



TOWN OF LEDYARD
CONNECTICUT
TOWN COUNCIL

Chairman S. Naomi Rodriguez

MINUTES
LEDYARD TOWN COUNCIL – SPECIAL MEETING
WEDNESDAY, JULY 23, 2025; 5:30 PM

- I. CALL TO ORDER – Chairman Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 5:30 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. ROLL CALL –

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

III. BUSINESS OF THE MEETING

1. MOTION to authorize the transfer from Account #21090305-58915 (CNR-Undesignated) to Account #21070101-57300 (CNR-Board of Education-New Equipment) and to authorize the appropriation of up to \$400,000 from Account #21070101-57300 (CNR-Board of Education-New Equipment) for the emergency replacement of the Chiller at the Gales Ferry School.

Upon future issuance of tax-exempt bonding reimburse such funds to Account #21090305-58915 (CNR-Undesignated); and,

In anticipation of such reimbursement, declare the Town’s official intent under Federal Income Tax Regulation Section 1.150-2 that project costs may be paid from temporary advances of available funds and that (except to the extent reimbursed from grant monies) the Town reasonably expects to reimburse any such advances from the proceeds of borrowings in an aggregate principal amount not in excess of the amount of borrowing authorized above for the project.

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Garcia-Irizarry

Discussion: Board of Education Director of Facilities & Grounds Wayne Donaldson stated at their July 9, 2025 meeting, the Town Council approved to grant a bid waiver in the amount of up-to \$390,782 to Tradesmen of New England, Bloomfield, Connecticut, to replace the Chiller at the Gales Ferry School. He explained the Chiller had two operating systems, noting that one of the systems failed last year and the repair costs were between \$30,000 - \$40,000. He stated because the Chiller was 25-years old that they tried to limp along until they could replace the entire unit, noting that the Chiller was included in the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Capital Budget as a Bond Project. However, he stated about a month ago that the second operating system failed causing the Gales Ferry School to have no air conditioning in that facility. He stated they went through a number of processes to see whether it was possible to take parts from one side and put them together on the other side, however, he stated that it was going to be costly and there was no guarantee that it would work.

Mr. Donaldson went on to state because the lead time for a replacement was going to be at least 19-weeks and would put them out to December; they found two-units that were each half the size of the current Chiller; explaining that instead of having two-units built into one, that they would have two-separate units, noting that the delivery time would be two-weeks. He stated this time frame would allow them to put everything back together before the start of school; which was one of the reasons the Board of Education had requested a bid waiver to Tradesmen of New England. He stated the other reason was because this contractor currently has the Service Contract on their current Chiller and they agreed to credit them \$30,000 for costs of the repairs for the chiller work; and the Contractor was providing the two units at their cost.

Mayor Allyn, III, explained that the July 9, 2025 action to grant a bid waiver to Tradesmen of New England, Bloomfield, Connecticut, for the emergency replacement of the Chiller at the Gales Ferry School was only half of the motion that was required to facilitate the project. He noted as Mr. Donaldson mentioned that the Chiller Replacement was included in the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Capital Plan as a Bondable Project. However, he stated because this was an emergency situation that they do not have time for the Bond Process. Therefore, he stated tonight's motion would provide funding on a temporary basis from Capital Non-Recuring Account #21090305-58915; and once the town obtains authorization to Bond (borrow) funding that the funds would be returned to the Capital Non-Recurring Undesignated Account. He also explained that because they would be using existing funds, and reimbursing the CNR Undesignated Fund sometime next year; that Bond Counsel provided specific language, as provided in tonight's motion, to allow the town to proceed.

Chairman Rodriguez thanked Mayor Allyn, Finance Director Matthew Bonin, School Superintendent Hartling, and Board of Education Director of Facilities & Grounds Wayne Donaldson for working so quickly to resolve this issue, and to bring it to the Town Council's attention.

Finance Director Matthew Bonin asked that going forward when financial matters were involved that someone contact him. He stated if he was contacted before the July 9, 2025 Town Council meeting that they could have avoided the need for tonight's Special Meeting.

Mr. Bonin continued by providing some background noting that he had contacted Bond Counsel even before the need for the emergency chiller replacement occurred, to discuss the process for Capital Projects that were approved through the Annual Budget Process and identified as "Bondable" in the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Capital Improvement Plan. He stated that Bond Counsel explained by listing the Capital Projects in the Annual Budget that all they were doing was identifying the projects that the town would like to address. He stated the Town would be required to go through the Bond Process to seek the townspeople's authorization to spend (appropriate) and borrow (bond) the amount to cover the full cost of the projects; which would involve Authorizing Resolutions, a Special Town Meeting, and a Referendum Vote.

Mr. Bonin went on to explain as Mayor Allyn mentioned, that because replacing the Chiller at the Gales Ferry School was an *emergency*, the town did not have the time to go through the Bond Authorization Process. Therefore, he stated tonight's motion has identified Account #21090305-58915 (CNR-Undesignated) as the funding source to allow the Chiller to be replaced for the short-term, until the town goes through the Bond Process, at which time Account #21090305-58915 (CNR-Undesignated) would be reimbursed. Therefore, he stated to facilitate this "short-term-long-term" funding mechanism that the specific language in tonight's motion was provided by Bond Counsel.

Chairman Rodriguez stated that last week she along with Mayor Allyn, Finance Director Matthew Bonin, and School Superintendent Hartling met to discuss the matter. She stated after their meeting Mr. Bonin spoke with Bond Counsel to get the correct wording. She stated because she was sick last week they decided to meet this week.

Councilor Buhle questioned the balance of Account #21090305-58915 (CNR-Undesignated) and whether allocating this \$400,000 to replace the Chiller at the Gales Ferry School would deplete the account. Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated although he did not know the

exact Account balance at this time, that this short-term allocation would not deplete the account.

Councilor Buhle addressed the Bond Process, and she questioned the other projects that would be included with the Gales Ferry Chiller. Mayor Allyn stated that there were a number of projects that were included in the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Capital Plan that were identified as “Bondable” noting the following: High School Fire Alarm System, Dehumidifiers for the Gallup Hill School and Middle School, along with some other projects. He explained that he expected that the Town Council would be addressing the Bond Resolutions to start the Authorization Process sometime during the fall in preparation to go out to sell Bonds next year.

Councilor Saccone stated that he wanted to mention for their taxpayers, future Mayors, and for future Town Councils the “*Committee to Review the Budget Process Final Report Dated October 31, 2023*” that was Chaired by Councilor Tim Ryan. He stated the Report included a Recommendation to set aside funding annually for Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) for facilities/buildings in something like a savings account for large, anticipated capital projects such as the replacement of the school roof projects. He noted the Interest Earnings on the Town’s Reserve Accounts were projected to generate income of \$525,000 in the coming year while it was just sitting in the bank. Therefore, he stated because they knew that the lifecycle of things such as school roofs were about twenty-five years that the town could begin to save for those expenses as they have been doing for years for the replacement of things such as Fire Apparatus, noting that fire trucks cost about \$1 million; and Public Works Equipment. He stated if they had a Sinking Fund for Facilities/Buildings that when emergencies or future projects come up the savings account would be available and that the Town would not have to bond as much; and the town would be earning interest on the money in the bank. He stated this type of savings account would be very helpful in saving the town money and to avoid future risk. He stated unfortunately they were not able to initiate this type of Facilities Capital Account in either the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 or the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget because of the increased operating costs due to inflation, reductions in revenues, and the need to increase the mil rate.

Councilor Barnes attending remotely via Zoom, stated that he understood that the Gales Ferry School Chiller failed and they needed to move quickly to replace the unit. However, he stated that he was looking for clarification for the reason they did not address this funding component at the July 9, 2025 meeting; and whether this language from Bond Counsel has truly become an emergent issue. School Superintendent Hartling stated the situation was as Mayor Allyn explained earlier this evening, noting that tonight’s Special Town Council meeting was wrapping up the second half of the required action to proceed with the emergency replacement of the Chiller; now that they had all the information and the language from Bond Counsel. Mayor Allyn noted that it comes down to process, explaining that when they were spending money they need to identify the funding source. He stated because the Chiller Replacement at the Gales Ferry School had been identified as a “Bondable Project” that they had to work with Bond Counsel to make sure they were proceeding appropriately; which was the reason the Special Town Council meeting was called for tonight to get it all straightened out.

Councilor Ryan attending remotely via Zoom, stated that he had the same question that Councilor Barnes asked. He stated it was always great when they were able to mitigate redundant meetings. However, he stated that he understood that they needed some additional information to move forward with replacing the Chiller at the Gales Ferry School, that they did not have at the time they held their July 9, 2025 meeting; which was the reason they were taking care of it today.

VOTE: 8 - 0 Approved and so declared

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

IV. ADJOURNMENT

VOTE: Councilor Buhle moved to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Brunelle
8 - 0 Approved and so declared. The meeting adjourned at 5:43 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 Special Town Council Meeting held on July 23, 2025

S. Naomi Rodriguez, Chairman