



TOWN OF LEDYARD
CONNECTICUT
TOWN COUNCIL

Chairman S. Naomi Rodriguez

MINUTES
LEDYARD TOWN COUNCIL – REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, MAY 22, 2024; 7:00 PM
HYBRID FORMAT
VIDEO CONFERENCE VIA ZOOM

DRAFT

- I. CALL TO ORDER – Chairman Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. at the Council Chambers, Town Hall Annex Building.

Chairman Rodriguez welcomed all to the Hybrid Meeting. She 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
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
Gary Paul	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
S. Naomi Rodriguez	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
Tim Ryan	Town Councilor	Excused	
Tony Saccone	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
Gary St. Vil	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person

- IV. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS/PRESENTATIONS

Chairman Rodriguez noted that Director of Planning & Land Use Elizabeth Burdick was present this evening to introduce herself to the Town Council and the Community.

Ms. Elizabeth Burdick thanked Chairman Rodriguez for giving her a few minutes to introduce herself to the Town Council and to the community as Ledyard's new (and former) Director of Planning & Land Use.

Ms. Burdick began by noting that she lived in New London, Connecticut, where she raised her two now adult sons and where many of her immediate and extended family were raised and still reside. She stated that she grew up in a small town in Connecticut and was the oldest of six children, which taught her to manage chaos. She stated in her free time, that she was an avid hiker in both New England & the West, she practiced yoga, enjoyed long rides on her road bike, relaxing at the beach, and she reads books every day.

Ms. Burdick continued by addressing her education, training and experience, stating that she had twenty-seven years of experience in land use planning & zoning, project compliance permitting & management both in the office and in the field. She noted since 1997 to Present that she has continued her land use education in various subjects, and she had the following Certifications:

- CAZEO Certification (1997-1999) - Connecticut Association of Zoning Enforcement Officers at University of Connecticut School of Professional Development.
- IWWC Agent Certification - State of Connecticut DEEP 2003; and she has continued her education since that time.
- ArcView GIS Certification - Marin Environmental, East Haddam, CT 1999.
- Certified CDBG 101 Sub-Grantee Grant Administrator Program, CT DOH 2019 and has renewed her Certification. Ms. Burdick explained that this Certification was through the

Department of Housing. Ms. Burdick explained to manage grants that the Town had to have someone who was certified as a Grant Manager.

- Litigation Paralegal Certification - University of Connecticut School of Professional Development at UCONN Law School, Hartford, CT 1995-1996. Ms. Burdick stated she had experience working for Attorneys, stating that this experience was helpful when she began her career as a Development Planning Technician in 1997. She stated over the next twenty years that she worked long hard hours to obtain her goal as a Director of Planning & Land Use Department.

Ms. Burdick reviewed her Professional and Personal Affiliations as follows:

- Member - Connecticut Association of Zoning Enforcement Officers (CAZEO); Member American Planning Association (APA) (CT Chapter).
- Past Regular Member - New London Conservation, Inland Wetlands & Watercourses and Street Tree Commission (Chairwoman - 2004 to 2010, Secretary/Vice-Chair, 2010 to 2015).
- Governor Lamont 2022 Appointee — Town Planner for State of Connecticut Mobile Manufactured Home Advisory Council. Ms. Burdick stated that she was subsequently appointed as Council Chairman in September 2023; and that she remained an active member of the State Council. She noted the State Council required an extensive background check to be appointed to these positions.

Ms. Burdick went on to note in serving as a Zoning Official that one of her Land Use Decisions “*Bruce Cady v. Zoning Board of Appeals of the Town of Burlington Et Al (SC 2001 1)*” was upheld by the Connecticut Supreme Court on December 11, 2018. She stated the Supreme Court overruled two lower courts and found in her favor, stating that the Zoning Official made the right decision.

Ms. Burdick continued by stating that most importantly was her experience in Ledyard. She stated that she served as the Director of Land Use & Planning for Ledyard from April 2018 to June 2021, when she left to relocate out of state. She stated during her tenure that she felt that she developed good relationships with Elected Officials, Town Staff, and members of the public; and that she hoped those relationships would carry on into her current time in Ledyard.

Ms. Burdick stated during her time in Ledyard, she successfully assisted the Town in obtaining grant funding which including the following:

- STEAP funding for the Ledyard Town Green renovations (Upgrading all the Pavilions, adding picnic tables, and other improvements, etc.).
- LOTCIP funding for the Multi-Use Pathway on Colonel Ledyard Highway from the High School to Ledyard Center; where the Ledyard Center Sewer Project extension was being incorporated into that project.
- Secured \$2 million in Grant Funding from the Department of Housing (DOH), and Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) for the renovations at the Kings Corner Manor Senior Citizens Housing Facility, working with Mayor Allyn, III and Ledyard Housing Director Colleen Lauer. She stated this was one of her favorite initiatives because it really needed to be done.
- Worked on the solar projects for the schools and at the WPCA site.
- Managed a multitude of Planning & Zoning and Inland Wetland and Watercourses development applications, including updating the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD).

- Participated in the Capital Improvement Budgeting processes.
- Managed the Land Use Department and its great staff.

Ms. Burdick stated that she was thrilled to have the opportunity to return to Ledyard and continue to do good work for the Town. She stated that she believed that she was a competent, experienced land use professional, and that she hoped that the Town and its elected and appointed officials and its residents would give her a chance to show that once again. She stated that she was happy to be back in Ledyard. She stated that she only recognized a few faces on the Town Council, and therefore, she wanted to introduce herself, noting that her door was always open, and that they could also email or call her anytime. She again thanked the Town Council for the opportunity to address them this evening.

Chairman Rodriguez stated that Ms. Burdick was nice enough to meet with her prior to tonight's meeting. She thanked Ms. Burdick for attending tonight's meeting, noting that she had a long list of accomplishments. She welcomed Ms. Burdick back to Ledyard.

V. RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS

Chairman Rodriguez stated before she opened the floor to resident comments that she would like to call on Mrs. Amy Hammer to come to the podium. She explained with the receipt of State Senator Cathy Osten's May 10, 2024 letter concerning tax relief for Mrs. Hammer, who was a Gold Star family, that she contacted Mrs. Hammer. She stated in speaking with Mrs. Hammer that she invited her to attend tonight's Town Council meeting.

Mrs. Amy Hammer, 39 Ash Drive, Ledyard, stated that she was a Gold Star Widow, and she questioned the reason the Town of Ledyard did not offer property tax relief to Gold Star Spouses, noting that other area towns offered tax relief. She stated if the taxes continue to go up that she would have to consider moving away.

Chairman Rodriguez thanked Mrs. Hammer for reaching out to State Senator Cathy Osten and Congressman Joe Courtney and for coming tonight to speak to the Town Council. She stated Connecticut adopted Public Act #17-65 "*An Act Concerning a Municipal Option Property Tax Exemption for Gold Star Parents and Spouses*" in 2017; and she referred the request for a property tax exemption for Gold Star Parents and Spouses to the Town Council's Administration Committee.

Chairman Rodriguez continued by stating that she would like to thank Mrs. Hammer for her service as a military spouse, noting that this Town Council acknowledges that it was not easy. She stated Mrs. Hammer's husband not only served his country well, that he gave the ultimate sacrifice for his country, noting that he is a true Hero. Chairman Rodriguez noted that her grandparents were Gold Star parents who loved their son very much stating that their pain and grief was overwhelming. She concluded by stating that she applauded Mrs. Hammer for having the courage to come forward and address the Town Council this evening, stating that it was the least the Town of Ledyard could do for their heroes who have given the ultimate sacrifice for their country. She stated the Administration Committee's next meeting was scheduled for June 12, 2024.

Mr. Ed Murray, 26 Devonshire Drive, Gales Ferry, stated that there were a few residents who were being the spokesperson for a number of folks who had questions and concerns about their town. He stated many residents have been involved with the Cashman Quarry Application in Gales Ferry, noting that this experience has given them a better understanding of what each of the Town Committees were responsible for and the role they should be playing in their town. He stated when residents make a decision to move to Ledyard, they invest in their homes, they raise their families, they live amongst people who have the same general desire to live in a residential neighborhood that they all share. He stated the lifestyle that they enjoy would become the core value for all other things that they do. He stated he did not think anyone of them thought it was a good idea to blow up rocks next to their house. He stated they needed to look at everything they do from the standpoint of making sure it upholds the lifestyle they want to maintain. He stated Ledyard was a small town, noting that they hear

rumors and innuendo; but what they wanted to hear was the truth. He stated the electors have given the Town Council these positions to be the caretakers for the next two-years. He stated their responsibility was to make sure that the ordinances, statutes, and regulations were held to the ultimate point of their existence, noting that they understand Elected Officials have tough job. He stated it was not only the few people who were going to stand at the podium this evening that had this issue. He stated to get a sense of how many people have raised these questions that they should think back to the last Public Hearing that was held on April 11, 2024 at the Middle School and all of the other people who attended all of the other Public Hearings over the last year or two. He stated they were all concerned and that they were going to ask hard questions. He stated that they were asking that their Elected Officials fulfill the role that they were asked to do; which was to tell them the truth.

Chairman Rodriguez noted that she also wanted to thank Mrs. Meaghan Durocher for being a Military Spouse and for the sacrifice her husband gave to our country, noting that she was a Gold Star Spouse with two children. She thanked Mrs. Durocher for her letter dated May 21, 2024, noting that it would be included on the Town Council's Communications List.

Ms. Ann Roberts-Pierson, 4 Anderson Drive, Gales Ferry, thanked the members of the Town Council for their service to the Town. She began her comments by quoting Thomas Murtin as follows: *"Heroes of our time are the people who quietly go about keeping their promises and offering their best to one another who are holding the world together. A force like gravity that is so basic that we are largely unaware."* Ms. Roberts-Pierson commented may we all be such a basic force.

Ms. Roberts-Pierson continued by stating her topic this evening was the firing of Town Planner Juliet Hodge on April 25, 2024 by Mayor Allyn, III. She stated the firing was abrupt, outrageous, irresponsible, cowardly, and reckless. He stated many people were concerned as was shown by the public comment at the May Town Council Subcommittee meetings; as well as seen in the eloquent letter dated May 1, 2024 from Mr. & Mrs. Graham listed on tonight's Communications List.

Ms. Roberts-Pierson continued by stating the workload for the Planning & Zoning Commission was large as witnessed at the Planning Zoning Commission May 9, 2024 Meeting, noting that paid staff was lacking. She thanked Director of Planning & Land Use, Ms. Burdick for introducing herself to the Town Council and the residents who were present this evening. She stated the Planning & Zoning Office needed to be up-to-speed with all of the Land Use Applications that were coming in, and they needed a whole team working diligently on what was likely the most complex and controversial Application the Town has received, that being the proposed Quarry Application in Gales Ferry. She stated the Exhibit Record was extensive for the first Public Hearing regarding the Application, which was withdrawn. She stated the current Re-Application was larger. She stated former Planner Juliet Hodge worked diligently to uphold Ledyard's Zoning Regulations for all of us. She stated that Ms. Hodge was dedicated, knowledgeable, and courteous.

Ms. Roberts-Pierson recommended the following:

- (1) Rehire Juliet Hodge immediately.
- (2) An investigation by the Town Council into why Ms. Hodge was let go. Ms. Roberts-Pierson questioned should the Town Council decide to take up such an investigation, how could residents follow-up on the Town Council's activities.

Chairman Rodriguez responded to Ms. Roberts-Pierson explaining the Town Council would need to vote to take on the investigation, noting that this was a personnel and human resources matter.

Ms. Roberts-Pierson stated that she would be presenting a letter from numerous citizens noting that the letter was very clear.

- (3) A Moratorium on all Land Use Application should be put into place until the Land Use Office was fully staffed and up-to-speed.
- (4) Create an Ethics Commission in 2024.

Ms. Roberts-Pierson asked whether the Town Council had any questions. She stated hearing none, Thank you.

Mr. Carlo Porazzi, 30 Chapman Lane, Gales Ferry, stated that he wanted to follow his fellow constituents in commenting on the Gales Ferry Intermodal (GFI) Application and other Applications forthcoming. He stated there were concerns regarding the previous GFI Application with regard to the blasting aspect; stating that blasting was prohibited. He stated Groton Utilities and the Water Pollution Control Authority (WPCA) also noted concerns; and they were hoping that the Town Council and the Planning & Zoning Commission would look at the concerns and carry them forward.

Mr. Porazzi continued by stating in the new Gales Ferry Intermodal (GFI) Application that the Applicant stated that the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission did not need to be considered because the previous Application was approved. He noted because the new Application had data points that were not in the previous Application they were hoping the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission would be consulted on the new Application.

Mr. Porazzi stated that it was his understanding that the Planning & Zoning Commission was allowed to hire outside expertise in certain complex matters, and he stated that he hoped this would continue and would be expanded stating the Town was up against some complex Applications. He stated that town and their residents needed experts funded by the Applicants to make sure they were getting the right information and that they were not being fed from Applicants who were well-funded. He stated the Zoning Regulations specifically state: *“Uses that were not called or spoken to, were prohibited.”* He stated pretending that blasting, quarrying, and rock crushing were allowed in tranquil neighborhoods does not make it so. He stated just because a property was Zoned Industrial does not open the door to wholesale uses and the destruction of the equity in health of adjacent neighborhoods. He stated that all Ledyard’s Zoning Regulations allowed for was excavation. He stated it was time the Town Council weighed-in on this important point and put an end to pretending that a rock quarry somehow equated to a simple excavation. He stated that the Planning & Zoning Commission should rule on this point and avoid the expense and imposition on the citizens for an extended series of Public Hearings. He stated the Town Council should make it clear that they would stand behind the Planning & Zoning Commission.

Mr. Porazzi stated the Elected Officials and appointed Commission Members serving on Boards and Commissions were volunteers noting that they were caught in the middle between the public who looked to them for protection; and what could only be described as a serious of abusive proposals that do not treat the residents fairly. He stated being part of the last GFI Application that he and his constituents do not have confidence that any compliance mandates put forward by the Planning & Zoning Commission or the Town Council would be able to be followed, which would leave them in a bad situation. He stated all neighborhoods matter regardless of where they were located, and he commented that the problem of abusive development was not confined to Gales Ferry, noting that it has continued across this town and others. He stated that they looked to them to fulfill their responsibilities, and to ensure that the town’s charter, ordinances, and regulations were upheld, as well as relevant state statutes. He stated that Ledyard was also obligated to ensure that enforcement and the provisions of the Clean Water Act delegated to them by the State to ensure that the waters in the United States on the western boarder remain protected. He stated inaction by the Town Council would allow bad actors to turn the Ledyard they know and enjoy into something far different, leaving them to clean up the mess. He stated in closing that not following the law leads to anarchy; not following the rules leads to chaos; and not following the regulations leads to abuse. Thank you.

Mr. Alan Burton, 166 Gallup Hill Road, Ledyard, stated that this town needed to work on communication. He stated on Thursday, May 16, 2024 he called the Mayor’s Office, noting that although the Mayor was on vacation, he left a message regarding a tree that came down while he was driving behind the High School. He stated the tree almost hit him and he almost hit another on-coming vehicle. He stated as of today, he had not received a call back. He stated that he later stopped by Town Hall, but the Mayor was out, noting that it was budget time and that he understood that the Mayor was busy. He stated he then stopped by the

Highway Garage, noting that their telephone was down because they were making improvements to the building. He stated in talking with the six employees who were there he was told that they do not deal with trees. However, he stated that the first thing they should have done was take his name and number and tell him that they would refer his issue to Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin. He stated when he later stopped by Mr. Masalin's Office that Mr. Masalin told him that he did not have the time or budget to address trees that were not on town property. Mr. Burton stated the trees that were of concern were hanging over the road, they were breaking and falling down, and they were a safety hazard. He questioned:

- Who was responsible for the dead trees that overhang the roads.
- Who would be liable if he had hit the other car that had two kids in it because of a falling tree.

Mayor Allyn, III, stated he understood that Mr. Burton visited Town Hall, noting that he referred Mr. Burton's concerns to Mr. Masalin who is the Town's Tree Warden and also the Public Works Director and Town Engineer. Mayor Allyn stated that he spoke to Mr. Masalin who said that he spoke to Mr. Burton about the trees. He stated that Mr. Masalin mentioned the trees that were of concern were not in the town's right-of-way. He stated the town has cleared 90% of the main road canopies, explaining that the town does not have the right to enter into private property.

Mr. Burton provided a list of 53 Potential Accidents waiting to happen on seven roads in town because they were not removing the trees that were falling down. He stated that he would do the rest of the town and bring the list to the next Town Council meeting (June 12, 2024). Mayor Allyn questioned whether any of the roads were State Roads. Mr. Burton stated the list he provided this evening were all town roads. Mayor Allyn stated the town worked in conjunction with Lucas Trees Company, who was a subcontractor for Eversource, noting that they cleared hundreds upon hundreds of dead Oak Trees that were damaged by the Gypsy Moths, and the Emerald Ash Bores. However, he explained that the reality was that the town was not going to be in-charge of cutting trees down on private property. He stated property owners have to have ownership responsibility of their property. Mr. Burton stated if the tree was over a town road that it was the town's responsibility because it was a hazard. Mayor Allyn stated if the tree comes into the road, that Mr. Burton was correct. Mr. Burton stated that he was going to do every road in town and send the list to the State.

Mrs. Eleanor Murray, 26 Devonshire Drive, Gales Ferry, stated that she previously lived on Chapman Lane, which was on the other side of Mount Decatur. She stated that she had planned to have a party for Commodore Decatur to celebrate that Ledyard had a historic figure in their town. However, she stated Cashman put a kibosh on that plan, noting that when she found out there was going to be blasts 6 hours a day-6 days a week, for ten years, that she made up her mind that she was going to have to leave her beautiful home, that she searched 6-months to find when she moved to Ledyard from New York State. She stated she had to find another place to live, noting that she loved her new home on Devonshire Drive, stating it was a beautiful home in a great neighborhood. However, she stated that she should not have had to move, noting that other people may like to move, but may not be able to move, stating that Cashman was changing their town.

Mrs. Murray went on to state that Cashman made four changes to their Application noting that it went from 300-pages to 600-pages; and that Juliet Hodge learned the Application. She stated that they had a wrongful termination in this town, stating that Juliet Hodge should not be gone. She stated Juliet Hodge worked to help them get rid of Cashman, and that Ms. Hodge could do it again. She stated they were going to need to have more Public Hearings and that they were going to have to stop them. She stated although Cashman could not be stopped entirely, that they were going to have to try to mitigate it. She stated that Cashman would be spewing carcinogens around town, and they were going to wreck our river, noting that they wanted to put the aggregate up the river instead of down Route 12, because so many people said not to put it down Route 12.

Mrs. Murray continued by stating members of the Town Council were supposed to serve as Liaisons and go to the various Committee and Board Meetings and report back to the Town Council. She stated it was a great plan when they did it, however, it was not always being done and meetings were being missed. She stated that Committees were being told that their meetings could be recorded, except that they would need to borrow audio equipment from the town. She stated that she could guarantee that they were not checking to see if the audio equipment could be borrowed. She also noted that the Housing Authority was planning to redo the Lease language, noting in five-years the lease went from 4-pages to 11-pages, and then to 22-pages, and that she expected that the Lease would go to 30-pages. She stated that she would like to know if the Housing Authority Liaison could start going to the meetings again to look at what was going on there; noting that she was not going to the Housing Authority Meetings anymore. She stated that she was happy the members of the Town Council were in their positions, noting that she knew that they wanted to make good changes, and that they have already made some changes. She thanked the Town Council for their time.

Ms. Deborah Edwards, 30 Bluff Road West, Gales Ferry, attending remotely, stated that she wanted to follow-up on the resident's comment requesting the town create an Ethics Commission. She stated that she has reviewed past minutes and the Town Charter, noting that the last time an Ethics Commission was discussed was about 15-years ago. However, she stated at that time it was decided that Ledyard did not need an Ethics Commission, because they had good people. She stated that things have changed in the past 15-years and that she believed that there were conflicts of interest and ethics violations. She stated it would do their town good to have an Ethics Commission to look into these types of things and to have a place where residents could go.

Chairman Rodriguez stated that she would refer the comment regarding an Ethics Commission to the Administration Committee.

Chairman Rodriguez thanked all of the residents for their comments this evening.

IV. COMMITTEE COMMISSION AND BOARD REPORTS – None.

VI. COMMENTS OF TOWN COUNCILORS

Chairman Rodriguez addressed the following: (1) Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget – Chairman Rodriguez noted that the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 budget passed yesterday; and she thanked everyone who took the time to vote, share information, and speak at the numerous workshops and meetings over the past months. She thanked the Town Council, Board of Education members, Mayor Allyn, III, School Superintendent Hartling, Department Heads and staff members who worked tirelessly on the budget. She stated like every other before, the Annual Budget was the result of hours and hours of work by many people. She stated yesterday's Budget Referendum result was a strong message in-favor of that work and its goals: “*A well-run town and top-notch schools*”. She stated Ledyard's budget process was a year-round effort, so the work continues. She encouraged residents to sign up at ledyardct.org to receive meeting notifications via **Notify Me** on the Town's website and follow along as your town government puts your tax dollars to work; (2) Memorial Day Parade Sunday, May 26, 2024 - Chairman Rodriguez stated Administrative Assistant Roxanne Maher sent an email for Elected Officials to meet at the Christmas tree; (3) Ledyard Prevention Coalition – Chairman Rodriguez stated the Drug Take Back Day was successful noting that 40-pounds of unused medications were dropped off at the Senior Citizens Center on Van Tassel Drive, Gales Ferry. She continued by reporting that the Naloxone (Narcan) Overdose Emergency Kits have been installed at the Upper Town Green in Ledyard Center and at the Gales Ferry Community Center parking lot. She thanked Parks & Recreation for installing the Overdose Emergency Kits which contained Narcan, Fentanyl Test Strips, and a Resource Card to seek help.

Councilor Brunelle thanked the Ledyard Center Fire Company for inviting the Town Council to their Annual Awards Ceromony. She noted that she and Councilor Saccone attended the event stating that it was a nice gathering, and good to see the young people volunteering to serve their community.

Councilor Saccone stated he was retired from the New London-Groton Submarine Base as a civilian; and that he wanted to recognize that today was the 80th Anniversary of the loss of the Scorpion, noting that the second submarine named the Scorpion was lost in 1968. He stated they lost community members and two submarines with the same name stating that he wanted to bring awareness to their remembrance.

Councilor Dombrowski stated with the warmer weather people were out walking, and riding bicycles, and he reminded motorists to take notice of the pedestrians and to be careful. He went on to note as former Councilor Steve Eichelberg use to say, that the motorcyclists were also out. He asked that motorists use care and try to give the pedestrians a wide berth on the roads, but to also be mindful not to cross over the yellow line if someone was coming from the other direction.

Councilor St. Vil stated he was raised with the philosophy to face the facts, commenting that the passion they heard from their constituents this evening was powerful. He noted the following two points: (1) They were elected by the residents of the town; and he stated from his personal conversations with members of the Town Council that they all take their responsibilities seriously. He stated as volunteers they were doing their best to collectively determine the best outcome for the town; and (2) The best way for them to do their job on behalf of the town was to have a robust understanding of the state statutes and regulations. He stated that he has been the subject of decisions that have not gone his way, noting that it did not feel good. However, he stated it made him feel better when he felt a part of the team and when he understood that the decision was based on facts. He stated the challenge he would take away from tonight's meeting was to get a better understanding of the State Statutes and a better understanding of the Town Charter. He stated that he knew that there were members of this Town Council that have done that in the past and that they would continue to do so. He concluded by stating that he wanted to verbalize this commitment to their constituents and the members of their community.

Councilor Buhle announced the following: (1) June 8, 2028 - Harvard-Yale Regatta 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. This was the oldest intercollegiate sporting event in the United States, and Ledyard was fortunate to be home to the event. Councilor Buhle stated the Regatta Day Festival celebrates the sporting event, along with many of their local businesses, noting that Councilor Paul does an amazing job with setting up a live-stream of the race at the Sweet Hill Farm, where folks could watch the races noting that they would have food trucks, and other vendors, noting that it was a fun time for all; and (2) Congressionally Directed Grant Spending Program \$240,000 – Councilor Buhle noted at their April 10, 2024 meeting the Town Council authorized the Mayor to submit a *COPS Law Enforcement Technology and Equipment Grant* in the amount of up-to \$240,000 through the Congressionally Directed Spending initiative, to replace the Ledyard Dispatch Emergency Communications CAD/RMS System. She stated that Congressman Courtney's Office notified the town that Ledyard was one of the fifteen Projects that was selected to be submitted to the Appropriations Committee, noting that Ledyard's Grant Application stood out because of its community impact, the quality of the application and community support. Councilor Buhle explained that Ledyard's Application would now be considered by the Appropriations Committee for inclusion in the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Appropriations Legislation. She stated although their Grant Application has not yet been approved that it was good news because it was another step forward in the approval process.

Chairman Rodriguez thanked the Registrars for their hard work yesterday (May 21, 2024) in conducting the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget Referendum. She stated that they worked about fourteen hours, noting that they had to come in early to set everything up and stay late after the Polls were closed to tally the votes. She commended them for their hard work.

VII. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

MOTION to approve the following:

Regular Meeting Minutes of April 24, 2024

Public Hearing Minutes of May 8, 2024

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Dombrowski

VOTE: 8 – 0 Approved and so declared

IX. COMMUNICATIONS

Chairman Rodriguez stated a Communications List has been provided on the meeting portal for tonight's meeting; and she noted earlier this evening that she referred to the Administration Committee the resident's comment regarding an Ethics Commission.

X. COUNCIL SUB COMMITTEE, LIAISON REPORTS

Administration Committee

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry noted at their May 8, 2024 meeting the Administration Committee addressed the following: (1) Approved to forward a number of appointments, which were on tonight's Agenda; and (2) Proposed amendments to Ordinance #100-015 "*An Ordinance Establishing a Permanent Municipal Building Committee for the Town of Ledyard*"- Councilor Garcia-Irizarry explained that the proposed amendments included a Project Classification threshold noting for *projects whose total project cost is estimated to exceed \$500,000, an Owner's Representative and/or Consulting Engineer shall be hired through a quality-based selection process to assist the Permanent Municipal Building Committee with management and oversight of such project(s)*. She stated the Committee was continuing their work on the proposed ordinance amendments and was taking comments and suggestions regarding the document.

Community Relations Committee

Councilor Brunelle stated the Community Relations Committee has not met since the last Town Council meeting.

Finance Committee

Councilor Saccone stated the Finance Committee met on May 15, 2024 and they have a few items on tonight's Agenda.

Land Use/Planning/Public Works Committee

Councilor St. Vil stated the Committee held their Regular Meeting on May 5, 2024 and on May 21, 2024 they participated in a Site Walk of the Spicer Homestead Ruins that was located within the Clark Farm property. He stated the Site Walk was very informative with regard to the historic value of the site. He also noted the value that the historic site would provide to the town with being historically relevant. He stated the Spicer Homestead Ruins would be an on-going discussion as the LUPPW Committee would continue to discuss the historic designation process at their June 3, 2024 meeting.

Conservation Commission

Councilor Paul stated the Conservation Commission met on May 14, 2024 and addressed the following: (1) White Hall Park Report has been completed and was available at Town Hall. He stated the Report included information regarding the invasive species, plants, animals, birds, etc. and (2) Regatta Day Festival – June 8, 2024 – Councilor Paul stated the Conservation Commission would be at the Festival and he encouraged residents to stop by and see them.

Councilor Buhle added that the Conservation Commission nominated Commission Member Betsy Graham for the *Aquarian Adult Environmental Champion Award*. She noted that she was pleased to announce that Mrs. Graham was selected to receive the *Award* which honored the efforts of individuals, businesses and organizations across Connecticut who were committed to preserving the environment.

Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Commission

Councilor Paul stated the Commission met on May 21, 2024, noting that there was not much to report on.

Ledyard Center Fire Department

Councilor Saccone reported on the following: (1) Annual Banquet – Councilor Saccone stated as Councilor Brunelle mentioned during Councilor Comments earlier this evening, that Ledyard Center Fire Department held their Annual Banquet, noting that both he and Councilor Brunelle attended the event. He explained that each year both the Ledyard

Center Fire Department and the Gales Ferry Fire Department each hold their Annual Banquet, noting that it gives each Company a night off, explaining that each Sister Company covered the emergency calls in each other's territory. He stated it was a great event noting that Awards were presented to the volunteers; (2) New Fire Tanker – Councilor Saccone stated that the Fire Department was continuing to purchase and mount equipment to get the truck ready for use.

Retirement Board

Chairman Rodriguez stated the Retirement Board cancelled their May 21, 2024 meeting.

Ledyard Farmers' Market Committee

Chairman Rodriguez stated the Farmers Market was excited about their 2024 Market Kick-Off on June 5, 2024, noting that they have been diligently working to make sure everything was lined up and ready to go for another great summer season, noting that they have 49 Vendors that would be participating in this summer's Market. Chairman Rodriguez stated that she was excited and looking forward to going to the Farmers' Market.

Library Commission

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated the Library Commission met on May 20, 2024, however, she stated that she was not able to attend because the Annual Town Meeting for the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget was also held that same evening. Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated the Library celebrated the 200th Birthday of Henry Bill on May 18, 2024.

Board of Education

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated the Board of Education met on May 15, 2024 and addressed the following: (1) CAFE (Carney Award of Excellence for Educational Communications) Student Leadership Awards – Two Middle School Students: Andrew Hernandez and Sydney Mohr; and two High School Students Sean Harren and Alisa Starkova were recognized for their achievements; (2) School(s) Consolidation Improvement Projects (Middle School and Gallup Hill School) Grant Funding Reimbursement– The State would be releasing about \$7 million to the town; (3) Agri-Science Technology Education (ASTE) Grant – The Board of Education approved to request the Town Council transfer \$129,698 from their Grant Account to the ASTE Capital Account. The Agri-Science Teachers would be developing a list for the use of the funding; (4) Proposed amendments to Ordinance #100-015 "*An Ordinance Establishing a Permanent Municipal Building Committee for the Town of Ledyard*" – The Board of Education had some questions regarding the proposed amendments.

Agricultural Commission

Councilor Dombrowski stated the Agricultural Commission cancelled their May 21, 2024 meeting.

Water Pollution Control Authority

Councilor Dombrowski stated the WPCA would be meeting on May 28, 2024.

Inland Wetland and Watercourses Commission

Councilor St. Vil stated the IWWC cancelled their May 7, 2024 meeting.

Planning & Zoning Commission

Councilor St. Vil stated the Planning & Zoning Commission had several discussions and has scheduled a Special Meeting for Thursday, May 30, 2024 to review an 18-Lot Subdivision and a Mobile Park Application. Councilor St. Vil continued by noting the Planning & Zoning Commission received an Application for work at the former Dow Chemical-Styrenics Site on Route 12, Gales Ferry. He stated a Public Hearing – Special Meeting was scheduled for Thursday, June 13, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. at the Middle School for those interested in attending in-person and that it would also be available via Zoom.

****POST MEETING NOTE**:** 5/28/2024: Attorney Heller letter dated 5/28/2024 withdrew the Application for Dow Chemical-Styrenics Site, noting that they would resubmit at a later time. The June 13, 2024 Planning & Zoning Commission meeting would be held at its regular location at the Town Hall Annex – Council Chambers.

Economic Development Commission

Councilor Buhle stated the EDC cancelled their May 7, 2024 meeting.

XI. MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Allyn, III, reported on the following: (1) Legislative Updates – (a) Solid Waste Bill – Mayor Allyn stated Connecticut had a crisis emerging in the state with about 900,000 tons of trash annually being trucked to landfills in Pennsylvania, New York, and Ohio. He stated instead of acting on the Solid Waste Bill that the State Legislature increased the weight capacity of the trucks hauling the trash from 80,000 pounds to 100,000 pounds; (b) Motor Vehicle Tax – Mayor Allyn stated although the proposed Bill was not approved, they promised to bring the Bill back next year. He explained the Bill included a Local Option which would allow each of the 169 Municipalities to decide whether they would tax motor vehicles or not. He stated for the Municipalities who chose not to tax motor vehicles that the Assessment Rate for Real Property would increase from 70% to 90%, causing property owners to absorb the loss of tax revenue; (c) Street Take Over Bill – Mayor Allyn stated the Street Take Over Bill passed the House but did not make it to the Senate floor, noting that they hoped to bring this Bill back again next year; (d) New Bill for next year would require all Municipalities accounts to go to **.gov** Accounts by the year 2027. He noted that Ledyard was currently a **ct.org** Account; (2) Land Use Department Staffing – Mayor Allyn stated a new Land Use Assistant was hired and would join the town on May 28, 2024; (3) School(s) Consolidation Improvement Projects (Middle School and Gallup Hill School) Grant Funding Reimbursement – Mayor Allyn stated all the paperwork for these Construction Projects was fully submitted to the Department of Administrative Services (DAS). He noted that the Town also submitted to the DAS *Waiver Requests* regarding “*Untimely Filings*” explaining that there were a number of reimbursements requests that were submitted to the State late. He stated in his Waiver Request letter dated May 22, 2024 he made a plea to the State noting that it was causing undo stress to the Municipality because they were having to pay Short-Term Borrowing costs as they wait for the State to release the Grant Reimbursement Funding to the Town. He stated the late submissions were due to the high turnover within the contractors during the projects, and that some things fell between the cracks between the contractor and the Permanent Municipal Building Committee (PMBC). He stated that he would be following up with the DAS to see that they received Ledyard’s letters and that he hoped that the Town would receive a positive response; (4) Board of Education Roof Projects – Mayor Allyn stated the Bids received were favorable. He explained when the Town initially submitted the Projects to the State that the State said Ledyard’s costs per square foot were too low and that they needed to revise their Request for Proposals (RFP) and solicit bids again, which slowed the Projects down. Therefore, he stated the Town followed the State’s direction and rebid the Roof Projects, noting that the costs still came in under the square footage, and that they were in-line the first time the Town solicited bids. He stated that the Contractors have assured the Town that they would be able to have the Roof Projects done by September, 2024. He noted that there would be some overhead work issues that the Contractors would have to work around as they were doing the roofing and solar installations; (5) Nuclear Safety Drill June 4, 2024 – Mayor Allyn stated this Drill would be evaluated by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA); (6) State Emergency Planning & Preparedness Initiative (EPPI) Drill was also planned for June; (7) Linda C. Davis Food Pantry Siding American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA Funding – Mayor Allyn stated the replacement of the windows, doors, and siding were in-progress. He noted that the work was progressing nicely and that the building looked great; (8) Finished Basements Assessments – Mayor Allyn noted a resident who attended the May 20, 2024 Annual Town Meeting regarding the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget spoke about the number of finished basements that were not on the tax rolls. He stated that he provided the packet to the Tax Assessor, and found in reviewing every home on the list that there were eleven properties that had tax changes for a finished basement that were not already in their system, totaling \$970.00 of new taxes; (9) Beverage Container Surcharge Revenues – Nip Bottle Payment – Mayor Allyn noted that the State disbursed funding collected from the .05 cent surcharge on each nip bottle sold in each municipality twice a year (every six months). He stated for the past six months Ledyard received \$15,503 from the Nip Bottle Surcharge, noting that equated to 310,060 nip bottles being sold in town from October, 2023 - April, 2024. He stated that was 20.11 nip bottles per capita in Ledyard, noting in Southeastern Connecticut that Norwich had the highest nip bottles sold per capita at 30.27; New London 26.11; Groton 22.71. He stated the .05 cent surcharge has not done anything to change the number of nip

bottles that were littering their roads; (10) National Opioid Settlement Funding – Mayor Allyn stated Ledyard would receive their next Opioid Payment in the amount of \$9,098 between June 30, 2024 – July 15, 2024. He stated the \$9,098 was a combined payment from CVS, Allergan, and Teva; (11) Avalonia Land Conservancy – Mayor Allyn stated that Avalonia Land Conservancy was looking to acquire another piece of property in Ledyard and would be seeking town participation for this Open Space Acquisition. He stated in speaking with Avalonia Land Conservancy President Dennis Main today that he stated once Avalonia had a contract for the property that he would talk with the Town Council to explain how it would tie into other open space.

Questions to the Mayor - None.

XII. OLD BUSINESS – None.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

Administration Committee

1. MOTION to appoint Mr. Peter Diette (U) 15 Hyde Park Drive, Gales Ferry to the Library Commission to complete a two (2) year term ending November 7, 2024 filling a vacancy left by Ms. Gantz.

Moved by Councilor Garcia-Irizarry, seconded by Councilor Brunelle

Discussion: Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated the Town Council received three applications to fill one vacancy on the Library Commission, noting that after seventeen years of service Ms. Gantz decided to stepped down. She stated that all of the candidates offered an extensive educational background and experience. She stated the Administration Committee recommended that Mr. Diette to be appointed to fill the position. She went on to state that Mr. Diette was employed as a Library Media Specialist at Groton Public Schools, and he also worked at the Stonington Free Library. She stated that Mr. Dietter also has a Master of Library and Information Sciences.

Chairman Rodriguez stated that Mr. Diette was an excellent candidate for the Library Commission.

VOTE: 8 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT:	APPROVED 8 - 0
MOVER:	Carmen Garcia-Irizarry, Town Councilor
SECONDER	April Brunelle, Town Councilor
AYES:	Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Paul, Rodriguez, Saccone, St. Vil
EXCUSED:	Ryan

2. MOTION to appoint Ms. Beth Ribe (U) 129 Rose Hill Road, Ledyard to the Planning & Zoning Commission as an alternate member, to complete a three (3) year term ending December 31, 2026 filling a vacancy left by Ms. Cobb.

Moved by Councilor Garcia-Irizarry, seconded by Councilor Dombrowski

Discussion: Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated Ms. Ribe has been an active member of the community, noting she served on the Committee to Review the Budget Process; and that she was currently serving on the Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission. Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated that she personally knew Ms. Ribe noting that she was detailed orientated and that she would do a great job.

VOTE: 8 – 0 Approved and so declared

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

3. MOTION to appoint Ms. Lauren Hawes (U) 8 Warbler Way, Gales Ferry, to the Ledyard Beautification Committee, to complete a three (3) year term ending October 26, 2026 filling a vacancy left by Ms. Vincent.

Moved by Councilor Garcia-Irizarry, seconded by Councilor Brunelle

Discussion: None.

VOTE: 8 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT:	APPROVED 8 - 0
MOVER:	Carmen Garcia-Irizarry, Town Councilor
SECONDER	April Brunelle, Town Councilor
AYES:	Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Paul, Rodriguez, Saccone, St. Vil
EXCUSED:	Ryan

4. MOTION to appoint the following appointment adjustments to the Cemetery Committee:

- Appoint Ms. Martha Reynolds (R) 1684 Center Groton Road, as a Regular Member, to complete a three (3) year term ending April 26, 2026 filling a vacancy left by Ms. Sheila Godino.
- Appoint Mr. Vincent Godino (D) 1906 Center Groton Road, Ledyard, as an Alternate Member, to complete a three (3) year term ending April 26, 2025 filling a vacancy left by Ms. Reynolds.

Moved by Councilor Garcia-Irizarry, seconded by Councilor Brunelle

Discussion: None.

VOTE: 8 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT:	APPROVED 8 - 0
MOVER:	Carmen Garcia-Irizarry, Town Councilor
SECONDER	April Brunelle, Town Councilor
AYES:	Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Paul, Rodriguez, Saccone, St. Vil
EXCUSED:	Ryan

5. MOTION to appoint Ms. Kristie Gardiner-Lundgren (U) 70 Iron Street, Ledyard, to the Cemetery Committee, as a Regular Member, to complete a three (3) year term ending April 26, 2026 filling a vacancy left by Mr. Godino.

Moved by Councilor Garcia-Irizarry, seconded by Councilor Brunelle

Discussion: None.

VOTE: 8 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT:	APPROVED 8 - 0
MOVER:	Carmen Garcia-Irizarry, Town Councilor
SECONDER	April Brunelle, Town Councilor
AYES:	Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Paul, Rodriguez, Saccone, St. Vil
EXCUSED:	Ryan

6. MOTION to appoint Ms. Lauren Hawes (U) 8 Warbler Way, Gales Ferry, to the Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Commission, as an Alternate Member, to complete a three (3) year term ending June 28, 2027 filling a vacancy left by Mr. Gallagher.

Moved by Councilor Garcia-Irizarry, seconded by Councilor Brunelle

Discussion: None.

VOTE: 8 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT:	APPROVED 8 - 0
MOVER:	Carmen Garcia-Irizarry, Town Councilor
SECONDER	April Brunelle, Town Councilor
AYES:	Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Paul, Rodriguez, Saccone, St. Vil
EXCUSED:	Ryan

Finance Committee

7. MOTION to approve a water rate increase of 5% to become effective on July 1, 2024 as recommended by the WPCA and contained in the water and sewer rate table presented at the WPCA April 23, 2024 Public Hearing; in accordance with Ordinance #400-001 “An Ordinance Creating a Water Pollution Control Authority for the Town of Ledyard”.

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Dombrowski

Discussion: Councilor Saccone explained in accordance with Ordinance #400-001 “An Ordinance Creating a Water Pollution Control Authority for the Town of Ledyard” and *CGS Chapter 102, Section 7-239, the Town Council shall set just and equitable rates or charges of the water system that shall be sufficient for the payment of expense of operation, repair, replacement and maintenance and foreseeable capital expenses of such system.*

Charman Rodriguez noted that WPCA Chairman Ed Lynch was present this evening and she asked whether he would like to provide additional information regarding the requested 5% water rate increase.

Mr. Ed Lynch, 11 Red Brook Lane, Ledyard, WPCA Chairman, attending remotely, stated that he would provide the same comments that he gave at the Finance Committee’s May 15, 2024 meeting. He explained the following two reasons for the Water Rate increase:

- (1) Water Rate Increase – Mr. Lynch stated that Groton Utilities notified the WPCA that they would be increasing the cost of water by 5% to commence on October 1, 2024. He stated in accordance with *CGS Chapter 102, Section 7-239*, and Ordinance #400-001 the WPCA held a Public Hearing on April 24, 2024 to present the proposed water rate increase to the rate payers.
- (2) Lead Sampling Survey – Mr. Lynch stated Water Providers now have an unfunded mandate to investigate lead in their system. He stated although he did not believe the WPCA had lead in their water system that it was not documented. Mr. Lynch continued by explaining in past years the WPCA did not allocate funding in their Contingency Account. However, he stated because the State Department of Health (DPH) was pressing water providers to conduct a Lead Sampling Survey, the WPCA allocated \$35,476.44 in their Contingency Account for the upcoming Fiscal Year 2024/2025. He explained that this would be an on-going process for the next 3-5 years to determine if they had any lead in their system. He stated the WPCA applied for a Grant through the Department of Health.

Councilor St. Vil questioned whether the 5% Rate Increase would apply to both water and sewer. Mr. Lynch stated the sewer rate would remain the same, explaining that the WPCA fixed the factor so that sewer rate would be the same as the previous year.

Councilor St. Vil noted the following two components were the drivers for the 5% Rate Increase: (1) Groton Utilities raised their water rate by 5%. Councilor St. Vil stated he understood that this was a pass thru; and (2) Unbudgeted Mandate Lead Sampling Survey – Councilor St. Vil questioned whether the 5% Rate Increase would be used to partially fund the unbudgeted mandates. Mr. Lynch stated in past years the WPCA did not budget any funding for Contingency; and therefore, the WPCA did not have funding to pay for unfunded mandates. Mr. Lynch stated the WPCA decided to add a Contingency Line to their budget so that they could handle unexpected mandates going forward. Councilor St. Vil questioned if the WPCA budget 5% increase was to cover the cost of both the Groton Utilities 5% water rate increase and the WPCA’s Contingency budget, whether the rate increase should be higher than 5%. Mr. Lynch stated the total WPCA Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget increase was 5%. Councilor Dombrowski explained that the increase was not one-to-one. Councilor St. Vil thanked Mr. Lynch for providing clarification.

VOTE: 8 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT:	APPROVED 8 - 0
MOVER:	Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor
SECONDER:	Kevin Dombrowski, Town Councilor
AYES:	Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Paul, Rodriguez, Saccone, St. Vil
EXCUSED:	Ryan

8. MOTION to approve two tax refunds in the combined total amount of \$7,321.19 with each exceeding \$2,400.00 in accordance with tax collector departmental procedures.
- Kineo Properties LLC \$3,602.19
 - Messier, Massad, Burdick & Associates \$3,719.00

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Saccone

Discussion: Councilor Buhle stated in accordance with policies established for the Tax Collection Department, refunds to taxpayers exceeding \$2,400 are to be approved by the Town Council. She stated that tax refunds were typically due to an overpayment or double payment to the taxes.

VOTE: 8 – 0 Approved and so declared

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

General Items

9. Town Council’s 2024 Summer Meeting Schedule.

By consensus the Town Council agreed to cancel the following Town Council Regular Meetings:

- July 10, 2024
- August 28, 2024

XV. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Buhle moved to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Paul

VOTE: 8 - 0 Approved and so declared. The meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

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

I, S. Naomi Rodriguez, 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 May 22, 2024.

S. Naomi Rodriguez, Chairman