

Roxanne Maher

From: Chris Jelden <chrisjelden@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2025 9:32 PM
To: Town Council Group
Subject: Appreciation and Support for Recent Council Actions

Dear Town Council,

I'm writing today to offer support for several things I've seen recently and to thank you for your continued efforts.

I watched the March 26th Town Council meeting on Zoom and thought it was just great to see the winners of the various Black History Month contests showcased. You all have many responsibilities, but taking the time to focus on something like that does so much for our community. I agreed with Councilor Buhle, who mentioned it would have been nice to hear some of the essays. Maybe next year we can hear from the first-place middle and high school winners. I know scheduling around town meetings can be tough, but it might be worth considering a 6:30 pre-meeting presentation or pushing the normal town meeting start back to 7:30 to give events like this more room to breathe. Either way, it was amazing to see the support for Black History and to watch the community show up to cheer on the students. Thank you.

I also want to thank you for your ongoing work on the town budget. From what I've seen at Town Council meetings, a budget workshop, and BOE meetings, it's clear that everyone is trying to serve Ledyard without placing too much burden on taxpayers. No one likes taxes, but they're how we all participate in the running of our town. I commend your efforts to make every dollar count. The long hours don't go unnoticed, and I've been sharing with others just how much work goes into the process.

I want to also note my continued support for the establishment of an Ethics Commission and Code of Ethics. Ledyard doesn't want to be one of the few towns without this kind of structure in place. I've heard some concerns that such a body could be used for political gamesmanship... but my hope and assumption is that the code would be carefully written to prevent that and clearly outline how concerns are handled. Either way, I support Councilor Garcia-Irizarry in her work on this effort.

The resolution calling on the State Legislature to address high energy costs — drafted by Councilor Ryan and approved by the Council — was a great example of local government being a voice for residents. I appreciated the discussion ensuring the resolution wasn't just symbolic, but a meaningful push for action on the root causes of these rising costs.

I was disappointed to hear that the effects of the recent Continuing Resolution passed by Congress were felt here in Ledyard. Councilor Buhle and the Town Council did incredible work in seeking and securing a grant to fund a new dispatch system for the Ledyard Police Department. This is exactly the kind of federal support small towns need, and while it's frustrating to see that support pulled back, I'm grateful for the persistence and energy that went into the application. This isn't the only grant Ledyard has secured recently and I know those don't happen without a willingness to ask and a lot of behind-the-scenes work.

A few other notes I wanted to make sure to mention:

- I support the budget submitted by the Board of Education to the Mayor's office at the end of February. The proposed 5.98% increase reflects a thoughtful effort to meet the needs of students while keeping taxpayers in mind. It's disappointing to hear that, after the BOE delivered their budget request, a unilateral decision was made by the mayor to shift healthcare costs from one area of the town's budget to the BOE's budget request, a move that has the effect of increasing the BOE's budget request. I encourage the Town Council to table this decision until after the budget season, and to do so in a way that reflects cooperation and open dialogue between the Town Council, the BOE and the Mayor's office. On the surface, this move looks blindly political and self-serving. Ledyard does not need this distraction.
- I also support the Town Council's efforts to gain clarity on that original budget proposal. You are responsible for presenting it to the town, and you need to understand it fully.
- I appreciate the conversation around the Optional Motor Vehicle Depreciation Schedule. Councilor Garcia-Irizarry made thoughtful points about how it would affect residents on fixed incomes compared to those who are working.
- I'm looking forward to seeing the results of the Linda Davis Ledyard Woman of the Year award... this has the potential to be a great annual tradition for Ledyard.

Once again, thank you for all that you do. You are steady stewards of our town and its budget, and I truly appreciate your time and service.

Chris Jelden