



Chairman Gary St. Vil

TOWN OF LEDYARD
CONNECTICUT
TOWN COUNCIL
HYBRID FORMAT

741 Colonel Ledyard Highway
Ledyard, CT 06339

towncouncil@ledyardct.org
860 464-3203
Roxanne Maher
Administrative Assistant

MINUTES
FINANCE COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING

Wednesday, May 20, 2026 5:00 PM Annex Meeting Room - Video Conference

DRAFT

I. CALL TO ORDER - The Meeting was called to order by Committee Chairman Councilor Buhle at 5:01 p.m. at the Council Chambers Town Hall Annex Building.

Councilor Buhle welcomed all to the Hybrid Meeting. She stated for the Town Council Finance Committee and members of the Public who were participating via video conference that the remote meeting information was available on the Agenda that was posted on the Town's Website - Granicus-Legistar Meeting Portal.

II. ROLL CALL

Table with 6 columns: Attendee Name, Title, Status, Location, Arrived, Departed. Lists attendees including Jessica Buhle, Carmen Garcia-Irizarry, Tim Ryan, Gary St. Vil, Ty (Earl) Lamb, Fred Allyn, III, Matthew Bonin, Eric Treaster, Jeff Eilenberger, Kevin Blacker, Mike Driemiller, and Roxanne Maher.

III. RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS COMMENTS (Comments limited to Three (3) Minutes)

Mr. Eric Treaster, 10 Huntington Way, Ledyard, commented on New Business Item #2 on tonight's agenda regarding the proposed sale of the 11-acre town-owned property located at 480R Shewville Road, (fka) Loftus Wellfield to Mr. Kevin Blacker. He provided some background noting when the Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) decided to purchase water from Groton Utilities that the Loftus Well Field was no longer needed and it was decommissioned. He stated at that time former Town Councilor Bill Saums asked him to research the economic reuse of the Loftus Well Field. He stated that his research resulted in the Report dated June, 2016, which he emailed to the Finance Committee prior to tonight's meeting. He stated because of the terms of the current deed that they needed to take into account the deconstruction of the buildings and structures on the property; noting

the current deed stated: “*The premises shall be used for the sole purpose of constructing and maintaining municipal water well sites and related equipment, machinery, structures, piping and utilities*”. He stated this one sentence could be interpreted as prohibiting the use of the 11-acre property as a farm. He noted there was also an easement restriction which stated: “*To be used for the sole purpose of ingress and egress to and from the premises; as described in the schedule and for all necessary utilities and water transmission lines*”. He stated this language meant that the property could not be used for any other purpose, other than the maintenance of a well field and equipment; and anything associated to the wellfield. He expressed concern that it may not be legal to sell the property to be used for farming purposes.

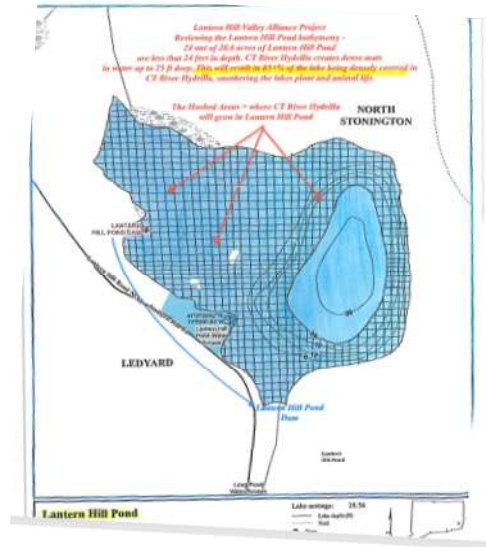
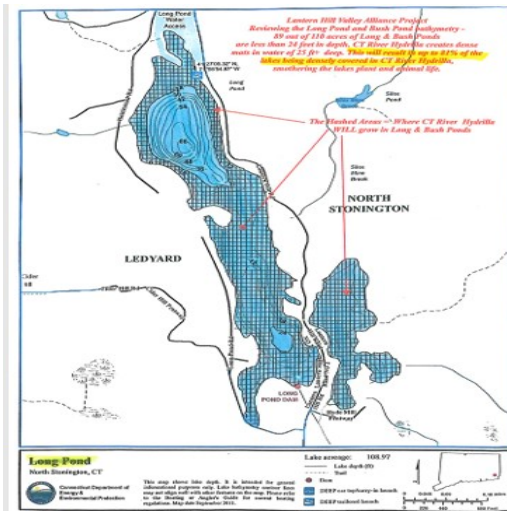
Mr. Treaster went on to note his second concern was that he was not sure if the property was being sold to the highest bidder. He stated if the property was under contract with Mr. Blacker that he did not have a problem with that. However, he stated that he would like to see the town get the most money possible for land that it owned. He stated 480R Shewville Road was 11-acres. He commented as Mayor Allyn, III knows that he was not a fan of giving town property away to Avalonia Land Conservancy because he thought in the future it could be 20, 30, 40, 50, 100 years, that every parcel of land the Town owned would be put to use. Therefore, he stated that he did not support giving land away, but that he also did not support leaving property idle. He stated if there was a way to solve these issues, that would be great. Thank you.

Mr. Jeff Eilienberger, 2 Village Drive, Ledyard, addressed the establishment of a Non-Lapsing Education Account as required in accordance with CGS Chapter 171, Section 10-2488; which he has been following since early 2023. He noted this Legislation called for the establishment of a Non-Lapsing Education Account starting with the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2024; and to continue each year thereafter. He stated this Legislation allowed for up to 2% of the Board of Education’s year-end Budget Surplus to be transferred into the Non-Lapsing Education Account. He stated in their March 30, 2026 letter the Board of Education requested the transfer of their \$212,031 Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Audited Surplus to their Capital Non-Recurring Account. However, he noted in his April 22, 2026 letter Finance Director Matthew Bonin addressed the need to comply with CGS Chapter 171, Section 10-2488; and to establish Non-Lapsing Education Account for the Board of Education’s Budget Surplus. He noted at the Finance Committee’s January 7, 2026 Meeting Mr. Bonin explained the need to establish the Non-Lapsing Education Account and at the February 4, 2026 Finance Committee Meeting, at which members of the Board of Education were present for the Annual Audit Report, that Principle Auditor Stephen Gross also explained the reason the town needed to establish a Non-Lapsing Education Account to transfer their Board of Education’s year-end budget surplus into. He went on to note in speaking with School Superintendent Hartling on February 4, 2026 about this piece of Legislation and the need to establish a Non-Lapsing Education Account to only be used for educational purposes that Superintendent Hartling responded by stating “*in my world, all capital is education*”. He stated although they had a grace period to set up the Education Non-Lapsing Account that time was ticking.

Mr. Terry Fedors, 25 Homestead Road, Ledyard, stated he was a Member of the Lantern Hill Valley Alliance (LHVA), noting their Mission was to preserve and protect the borders and the dams of Long Pond and Bush Pond. He stated that he was present this evening to request the Town’s financial support to conduct a Long Pond Invasive

Species Study. He explained the Long Pond Invasive Species Study would be a two-year project and would cost about \$19,000. He stated the Lantern Hill Valley Alliance (LHVA) has received a \$10,000 Grant from the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP); and a \$2,500 Grant from the Eastern Connecticut Foundation. He noted as part of their fundraising efforts the Lantern Hill Valley Association (LHVA) has come to the Town to ask for \$7,000 to help support the Study.

Mr. Fedors provided some background explaining in 2016 a new invasive plant called Hydrilla was first discovered in Connecticut in the Connecticut River. Since then, it has been found in at least 10 lakes in Connecticut. He provided handouts showing how thick and dense the Hydrilla matt becomes, noting that they could not boat, paddle, or swim through it. He stated the plant affected the oxygen levels in the pond which impacts the fish, turtles, osprey, and other wildlife. He also noted that the Hydrilla would grow in water up to 25-feet deep which would cover about 81% of Long Pond and Bush Pond; or 89 acres of the 110 acres if it was left unchecked; and about 24-acres of the 28-acres Lantern Hill Pond.



Lantern Hill Valley Alliance
Development of a Long-Term Holistic Lake Management Plan for Controlling Fanwort, Variable-leaf, and Eurasian watermilfoils in the Lantern Hill Valley Lakes located in Ledyard and North Stonington, CT

CT River Hydrilla photos

The economic and resource impacts of CT River Hydrilla will total billions, stemming from lost recreational income, declining waterfront property values, high management expenses, and the destruction of vital aquatic resources essential for all life.

Hydrilla has captured the attention of marina owners and recreational boaters concerned about the potential diminishment of the River's recreational value. Pictured: Portland Boat Works.

From Estuary Magazine, Winter 2025, text/photo credit to Judy Preston

Lantern Hill Valley Alliance
Development of a Long-Term Holistic Lake Management Plan for Controlling Fanwort, Variable-leaf, and Eurasian watermilfoils in the Lantern Hill Valley Lakes located in Ledyard and North Stonington, CT

CT River Hydrilla photos

The Mattabesett River in Middletown is choked by the invasive weed Hydrilla, which is so thick it threatens to disrupt the river's flow as well as the Connecticut River's \$1 billion plus annual contribution to the economy. Photo by Gregory Bugher, courtesy of the Connecticut Office of Aquatic Invasive Species.



Hydrilla plants can be seen along the surface of the water at Ledyard Lake in Lyme, a cove that is part of the Connecticut River on Tuesday, Sept. 26, 2023. (Aaron Flann/Safford Connect)

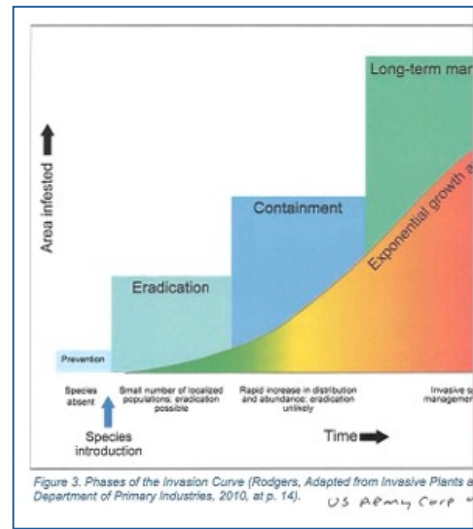


Figure 3. Phases of the Invasion Curve (Rodgers, Adapted from Invasive Plants a Department of Primary Industries, 2010, at p. 14). US Army Corp

Mr. Fedors stated although they have not found Hydrilla in Ledyard’s ponds that their concern was that Hydrilla has been identified in Amos Lake in Preston, and Gardner Lake which borders Montville, Salem and Bozrah. He stated the primary cause of the spread from lake to lake was from the boats, noting the Hydrilla could be in the fish wells, attached to the motor, or be between the hull and the trailer. He stated that it could be spread by kayaks because they were difficult to clean. He stated what Long Pond and Bush Pond have in common with these other lakes is that they have State Boat Launches; therefore, they had a lot of boating traffic.

Mr. Fedors went on to explain Hydrilla was discovered in late 2023 in Amos Lake, however, it was too late to treat it noting in 2024, they treated it locally, and they actually were pulling out the Hydrilla, which in retrospect was a mistake because the fragments caused the plant to spread even more. He stated last year Preston spent \$27,000 to treat it; and they plan to spend \$38,000 to treat it this year. He stated Amos Lake was only five miles from Ledyard’s Ponds.

Mr. Fedors continued by stating last year the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) monitored the boat launch and there was over 1,800 anglers, noting that was a lot of people that use that use the Ponds for fishing. He stated if they do not protect their Ponds from Hydrilla that it would impact the surrounding community, and all the neighborhoods around the Ponds. Therefore, he stated that they need to be ready to take action immediately, noting that currently they do not have Hydrilla in Bush Pond or Long Pond, which was the reason they need to have a plan in place now so they could address it immediately; stating that the cost would be minimal. He noted Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) has said *“It’s not if you’re going to get Hydrilla, it’s when you’re going to get it”*.

Mr. Fedors stated the requested \$7,000 would be used to hire a Certified Limnologist, who was a scientist that studies inland aquatic ecosystems. He stated the Limnologist would use different techniques as approved by the State of Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) to look at all the aquatic plant species and their density along the parameter of all of the ponds and would report their findings to the State of Connecticut’s Natural Diversity Data Base Program. He stated they would then make a determination on what they could do to effectively treat the invasive species found without impacting the native plants, wildlife, and the surrounding community. Therefore, he explained before they could do anything to treat or address Hydrilla the

State of Connecticut required that they conduct this Study. He stated the Limnologist, would submit their initial Report in January of 2027, noting that the Lantern Hill Valley Alliance has already hired the Limnologist. He stated to date they have raised \$12,500, and still needed about 6,500, for the study, noting that the Lantern Hill Valley Alliance (LHVA) would greatly appreciate the town's help to authorize \$6,500 to support their efforts. He stated that the LHVA would also continue their fundraising activities. Mr. Fedors thanked the Finance Committee for their time.

Councilor Buhle thanked the residents for their comments.

IV. PRESENTATIONS/INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Councilor Buhle noted the Finance Committee received the following correspondence:

1. Chairman St. Vil email dated 5/5/2026 re: Board of Education Letter dated 3/30/2026 re: Budget Surplus & Eversource Reimbursement & Finance Director Letter dated 4/22/2026.

Councilor Buhle stated that it was clear that the correct course of action was for the Town Council to authorize the transfer of the Board of Education's Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Audited Surplus in the amount of \$212,031 into a new Non-Lapsing Education Account, solely intended for educational purposes; in accordance with the CGS Chapter 171, Section 10 -2488legislation. She stated that she did not want to continue to fight about this issue, and therefore, she questioned the process to create the new Non-Lapsing Education Account.

Finance Director Matthew Bonin noted the process to establish the new Non-Lapsing Education Fund would be the same process that he has been talking about for months. He explained once the Non-Lapsing Education Fund has been set-up the Town Council would need to approve transferring the Board of Education's Budget Surplus from the prior year because it was not already set up to do that. He stated once the prior year's budget overage was moved into the Non-Lapsing Education Fund that by a vote of the Board of Education they could move funds from the Non-Lapsing Fund into their Capital Non-Recurring Fund, should they choose to do that.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry questioned whether the Board of Education would need to come back to the Town Council to transfer funds from their Non-Lapsing Education Fund to their Capital Non-Recurring Fund. Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated Town Council action was not needed for the Board of Education to transfer funds from their Non-Lapsing Fund to their Capital Non-Recurring Fund because the Legislation stated that once the money was in that Non-Lapsing Education Fund they could spend it how they see fit; with the Board of Education's vote.

Councilor Buhle stated the first step in this process was to establish the Non-Lapsing Education Fund. Finance Director Matthew Bonin responded "*correct*". Councilor Buhle asked Councilor Ryan if he would like to put a motion on the floor.

- ❖ MOTION to recommend the Town Council establish a new Board of Education Non-Lapsing Fund in accordance with CGS 171-10-248.
 Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Buhle
 Discussion: Councilor Buhle requested clarification noting with the establishment of the Non-Lapsing Education Fund that going forward the Board of Education's Budget Surplus (up-to 2% or original budget) would automatically be transferred into the new Fund; and that approval from the Town Council for the transfer of the Surplus Funds would not be needed. Finance Director Matthew Bonin noted Councilor Buhle's understanding was correct. (Also, see discussion above).

VOTE: 3– 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED 3 – 0

MOVER: Tim Ryan, Town Councilor

SECONDER: Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor

AYES: Jessica Buhle, Carmen Garcia-Irizarry, Tim Ryan

Councilor Buhle stated the next step was to transfer the Board of Education's Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Audited Surplus in the amount of \$212,031; and she questioned what account the surplus funds were going to be transferred from. Finance Director Matthew Bonin noted the Board of Education's prior year surplus was coming from the General Fund - Undesignated Fund Balance. Councilor Buhle asked Councilor Ryan if he would like to put a motion on the floor.

- ❖ MOTION to recommend the Town Council appropriate and transfer the Board of Education's Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Audited Surplus in the amount of \$212,031 from Undesignated Fund Balance) to the newly established Board of Education Fund.
 Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Buhle
 Discussion: (See Above).

VOTE: 3– 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED 3 – 0

MOVER: Tim Ryan, Town Councilor

SECONDER: Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor

AYES: Jessica Buhle, Carmen Garcia-Irizarry, Tim Ryan

Councilor Buhle noted the next item in the Board of Education's March 30, 2026 letter was to transfer the Eversource \$19,943 Reimbursement from their Energy Audit. She asked Councilor Ryan to put a motion on the floor.

- ❖ MOTION to transfer Eversource Reimbursement in the amount of \$19,943 from Undesignated Fund Balance to the Board of Education's Capital Non-Reoccurring Account.
 Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Buhle
 Discussion: (See Above).

VOTE: 3– 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED 3 – 0

MOVER: Tim Ryan, Town Councilor

SECONDER: Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor

AYES: Jessica Buhle, Carmen Garcia-Irizarry, Tim Ryan

V. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

MOTION to approve the Finance Committee Minutes of May 6, 2026
Moved by Councilor Garcia-Irizarry, seconded by Councilor Ryan

VOTE: 3– 0 Approved and so declared

VI. FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Finance Director Matthew Bonin addressed the upcoming Short-term Borrowing -Bond Anticipation Notes (BAN's) scheduled to occur in August, 2026. He explained that the Town would be financing \$8.5 million in short term money for the existing roof projects that were ongoing, and the Juliet W. Long Heating Ventilation Air Condition (HVAC). He explained that these funds would be used to pay down some short-term debt, noting there were several factors and moving parts that would impact the amount of money they would have borrow, noting the following:

- State Grant Reimbursements \$465,000 – Mr. Bonin stated that they have been waiting for two disbursements from the State for about 4 – 5 months.
- Gales Ferry School Space Standard - State Grant Reimbursement – Mr. Bonin noted the first Grant Reimbursement disbursement from the State was \$244,000; which was short of what he was expecting. He noted when he talked to the State about the dollar amount they said there was a Space Standard issue. He stated the Board of Education was working with the State on this issue. He explained the Board of Education has access to the State's Grant Portal, noting that the Town does not have access.
- Chiller Replacement \$373,000 Gales Ferry School – Mr. Bonin noted the Town fronted the funding out of their Capital Non-Recurring Fund for the Board of Education when the Chiller failed. He noted the Short-Term Borrowing would also include the cost for the Chiller Replacement.
- State Audit – Ledyard Middle School and Gallup Hill School Renovate as New Projects – Mr. Bonin stated with the completion of the State's Audit for these two school projects that the Town would need to borrow \$900,000 to close out these projects.

Councilor Buhle questioned the amount of money the Town would need to borrow in August, 2026 if they received the Grant Reimbursements from the State. Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated that he would guess about \$7 million; explaining that some of the temporary money was going to be rolled over into the Short-Term Borrowing – Bond Anticipation Notes (BAN's). However, he stated there was a piece of the project that was completed which they would permanently finance, meaning Bond versus Bond Anticipation Notes (BAN's). He stated that he has been tracking all of these projects along with the grant reimbursements received, noting that the spreadsheet changes daily. He stated there was a lot of work involved with the borrowing, and that they would need to finalize those numbers as they get closer to August.

Councilor Buhle questioned whether Mr. Bonin expected to borrow the full \$8.5 million in August, 2026. Finance Director Matthew Bonin replied “No” ; explaining that if the town received the Grant Reimbursement funding from the State that it would dramatically impact the amount of money the town would need to borrow.

Councilor Buhle questioned what interest rate Mr. Bonin was expecting to receive for the Short-Term Borrowing in August. Finance Director Bonin stated that he would expect to receive the interest rate at that time, which could be 4% – 5%. Mayor Allyn, III explained that the interest rate they would receive would also be dependent on the number of buyers that were interested in buying municipal debt. He stated there have been times when they have only had one or two bidders, and other times when they had five or six bidders.

Mayor Allyn went on to state that it was amazing to think that the Middle School and Gallup Hill School Renovate as New (Schools Consolidation Projects) were completed about eight years ago; and that they were just getting the final Grant Reimbursement disbursements from State. He noted in looking at the 62.5% Grant Reimbursement rate, and then factoring in the long wait for the State Funding along with the Short Term Borrowing costs that the taxpayers have paid, that the Grant Funding was not really 62.5%.

Finance Director Matthew Bonin noted the amount of work involved to prepare projects for the State Audit and to receive the State Grant Funding. He stated that Ledyard was trying to push through a lot of Projects; and that they were battling with the State about costs that were ineligible for grant reimbursement, noting that the Town had already told the State about the ineligible costs. Therefore, he explained that essentially the State was doubling up on their ineligible costs.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated hopefully the new *Ad Hoc Committee to Develop a Process to Establish the Process for Capital Improvement Building Projects* could look into all of these things; so when they have a project, they could make sure that the expenses submitted to the State would be eligible for the Grant Reimbursement. Mayor Allyn, III noted as an example they bought a shed for the Middle School; and a couple mowing tractors which were not eligible for the State Grant Reimbursement.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated in many cases when they do these projects the people that were making the plans do not know exactly what can and cannot be submitted for the Grant Reimbursement. She stated because time is money they should not be spending time to submit expenses for Grant Reimbursement that they were not going to get, noting their time could be better spent doing something else.

Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated he believed the biggest issue for the Middle School and Gallup Hill School Renovate as New Projects (Schools Consolidation Projects) was that they did not have an Owners Representative. Mayor Allyn, III addressed the importance of having an Owners Representative up-front before the project even started. He stated those professionals know about the very things Councilor Garcia-Irizarry mentioned. He explained that an Owners Representative could guide them on what they could do and what would and would not be eligible for the Grant Reimbursement.

Councilor Ryan stated that he appreciated the insight and the explanation.

VII. FINANCIAL REPORTS

Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated that he provided the April 30, 2026 Revenue and Expenditure Reports for tonight’s meeting and he highlighted the following:

- **Revenue Report – April 30, 2026:**

- ✓ **Education Cost Sharing** (ECS) came in \$142,000 less than the amount that was budgeted. There were no additional ECS payments expected from the State for Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2026.
- ✓ **Impact Aid** came in \$172,000 less than the amount that was budgeted. Mr. Bonin stated he did not know if more Federal Impact Aid payments were expected, noting in past years payments were received in May and June.
- ✓ **Tax Collection** was at 99.4 % of budget with two months left to go.
- ✓ **Investment Income** has already exceeded the budget estimate by around \$300,000. Mr. Bonin stated it was important to note that this line is budgeted conservatively because they do not have a crystal ball to know where the interest rates were headed, or what the feds were going to do.

- **Expenditure Report – April 30, 2026:**

- ✓ **Police Overtime** due to officer shortage and expenses tied to the snow and it's removal.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

1. Continued discussion regarding potential uses for the funding received from the National Opioid Settlement Payments.

Mayor Allyn, III stated the town would continue to receive Opioid Settlement Payments to 2034. He stated Governor Lamont has created a new Prevention Partnership Organization to address prevention and treatment. He stated more information would be available in June, 2026.

Councilor Buhle questioned whether the Ledyard Prevention Coalition was planning to host a Booth at this summer’s Farmers Market. Mayor Allyn stated that he believed that they were.

RESULT: NO ACTION	Next Meeting 7/1/2026 : 5:00 p.m.
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2. Schedule for Joint Meetings between the Finance Committees of the Town Council & Board of Education.

Councilor Buhle stated she did not have a chance to follow up with Board of Education Chairman Jennifer Reguin and Finance Committee Chairman Amanda Veneziano to try to find some dates for the two Finance Committees to meet.

RESULT: CONTINUED

Next Meeting 7/1/20/2026; 5:00 p.m.

3. Continued discussion regarding potential grant opportunities.

Councilor Buhle noted she did not have any updates.

RESULT: CONTINUED

Next Meeting 7/1/2026; 5:00 p.m.

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

IX. NEW BUSINESS

1. MOTION to recommend the Town Council to authorize the expenditure of up to \$7,000 from Account #21090305-58920 (Acquisition of Open Space) to support a Long Pond Invasive Species Study.

Moved by Councilor Garica-Irizarry, seconded by Councilor Buhle

Discussion: Councilor Buhle noted that Lantern Hill Valley Alliance Terry Fedors provided information during Residents Comments earlier this evening and she questioned whether anyone had questions.

Councilor Ryan attending remotely mentioned that he first learned about the invasive Hydrilla about two years ago when Lantern Hill Valley Alliance (LHVA) Member Betsy Graham gave an impassioned presentation regarding Hydrilla. He noted at that time Mrs. Graham appealed to the Town to include \$5,000 in their General Fund Budget to implement a Boat Inspection Program. He stated tonight was the first the Finance Committee has heard from the Lantern Hill Valley Alliance since Mrs. Gorham appealed to the Town Council. He stated that he was curious about what has happened during the past two years, noting that he did not recall whether the \$5,000 for a Boat Inspection Program was included in the Town's Budget two years ago.

Councilor Buhle stated the Finance Committee did not include the requested the \$5,000 in the General Fund Budget for the Boat Launch Inspection initiative because they needed more information; and because there was a suggestion to try to seek other outside funding.

Mr. Terry Fedors, 25 Homestead Road, Ledyard, explained at that time the stumbling block with the Boat Launch Inspection initiative was that the Lantern Hill Valley Alliance (LHVA) did not have liability insurance for their 501(c)(3) Organization, which the State required for them to conduct boat inspections. He stated since then the Lantern Hill Valley Alliance (LHVA) has gotten liability insurance because it was needed to hire the Limnologist to conduct the Invasive Species Study. However, he stated the Lantern Hill Valley Alliance (LHVA) may take-up the Boat Inspection initiative because it directly tied into this Invasive Species Study; explaining that the boats were the problem because they bring the Hydrilla from one body of water to another. He went on to note that getting volunteers to support the Boat Inspection was also a challenge. He stated in the Adirondacks and in Maine that they have boat washing stations and inspectors, noting that only 2% of the Maine Lakes have Hydrilla, stating that prevention was Key.

Councilor Ryan thanked Mr. Fedors for his presentation noting that it was informative.

Councilor Buhle noted the \$7,000 was coming out of the Acquisition of Open Space Fund, therefore, she questioned whether this Fund could also be used to maintain open space. Mayor Allyn stated in discussing the uses of the Open Space Fund, it was agreed that this was for water open space, opposed to land open space. Therefore, he stated that using the Open Space Fund for this purpose was in-line with the nature of the Fund. He stated the Open Space Fund's current balance was about \$350,000. He stated when Mr. Fedors visited his Office he discussed the Lantern Hill Valley Alliance fundraising activities, and therefore, he felt this was a good use and a good cause.

Councilor Buhle questioned whether the Lantern Hill Valley Alliance has asked North Stonington for funding to help with the Invasive Species Study. Mr. Fedors stated that they have approached North Stonington and talked with First Selectman Robert Carlson, however, he stated that it was unlikely that North Stonington would provide funding to help with this initiative.

VOTE: 3- 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED TO RECOMMEND 3 – 0

MOVER: Carmen Garcia-Irizarry, Town Councilor

SECONDER: Tim Ryan, Town Councilor

AYES: Jessica Buhle, Carmen Garcia-Irizarry, Tim Ryan

2. MOTION to recommend the Town Council recommend the Town of Ledyard enter into an agreement to sell town-owned property located 480R Shewville Road, (fka) Loftus Wellfield, for \$150,000 to Mr. Kevin Blacker, of Groton, Connecticut.

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Garcia-Irizarry

Discussion: Mayor Allyn, III noted as Mr. Treaster mentioned during Residents Comments (see earlier this evening, that his number one concern with this property was also that it was heavily restricted with a covenant that was placed on the deed specifically for the use as a Municipal Water Supply Company.

Mayor Allyn provided some background noting in 1994 the Town acquired 480R Shewville Road for \$275,000 for the purpose to provide a Public Water Supply specifically to the Highlands. He stated a small 1,800 square foot steel building was built on the property and the water operation was set-up. He stated around 2015, the Water Pollution Control Authority entered into an Agreement with Groton Utilities to provide public water; and the Loftus Wellfield was abandoned and the 11.5+/- acre parcel became surplus property for the town.

Mayor Allyn stated in April, 2023 he expressed concern to the Town Attorney regarding the restrictive covenant and the right-of-way. He noted the Town Attorney spent 11.8 hours studying Connecticut General Statutes and Connecticut Laws regarding restrictive covenants; which stated the property could be used for the sole purpose of constructing and maintaining municipal water well sites and related equipment, machinery, structures and piping utilities. He stated the Town Attorney explained that because the Town went into the Agreement knowingly and eyes wide open with that restrictive language in place that the easement and the restrictive covenant stands.

Mayor Allyn continued by stating that because they no longer have a municipal well supply on the parcel, they currently do not have a usable right to that property. He also explained that 480R Shewville Road does not have frontage, noting that it had a right-of-way over other property. Therefore, he stated even if the restrictive covenant was removed that not having any frontage also posed an issue.

Mayor Allyn went on to explain in 2024 Julie Loftus, who was one of the original family members of the Loftus Family Farm located at 482 Shewville Road, visited his Office, to express her family's interest to re-acquire 480R Shewville Road, which is about 11.5+/- acres. He stated because of the restrictive covenants, that he thought the fair and right thing to do was to allocate the property back to the Loftus Family Farm through a sale.

Mayor Allyn proceeded to explain that Kevin Blacker, who is from Groton, and was farming the Loftus Farm was the individual who came forward with an offer, noting that Mr. Blacker's offer to purchase the town-owned surplus property located at 480R Shewville Road, was attached to the Agenda packet on the meeting portal. Mayor Allyn stated he fully supported the sale of the property to Mr. Blacker because it was not only town- surplus property, it was unusable surplus property, and since it has been vacant for so many years it has become an attractive nuisance; noting it was just a matter of time before vagrants and kids might get into the property. Therefore, he stated by selling the 11.5+/- acre parcel that it would provide value to the Loftus Family by way of Kevin Blacker continuing to farm the property; noting the property was of no value to the Town of Ledyard at this point. He stated there was only one way to remove the restrictive covenant, which was to sell the property back to the original conveyor. Therefore, he stated that he supported this proposal.

Councilor Buhle stated tonight's Motion was to sell the Loftus Wellfield property to Mr. Blacker not to the Loftus Family. Mayor Allyn stated that Councilor Buhle was correct, however, he explained that Mr. Blacker has an Agreement with the Loftus Family, noting that he did not know the terms of their Agreement.

Mr. Kevin Blacker, 11 Church Street, Noank, provided some background noting during college he studied soil science, and worked in a family business with his father. He stated after college, he began farming in a small way, and continued to expand his farming interests on rented property located in Ledyard, Stonington, and North Stonington, noting that he has been renting land at the Loftus Family Farm since 2017. He stated he owned his own farming equipment and has been farming for about 22 years, noting that he has raised beef cattle for about a dozen years; cut a hay; and other types of farming activities.

Mr. Blacker stated after Bill Loftus passed away, Julie Loftus has been cutting the hay. He stated since 2017 he has tried to purchase the Loftus Family Farm; however, he stated for financial reasons he was not able to purchase the property alone. He stated after working with the Loftus Family, Julie, Bill's brother Robert, and his sons Matt and Christopher they developed a plan in which he and Juile would purchase the Loftus Farm. He explained that Julie bought the property on one side of Shewville Road and he along with his wife and uncle bought the Loftus property on the other side of the Shewville Road, which was the 38-ace parcel from which the 11.5+/- acre was cut out of for the Loftus Wellfield.

Mr. Blacker provided some additional information noting that he and his sister have under contract and were working to purchase 46-acres from Rick and Deb Morgan, noting that Mr. and Mrs. Morgan previously sold the Development Rights on the majority of their farm; and that there was an additional 46-acre parcel where the Development Rights were left intact. He explained that his intention was to sell the Development Rights, meaning that it would be preserved for farming only, on all of this land to either to the State of Connecticut or to the American Connecticut Farmland Trust to permanently preserve the property for farming purposes only. He stated his interest to purchase the 11.5+/- acres (fka Loftus Wellfield) was to put it back together with the Loftus Farm, noting that they have been able to use the building to store hay. He stated Julie Loftus, Robert Loftus, and Rick Morgan were all willing to provide letters of support to sell 480R Shewville Road to him. He noted that he has consulted with an attorney regarding the restrictive covenant, explaining that the covenant could be released if the heirs of the original grantors, and the owners of the remainder property supported removing the covenant.

Mayor Allyn noted the information Mr. Blacker provided this evening was helpful because one of the other things they discussed was the abutting property. He noted as Mr. Blacker mentioned, Rick Morgan's property abutted the 11.5+/- 480R parcel, noting that the former Loftus Wellfield property crosses over the Williams Brook and that Mr. Blacker would also be acquiring Brook as well. He stated because Mr. Blacker would be acquiring Williams Brook he would affectively be the abutter all the way around. Councilor Ryan asked Mr. Blacker to expand on his intent to sell the Development Rights of the property.

Mr. Blacker explained the State of Connecticut would pay the landowner to place a permanent deed restriction on the a parcel. He stated this Program was a way for the landowner to get money out of the property in exchange for selling the Right to Develop their property. He stated the money would be helpful and it would also protect the farmland. He commented on the ability to protect the view of the scenic beauty of that valley and to ensure land would be farmed by future generations noting that this was something that he want to do; and was something Rick Morgan did. He stated the Connecticut Farmland Trust was another option for selling the Development Rights. He noted that he made the following two offers to purchase 480R Shewville Road \$150,000 and \$100,000 with the cavate that he would donate the rights to the 11.5+/- acre property to the American Farmland Trust; so the property could never be developed. He also noted that the State of Connecticut had a new Commissioner of Department of Agriculture.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry addressed the removal of the restrictive covenant; noting that Mr. Blacker consulted with an attorney regarding the restrictive covenant, who said the covenant could be released if the heirs of the original grantors, and the owners of the remainder property supported removing the covenant. Therefore, she questioned whether the town has received a legal opinion that verified the removal of the covenant.

Mayor Allyn stated during their discussion that Mr. Blacker provided his attorney's contact information. He went on to note after their discussion that he contacted the town's Attorney Matt Ritter who explained that if the Loftus Family was on-board with removing the covenant that they could remove it. He explained essentially the Loftus Family had full control of the property noting that they could choose to release the restrictive covenant for the right party; i.e. Kevin Blacker; or not release the covenant

for anybody else. He noted Attorney Ritter stated that they could work with the buyer's attorney to draft the proper language to remove the restrictive covenant from the deed.

Councilor Garica-Irizarry noted the town has not received any other offers to purchase 480R Shewville Road. Mayor Allyn stated based on the restrictive covenant and easement he did not see the town receiving any other offers to purchase the property.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated Mr. Blacker's offer was \$56,000 less than the appraised value listed on the Tax Assessment Card. Councilor Buhle stated in looking at the Tax Assessor Card that \$88,300 of the appraised value was for the Pump House that was on the property. She stated the pump house was deteriorating, noting that Mr. Blacker was not purchasing the former Loftus Wellfield property for the pump house, stating at this point no one was getting any value from the pump house. She stated the land was appraised at \$117,800. She stated because of the restrictive covenant and no right-of-way the only person that would want to buy this parcel was someone who had access to the property. She stated even if the town listed the property to find other buyers that if they cannot access the property it was of no value.

Councilor Buhle stated when the Town purchased the property in 1994 for \$275,000 that was the value at the time based on the needed use. However, she stated the town no longer had a need for the use of the parcel.

Councilor Ryan noted for clarification that the Tax Card attached to the Agenda packet on the meeting portal was not the most current tax card. He stated the Reassessed Value was just slightly more; noting that it was about \$215,000 in total; with \$125,000 for the land value.

Chairman St. Vil, attending remotely via Zoom, questioned the rationale behind Mr. Blacker's two offers to purchase 480R Shewville Road: (1) \$150,000; and (2) \$100,000. Mr. Blacker explained the rationale was that if he purchased the parcel for \$100,000 that he would donate the rights to the 11.5+/- acre property to the American Farmland Trust; so the property could never be developed. He stated that he was not trying to get one over on the town, noting that he thought he would give it a shot and present an offer, noting that he wanted to pay what the property was worth. However, he stated that he would be interested to see if the appraisals on the paper accurately match the condition of the building.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated she understood they have to take in consideration the use and condition of the building. However, she stated based on the 2025 Revaluation the property located at 480R Shewville Road was now appraised at 215,000; therefore, the town was losing. \$65,000. She noted that her concern was the \$65,000, could be used to conduct one of the needed studies for the town.

Mayor Allyn explained when the Appraisal Company conducts the revaluation that they do not spend any time appraising town-owned property, because the value does not matter to the town, noting that the town was not going to be collecting taxes on their own property. He stated as an example the Town Hall may have an appraised value of \$3 million; however, he rhetorically questioned whether the Town Hall was really worth \$3 million. He explained this was an assessor's valuation, but not an appraisal, noting

that they were vastly different. He went on to state that he wanted to reiterate that the valuation of 480R Shewville Road was based on its prior use as a Municipal Water Supply Company, which was no longer the use of the property. He stated that he personally had 22 years in the real estate business, including commercial real estate; and that he would say Mr. Blacker's offer was a very fair proposal for both the town and for Mr. Blacker.

Councilor Buhle stated that she did not have any experience as a real estate agent. However, she stated that it was her understanding the town was not going to post 480R Shewville Road on *Realtor.com* and get bidders, noting that it was never going to happen. She stated this was a fantastic opportunity for Mr. Blacker to continue farming in Ledyard; and for the town to move away from a property that they no longer needed to be liable for.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated that \$150,000 would help the town do a lot of things. She stated as Councilor Buhle stated that she was also not a real estate agent, which was the reason she was asking these questions.

Mayor Allyn stated explained the sale of 840R Shewville Road was like offering a house for sale in which they could not use the bathrooms. He stated because of the restricted covenants the property was of no value to just anyone. Finance Director Matthew Bonin noted under town ownership the property was not on the tax rolls.

Councilor Ryan thanked Mayor Allyn for verifying the amount of the time spent to reassess town-owned land. He went on to state the only reason he brought up the reassessed appraisal was to point out that even with the reassessed value the land did not increase much, noting that the appraised value of the land was below Mr. Blacker's offer. He stated to say this another way, that Mr. Blacker's offers were higher than the land value.

Administrative Assistant Roxanne provided an overview of the process to sell town-owned property, noting that the sale of 480R Shewville Road would go to the Land Use/Planning/Public Works Committee. She noted in accordance with CGS 7-163e a Public Hearing was required and that it would also be presented to the townspeople at a Special Town Meeting where the townspeople would vote to approve or not approve the sale of the surplus property. Mayor Allyn added that this would also go to the Planning & Zoning Commission to conduct an 8-24 Review.

VOTE:

3- 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED TO RECOMMEND 3 – 0

MOVER: Carmen Garcia-Irizarry, Town Councilor

SECONDER: Tim Ryan, Town Councilor

AYES: Jessica Buhle, Carmen Garcia-Irizarry, Tim Ryan

The Finance Committee thanked Mr. Blacker for attending tonight's meeting.

3. MOTION to recommend the Town Council to authorize the Mayor to enter into a Listing Agreement with a Realtor to list 89 Town Farm Road for sale.
Moved by Councilor, seconded by Councilor
Discussion: Mayor Allyn, III provided some background noting that 89 Town Farm

Road was a 8.2-acre town property that they have owned since May 3, 1895. He stated about 4.6-acres of the parcel was upland, noting after they take out the wetlands and flood plain; the parcel was about 4.6-acreas, which was subject to field location.

Mayor Allyn stated in 2025 Mr. Bliven and his son-in-law Mr. Luiz Ortiz-Perez approached the Town to express their interest to purchase 89 Town Farm Road, noting that Mr. Bliven's property located at 615 Shewville Road was adjacent to 89 Town Farm Road. He noted that he recommended they meet with the Land Director to discuss the potential use of the property because it had a flood plain and wetlands. He stated in a letter dated February 17, 2026 Mr. Ortiz-Perez expressed interest in building a home on the property.

Mayor Allyn went on to note when the town sold 332 Colonel Ledyard Highway, which was also a town-owned surplus property, it was listed with a realtor to get the highest and best offer; unlike the property they discussed during New Business Item #2 (see above) it does not have a highly restricted covenant. He stated that he explained to Mr. Bliven and Mr. Ortiz-Perez that should the Finance Committee and Town Council be interested in selling 89 Town Farm Road the town would use the same process to list the property for sale with a realtor, noting that Mr. Bliven and Mr. Ortez-Perez understood.

Councilor Ryan requested clarification noting that the Planning & Zoning Commission would conduct an 8-24 Review before the town would sell of 89 Town Farm Road. Mayor Allyn stated that Councilor Ryan's understanding was correct; and he explained the process noting that once the Town received an offer it would be referred to the Land Use/Planning/Public Works Committee. He stated with the Land Use/Planning/Public Works Committee's recommendation that the property would then go through the formal process.

Administrative Assistant Roxanne provided an overview of the process to sell town-owned property, noting that should the Finance Committee approve this request to list 89 Town Farm Road with a realtor that the Motion would be included on the Town Council's June 10, 2026 Agenda. She stated once the town received offers that the process would continue as described during New Business Item #2 (see above).

Councilor Buhle questioned who had Administrative Control of 89 Town Farm Road. Mayor Allyn stated although he did not have the Administrative Control List with him this evening, that he did not think the property had been assigned. Councilor Buhle noted 89 Town Farm Road was listed in the Town's Land Records in Book #8; page 1; and it was Zoned R60. Therefore, she questioned whether they anticipated a Developer being interested in purchasing the 8.2 -acre parcel.

Mayor Allyn responded to Councilor Buhle stating that it was a possible that a Developer may be interested in purchasing 89 Town Farm Road, explaining that about 4.5-acres appear to be useable. He stated at that point the Finance Committee and Town Council would have to look at the offers based on the use, noting as an example that one offer may say they were going to build five houses on the property; while another offer

may say they were going to build one house. Councilor Buhle expressed concern that an offer may say they wanted to build one house and then after they owned the property they subdivided for more houses. Mayor Allyn stated if the Town Council felt that it was appropriate the Town could impose a restriction, similar to what they discussed during New Business Item #2 (see above); noting the restriction would be included in the deed and would say whatever restriction they choose.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated the town owned many properties in town. Therefore, she questioned why they decided to sell 89 Town Farm Road now. Mayor Allyn stated that the reason the Town was considering selling 89 Town Farm Road at this time was because the neighboring property owner approached the town and expressed their interest in purchasing the property. He stated since this parcel was brought to his attention that he has started to look at other town-owned properties to determine: (1) Whether it made sense to sell the properties to become someone's home; or (2) Whether it made sense for the parcel to remain as open space because it was adjacent to a trail; or to Avalonia Land Conservancy property, etc. He stated 89 Town Farm Road did not tie into any open space, etc.

Councilor Buhle noted the town also owned a property across the street from 89 Town Farm Road. Mayor Allyn stated the property across the street was the Wastewater Treatment Facility.

VOTE: 3- 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVED TO RECOMMEND 3 – 0
MOVER: Carmen Garcia-Irizarry, Town Councilor
SECONDER: Tim Ryan, Town Councilor
AYES: Jessica Buhle, Carmen Garcia-Irizarry, Tim Ryan

4. Any other New Business proper to come before the Committee. – None.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry moved the meeting be adjourned, seconded by Councilor Buhle
VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared, the meeting was adjourned at 6:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Buhle.
Committee Chairman
Finance Committee