



TOWN OF LEDYARD
CONNECTICUT
TOWN COUNCIL

Chairman S. Naomi Rodriguez

MINUTES
LEDYARD TOWN COUNCIL – REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9, 2025; 7:00 PM
HYBRID FORMAT
VIDEO CONFERENCE VIA ZOOM

DRAFT

- I. CALL TO ORDER – Chairman Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 7:00 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
William Barnes	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
April Brunelle	Town Councilor	Present	Remote
Jessica Buhle	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
Carmen Garcia-Irizarry	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
Kevin Dombrowski	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
S. Naomi Rodriguez	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
Tim Ryan	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
Tony Saccone	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
Gary St. Vil	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person

- IV. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS/PRESENTATIONS

- V. RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS

Mrs. Eleanor Murray, 26 Devonshire Drive, Gales Ferry, stated that she appreciated all the work the Town Council does, noting that she knows that they were all volunteers. She stated that she would like to address three topics this evening.

- (1) **Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget** – Mrs. Murray stated that she noticed that some employees were getting salary increases of over 10% noting that some of those people have not even been working for the town for six months. She stated that these salary increases were shocking to her since the teachers, who work pretty hard, were getting 3% salary increases. She stated that 10% salary increases were outrageous and that taxpayers could not afford to pay that. She stated that she finds this appalling and that she would do everything she could to bring that to everybody's attention, and that she would work to make sure Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget does not pass if the salary increases were not changed.
- (2) **Budget Advisory Questions** – Mrs. Murray addressed the Advisory Questions that were being proposed, noting that they were “Yes” or “No” Questions. She stated because a budget that has so many facets; that you cannot ask people “*Do you like the budget? Yes or no? Is it too high? Is it too low?*” She stated the Advisory Questions were ridiculous, commenting that it looked like a 6th grader put them together. She stated that the way the Advisory Questions were written that they could not expect to get anything out of them.
- (3) **Administration Committee’s March 12, 2025 Meeting** – Mrs. Murray stated that it was absolutely useless going to the Administration Committee, noting that the residents were lectured and that nobody listened to what the residents had to say. She went on to address when the Committee decided to talk among themselves they whispered, however, that was not brought up in the minutes. She stated that the minutes looked like they spoke, but the residents in the audience could not hear what they said, noting that was appalling.

Mr. Steve Munger, 12 Nutmeg Drive, Gales Ferry, stated that he always likes to begin his comments by thanking everybody for their volunteer service to the town, even though he knew that they were aware that he disagreed with a lot of what they were doing. However, he stated that he does appreciate, and respect everybody here; and that he thought that respect was reciprocal until the March 12, 2025 Administration Committee Meeting. He stated those who know him, know that he was about the most mellow person in the world, and that someone would have to do something really terrible to upset him. He stated that he did not like to attack anybody, but that he was going to direct his negative comments to one person this evening, and that he was glad to see that she was attending tonight's meeting via Zoom, because he would have been disappointed if Councilor Brunelle did not hear what he had to say this evening.

Mr. Munger continued by stating that residents have a lot of things going on and yet they take the time to attend meetings to speak about their sincere and serious concerns, not to fight with members of the Town Council. He stated at the March 12, 2025 Administration Committee several residents, including a former Mayor, a retired Navy Captain, and a retired Master Chief were in attendance to speak on the Ordinance that was being proposed to Fly Third-Party Flags. He stated that some of these residents have dedicated their life to serve our country; and that they have a right to speak their minds. However, he stated after the residents spoke that the members of the Town Council can say whatever they want, and the residents cannot respond, noting that it was too bad that residents were not able to speak at the end. He stated that it was saddening that a member of the Town Council basically attacked every resident who spoke at the meeting. He stated that the Town Councilor made it sound like we were anti-gay or homophobic. He stated that he was not only against flying the gay flag, that he was against flying any flags other than the US American Flag and State Flag. He stated as he has said at previous meetings that if you "*Fly One - Fly All*". However, he stated that Councilor Brunelle made the whole fly issue about just the gay flag. He stated that was not what the proposed Third-Party Flag Ordinance was about.

Mr. Munger went on to provide the following statistics:

- Veterans - At least 22 veterans a day commit suicide from all six branches of the military.
- Police Officers - Have a high suicide rate. Mr. Munger stated that he did not want to quote an exact number, because he found different numbers on different websites. However, stated that Police Officers not only die by suicide, that there were hundreds that were killed by criminals. He noted Police Officers put their lives on the line everyday for all of us.
- Doctors -300- 400 Doctors commit suicide every year. Mr. Munger stated that male doctors commit suicide 4 times higher than female doctors.
- Native Americans have the highest suicide rate in the country.
- Gay Community – Mr. Munger stated that all the information he found was on attempted suicides. However, he stated it would be terrible to lose one kid, regardless of who they were or what their sex was.

Mr. Munger stated that if the town was going to fly the flag of one group that they should fly a flag for all the groups that he mentioned this evening. He stated that they should fly the flag of each of the six military branches, the thin blue line flag for the police, a flag for healthcare providers, a flag for the native Americans, noting that he could go on, etc.

Mr. Munger stated at the March 12, 2025 Administration Committee Meeting that he felt as though he was being lectured like he was in kindergarten; and that it was all about one issue. He stated that he was sorry that Councilor Brunelle was not physically present this evening because he would have preferred to provide his comments to her in-person. He stated that he respected everyone on the Town Council and that people who know him know that he does not get frustrated, noting that he was just happy that he was alive at 70 years old; and that he appreciated every day that he wakes up. However, he stated what he did not appreciate was how the residents were spoken to at that meeting; and that he hoped that this was the last time they have to speak about that meeting.

Mr. Munger stated if they were going to talk about hate crimes and the anti-transgender culture, that they also need to talk about the Jewish community, because they were the biggest community that has experienced the most hate crimes. He went on to note that hate crimes against religious people was up 22.5%; and hate crimes against sexual orientation was at 18.4%. He stated that these were all terrible, and we should not be attacking anybody.

Mr. Munger stated what he would like to see moving forward from the Town Council was that they be more professional. He stated that he thought that he was being professional tonight, even though he was still a little worked up from the March 12, 2025 Administration Committee meeting. He stated that he did not talk to the Town Council like they were in kindergarten; and that he did not expect that he be talked to like he was a kindergartener. He stated that he was not the only resident who left that meeting that felt that way. He stated that he understands the makeup of the Town Council; however, he stated that they were supposed to be here for everybody in town, not just Democrats, not just Republicans, not just Independents, for all of us.

Mr. Munger concluded his comments by stating that he hoped that the Town Council would respect the fact that he took the time to give his input to help them make a decision. He stated that he wanted to apologize for being a little forceful tonight, noting that he was a mellow person. He addressed Councilor Brunelle, and he stated that he did not mean for his comments to be personal; however, he asked that she please listen to what he said this evening, because it affected a lot of people, and because he wanted to respect her every time he comes to the Town Council to speak to his Elected Officials. Thank you.

Mr. Edwin Murray, 26 Devonshire Drive, Gales Ferry, stated he wanted to address the following:

- (1) **Budget Advisory Questions** – Mr. Murray stated in reading the Advisory Questions that he did not understand them. He stated that he thought the Questions were missing a Box that stated: *“There is not enough information for them to answer the Advisory Question reasonably”*.
- (2) **Annual Budget Format** – Mr. Murray suggested the General Government Budget and the Board of Education Budget be separate Budgets. He stated he has lived in Ledyard for two-years, noting the town he moved from was similar in size to Ledyard and their budgets were separate. He stated by having the Board of Education Budget separate from the Town Budget that there was never any confusion, never any question, and it allowed the two budgets to be handled at different times during the year; and allowed people to focus on each of the budgets separately.
- (3) **Voter Turnout**- Mr. Murray stated for the past few years that Ledyard has had a low voter turnout for the Annual Budget Referendum. Therefore, he questioned what the Town planned to do differently to encourage voters to go out to polls. He noted that there was a good turnout for the Planning & Zoning Meetings that were recently held at the Middle School because people were talking about the quarry project. He stated that the Annual Town Budget was just as important; noting that too many times folks were talking with only half information; or no information, and they do not understand the purpose of the changes that were being made; or why some things were added to one budget and taken away from another. Therefore, he stated that it was important to get as many people to the polls as they can. He noted last year he was the 95th person voting on the Annual Budget when he went to the polls after 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Murray stated that those who were interested and involved in our town would want to see as many people as possible get out to the polls to vote on the Annual Budget. He asked the Town Council to let him help them get more folks to show up for this budget in two weeks.

- (4) **Ethics Commission** – Mr. Murray stated the Administration Committee has been discussing the subject to establish an Ethics Commission for quite some time. However, he stated that he did not understand why they have not moved forward on the initiative. He stated that today he looked at how the Ethics Commission was set up in the New York

Town, where he lived before moving to Ledyard. He explained that their Ethics Commission was designed to be a Preventor of Issues rather than be the Addresser of Issues. He noted as an example: If everybody had to disclose certain things to perform in their volunteer function that the Ethics Commission would take a look at that in the beginning, and make sure that all the questions are answered the way the town wanted the questions answered, so they would not have somebody complaining that someone left something out six-months later. He stated that this was how that town's Ethics Commission handle almost all the issues in the town, noting that worked very well. He stated because it worked so well that the Ethics Commission never had any issues to talk about.

Chairman Rodriguez thanked the residents for their comments.

VI. COMMITTEE COMMISSION AND BOARD REPORTS – None.

VII. COMMENTS OF TOWN COUNCILORS

Councilor Barnes stated he would like to begin by thanking all of the residents who spoke tonight for their comments, noting that he appreciated hearing from them. He went to state that as the town approaches the Annual Budget Referendum, he wanted to express his appreciation to the Town Council, and particularly the Finance Committee, the Board of Education, as well as School Superintendent Hartling, and the many residents who have been involved. He stated developing a budget was not an easy process to go through, noting that they have to make decisions that were sometimes difficult. However, he stated in the end that he hoped they would deliver a responsible budget for the General Government and the Board of Education. He stated that he appreciated Mr. Murray's comments, and he noted the best thing we could all do to get residents out to vote, was to remind your friends and neighbors to vote, to ensure the voices of our residents are heard. He stated if we all do that, we will have a turnout that was better than being the 96th person voting at 6:00 p.m. on the day of the budget referendum.

Councilor Brunelle stated because she had a cold that she did not want to give to everyone that she was attending tonight's meeting remotely, via Zoom. She proceeded by stating that April was Fair Housing Month and that she attended a meeting regarding Fair and Affordable Housing in Connecticut. She stated that it was eye opening to learn that all across Connecticut we need more housing for families; and she noted that Ledyard was definitely among the towns that needed more housing.

Councilor Brunelle continued by noting at the Administration Committee meeting that was held earlier this evening that the Committee voted to remove the proposal to draft an Ordinance to Fly Third-Party Flags. She stated that the Administration Committee would not be moving the proposed Third-Party Flag Ordinance forward.

Councilor Ryan noted Councilor Barnes' comments, and he stated that he would also like to thank residents for coming out to express their procedural concerns regarding the Annual Town Budget. He stated as a member of the Finance Committee that he thought that he could speak on behalf of the other two members, noting that the Committee has spent a lot of time working on the proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget. He stated on Monday, April 7, 2025 after working at their full-time jobs the Finance Committee arrived at the Council Chambers at 3:30 p.m. and did not leave until 7:30 p.m. as they worked to deliberate over the proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget that was being presented to the Town Council later this evening. He stated that there were obviously some things in the proposed budget that everybody was not going to agree with; however, he stated that was unfortunately the nature of the budget; and the reason they have a Town-Wide Referendum for the townspeople to cast their votes.

Councilor Ryan continued by noting Mr. Murray's comments regarding two separate budgets, a General Government Budget and a Board of Education Budget, noting that he was in favor of separating the budgets. He stated since he became a member of the Town Council that he has been vocal about separating the General Government Budget and the Board of Education Budget. He stated that he believed Ledyard should have two Budgets; two Budget

Referendum Questions; and two Mil Rates. He stated that this would provide clear transparency and accountability for each of those budgets, noting that he would continue to be a fan of two separate budgets, unless he could be convinced otherwise. He stated that some local municipalities have separate budgets, with separate budget questions, and that it seemed to work just fine.

Councilor Ryan went on to address the residents comments regarding the Advisory Questions that would be included on the May 20, 2025 Referendum noting the following:

- Wording of the Advisory Questions – Councilor Ryan stated in writing the Advisory Questions they were held to strict rules provided in the Connecticut General State Statutes and the Election Laws.
- Yes or No Questions – Councilor Ryan stated the Advisory Questions were not “Yes” or “No” Questions. He stated that they were looking for the townspeople’s opinion on the proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget, noting that the Questions were “**Too High**” or “**Too Low**”.
- Third Option – Councilor Ryan stated that he understood Mr. Murray’s comments and he stated that there was a **Third Option**. He stated that residents could abstain, noting that residents did not have to respond to the Advisory Questions at all.

Councilor Ryan thanked his peers on Finance Committee for their work, noting that this year was not an easy budget season. He stated that he also appreciated all the Department Heads who put the time in to prepare their budgets and to attend the Budget Work Sessions and sit with the Finance Committee to go through their proposed budgets line by line and to justify each one. He stated every year he continues to be amazed to see how concerned their Department Heads were about each expense line in their budgets. But more importantly he was amazed with how aware, and cognizant they were of how their budget requests impact the taxes that we pay, and how it might sacrifice some of the services they provide; which was why they ended up with the increases we saw on the General Government side of the budget.

Councilor Ryan addressed the Mrs. Murray’s comments regarding some of the Department Head Salary increases. He stated that he agreed with her in that the optics were probably not good. However, he stated that if Mrs. Murray had attended the April 7, 2025 Finance Committee meeting, in which they discussed the salary increases, that she would have seen the reasons they were being given. He stated that periodically, and it happens both in the private business sector, and in the public government sector, that they have to have a realignment for Market Analysis; which provided data on what that position should pay relative to comparable municipalities. He explained that there was a process and comparison with municipalities that were similar in size, population, and budget. He stated the data indicated that the salaries Ledyard was paying for some Department Heads was below the Market Rate for the work that they perform for the town. He stated in order to retain quality personnel, who were actually adding value to that department, and not lose them to another municipality or to somewhere else; that it was important that Ledyard’s salaries to remain competitive. Councilor Ryan thanked Chairman Rodriguez for the additional time this evening to provide his extended comments.

Councilor Saccone stated that he would like to echo Councilor Ryan’s comments. He stated in working to prepare the proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget that the Finance Committee held about six meetings with the April 7, 2025 meeting being a marathon lasting about four-hours. He stated the Finance Committee has reviewed the budget line by line in an effort to prepare a responsible budget. He continued by addressing the Department Head Salary increases explaining that Ledyard has some outstanding Directors and Supervisors, and that the town would like to keep them. He stated that increasing the salaries was discussed last year but the raises did not happen. Therefore, he stated when the salary increases were proposed again this year, for the reasons Councilor Ryan mentioned, that the Finance Committee agreed to include them in the proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget. He stated that the members of the Finance Committee, Councilor Ryan and Council Buhle were very efficient with the numbers and budgets. He stated that residents could trust that the Finance Committee has done everything they could to minimize the budget increase. He stated the

proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget as submitted required a 5-mil rate increase. However, he stated that both the Mayor and then the Finance Committee worked to reduce the budget increase. He stated the proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget that the Finance Committee forwarded to the Town Council for action this evening would require a increase of 2.76 mil increase.

Councilor Saccone went on to state that his four children attended Ledyard Schools, noting that their schools were outstanding. He addressed the challenges that Ledyard Schools were facing with level funding from Hartford and the unfunded mandates. He also noted the reduction in revenues which included a 1.6% decrease in the Grand List this year. Therefore, he stated to minimize the mil rate increase that they had to make some compromises, noting that they could not fund all the capital needs for the school facilities. He stated with all these things combined that they have done their best to maintain current services, taking into consideration inflation, and to minimize the tax increase on their residents.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated that she wanted to briefly talk about the recent directive from the current Federal Administration concerning Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in our schools. She noted the Town Council received several emails/letters asking the School District to not take any actions preemptively regarding the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. She noted that a member of the Board of Education was a member of the LGBTQ+ Community and that she was concerned about the Federal Administration's Directive because she cared about the inclusion of all kids, noting that all of this affects their families. Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated although we all see a lot happening in the news that most think that it does not affect their friends, neighbors or the people in their community; noting that it actually does affect all of them.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry provided the following examples of how the Federal Administration Directives was affecting their communities:

New Jersey – Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated there was a man in New Jersey, who was a United States Veteran from Puerto Rico, that was at a Fish Market, and there were some illegal immigrants in that fish market. She stated that the New Jersey man was detained because they didn't believe his credentials at first, noting that the US Veteran had to really prove that he was an American citizen.

Milwaukee, Wisconsin – Councilor Garcia-Irizarry noted that there was a family of three (Grandmother, Mother, and Toddler) who were all from Puerto Rico and they were speaking Spanish. She stated an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Officer heard them talking and detained them; and they had to prove that they were American citizens.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated it was frustrating to see things like this when those living in Puerto Rico have been United States Citizens for more than 100 years. She stated that they serve in the US Military, noting that her Grandfather served in the military and her Uncle served two tours in Vietnam. She stated one week before her Uncle was supposed to come back that he lost his life in an ambush.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated when you see this kind of stuff, it scares you. She stated that she and her daughter had passports, however, her Husband's passport recently expired, and her two sons did not have passports. Therefore, she stated that her family went and got their passports, and she got a passport card for her son to keep in his wallet, because if somebody stopped them they have to have their passport to prove they are United States Citizens. She stated that unfortunately, that was the way were living right now. She stated that they were planning to travel to Montreal this summer, but that was now out of the question, and they were not going, because she did not want to go through the border and immigration.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated that it was important for people to realize that all of our choices in some way affects your neighbors. She stated although you may not have to worry about these types of things, that you may have neighbors that do. She stated there were lot of people that were scared because they were going through this kind of stuff. She stated in listening to the LGBTQ+ Board of Education Member yesterday that she could sympathize with her because she was worried about her family, the students, and the funding that the schools receive, noting that these Federal Directives was not only to renew School Policies.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated it does not matter whether you were on one side or the other. She stated that these Federal Directives were affecting your neighbors, your coworkers, your parents, everyone.

Councilor St. Vil stated that he wanted to take a moment to face the facts brutally. He stated that there was a lot of uncertainty in our country right now. He stated just look at the Stock Market, listen to Councilor Garcia Irizarry talk about other types of uncertainties. He stated these concerns grant us on a local level an opportunity to bring a little bit of certainty. He stated he believed that there were other members on this Town Council that would agree that the opinions expressed by their residents were valued. He stated the members of the Town Council were volunteers, and they do this because they care about this community. He stated they do this because they want to make a difference in this community, and likewise as constituents and as residents, you also care, and you also play a part in helping us improve our community. Therefore, he stated residents were a key part of this process; and for him that by being a key part he could guarantee that their residents' opinions were valued, and they were heard. He stated that he has served on many caucuses and has served on many committees and attended many meetings. He stated that he has attended many Town Council meetings where residents' input has been used to decide votes, either “*Yea*” or “*Nay*”.

Councilor St. Vil went on to state that they were not always going to agree, however, he stated that residents absolutely have a right to understand why the Town Council decided to either vote something either up or down. He stated that it was fair to expect, assuming the question was asked with respect, that there was nothing wrong with getting a response with respect.

Councilor St. Vil concluded his remarks by stating that a lot of time and effort goes into proposing and deliberating on a lot of the motions that are presented, both at the Subcommittee level and at the Town Council level. He noted that there were hours and hours spent individually, and as groups outside of this forum, by the members of the Town Council. Therefore, he stated although all that work may be captured on camera or, just a few minutes of quick discussion, that he could assure residents that it was not the only discussion that takes place in order to make a decision. Therefore, he stated the decisions of the members of the Town Council were aligned with their values, and for him that his values were threefold as follows: (1) He believed in a strong school system not only because it was good for the kids, and the youth that were in our community today; but because it was good for the homeowners in our community today, and it was good for our collective future; (2) He believed in open space and preserving open space, because it was a benefit to the character of this town. It was a benefit to all the residents that have the opportunity to use it; (3) He believed in the diversity of our town, the diversity in people, the diversity in thought, and diversity in beliefs, and that all of the diversity of this town should be preserved and should be respected. He stated although folks may be thinking in their head, “*Yeah, yeah, I know it*”; that he just wanted to speak it into existence so that we could all nod our heads and agree that they were all working, and they were all charging towards a common core, and a better tomorrow.

Councilor Buhle stated that she wanted to echo Council St. Vil's statements, noting that he was always exceptionally eloquent, and that she also wanted to echo Councilor Ryan's statements that about the hard work that went into preparing the proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget. She noted that Councilors individually spent several hours outside of the meetings working through the numbers, and conducting research, making sure that they were working together to prepare a proposed Budget that represented the needs of the town, by balancing the expenses as much as they could. She noted that the members of the Finance Committee have been great to work with.

Councilor Buhle continued by wishing the United States Navy Happy 250th Birthday! . She stated that she was lucky enough to attend the Submarine Birthday Ball. She stated that it is a great event and that she loved being a part of the navy community; which was a big part of our Ledyard community.

Chairman Rodriguez stated that she loved to see residents come out and give their opinions whether they agree; or not agree. She stated that it says a lot about our community when people come out and give their opinions. She went on to thank Councilor St. Vil and Councilor Garcia-Irizarry for their comments this evening.

Chairman Rodriguez continued by stating that people say Ledyard is a great community; and she noted that was a fact. She stated during the budget preparation process that they get to see how great their community is. She stated the budget work begins very early, noting it involved a lot of meetings and many hours of work before the proposed budgets were turned-in. She stated that the Town's Department Heads all work together to try to help the town, noting that sometimes they go without what they need; and that it tears at her heart because she knows they were going without to help keep the mil rate low for the community. She stated in her conversations with Police Chief Rich that he was always thinking of the town; and she thanked him for his graciousness. She stated that we do live in a great community, where everybody worked to try to help everyone else. She stated that she has seen the Finance Committee members, Councilor Saccone, Councilor Buhle, and Councilor Ryan work for hours to reduce the budget and minimize the impact of the cost to operate their town for their community. She stated that they were all volunteers, and they dedicate this time because they care about their community; and they care about the residents who were paying high electric bill and high taxes. She stated that they all live in town and that they were all hurting, noting that there have been many layoffs; noting that they were all going through the pain. She stated that she could attest to everyone here that they have worked hard to present a reasonable budget. She thanked the Finance Committee and all those who were involved in preparing the proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget that the Town Council would be addressing later this evening.

VIII. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

MOTION to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of March 26, 2025
Moved by Councilor Barnes, seconded by Councilor Saccone

VOTE: 9 – 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 referrals were listed.

X. COUNCIL SUB COMMITTEE, LIAISON REPORTS

Administration Committee

Councilor Buhle stated the Administration Committee met earlier this evening and discussed the following: (1) Proposed Ethics Commission – Councilor Buhle stated the Committee would be scheduling a Workshop on May 14, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. to focus on drafting an Ordinance to Establish an Ethics Commission. She noted the Work Shop would be in-place of their regular monthly meeting; (2) Proposed Ordinance regarding the Flying of Third-Party Flags - Councilor Buhle noted as Councilor Brunelle mentioned earlier this evening, the Committee voted to remove the proposed Third-Party-Flags Ordinance from their future agendas, noting that they would not continue to pursue the initiative; (3) Moved forward two new appointments that would be included on the Town Council's April 23, 2025 Agenda; and (4) Sustainable CT Ad Hoc Committee – Councilor Buhle stated the Committee reviewed a draft Resolution and would continue to work on the proposal.

Community Relations Committee for Diversity Equity & Inclusion

Councilor Brunelle stated the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion would be meeting on Wednesday, April 16, 2025.

Chairman Rodriguez questioned whether the Committee has selected the recipient of the *Linda C. Davis Woman of the Year Award*. Councilor Brunelle noted that the Committee received several nominations, and they would be announcing the winner at their next meeting.

Finance Committee

Councilor Saccone stated the Finance Committee held their Regular Meeting on April 2, 2025 and that they also held a Special Meeting on April 7, 2025 to address the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget. He stated the Finance Committee had a number of items on tonight's agenda which he would discuss later this evening.

Land Use/Planning/Public Works Committee

Councilor St. Vil stated the LUPPW Committee met on April 7, 2025 and were continuing to work on the following: (1) Historic Designation of the Spicer Homestead Ruins; and (2) Request for the town to adopt a Noise Ordinance.

Conservation Commission:

Councilor Barnes stated the Conservation Commission met on April 8, 2025 and discussed the observation of a significant number of ticks while they were visiting local parks. He stated that the Commission would inquire with the Department of Environmental Protection about the possibility to post warning signs such as *"Please Exercise Caution When Engaging In Outdoor Activities"*.

Public Safety

Councilor Saccone requested the Floor to recognize Emergency 911 Dispatcher Kristen Wadecki.

Councilor Saccone introduced Mrs. Kristen Wadecki, noting that she used to be part of the Ledyard Volunteer Emergency Ambulance Squad (LVES) until the town contracted with American Ambulance. He stated during the past five years that Mrs. Wadecki has been working as an Emergency 911 Dispatcher for the town. He stated that our Dispatchers were often the unsung heroes in emergency services, noting that the First Responders, Police and Firefighters who were out in the field typically receive all the all the glory for the services they provide. However, he stated all of their responses cannot happen without their Emergency 911 Dispatch personnel.

Councilor Saccone explained about two-weeks ago at about 6:15 a.m. Dispatchers Kristen Wadecki and Taylor Smith called command for a possible Structure Fire in the area of Thames View Pentway, Gales Ferry. Councilor Saccone stated that he was listening to his portable radio from his home scanner, and that he heard that some units were signing on as they normally did, but there was no one answering them back, which was when multiple units began to sign on. He stated because no one was answering that Emergency 911 Dispatch sent out a second page on their telephones. However, he stated that still nobody was answering.

Councilor Saccone stated having heard this, he made a telephone call to the Emergency Dispatch Center to inform them that people were answering. He stated through a quick and decisive action the Dispatch Center realized that there was a double equipment failure overnight. He stated that their two multiplexers were not working, explaining that these were the systems that send out the signals over the airways and allowed them to talk back and forth to their First Responders. He stated if their equipment was not working that the immediate action would have been to call a secondary dispatch center (Groton or Mashantucket) to get them on the airways to answer the Responding Units. However, he stated because there was no alarm to let them know the multiplexers were not working Dispatcher Wadecki got on the little walkie- talkie, which probably cost about \$1,000 and started talking to the units that were out in the field. He stated when they received an update from somebody who was on the scene they learned that the call was not a Structure Fire, but that it was Furnace Malfunction with possible carbon monoxide poisoning, noting that it was a family of four with two kids.

Councilor Saccone stated we have to understand that Emergency 911 does not happen without our Emergency 911 Dispatchers; and without the State Dispatchers. He stated because they all acted so quickly that it was almost seamless. He stated from the time the First Responders arrived on the scene that the problem was resolved within a couple of hours; and the whole furnace system was repaired. Councilor Saccone Congratulated Dispatcher Kristen Wadecki and thanked her for her efforts.

Library Commission

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry noted that the Library Commission will be meeting on Monday, April 21 2025. However, she stated because she would be attending the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget Public Hearing that she would not be able to attend the Library Commission's April meeting.

Board of Education

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated the Board of Education held a Special Executive Session on April 7, 2025 to interview the following Candidates; Jessica Adams, Charles Dore, and Alexander Frisch to fill the vacancy left by Ms. Hill. She stated at the Board of Education's April 8, 2025 Regular meeting they addressed the following: (1) Appointed Mr. Alexander Frisch to fill Ms. Hill's vacancy; and (2) Discussed the proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget.

Planning & Zoning Commission

Councilor St. Vil stated the Planning & Zoning Commission would be meeting on April 10, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

Inland Wetland and Water Courses Commission

Councilor St. Vil stated the IWWC met on April 1, 2025, and scheduled a Special Meeting and Public Hearing for April 22, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. at the Ledyard Middle School regarding the Application regarding the former Sweet Hill Farm.

Economic Development Commission

Councilor Buhle stated the EDC met on April 1, 2025; however, she was not able to attend. She stated in reading their minutes that the EDC discussed the following: (1) New Businesses in town which included a Retro-Gaming Shop; and (2) Route 12 Corridor Study – Councilor Buhle stated the EDC would be holding a Public Hearing on April 15, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. at the Ledyard Senior Center, Van Tassel Drive, Gales Ferry, to receive comments on the Route 12 Corridor Study that was prepared by Consultant Gorman + York.

Retirement Board

Chairman Rodriguez stated the Retirement Board has one item on tonight's Agenda to Amend the Defined Contribution (DC) Plan 401 (a) Plan.

Chairman Rodriguez announced that April was *National Volunteer Appreciation Month*. She stated that she would like to extend a sincere "Thank You" to all of the town's volunteers. She stated that they appreciated all of the members serving on the Town's Committees, Commissions, and Board for their time and talents noting that they were a critical component to making our town operate, and a great place to live. She distributed Flyers to the Town Council, and she asked that when they attend their Liaison Assignment Committee meetings that they pass out the Flyers to the Committee Members and that perhaps show their appreciation for all that they do for the town by providing cookies or some other goodies to let them know that they were very much appreciated Thank you.

XI. MAYOR'S REPORT

Chairman Rodriguez noted that Mayor Allyn, III, was out of town. However, she reported that both she and Mayor Allyn attended the Ledyard Prevention Coalition Meeting, and she reported that Ledyard had a fatal overdose on February 21, 2025; a fatal overdose on March 8, 2025; and a non-fatal overdose on March 14, 2025. She noted that Police Chief John Rich and Ledyard Middle School Principal Ryan Earley also attends the Ledyard Prevention Coalition Monthly meetings. She stated that a Prescription Drug Take Back Day has been scheduled for April 26, 2025.

XII. OLD BUSINESS – None.

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

Finance Committee

1. MOTION to allocate up-to \$12,500 from the National Opioid Settlement Funding (Account #20810201-58206-24206) to support the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 administration of the DARE Program in Ledyard Public Schools.

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: Councilor Saccone provided some background noting that the Police Department worked with the Board of Education and Middle School Principal Earley to reinstitute the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) Program. He stated about 180 students

participated and completed the program this year. He stated because the DARE Program was very well received, they decided that they wanted to continue it.

Councilor Saccone went on to state the Finance Committee talked with Police Chief John Rich about the costs to administer the DARE Program and he noted that Chief Rich explained that because many of the supplies such as the workbooks, materials, and merchandise that goes to the kids was donated; that most of the Police Department’s costs to administer the 10-week program was for personnel which required about 133-man-hours.

Councilor Saccone continued by stating that Mayor Allyn, III reviewed the allowed uses of the Opioid Settlement Funding, noting that it could be used for educational programs. Therefore, he stated that the requested \$12,500 would be allocated from the National Opioid Settlement Funding that the town receives to support the DARE Program in the Schools and that no funding for the program would be allocated in the annual budget.

VOTE: 9 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT:	APPROVED 9- 0
MOVER:	Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor
SECONDER:	Tim Ryan, Town Councilor
AYES:	Barnes, Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Rodriguez, Ryan, Saccone, St. Vil

2. MOTION to authorize the overspending of Account #10120501-54300 Ledyard Fire Repairs and Maintenance by an amount not to exceed \$6,000.

Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Buhle

Discussion: Ledyard Center Fire Chief Jon Mann explained that this past year they had some unfortunate repairs ranging from the replacement of new tires on one truck, to corrosion issues, and having to replace valves. He stated because the Department used up their maintenance budget; that he transferred funding from other accounts within their budget. However, he stated they learned that the Air Tanks on R-11 for the Air Brakes needed to be replaced. He stated the cost to replace the Air Tanks was \$3,500 noting that because this was a safety issue they could not put this repair off, stating that they would not want to have an accident with this piece of apparatus. Mr. Mann went on to explain the remaining \$2,500 would be a contingency in case they found something else when they were replacing the Air Tanks. He stated although the Fire Department still had some needed repairs to do, that they planned to put them off until next fiscal year.

Mr. Mann continued by providing some background noting that R-11 was purchased in 2011; however, he explained that this was the truck that had problems with the engine. Therefore, he stated that R-11 sat for a couple of years while they were working out how to proceed with the replacement of the truck’s engine. He stated when a vehicle sits for a while that the Air Tanks develop moisture which led to corrosion issues.

VOTE: 9 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT:	APPROVED 9- 0
MOVER:	Tim Ryan, Town Councilor
SECONDER:	Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor
AYES:	Barnes, Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Rodriguez, Ryan, Saccone, St. Vil

3. MOTION to approve a proposed “*Amendment 2025-1 to the Town of Ledyard 401(a) Plan*” pertaining to Employees eligible for Matching Contributions; as presented by the Retirement Board in the draft dated March 18, 2025.

DRAFT: 3/18/2025

**AMENDMENT 2025-1 TO THE
TOWN OF LEDYARD 401(a) PLAN**

Amended and Restated January 1, 2014

WHEREAS, The Town of Ledyard, hereinafter referred to as the “Employer” established a Plan which reserves in Section 6.1, the Employer’s right and authority to amend the Plan; and

NOW THEREFORE, effective _____, the Employer hereby amends the Plan as follows:

Matching Contributions: Money Purchase Pension Plan is hereby amended to read as follows:

Matching Contributions ARE permitted under the Plan

Employees eligible for Matching Contributions:

All employees hired after July 1, 2009 whose participation in the Town 401(a) Defined Contribution Plan has either been approved by action of the Town Council or is mandated under a collective bargaining agreement between the Town and a collective bargaining unit.

~~Employees who were participants in or drawing benefits from the Retirement Plan for full-time Employees of the Town of Ledyard (Defined Benefit Plan) who are rehired are NOT eligible for Matching Contributions under the Plan.~~

Approved by the Ledyard Town Council on _____

S. Naomi Rodriguez, Chairman

Moved by Councilor Saccone, seconded by Councilor Buhle
Discussion: Councilor Buhle stated the Retirement Board has been working with their Consultant to clean up the Retirement Plan Documents in preparation for the Restating of the Plan.

Councilor Buhle went on to state the proposed amendment to the “*Defined Contribution 401(a) Plan*” as presented in the draft dated March 18, 2025 was just one component of updating the Plan Document. She explained that currently if a Town Employee retired and was rehired by the Town that they could not participate in the Defined Contribution (DC) Plan *401(a) Plan* and accrue new retirement benefits. Therefore, she stated the Retirement Board has forwarded the proposed Amendment to remove the language that prevented rehired employees from having the ability to participate in the Defined Contribution (DC) Retirement Plan.

Councilor Saccone stated that Ledyard has rehired a few employees after they retired from the town. He provided the following examples: Firefighter Jerry Watkins retired and was rehired by the Town to work in the Public Works Department, Police Officer Ken Kreutz retired and was rehired by the Police Department in the capacity as a Captain; and Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin retired and was rehired in the same position. He stated these three employees have dedicated a lot of time, effort and commitment to their jobs, which the Town valued. He stated for these reasons it was important to allow them to earn a retirement benefit.

VOTE: 9 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT:	APPROVED 9- 0
MOVER:	Tony Saccone, Town Councilor
SECONDER:	Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor
AYES:	Barnes, Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Rodriguez, Ryan, Saccone, St. Vil

4. MOTION to adopt a proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Water Operations Budget in the amount \$1,765,186.

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: Water Pollution Control Authority Chairman Ed Lynch, attending remotely via Zoom, stated the proposed Water Operations Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget in the amount of \$1,765,186 increased by \$248,348.18; or 4% because their water provider, Groton Utilities, increased their water rates. He explained that the WPCA had a three-year Contract with Groton Utilities that included two one-year extensions. He stated they were currently in their fifth-Contract year with Groton Utilities; and he noted that the Water Operations Budget has increased by 8% during that time. However, he stated the reason for the increases were as follows:

- Watermain breaks in the Highlands. Mr. Lynch noted that they had another watermain break again today; and that this was getting expensive.
- WPCA Billing increased by 6% – Mr. Lynch stated although Groton Utilities handles the billing for the WPCA that Ledyard's Billing System was different from the billing system Groton Utilities uses for their ratepayers. Mr. Lynch stated the Ledyard WPCA uses the Continental Utility Solutions Inc (CUSI) Billing System, noting that it was getting old. He stated that this issue could be mitigated; however, it would cost about \$100,000 to convert Ledyard's Billing to the Groton Utilities Billing System.
- Water Rate Increase – Mr. Lynch stated that the WPCA was in the arrears by about \$30,000 and that Groton Utilities would be raising the Water Rate by 4% effective October 1, 2025. He also noted that Groton Utilities proposed increasing the Water Rate by 6% effective January 1, 2026. Therefore, he stated that the increase from January to July would be about \$20,000.
- Fire Hydrant Maintenance & Repairs – Mr. Lynch stated the WPCA has a Fire Hydrant Maintenance Account, noting that they had a few Fire hydrants that needed to be repaired.
- Department of Health Leak Tests – Mr. Lynch explained that the Leak Tests cost \$15,000, noting that they have to do these tests every 5-years. He stated for the Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget that he would like the WPCA to set up an Account and allocate funding each year to pay for the Leak Tests, so they have the money when they need to be done.
- Water Purchased – Mr. Lynch stated Assistant Finance Director Ian Stammel noticed that the WPCA was not budgeting enough for Water Purchased. He stated projecting the amount of Water to Purchase was a challenge because if there was a drought the WPCA buys more water; but if there was a rainy season, they actually purchase less water. Therefore, he stated the WPCA added funding for the Water Purchased.

Mr. Lynch stated that he would be happy to answer questions.

Councilor Buhle questioned how the Ledyard WPCA Water Rate compared to the Southeastern Connecticut Water Authority's (SCWA) Water Rate, noting that she was interested in knowing how the WPCA's Water Operations Budget increase would impact one side of town compared to the other side of town. She stated residents water provided depended on where they lived in town.

Mr. Lynch stated depending on where you live in Ledyard would determine which water provider would service your home. He stated that most Water Service Providers charge \$50; \$60; or \$70, just for a Connection Fee, and he explained that even if the customer did not use a drop of water they would still pay the fixed Connection Fee, and he noted that the water provided would also charge per gallon. However, he stated that the Ledayd WPCA charges about \$34 for their Connection Fee, and that included using up-to 3,000 gallons of water a month of water. Therefore, he stated one of the WPCA's top priorities was to look at their rate structure differently. He stated that he did not know what the Southeastern Connecticut Water Authority (SCWA) charges were.

Councilor Buhle stated that SCWA most likely had similar problems as other water providers. She questioned whether the Town Council was also required to approve SCWA’s Water Operations Budget. Mr. Lynch replied “No”.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry questioned the reason the Water Operations Budget was outside of the Town’s Annual budget; and why the Town Council was required to approve the Water Operations Budget, but not the Sewer Operations Budget.

Councilor Dombrowski explained that the Water Operations Budget was paid by the water rate users and not the taxpayers; therefore, he stated the WPCA has its own budget that was not part of the Town’s Annual Budget. WPCA Chairman Lynch explained that the taxpayers do pay for the watermain infrastructure, including any expansion of the infrastructure. Councilor Dombrowski stated because of the size and cost of the water projects that town would typically need to present the project at a Referendum to seek Bond Authorization (borrow) to fund the projects, noting that it would be capital infrastructure.

Mr. Lynch went on to explain that the WPCA could sell the Ledyard’s Water Infrastructure to the Groton Utilities. However, he stated because they were not sure how to divvy all of the town-owned assets this option has been on the back burner.

Chairman Rodriguez thanked Mr. Lynch for attending tonight’s meeting

VOTE: 9 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT:	APPROVED 9- 0
MOVER:	Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor
SECONDER:	Tim Ryan, Town Councilor
AYES:	Barnes, Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Rodriguez, Ryan, Saccone, St. Vil

5. MOTION to adopt a proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget in the amount of **\$71,062,240** comprised of:
- General Government: **\$30,394,998**
 - Board of Education: **\$ 40,667,242**

Moved by Councilor Saccone, seconded by Councilor Buhle
Discussion: Councilor Saccone stated as many mentioned during their Councilor Comments earlier this evening the Finance Committee diligently worked for many hours to minimize the budget increase. He stated the Committee reviewed the budget line by line making adjustments and reducing some lines by as little as \$200, \$1,000; and \$7,646; which was minuscule when they were looking at a \$71,062,240. However, he explain in addition the State Revenues remaining flat and the town continues to face the State’s Unfunded Mandates. He noted that he could tell the taxpayers that the Finance Committee worked with Town Staff and the School Superintendent to do everything they could to bring the budget down to the lowest possible level without impacting services to the community.

Councilor Buhle questioned where the bonded projects were reflected in a \$71,062,240 Budget. Councilor Ryan explained that the bonded expenses were reflected in the “*Debt Service*” portion of the Budget, which included the following expense lines: General Obligation Bond Principal, General Obligation Bond Interest; Projects In-Progress and other expense lines.

Councilor Buhle continued by noting that she agreed with Councilor Saccone’s comments in that everyone worked hard to develop the proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget; and that she wholeheartedly supported it. She went on to note as she has been saying for a long time that Ledyard does not have a spending problem, they have a revenue problem. She stated that Ledyard’s Annual Budgets have no fat, if you could call it that. She stated to maintain the great level of education in our schools; and to be comparable or exceed neighboring communities, that she believed that Ledyard was doing the right thing to fund our education system, to make sure that Ledyard continues to be recognized as one of the best school systems in the area.

Councilor Buhle noted at their Special Meeting on April 7, 2025 the Finance Committee unanimously voted to delay moving the Board of Education Employees Healthcare to the education side of the budget ledger until the Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget. She stated that moving the healthcare expenses did not need to be rushed in a 6-week process; and that they should have collaboration, communication, understanding, and a good plan between the Board of Education Finance Committee and the Town Council Finance Committee, the School Superintendent, and the Mayor to make sure that the change would be beneficial for everyone involved.

Chairman Rodriguez asked Councilor Saccone if he spoke with Finance Director Matthew Bonin after the April 7, 2025 Special Finance Committee about whether the changes they made were reflected in the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget Spreadsheet that was provided for tonight's meeting. Councilor Saccone stated that he did speak with Mr. Bonin and the Spreadsheet has been updated to include all of the budget adjustments that Finance Committee approved at their April 7, 2025 meeting.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry questioned the amount of Debt the town currently had for projects such as the Renovate as New Middle School and Gallup Hil School Improvement/Consolidation Projects, as well as other projects. Councilor Ryan stated the town had \$3.85 million in Debt Service.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated the question she was asking was what the Grant Reimbursement from the State was for the last school projects (Middle School and Gallup Hil School Projects) and whether the grant funding was used to pay down the Bonds; and why the same amount was included in the budget every year. Councilor Dombrowski explained when the Town Bonds for a project that it was similar to a mortgage, noting that the Bonds typically run for 20 or 30 years; and the Town annually makes payments. He stated that the payment can fluctuate depending on whether some Bonds were paid off and whether new Bonds were added. Councilor Buhle noted that the interest the Town had been paying was close to \$1.2 million, and in the upcoming Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget the interest payment decreased to \$900,000; and she explained although the annual payment was about the same, like a mortgage, as the interest was being paid down that more of the payment would be applied to the principal.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry questioned how much the town owed in Debt, noting that the dollar amount the town owed was not included in the Annual Budget. Councilor Dombrowski stated the amount of Debt the town had was not included in the Annual Budget. He explained the town's Debt included projects such as the Police Headquarters Facility, the Renovate as New Middle School and Gallup Hill School Improvement/Consolidation Projects, the installation of the Watermains on Route 117 and Aljen Heights. He stated that because most of the Bonds were for a 20-year period that as some Bonds were paid off the Town's Debt would decrease or increase if the Town Bonded for new projects such as the Board of Education Various Projects (new roofs, Building Maintenance Systems, Heating & Air Condition System), which have not been Bonded yet. He went on to explain that while projects were underway the Town borrows temporary notes called Bond Anticipation Notes (BAN). He stated once the project has been completed, if it was eligible for State Grant Reimbursement that the paperwork would be submitted to the State and that the Town would then pay off the BAN's and sell Bonds once they know the final taxpayers cost of the Project. Therefore, he stated the Town's Total Debt fluctuates; however, the debt resides on the General Government side of the budget ledger regardless of whether the projects were for the Town or the Board of Education.

Chairman Rodriguez stated that recently the town passed the high point in their debt and that it was starting to come down.

Councilor Barnes questioned the Town's Credit Rating. Councilor Ryan noted that during the Finance Committee's February 5, 2025 Auditor Joe Gross of CliftonLarsonAllen, LLP provided the Annual Audit Report for the Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2024. He stated that Ledyard received a rating of A/A-stable from Standards and Poors, which was very good for their General Obligation Municipal Bond Rating. He also noted that the Annual Audit reported that the Ledyard's General Obligation Bonds and Notes, including their Premium which decreased by \$3,126,610; and that the town had a total Outstanding Bond and Note Debt in the amount of \$32,732,399.

Councilor Barnes addressed the Board of Education Employees Healthcare Expenses; and he noted that he appreciated Councilor Buhle's comments to not move the expense line and revenues to the education side of the budget ledger for the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 and defer the move to the Fiscal Year 2026/2027 Budget preparation. He stated that it was wise to involve all in the process so that it was thought out and all were understood.

Councilor Barnes continued by stating that later this evening they would be talking about the Budget Advisory Questions in which they were going to ask the Voters "*Do you believe the General Government Budget was Too High Or Too Low- and - Do you believe the Board of Education Budget was Too High Or Too Low?*". Councilor Barnes stated that it would not be appropriate to ask the question if they were not doing it on the entire amount. He noted Councilor Ryan's and other's comments that were made earlier this evening to separate the General Government Budget and the Board of Education Budget. He stated that he fully supported allowing the townspeople to vote on the General Government Budget and the Board of Education Budget each independently, noting that ultimately it would give the voters the best choice and the best ability to express their interests. However, he stated having separate budgets was not simple to do, noting that he believed it would require a Charter Revision. He stated by having two separate budgets it would give the voters the opportunity to make a clear statement, rather than just vote on a dollar amount; and it would allow them to say how much of their mil rate should go to Education and how much of their mil rate should go to the General Government.

Councilor Ryan stated as Councilor Buhle mentioned earlier this evening at their April 7, 2025 Special Meeting that the Finance Committee unanimously voted not to shift the Board of Education Employees Healthcare to education side of the budget ledger in the upcoming Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget. However, he stated that the Finance Committee was all unanimous in their desire to shift the expense and revenue to the education side of the ledger; noting that it was just a question of when. He stated at their April 16, 2025 Meeting that the Finance Committee was going to talk about scheduling Regular Joint Finance Committee Meetings between the Town Council Finance Committee and Board of Education Finance Committee to talk about these types of issues.

Councilor Ryan continued by addressing the proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget noting the following:

- The Board of Education's proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget included a \$2,297,419 increase or 5.98%. Councilor Ryan stated that this increase does not include the \$5,768,830 cost for the Board of Education Employees and Retires Healthcare.
- The General Government's proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget included a \$1,236,419 increase of 2.65%. Councilor Ryan stated the General Government Budget was very lean.
- The proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget in the total amount of \$71,062,240, as presented this evening, would call for a 2.76 mil rate increase, noting that taxpayers would see an increase of about \$500 - \$700 in their annual tax bill.

Councilor Ryan stated although he did not think that the Education Budget was overly burdensome, that he believed that it did not represent a shared sacrifice on their part. He stated that an increase of \$500 - \$700 in a residents annual tax bill might not seem like a lot of money to some people, but for a lot of people a \$500 - \$700 increase in their taxes was a lot of money.

Councilor Ryan stated that a 5.2% total Budget increase was unsustainable if they want to continue to attract people to Ledyard. He stated that School Districts in many Municipalities was one of the features that attracted people to a community. However he stated another feature was affordability, noting as an example that people could move to East Lyme and pay less taxes and still have access to a great School District. He stated the point he was trying to make was that Ledyard has the unenviable task of trying to simultaneously make Ledyard affordable, and also improve its services. He stated as Councilor Buhle mentioned that one of

the root causes that we could agree on was that Ledyard needed to increase its commercial and industrial tax base. He stated as the Liaison to the Economic Development Commission, that hopefully Councilor Buhle could help with that. He stated the common enemy of every single budget cycle in Ledyard was the lack of a commercial and industrial tax base, putting most of the tax burden to support both the General Government and Board of Education on its residential property owners.

Councilor Ryan continued by reviewing some data he obtained from the Connecticut Department of Education (CDSE) Website, noting that when you see the numbers on a sheet, it says one thing, but when they are graphed out, it says another thing.

- **Revenues** – Councilor Ryan stated over a 20-year period that Revenues to Ledyard from the State and Federal Government, including outside tuition, have remained flat, which meant that more funding needed to come from local funding (taxpayers). He stated that this was where Ledyard needed to engage our State Senator and State Representatives to gain their support to fix this situation.
- **Per Pupil Expenditures** - Councilor Ryan stated just to be clear, that he agreed with the statements that have been made by various Board of Education Members, as well as School Superintendent Hartling, that Ledyard had one of the lowest Per Pupil expenditures both in our Region, or in our District Reference Group. He stated that the District Reference Group was probably a more accurate measurement of how Ledyard's Schools compared to other municipalities that were similar to us.

Councilor Ryan went on to state that year over year Ledyard has increased its Per Pupil Expenditure by more than inflation. He noted that he did not think anyone would say that it was not important to fund the schools. He stated it was absolutely important to fund the schools and to help the next generation by providing the best possible education we could afford; so they could become the best individuals possible. He stated the key was “*What we could afford*”. He stated that he did not believe the Board of Education's proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 in the amount of \$40,062,242; an increase of \$2,297,419 was what Ledyard could afford.

Councilor Ryan in addition to having a low Per Pupil Expenditure that the CDSE Website indicated that Ledyard had one of the lower Administration expenses in the State.

Councilor Ryan stated at Monday night's Finance Committee meeting (4/7/2025) that the Committee agreed that efforts were made to try to reduce expenses in the General Governments. He noted that the Committee cut a \$1,000 here and added \$800 there looking to save money in every budget line. However, he stated that there really was not much to play with in the General Government budget, especially with a little over a 2% increase overall.

Councilor Ryan continued by stating during the Finance Committee's April 7, 2025 meeting that he noted in Board of Education Chairman Favry's Budget Letter dated February 24, 2025 he stated that 70.2% of the proposed education budget increase was tied to maintaining required services and fulfilling contractual agreements. He stated just for conversation purposes that of the Board of Education's proposed \$2.3 million increase that \$1.7 million was just to maintain the current status, and then there were some other nuances. Therefore, he stated that it would mean about \$669,000 or 29% of the budget was in play for programmatic improvements, and for various things that would improve the schools and student-facing services.

Councilor Ryan stated that the Town Council was responsible for all residents, including their students, parents, families that do not have students, retirees, and everybody in between. Therefore, he stated that a 2.76 mil rate increase was not going to be acceptable when the Town has endured about a 1 mill increase on average over the last few years; and in some years a little less than 1 mil.

Councilor Ryan stated after much deliberation during the Finance Committee's April 7, 2025 meeting, there was no appetite to decrease the portion of the Board of Education's proposed budget increase that he considered was in-play. Therefore, he stated that the Town Council should at least challenge the Board of Education's proposed 5.98% increase; and he suggested they consider reducing the 5.98% increase to a 5% increase. He stated in considering a .99% reduction to the Board of Education's proposed 5.99% increase that it would at least show that the Town Council was doing their due diligence to recognize the challenges that residents have been facing. He went on to state that he does recognize that it was important to continue to fund improvements in the schools, especially the student-facing services.

Councilor Buhle noted at the Finance Committee's April 7, 2025 Special Meeting that Councilor Ryan suggested reducing the Board of Education's proposed budget increase by \$330,000; to start the conversation. However, she stated that it would have equated to about half of the programmatic improvements, which she did not think would be attainable. She stated that the Finance Committee asked Finance Director Matthew Bonin how a \$100,000 reduction would impact the mil rate; and she noted that \$100,000 was about .009 of a mil. She stated the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Capital Budget included the following:

- \$135,000 for Juliet W. Long Classroom Improvements and Improvements in the Science Center;
- \$260,000 for High School Science Labs Improvements.

Councilor Buhle stated that both of these School Facilities Improvement were 3-year projects, noting they have been delayed for many years and that they were now well overdue, and highly necessary improvements. She stated with that being said that during the April 7, 2025 Special Finance Committee Meeting that she stated her personal appetite would have been to reduce capital expenses over programmatic improvements. She stated in looking at the Board of Education's proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget that she sees a very well-thought-out budget that was prioritized, based on need of their students; and to make sure that Ledyard's Schools stay as highly respected as they were, and that they provide the education that our families expect.

Councilor Buhle stated the Board of Education's budget proposal was all broken down very clearly. She stated what she had a hard time with was, if the Town Council reduced the Board of Education's proposed budget increase, it would be a shot in the dark as to which items the Board of Education would fund; and which items they would not fund.

Councilor Ryan stated that Councilor Buhle was speaking to his point. He stated the Town Council was working within the confines of the system that they have. He stated that he did not want to say that during the Finance Committee's April 7, 2025 meeting that their conversation was completely off the table, however, he stated that their meeting points were far apart.

Councilor Buhle stated in looking at the way the numbers break down it felt like the students would have to sacrifice even with a mil rate increase that was over 2.5 mils. She stated that budget reductions would not have amounted to enough that would have reduced the tax burden without severely impacting our students.

Councilor St. Vil stated his parents were on fixed income; and his grandparents were on a fixed income, and he had a younger brother who was on a fixed income. Therefore, he stated that he was extremely sensitive to price increases. He noted today that a carton of a dozen eggs costs almost \$25.000; which was debilitating for his parent's household, and his brother's household. Therefore, he stated that he was sensitive to any tax increases and the effect on households in their community. However, he stated that he did not want to be short sided with the decisions that they make. He stated to substantiate that statement that if you were to take an equivalent sized home from Ledyard and put it in East Lyme that your taxes would not be less. He stated the reason he was saying this was because he reviewed both Towns Operating Budget and both Towns Board of Education's Budgets, line by line. He stated if you just look at the mil rate, you would say to yourself, "*Well, our mil rate is higher*". However, he stated that if you look at the overarching budget numbers in comparison to surrounding towns that

Ledyard had the second lowest operating budget. He stated that our Town's Administrators deserve some credit for that, because they were running a lean house and providing services to the town. However, he stated if the town was not providing the services required, that he would not approve the proposed budget, and he would continue to ask questions. He stated although there were always opportunities to improve, and to become more efficient, that he thought that was the challenge for Superintendent Hartling and the Board of Education to decide.

Councilor St. Vil stated that the Town Council has reviewed the proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget line by line. He stated that they have made their comments, and they have inquired about the subject matter. He stated that experts have proposed these budgets, and they were both fiscally responsible budgets. He stated that he did not believe the Board of Education had any additional fat, noting that it was just not there, otherwise he would not approve it.

Councilor St. Vil stated although they do not live in other towns, that he would challenge their residents to look at surrounding towns and their budget, to get a perspective and some context on how hard the people in this town work to ensure that their costs were as low as they can possibly be, and that the proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget had the lowest increase that they could possibly offer.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated that she wanted to explain a few things about the proposed Board of Education Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget. She stated that they have a lot of unfunded mandates that have to be funded at the local level. She noted as an example for the current budget year (fy 24/25) that the State implemented a new Reading Program, and they required the Schools to buy the required books from a specific seller. She stated that because the Board of Education could purchase the same books for a lower cost from another seller vendor they requested a waiver from the State. However, she stated that the State denied their request, and therefore, the Board of Education had to spend an extra \$100,000 more to buy the books from the one seller that the State designated, noting that going forward that this would continue. She went on to note that there was a number of things that were basically out of their local control, but because the State mandated the programs the School District was required to comply. She noted another example was that to enter kindergarten now the children have to be 5-years old by September 1st, noting in the past the children had to be 5-years old by January 1st. She stated because the age requirement changed that the State of Connecticut was sending less money to the School District because they were assuming that the schools would have less kindergarten students, because the children born between September and December would have to wait until the following school year. However, she stated the School District still had to teach the kids to read, etc.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry noted Councilor Ryan's comments regarding the salary increases and the importance to attract good talent. She stated just like the Town wanted to retain the good talented staff they had; that the Board of Education also wanted to retain good talent; and therefore, she stated that they deserved salary increases for the school side too. She stated that it was difficult to get the talent that we need; and she commented that right now the School Staff were trying to do a lot with very little. She stated that sometimes teachers have to cover for other teachers during their prep time, because there was not enough substitute teachers.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry addressed the comments about separating the General Government Budget and the Board of Education Budget. She stated that she did not agree with separating the budgets, because residents would see that the General Government Budget had a 3% increase; and the Board of Education budget had a 5.98% increase. Therefore, she stated that the residents would approve the General Government Budget, and they might not approve the Board of Education Budget. However, she stated that the residents would not understand all the nuances that impact the Board of Education Budget. She stated separating the budgets was a high risk, and that she did not want to see our schools not be funded. She stated that it was not like the Residents would only pay property taxes on one of the budgets, noting that they would still have to pay property taxes on both of the budgets (General Government Budget and Board of Education Budget). Therefore, she stated at the end of the day the Residents have to pay for the budget through their property taxes.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated that she understood that a 2.7 mil increase was a lot; however, she stated that things have to be funded. She stated that she would welcome ideas on how the Town could get more funding such as grants; to help decrease the amount of money taxpayers have to pay. She stated that Ledyard has to be more aggressive in seeking grant funding. She stated that the Board of Education worked very hard to prepare their budget, noting that they know what the School District needed. She stated that she agreed that the Town Council should have a say in the education budget; and that the Board of Education should make the information available so that the Town Council could review and analyze it, and ask questions, and to be more proactive in the Board of Education's budget. However, she stated that she did not think the Budgets should be separated. She suggested they should conduct a survey on separating the budgets when they do the next Charter Revision.

Councilor Dombrowski thanked all the members of the Town Council Finance Committee, as well as the Board of Education Finance Committee for the hard work in preparing the proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget. He stated during the 14-years he has served on the Town Council; and before that he had served for many years on other Town Commissions, including the Charter Revision Commission. He stated he has heard these same discussions over the last 25 years about separating the two budgets (General Government Budget and Board of Education Budget); and whether they should be voted on as a single-line; or as two-lines on the Budget Referendum, noting that this was nothing new to him.

Councilor Dombrowski continued by addressing the Board of Education Employees Healthcare expenses and this year's discussion about moving the expense line back to the education side of the budget ledger. He urged the Finance Committee to understand the reason Board of Education Employees Healthcare expenses was moved to the General Government side of the budget ledger, before they made a decision to move it back to the education side of the budget ledger. He urged them to review what happened 20- years ago noting that the Town Council served as the Financial Guardians for the Town.

Councilor Dombrowski went on to state that the Town Council could comment on what they should or could do with the Board of Education's Budget. However, he stated per Connecticut General State Statute the only thing the Town Council could do with the Board of Education's Budget was to change the total amount of their budget. He stated that the Town Council cannot make suggestions regarding any line item in the Board of Education's Budget, noting that all they could say was *"Yes, we agree; or No it was too high"*; and that the Board had to reduce their budget by a certain amount. He stated that the Town Council could not make suggestions where they think budget cuts could be made, noting that all they could do was address the total dollar amount of the Board of Education's Budget, in accordance to the Connecticut General State Statutes.

Councilor Buhle addressed the 2025 Property Revaluation, noting that because property values would increase that the mil rate would decrease.

Councilor Dombrowski stated that the homeowners that would be most affected by an increase in the value of their property and the mil rate were the ones who could least afford it. He stated that the impact would not be an 8% increase on property, noting that for some property owners they could see an increase closer to 12% - 15%. He stated that some property owners would almost get a double hit based on how much their property values increased, because that would be on top of the mil rate increase. Therefore, he stated that he could not support the proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget; and that he would be voting *"No"* this evening.

Councilor Ryan stated that he wanted to provide clarification regarding the Property Revaluation that was currently underway, noting that he understood what the Councilors were saying. However, he stated what they should see going forward, starting with the 2026/2027 budget year, was that with the Property Revaluation the mil rate would potentially be reduced because the Grand List would increase. However, he stated that if the Grand List goes up, that does not mean that the amount of the annual budget would go down. He explained that it would just mean that the taxes were allotted differently on a different assessed value. He stated that Councilor Dombrowski's comments were correct in that the more affordable

homes would see the biggest jump in their assessed value. Therefore, he stated that he could see his concern. However, he stated that for the proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget that they were discussing this evening, that the Property Revaluation assessments would not apply.

Councilor Dombrowski stated that the proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget was still an 8% increase over the current year. Councilor Buhle stated that the increase was not 8%, noting that the proposed budget was seeing a 2% - 3% increase; but that they were getting an 8% increase in the taxes they would pay. Councilor Dombrowski stated that was what he had an issue with. Councilor Buhle stated that she understood everyone's argument; however, she stated that they had to fund the education budget. Councilor Dombrowski stated that he supported education, noting that he was not anti-education. He stated it was just that they should be telling the taxpayers that it was still an 8% increase on people who could least afford it.

Chairman Rodriguez thanked Councilor Buhle and Councilor Dombrowski for their comments.

Councilor Ryan continued by stating that the Property Revaluation would affect more of the affordable housing. He stated generally the Grand List would go up and the Mil Rate would come down. However, he stated the reality was that the Tax Bills never come down. He stated ideally it would make sense that if the Grand List goes up and Mil Rate comes down that property taxes would come down too, and that would be correct in a general sense. However, he stated on a local sense, meaning local to each house, that the impact was varied, noting that everyone knows that property taxes only go up.

Councilor Ryan went on to note that he also had concerns regarding the unknowns in the town's revenue. He stated that their State Senator Cathy Osten was supporting Legislation "*An Act Establishing a Property Tax Exemption for Property Located on Certain Indian Lands*"; which was designed to negate the Town's ability to collect personal property tax from the third-party private vendors operating at the Mashantucket Pequot Foxwoods Resort Casino. He explained if this piece of Legislation was approved by the State that Ledyard would see a loss of \$625,000 to \$825,000 in tax revenues from commercial businesses such as the Tanger Outlet, California Pizza Kitchen, Dunkin Donuts, etc. He stated if that happened Ledyard would be in a bigger hole. He stated that they discussed trying to amortize the effect of the budget increases over the years. However, he stated they recognized the fact that they needed to increase the school budget; and they needed to keep showing improvement in the services that the School District provided. However, he stated that does not mean that they needed to do it all at once, even with the proposed budget. Therefore, he stated that they had to make some hard choices.

Councilor Ryan stated that during the April 7, 2025 Special Finance Committee he asked the Committee if they were willing to decrease the proposed budget, and that Councilor Buhle and Councilor Saccone said "*No*"; which was how they forwarded the proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget presented this evening. He stated by voting on the General Government Budget and Board of Education Budget separately that it would provide the ultimate in transparency. However, he stated that he understood that some feared that residents would not understand the nuances of the budgets and would see a 6% budget increase and a 2% budget increase and may vote for one budget and not the other budget. He stated having two separate budgets would be part of being an engaged voter, noting that he would encourage everybody out there, every resident to be more engaged because it merits accountability. He stated that both budgets would be put out there showing what each of the major services were costing the taxpayers.

Chairman Rodriguez noted that Councilor Ryan mentioned the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation (MPTN) Foxwoods Casino-Resort; and she stated that she was able to arrange a meeting between Mayor Allyn, III, herself and MPTN Chairman Rodney Butler, and MPTN Councilor Crystal Whipple for next week. She stated that she would be praying for that they communicate effectively, and that they could continue to have future conversations regarding the issues that are of high concern for the Town of Ledyard.

Chairman Rodriguez addressed the comments to separate the General Government Budget and the Board of Education Budget, and she stated that she believed that the two budgets should remain combined, as it has been for all these years. She stated that prior Town Councils could have separated the two budgets, noting that they did not choose to do so. She stated even with the combined budgets that there was transparency. She stated to think that because the budgets were combined that there was no transparency was an erroneous statement. She stated that they have gone through great lengths to be transparent with the Board of Education Budget and with the General Government Budget; and that she was proud of the hard work that everyone has done with both of these budgets. She stated that a lot of hours; and a lot of people caring about the community and about the taxpayers has gone into preparing the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget and that she though it was as transparent as it can be.

Councilor Ryan stated that Ledyard had to face the reality with what their residents cannot afford. Therefore, he stated that he would like to propose an Amendment to the proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget a follows:

MOTION to amend the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget to reduce the proposed Board of Education Budget increase from 5.98% to a 5% increase for a revised Education Budget in the amount of \$40,288,314.

Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Barnes

Discussion: (see above)

VOTE: 3 – 6 Motion Failed (Brunelle, Buhle, Garcia-Irizarry, Rodriguez, Saccone, St. Vil not in favor)

RESULT:	FAILED 3 - 6
MOVER:	Tim Ryan, Town Councilor
SECONDER:	Bill Barnes, Town Councilor
AYES:	Barnes, Dombrowski, Ryan
NAYES:	Brunelle, Buhle, Garcia-Irizarry, Rodriguez, Saccone, St. Vil

Chairman Rodriguez called for a Vote on Main Motion as follows:

MOTION to adopt a proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget in the amount of **\$71,062,240** comprised of:

- General Government: **\$30,394,998**
- Board of Education: **\$ 40,667,242**

Moved by Councilor Saccone, seconded by Councilor Buhle

VOTE: 6 – 3 Approved and so declared (Barnes, Dombrowski, Ryan not in favor)

RESULT:	APPROVED 6 - 3
MOVER:	Tony Saccone, Town Councilor
SECONDER:	Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor
AYES:	Brunelle, Buhle, Garcia-Irizarry, Rodriguez, Saccone, St. Vil
NAYES:	Barnes, Dombrowski, Ryan

6. MOTION to set a Public Hearing (Hybrid Format - Video Conference and In-Person) Public Hearing date to be held on April 21, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. to be held in Ledyard Middle School Auditorium, 1860 Route 12, Gales Ferry, Connecticut, to receive comments and recommendations regarding a proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget.

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: It was noted that in accordance with Chapter VII; Section 5 of the of the Town Charter:

“....The Town Council shall have the power to revise any of the proposed budget items. After formation of a preliminary budget, the Town Council shall provide sufficient copies of said budget for general distribution in the office of the Town Clerk, and shall conduct one or more public hearings on or before the last Monday of April.....”

VOTE: 9 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT:	APPROVED 9- 0
MOVER:	Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor
SECONDER:	Tim Ryan, Town Councilor
AYES:	Barnes, Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Rodriguez, Ryan, Saccone, St. Vil

7. MOTION to set the Annual Town Meeting (Hybrid Format Video Conference and In-Person) date regarding the proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget to be on May 19, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. to be held at the Ledyard Middle School Auditorium, 1860 Route 12, Gales Ferry, Connecticut; and to adjourn to a Referendum to be held on May 20, 2025 between the hours of 6:00 a.m. 8:00 p.m.

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Ryan
Discussion: It was noted that in accordance with Chapter VII; Section 5 of the Town Charter:

*“...The **Annual Town Meeting** for the consideration of the budget and the transaction of other business **shall be held on the third Monday of May** at such hour and at such place as the Town Council shall determine.*

*The Town Meeting(s) may not alter the amount of any appropriation recommended by the Town Council. The vote of the **Town meeting on the Annual Budget shall be adjourned to a vote on the voting machines the day following the Town Meeting** in the same manner as outlined in Chapter VII, Section 9D and, if approved by a majority of those voting hereon, shall be deemed to be the vote of the Town Meeting.”*

VOTE: 9 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT:	APPROVED 9- 0
MOVER:	Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor
SECONDER:	Tim Ryan, Town Councilor
AYES:	Barnes, Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Rodriguez, Ryan, Saccone, St. Vil

8. MOTION to acknowledge the following “*Advisory Questions*” will be placed on the May 20, 2025 Referendum, in accordance with Chapter VII, Section 7 of the Town Charter:
- 1.) Do you believe the **Board of Education budget** is:

☐ Too High

Or

☐ Too Low
- 2.) Do you believe the **General Government budget** is:

☐ Too High

Or

☐ Too Low

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Ryan
Discussion: Chairman Rodriguez explained that the Town Council was only acknowledging that these Advisory Questions would be included on the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget Ballot so residents would be aware that they would have the opportunity to provide some feedback on the proposed budget.

Chairman Rodriguez went on to note that in accordance with Chapter VII; Section 7 of the Town Charter

“Advisory Questions may be proposed by petition of at least 100 Town electors, or by the written request of at least 4 of the elected town officers listed in Chapter II, Section 3.

*Proposed Advisory Questions shall be submitted to the Town Clerk at least 30 days in advance of the **Initial Budget Referendum**. The Town Council may place Advisory Questions on **subsequent referendum**.”*

Chairman Rodriguez explained that *non-binding Advisory Questions* may be placed on the voting machines for the initial Budget Referendum. She stated that the Advisory Questions may invite opinions on the proposed annual budget; or they may invite opinions that could aid the town government on any issue within the authority of the Town of Ledyard.

Chairman Rodriguez went on to state that the Town Clerk received 4 letters from the following Elected Officials: Mayor Allyn, III, Councilor Bill Barnes, Councilor Kevin Dombrowski, and Board of Education Member Earl (Ty) Lamb. She stated in accordance with the Town Charter that the Town Clerk amended the Advisory Questions with the advice of the Town’s Legal Counsel. Therefore, she stated that they were left with these Advisory Questions for the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget Referendum; noting that tonight’s vote was only to acknowledge the placement of these Advisory Questions on the ballot.

VOTE: 9 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT:	APPROVED 9- 0
MOVER:	Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor
SECONDER:	Tim Ryan, Town Councilor
AYES:	Barnes, Brunelle, Buhle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Rodriguez, Ryan, Saccone, St. Vil

XV. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Buhle moved to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Dombrowski.

VOTE: 9 - 0 Approved and so declared. The meeting adjourned at 9:00 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 April 9, 2025.

S. Naomi Rodriguez, Chairman