the Town Council, for obvious reasons, noting that does not seem to conflict with the Town Charter.

- **Costs for Ethics Commission** - Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated that she wanted to address the concerns that many people had regarding the cost of having an Ethics Commission. She stated that she did go to the budget of the Preston and Norwich to see what they were spending for their Ethics Commission. She stated this year Preston allocated about \$600 for the Ethics Commission; and Norwich allocated \$500 in their budget for the Ethics Commission.

Councilor Ryan questioned whether those town's budgets were for the Ethics Commission's operation of the Commission; or for the pursuit of the legal issues. He stated those budget amounts sounded to him like the costs for printing paper and other operational costs.

Councilor Barnes stated that he wanted to refer back to something that happened in the past. He stated when they cherry pick and look at a budget line item, that sometimes they draw inaccurate conclusions. He noted that during the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget process in looking at certain employees in other towns budgets and making a judgement to only find out later that town's budget for that particular role was actually also added with another line item. He stated that he was not suggesting that the research was not valid, but that simply looking at the budget and seeing a line item does not assure them that the cost of that was solely in that line item. He stated that information could only come from a conversation with the Finance Department from that town to confirm that there were not other costs that they would not have otherwise seen, that were associated with that activity.

Councilor Dombrowski stated that some towns, including Ledyard, sometimes have a line item in the budget that has a token amount to hold the line item, so that funding could be transferred in from other places to pay for those expenses, if needed. He stated without looking at their overall Legal Budget that they have spent in previous years on Ethics, that they could not just look at the line item to figure out what those costs were.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated her point was that for every Commission and Committee they have in this town, that a certain amount of money has been assigned to each one of them; and if they had a legal issue that they would have to use the Town Attorney. She stated basically the Ethics Commission would look for an Advisory Opinion from the Town Attorney. She stated it was not like the Ethics Commission would have to do everything every step of the way, with the Town Attorney holding their hand. She stated the Ethics Commission would have a procedure to follow and once they get into a certain position, if they need it, that they ask for the Legal Advisory Opinion. She stated they were not obligated to ask the Town Attorney for an Advisory Opinion, if they do not need it. She stated that there could be legal costs, and she noted as an example that the town was going to have pay a bunch of money to the Lawyers because the company was not doing their job; noting that they could not have predicted that. She stated her point was that they could have a year with no Ethics Complaints and have no legal fees; and maybe the next year they have some legal fees. She stated the Town Attorney did not have to hold the Ethics Commissions hand every step of the way until the end. She stated that it would only be at a certain step when the Ethics Commission asked for the Legal Advisory Opinion. She stated that she understood that people have a concern about the legal costs, noting that it was a valid concern, but that she was really not concerned. She stated that she trusted their employees, she trusted their town officials, and she did not foresee a big amount of Complaints coming into the Ethics Commission because she trusted that everyone was ethical. But as Councilor Buhle has said in the past "*Just because we do not need something right now does not mean that it was not useful. The best time to have it was when they do not need it; and it was better to have something and not need it; than to need something and not have it.*" Councilor Garcia-Irizarry went on to state that she was not concerned about going through a lot of costs. She stated that everyone here was very dedicated and that was the same with their employees, so she was not worried.

Councilor Buhle stated that this was the last time she was going to say this. To settle the Town Charter portion of this document that they either have to accept that the Town Attorney sent them a document that was in conflict with their Town Charter; and if the Town Attorney sent them a draft Ordinance that was in conflict with their Town Charter that she would question why they sent it for an Attorney review. She stated in the draft Ordinance that the Town Attorney proposed the entire portion for the Commission, the Hearing, the Investigation, all of it was the Attorney's words. She stated if the draft the Town Attorney sent them was not in conflict with the Town Charter, then it was not in conflict with the Town Charter; and she was not concerned about it.

Councilor Barnes stated after two years of work and the discussion regarding "*What was an Investigation*" noting that Councilor Garcia-Irizarry made some good points, in that there were some things that they may do that were considered an investigation that were consistent with the Town Charter. He stated why they would not use this opportunity to say "*Town Attorney, thank you for all the work to date. We are pleased to share our final version. We would ask for your concurrence on it; and we would ask to clarify questions we have around the Town Charter, and whether Section 9 was in conflict with this.*" Councilor Barnes stated that it was a simple ask, it was a final review; and they would get statement to put on the record as a legal opinion to that point. He stated outside of that they were basing it on conjecture. He stated that they had many engineers and professionals in other areas amongst them, noting that none of them were attorneys. He stated even if he was an attorney that in his role on the Town Council, he would have to report himself to the Ethics Commission, because he could not make a judgement given the seat he was in. He stated why after two-years they would not ask the Town Attorney was ridiculous to him. He stated that they could schedule a Special Town Council meeting the very next day to vote, however, he stated that they should not take a vote without having feedback from the Town Attorney on the final draft of the Ordinance and regarding the question whether it was inconsistent with the Town Charter.

Councilor Ryan stated he listened to Councilor Garcia-Irizarry comments and that he agreed with her in that he hoped that there was never a need to address any ethics issues within the town. He stated with that being said, that perhaps they could look at Councilor Garcia-Irizarry's statement in a different way. He stated if she implicitly trusted the town employees, and she believed they were going to do the right thing then what the Town currently had in-place seemed to be working. He stated to be clear that with the proposed Ordinance that they were opening a door for additional attorney fees that they cannot predict. He stated he understood that for Land Use issues they have had to approve additional funds that they could not have predicted; which was the reason they have a token amount in the budget line, noting that every year he asks why they cannot predict these costs better. He stated Councilor Garcia-Irizarry may be right, that one year the legal fees for the Ethics Commission may be zero; but that the next year the legal fees may blow them out of the water, noting that they may even need to do some level of assessment or budget transfer. He stated that it would depend on what happens and what their funds would cover. He stated that this was a concern for him because they do not know; and they were creating another avenue for another unknown in their budget.

Councilor Ryan concluded his comments by stating the vote that was being taken tonight was on a proposed Ordinance that has not had a final review by the Town Attorney, had not had a final review by the Human Resources Director, and had not had a final review by the Town Clerk, but has had the benefit of being reviewed by the Parks & Recreation Director; and that he thought that Councilor Buhle addressed his concerns. Councilor Buhle stated that she did. Councilor Ryan stated that it was still troublesome to him that the other individuals that would be directly affected by this proposed Ordinance have not been considered. He stated to Councilor Barnes point, that the Town Attorney has not had a chance to do a final review, and to answer the questions that have been brought up.

Councilor Dombrowski stated that he wanted to close with a final comment, noting that they have had some strong disagreement and healthy dialogue this evening. He thanked everyone who worked hard on the proposed "*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of*

Ethics and Ethics Commission". He stated whether he agreed with the proposal or not, that it was immaterial, noting the hard work that the Administration Committee did to put the proposal forward, and the work that the full Town Council has done in reviewing, commenting, and for the thought behind their discussion. Therefore, he stated that he wanted to thank everyone.

Councilor Garica-Irizarry stated that they could have the Town Attorney look at the proposed Ordinance and give him a deadline to return his comments back to the Town Council by a certain date.

Chairman St. Vil stated that Councilor Buhle laid out the process that was used, which included the support of the members of the Administration Committee and others to develop the proposed draft Ordinance, which was inclusive of a substantial legal review; noting that the end the product, was presented before the Town Council this evening. He stated as Councilor Buhle has stated, that it has been piece meal, noting a portion was documented via email stating this what they concurred with, and a portion was verbal – *"You can have this if you want it"*. He stated nonetheless, the aggregate has been reviewed, not together, but that the aggregate has been reviewed.

Chairman St. Vil continued by outlining the process for the town to adopt an Ordinance as follows:

- If the Town Council chooses to vote on the Ordinance, and the proposed Ordinance fails it ends - Chairman St. Vil stated that he would call for a vote this evening.
- If the Town Council approved the proposed Ordinance, the document has to be certified within seven (7) days; and presented to the Mayor.
- If the Mayor was concerned with the Town Council's due diligence; and a legal review, the Mayor could have a legal review done. Chairman St. Vil stated the legal review does not have to be done by the Town Council, noting that he was confident with the draft Ordinance, and that it did not need that extra layer. He stated when he votes that he would be voting with a good conscious that their legal aspects were covered, not only by the written verbiage of the Town Charter, but by the verbiage within the document. He stated that he thought that the question of a legal review was being framed as if it was not done, and it has been done, or it could never be. He stated that was not a true statement. He stated the Mayor could do a legal review; and if the Mayor was not confident with the proposed Ordinance that he does not have to certify the document. If the Mayor does not certify the Ordinance it would come back to the Town Council.
- The Town Council would get to vote on the Ordinance again, should they vote on it this evening and it passes.

Chairman St. Vil stated that they have to reflect on the process that was followed that was comprised of work beginning in July, 2024 through today. Not only that process, but the process their predecessors started back in 2007; where someone said *"I think this is a good idea, lets take a look at it"*; and the input they have received and the due diligence that has been done.

Councilor Bule stated that she had one last comment, noting that her thought regarding an additional legal review was requested, that all they were striking were specific things that were in conflict with State Statute and the Town Charter, that was it.

Chairman St. Vil stated that this was where collectively they have to debate, and they have to be fair. He questioned whether Councilor Buhle was saying that the competing opinion was whether there were further changes that should happen now. Councilor Buhle stated that she was saying that she believed everything that was in this draft Ordinance was legal and meets the legal requirements. She stated that there were changes to condense; and that she did not think that changes should be proposed for the sake of condensation; whereas the legal review from the Town Attorney should be *"Does this pass the legal test – Yes or No"*. She stated if the answer was *"Yes"* there should be no question or worry.

Chairman St. Vil stated he was not asking for a legal review; and he was not sending the proposed Ordinance back to the Administration Committee for a legal review. He stated what he was saying was that the Mayor has the right to ask for a legal review. He stated the Mayor

would do as he sees fit, which was under his purview. He stated he was checking with Councilor Buhle, as the author of the proposed “*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission*”, to confirm that she did not have any concerns. Councilor Buhle stated that she did not have any concerns regarding the proposed Ordinance.

Chairman St. Vil stated that he appreciated everyone’s comments, he appreciated the debate, and he appreciated the discussion. He stated most of all that he appreciated the input from their residents and from their department heads that they heard at their last meeting, both those who were in the room; and the ones who were not in the room. He stated the ones who were not in the room were just as opinionated. He stated that some of the comments he heard was the frustration with what was going on in the Federal Government and the stalemates that were happening; and the lack of progress that was happening. He stated that there was a perception that Municipal Governance was in a similar stalemate where they cannot make progress and they cannot make decisions; and they cannot improve their community.

Chairman St. Vil stated it was his opinion that the only thing the proposed Ordinance does was ensure folks conduct themselves in an ethical way; and it uses the right embedded in the Town Charter to have a standalone Commission on an investigatory basis to determine what was potentially ethical or was potentially not ethical. He stated that it would take a super majority by the Ethics Commission for anyone’s lives to be impacted. He stated that it was either you were for it; or you were not it.

Chairman St. Vil called for a Vote on the Amendments as presented earlier this evening, noted again below:

- ❖ MOTION to amend the “*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics And Ethics Commission*” as follows:
- *Section 4, paragraph 3b*, remove the phrase “~~spouse or minor child~~” and replace it with “*or immediate family of*”.
- *Section 4, paragraph 8*, Town Employee definition will be modified to add the phrase, “*including outsourced administrative or executive professionals, including but not limited to consultants and the Town Attorney*”
- *Section 5, paragraph 3*, add the phrase, “*unless the contract or purchase order is awarded through the traditional bid or quote process and conflict is disclosed.*”
- *Section 5, paragraph 4*, add the following sentence, “*This provision does not apply to Town employees or Board of Education employees providing recreational services including but not limited to classes, coaching, camp counseling through Ledyard Parks and Recreation or Ledyard Board of Education*”.
- *Section 7, paragraph 1b6*, add the phrase “*unless disclosed to the Ethics Commission.*”

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Brunelle

Discussion: (see above)

VOTE: 5 – 3 Approved and so declared (Barnes, Dombrowski, Ryan not in favor)

RESULT:	AMENDMENTAPPROVED 5 - 3
MOVER:	Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor.
SECONDER:	April Brunelle, Town Councilor
AYES:	Brunelle, Buhle, Garcia-Irizarry, Saccone, St. Vil
NAYES:	Barnes, Dombrowski, Ryan
EXCUSED:	Parad

Chairman St. Vil called for a Vote on the Main Motion as amended this evening as noted below:

MOTION to adopt a proposed “*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission*” as presented in the draft dated ~~September 10~~, *October 8*, .2025.

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Brunelle

Discussion: Councilor Barnes thanked Chairman St. Vil for providing the process assuming the proposed Ordinance passed this evening; and he questioned whether there was a certain timeline for the Mayor’s review. Chairman St. Vil noted that the Town Charter; Chapter III; Section 12, provided the process noting the following:

- 7- Days for the Town Council to certify the Ordinance and forward to the Mayor.
- 5-Days for the Mayor to Approve or Disapprove the Ordinance.

If the Mayor does not sign or veto's the Ordinance:

- 14-Days after the Mayor veto's the Ordinance the Town Council can approve the Ordinance by a super majority (6 Affirmative votes).

Chairman St. Vil stated that the Town Charter does not state calendar days or business days.

Mayor Allyn, III, stated that he would be seeking a legal review of the "*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission*" as presented in the draft dated October 8, 2025. Therefore, he asked that he be provided with the a red line document identifying all additions and deletions that were made to the Town Attorney's July 14, 2025 red lined draft; including the amendments that were voted on tonight; noting that would make it easier for the Town Attorney to review.

Councilor Ryan stated that he takes issue with Chairman St. Vil's comment that "*You are either for it; or your not for it*". He stated that it was not whether they were for it; or not for it, explaining that there were concerns about the proposed "*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission*" that have not been addressed. He stated he wanted to be clear, that although he was not going to speak for anybody, that he would like to think that everybody on this Town Council had a preference to enforce ethical behavior. He stated it was his opinion that there was no room for unethical behavior in any role in life. He stated it was just about the way they were going about putting the proposed Ordinance in-place. He stated in this case there were specific concerns that he outlined; and they have not been addressed. He stated referencing what others have said; that they have had years to address those concerns; and years to involve the right stakeholders from the very beginning. He stated that apparently there was due diligence done to identify what other municipalities have done with regard to the effects of having an Ethics Commission; and who it involved in terms of department heads; and it was known that their department heads were not involved even after the due diligence was done. He stated it did not seem like it was a big ask to make sure the department heads who have not been met with have the benefit to work with the Administration Committee to come up with a final draft; and that final draft be reviewed by the Town Attorney, prior to the Ordinance going to the Mayor. He stated at this point it felt like it was a throw over the wall, and let the Mayor handle it.

Chairman St. Vil stated that it was tough to lead, and it was tough to get involved with something that you may not be cognizant of; but your aware of. He stated by process Councilor Ryan's concerns have been addressed and adjudicated, however, not in his favor. He stated because Councilor Ryan's concerns were not addressed to his satisfaction, that Councilor Ryan was assuming that they have not been addressed, noting that if it was not an accurate statement. He stated that this was the same thing that was going on in the Federal Government. He stated what was going on in the Federal Government was; "*If you do not agree with me then I am not moving forward*". He stated "*Let's move forward*". Councilor Ryan stated those were inaccurate statements. He stated that his concerns have not been addressed in a factual manner, period-full stop.

Councilor Buhle stated the job of the Town Clerk as listed in the proposed Ordinance was the job of the Town Clerk listed in every other town's ordinance. Councilor Ryan questioned why Councilor Buhle did not involve the Town Clerk when they started drafting the document. Councilor Buhle stated that involving the Town Clerk would not have changed the proposed Ordinance. Councilor Ryan questioned whether Councilor Buhle thought that if the Town Clerk had known that the proposed Ordinance was coming that she would have wanted to account for that in her budget. Councilor Brunelle questioned whether that was their responsibility. Councilor Dombrowski stated that it was the Administration Committee's was to involve all stakeholders. He stated, we as the Administration Committee, failed to get all of the stakeholders, as far as Human Resources, Town Clerk, and Parks & Recreation, involved in the discussion early on in the process. Chairman St. Vil stated that he did not think Councilor Dombrowki's statement was accurate, because those individuals presented at the September 24, 2025 Public Hearing, and provided their input, which was addressed. Councilor Ryan stated that their input was not addressed.

Councilor Buhle stated that she could not change the procedural portions of the proposed Ordinance that included the Town Clerk because the Town Clerk was the body that gives an Oath in their town. She went on to note that the Town Clerk's primary concern was what happens in her absence when she may be on vacation, or she was not available to accept an Ethics Complaint. Councilor Buhle stated she discussed this with the Town Attorney and that in the absence of the Town Clerk that the Assistant Clerk was the Acting Town Clerk the same way that she would sign a marriage license or another document. She noted that she and the Town Clerk discussed that in person either after the Administration Committee's September 10, 2025; meeting or after the September 24, 2025 Public Hearing at which the Town Clerk spoke, noting that this addressed the Town Clerk's biggest concern, which were about not being available. Councilor Buhle stated that the Town Clerk stated that one of her primary concerns was not being able to take time off; or not being available to accept an Ethics Complaint being a problem. Therefore, she stated that portion of it was addressed. She went on to state that the Town Clerk suggested changing the document from being submitted "*Under Oath*" to a "*Notary*". Councilor Buhle stated let's be honest, signing something with a *Notary*, was just saying *I'm the one who signed it*, it was not signing it Under Oath; and they did not have the same meaning. She stated an Oath was more important for the situation that it was, and which applied to 19 people in the town. She stated that she did not think that this was a significant burden, in the same way the Town Council gets *Sworn -In Under Oath* when they were elected, and things like that. She stated that she was telling them that the Town Clerk's concerns have been addressed in-part. Councilor Buhle stated that there were parts of it that she could not quickly delegate to another person or completely change. She stated the documentation that includes the Town Clerk, as the Body, was the language from the Town Attorney, which tells her that the Town Clerk was the appropriate person to handle the Ethics Complaints; and the duties and processes. She stated that she understands the Town Clerk's concern, however, those would still be the Town Clerk's job regardless. Councilor Ryan noted that they knew all along that the Town Clerk was going to have additional responsibilities if the proposed Ordinance passed. Therefore, he questioned the reason the Town Clerk was not involved from the very beginning, so that they could have built this into their budget cycle, and understood what the resources were going to be.

Chairman St. Vil stated that everyone had valid comments, and he suggested they have an *After Action Review*. He stated regardless of what happens with the proposed "*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission*" this evening – Pass or Fail; that the Administration Committee review of the Town Councilors comments to find out what they could do better going forward for the next ordinance, or the next procedural review.

Councilor Buhle stated that she still planned to meet with the Town Clerk, however, she stated at the end of the day, she has addressed as many of the issues as she possibly could, without changing the entire document, as the Town Attorney presented it in the portions of the proposed Ordinance that included the Town Clerk. She stated while the Town Clerk's input was extremely valid, and she should have been brought in, that continuing to discuss this does not change the meat of the document. She stated hypothetically, if the Town Council does not vote tonight, and she meets with the Town Clerk tomorrow, that it would not change anything in the proposed Ordinance, because these were the requirements of what they would have to do. Councilor Ryan questioned whether Councilor Buhle thought that they owned the Town Clerk and the Director of Human Resources an opportunity to have a final review of the proposed Ordinance. Councilor Buhle stated that the final consequence was the only portion of anything that had the potential to run into grievances, or labor contracts; noting that those choices would be made by the Town Council; at which point the Town Council would not make that choice without the Director of Human Resources. She stated those opinions were valid, but they do not change the proposed Ordinance.

Councilor Barnes stated given the discussion this evening that he was certain that the Mayor had some concerns, and he had the right to do. However, he stated by not giving the Mayor a fully vetted proposal, that the Town Council was transferring that stakeholder management/staff action, all the things that the Administration Committee could have or should have done, to the Mayor; and they were giving him a five (5) day period to return it.

Councilor Barnes went on to state if the Town Council were to approve the proposed "*An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code of Ethics and Ethics Commission*" this evening, the process as he understands it would be as follows:

- Ordinance would go to the Mayor.
- The Mayor would quickly assessable his Team and the Town Attorney to review the Ordinance.
- If everything was fine, the Mayor would approve the Ordinance.
- If the Mayor had concerns that he would veto the Ordinance.
- The Ordinance would come back to the Town Council.

Councilor Barnes stated he hoped that Chairman St. Vil could scheduled a date that everybody could be there, because it would be a war and see who votes. He stated based on what has been expressed in the comments that they would need a full Town Council for the Ordinance to pass. He stated if they only have eight members of the Town Council, like this evening, the Ordinance would fail 5 - 3. He stated the Town Council was transferring to the Mayor responsibilities that they should have done themselves.

VOTE: **5 – 3 Approved and so declared** (Barnes, Dombrowski, Ryan not in favor)

RESULT:	APPROVED 5 - 3
MOVER:	Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor.
SECONDER:	April Brunelle, Town Councilor
AYES:	Brunelle, Buhle, Garcia-Irizarry, Saccone, St. Vil
NAYES:	Barnes, Dombrowski, Ryan
EXCUSED:	Parad

Chairman St. Vil noted that Iten #7 was not necessary this evening.

- No Action on the Discussion and possible action on the MOTION to set a Public Hearing (Hybrid Format - Video Conference and In-Person) Public Hearing date to be held on October 22, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. to be held in Council Chambers, Town Hall Annex, 741 Colonel Ledyard Highway, Ledyard, Connecticut, to receive comments and recommendations regarding a *proposed An Ordinance Establishing a Town of Ledyard Code Of Ethics And Ethics Commission*” .

RESULT: NO ACTION

- MOTION to grant a bid waiver to P & H Construction & Septic Services LLC, of Uncasville, Connecticut, in the amount of \$29,700 due to receiving fewer than the required three bids in response to Bid #072-PI-35 (Septic System 70 Christy Hill Road) in accordance with Ordinance #200-001 (rev 1) “*An Ordinance for Purchasing*”
 Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Saccone
 Discussion: Mayor Allyn, III explained that the Town has been involved in the Small Cities Program Income Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program for over a decade. He noted that the Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program was a Revolving Loan Program that was funded by the State and partially funded by American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds. He stated the program provides no interest loans to residents who qualified for certain/serious home repairs such as the replacement of a furnace, new roof, septic system, etc. He stated the Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program was not for people to beautify their homes or put granite countertops in their kitchen. He stated as Homeowners pay their loans back the town could then loan the money to another qualifying family.

Mayor Allyn went on to explain that the Septic System at 70 Christy Hill Road, Gales Ferry, failed and needed to be replaced; and he noted that the homeowner/applicant has qualified for the Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program. He stated because the Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program Funding was being used the town was required to follow its’s purchasing procedures as provided in Ordinance #200-001 (rev. 1) “*An Ordinance for Purchasing*; which required the solicitation of bids for the work. He stated because of the location was a challenging site in terms of the where the septic system was, noting that that they have to pump it up hill; stating that may

have been a reason only one Bid was received. He stated that he checked with the local septic system installers, and they were aware of the Request for Proposals. He stated that because only one bid was received, a Bid Waiver has been requested.

Councilor Barnes questioned whether 70 Christy Hill Road was a town-owned property. Mayor Allyn stated it was a privately owned property; and he explained that the Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program was a Zero Interest Loan Program for privately owned homes, that met the required income guidelines, and had a need for a critical improvement. He stated the Loan was required to be paid back to the town if the property owner refinances the home, sells or transfers the home.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated last year there was a couple who appealed to the Finance Committee because they had previously qualified and received funding from Housing Rehabilitation Loan Program; and they were refinancing their home; so they were looking to defer paying back the Housing Rehabilitation Loan.

Mayor Allyn stated that Councilor Garcia-Irizarry was correct, noting in 2017 a couple received about \$32,820.40+ funding from the Housing Rehabilitation Revolving Loan Program to make improvements at their home on Highlands Drive. He stated because they were refinancing their home that they were seeking a “*Subordinate Agreement*” to defer the paying back the 0% interest Housing Rehabilitation Loan to the town. However, he stated because they were refinancing their home, which was one of the terms for the Loan to be repaid to the town, at their January 17, 2024 meeting Finance Committee denied the request. He stated the Loan was paid back to the town which then provided funding that the town could loan to another qualifying family.

VOTE: 8 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT:	APPROVED 8 – 0
MOVER:	Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor.
SECONDER:	Tony Saccone, Town Councilor
AYES:	Barnes, Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Ryan, Saccone, St. Vil
EXCUSED:	Parad

XV. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Buhle, moved to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Dombrowski.
VOTE: 8 - 0 Approved and so declared. The meeting adjourned at 9:05 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 Regular Town Council
Meeting held on October 8, 2025.

Gary St. Vil, Chairman