Chairman S. Naomi Rodriguez

TOWN OF LEDYARD

CONNECTICUT
TOWN COUNCIL
HYBRID FORMAT

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MINUTES
FINANCE COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING

Wednesday, April 3, 2024 5:00 PM Annex Meeting Room - Video Conference

DRAFT

I. CALL TO ORDER - The Meeting was called to order by Committee Chairman Councilor Saccone at 5:00 p.m. at the Council Chambers Town Hall Annex Building.

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

II. ROLL CALL

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Location	Arrived	Departed
Jessica Buhle	Town Councilor	Present	Remote	5:00 pm	6:41 pm
Tim Ryan	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	6:41 pm
Tony Saccone	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	6:41 pm
S. Naomi Rodriguez	Town Council Chairman	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	6:41 pm
Carmen Garcia-Irizarry	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	6:41 pm
Fred Allyn, III	Mayor	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	6:41 pm
Matthew Bonin	Finance Director	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	6:41 pm
Steve Masalin	Public Works Director/Town Engineer	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	6:41 pm
Jennifer Smith	Library Director	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	5:16 pm
Scott Johnson, Jr.	Parks, Recreation, & Senior Citizens Director	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	6:41 pm
Roxanne Maher	Administrative Assistant	Present	In-Person	5:00 pm	6:41 pm

III. RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS COMMENTS - None

IV. PRESENTATIONS/INFORMATIONAL ITEMS – None.

V. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

MOTION to approve the following Finance Committee Minutes

- Regular Meeting Minutes of March 20, 2024
- Special Meeting Minutes of March 25, 2024

Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Buhle

VOTE: 3 – 0 Approved and so declared

VI. FINANCE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Finance Director Matthew Bonin reported on the following: (1) Munis Financial System Postings – Mr. Bonin stated Fiscal Assistant Nancy Michard has completed entering all the posting into the Munis that had accumulated during the time the position was vacant. He stated this would allow him to return to his schedule to provide Financial Reports at the Finance Committee's second meeting of the month; (2) School(s) Consolidation/Improvement Projects (Middle School & Gallup Hill School) – The School(s) Project Reimbursement Package prepared by Colliers Project Leaders was submitted last week to the State's Department of Administrative Services (DAS) for the disbursement of funding to the Town; and for the State to conduct the Final Project Audit before releasing the final payment to the Town which was about $8 million; (3) Board of Education Capital Account – Mr. Bonin noted that he wanted to provide clarification regarding some of the comments Superintendent of Schools Jason Hartling made at the Special Finance Committee's March 25, 2024 meeting regarding the following: (a) ***The allocation of the Board of Education's Fiscal Year 2022/2023 Budget Surplus Funds:*** Mr. Bonin explained that the Town Council had to wait until the Annual Audit for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2023 was completed before they could transfer the Board of Education's $217,387 Surplus to their Capital Fund, noting that the Auditor CliftonLarsonAllen, presented the Annual Audit for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2023 at the Finance Committee's February 7, 2024 meeting. He stated subsequently the Town Council approved to transfer the Board of Education's $217,387 Surplus funds to their Capital Fund in accordance with "*Resolution Creating a Funding Mechanism for Making Annual Appropriations to a Capital Reserve Fund for the Board of Education*" adopted on September 28, 1988. He went on to note at their February 28, 2024 meeting the Town Council approved to set-up a new, stand alone, *Board of Education Capital Fund for Non-Bonded Board of Education Capital Items* to reside outside of the Town's Capital Nonrecurring Fund (CNR Fund 210). Therefore, he stated that the General Government's Finance Department and the Board of Education's Finance Department were working to pay all invoices from the current Purchase Orders that were opened by the Board of Education from their Capital Accounts. He explained that once all the invoices were paid and the Purchase Orders were closed, that the Board of Education's Capital Accounts, that were currently residing on the General Government's side of the ledger would be closed. He stated in addition they were working to set-up the new Board of Education Capital Accounts for Non-Bonded Capital Expenses that would reside on the Board of Education's side of ledger. He stated since the March 25, 2024 meeting all of these actions have taken place; and the Education's Fiscal Year 2022/2023 Surplus in the amount of $217,387 has now been transferred to their Capital Account, noting that their current available Capital Account had a balance in the amount of $872,638; (b) ***The transfer of the Surplus Funds had not been done:*** Mr. Bonin stated at the time of the March 25, 2024 Finance Committee meeting the Surplus Funds had not been transferred because they needed to complete all of the work he mentioned under item (a)(see above); noting that the Education's Fiscal Year 2022/2023 Surplus in the amount of $217,387 has now been transferred to their Capital Account; (c) ***The Board of Education previously designated the 2022/2023 Surplus Funds for other capital projects in the current year's budget:*** Mr. Bonin stated that he does not see how the Fiscal Year 2022/2023 Surplus in the amount of $217,387 could have been factored into the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Capital Plan because they did not know that dollar amount until the Annual Audit was completed (February 2024). Councilor Ryan stated from an accounting standpoint that it would not make sense to factor the Fiscal Year 2022/2023 Surplus in the amount of $217,387 Surplus Funds into the Capital Plan for Fiscal Year 2023/2024 because they would not have known that dollar amount when the budget was approved; (d) ***The Board of Education did not have the ability to see what goes on in their Capital Account that was being managed by the Town's Finance Department***: Mr. Bonin

stated that the Board of Education had full oversight of everything that goes on in in the Capital Account. He stated the only work the Town's Finance Department was doing was paying the Board of Education's invoices. He stated the Town's Finance Department was not making any decisions as to what Board of Education Capital Accounts that expenditures were supposed to be paid from. He stated the Town's Finance Department received Purchase Orders from the Board of Education with Invoices to paid. He stated the Town's Finance Department was only managing the money and paying the Board of Education's bills. He stated with the new Board of Education Capital Accounts that have been set-up outside the General Government's ledger that all this work would rest with the Board of Education; (e) ***There was a change in the amount of the taxpayers portion (tax levy) that was supposed to be allocated to the Board of Education's Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Capital Account.*** Mr. Bonin stated the tax levy (townspeople dollars) in the amount of $265,000 was the dollar amount that was approved as part of the Annual Budget process; and that $265,000 from the tax levy was allocated to the Board of Education's Capital Account. Mr. Bonin concluded his remarks by providing the following Munis Financial Report regarding the Board of Education's Capital Account:

Town and Schools of Ledyard

YEAR-TO-DATE BUDGET REPORT

FOR 2024 13

	ORIGINAL APPROP	TRANS/ADJSMTS	REVISED BUDGET	YTD EXPENDED	ENCUMBRANCES	AVAILABLE BUDGET	% USED
22570101 BOE EXPENDITURES							
22570101 58250	BOE RESERVE FUND						
	460,583.72	217,387.00	677,970.72	5,676.60	53,584.95	618,709.17	8.7%
22570101 58260	BOE SECURITY						
	-60,480.77	0.00	-60,480.77	0.00	0.00	-60,480.77	.0%
22570101 58261	AG-SCIENCE						
	79,916.42	0.00	79,916.42	0.00	0.00	79,916.42	.0%
22570101 58262	Track & Field Rental Reserve						
	156,480.93	0.00	156,480.93	0.00	0.00	156,480.93	.0%
22570101 58263	AG-SCI NON-CAPITOL						
	88,661.99	0.00	88,661.99	10,628.67	20.67	78,012.65	12.0%
TOTAL BOE EXPENDITURES	725,162.29	217,387.00	942,549.29	16,305.27	53,605.62	872,638.40	7.4%
TOTAL EXPENSES	725,162.29	217,387.00	942,549.29	16,305.27	53,605.62	872,638.40	
GRAND TOTAL	725,162.29	217,387.00	942,549.29	16,305.27	53,605.62	872,638.40	7.4%

** END OF REPORT - Generated by Matthew Bonin **

Councilor Ryan questioned the negative $60,000 balance in the Account titled *BOE Security*. Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated there were five Board of Education Non-Bonded Capital Accounts that were closed out of the General Government side of the ledger and transferred into the Board of Education's new Non-Bonded Capital Accounts on their side of the ledger. He stated there was one Account titled BOE Security, which had a negative $60,000 balance. He stated this has been sitting in the Board of Education's Capital Account since he joined the town in January, 2022; noting that it was his assumption that there had been an appropriation for those projects, but that they were not properly entered into the system. He stated that Board of Education Finance Director Kenneth Knight would need to research that item, noting that the Account should not have a negative balance. Mayor Allyn, III, stated he believed a School Security Grant Funding was received sometime after the 2013 Sandy Hook Shooting Incident to provide security improvements in the schools such as the glass, intercoms, automatic door locks, video cameras, etc.

VII. FINANCIAL REPORTS

Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated now that the Finance Department was caught up with entering in all the revenues, etc. into the Munis Financial System that he would be resuming the schedule to provide the Year-to-Date Revenue and Expenditures Reports at the Finance Committee's second meeting of the month.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

1. MOTION to recommend the Town Council authorize the Mayor to submit the following Grant Applications to expand the Libraries Children's Collections with modern interactive and audiobook options:

- Dollar General Literacy Toniebox Grant in the amount of $4,000;
- Ledyard Rotary Wonderbook Grant in the amount of $1,000;
- New London Kiwanis in the amount of $500.

Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Buhle
Discussion: Library Director Jennifer Smith stated Ledyard Libraries (Bill Library and Gales Ferry Library) have the opportunity to apply for Grant Funding from the following Organizations, noting that there were no local matching funds required.

- ***Dollar General Literacy Toniebox Grant $4,000 Application due by April 25, 2024***
  Toniebox: Ms. Smith explained that the *Toniebox* ($100.00 each) was a child-friendly audio system that allowed kids to listen to music and stories using their own portable speaker called a *Toniebox* which was operated using colorful figures that go on top of the *Toniebox*, noting that it was a two-part system (Toniebox and Tonies). She stated the Library was the perfect place to have these systems because parents like to "*try before they buy*". She stated that she has had discussions with many patrons noting that they would like to be able to use a T*oniebox* from the Library. She stated that parents were also interested in Toniebox system because it was a way for their children to experience storytelling in a digital age that stimulates their imagination while being educational and fun, and was also a screen-free experience. She stated the Toniebox and Tonies were built for circulation from the Library.

- ***The New London Kiwanis Grant $500 does not have an Application due date:*** Ms. Smith stated the Kiwanis Grant would allow the Libraries to expand the Children's Collections with modern audiobook options, such as purchasing additional *Tonies*.

- ***Ledyard Rotary- Grant $1,000 Application due by May 15, 2024***
  Wonderbooks: Ms. Smith stated the Ledyard Rotary Grant would be used to purchase *Wonderbooks* which were print books with a ready-to-play audiobook inside. She stated kids could press play to read along with their favorite books and then switch to a learning mode for literacy learning and fun. She presented a *Wonderbook* noting that they were built for circulation from the Library. She stated the Wonderbook company would work with the Library should they break.

  Councilor Ryan questioned the number of *Tonieboxes* and *Tonies* the Library would be able to purchase should they receive the Grant Funding. Ms. Smith explained that the Library would most likely purchase six *Tonieboxes* three for each of the Libraries (Bill Library and Gales Ferry Library). She stated that they would also purchase as many *Tonies* as they could with the remaining Dollar General money and using the Kiwanis Grant.

VOTE: 3 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT:	**APPROVE TO RECOMMEND 3 – 0**
MOVER:	Tim Ryan, Town Councilor
SECONDER:	Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor
AYES:	Jessica Buhle, Tim Ryan, Tony Saccone

The Finance Committee thanked Library Director Jennifer Smith for attending tonight's meeting.

Ms. Smith left the meeting at 5:16 p.m.

2. MOTION to grant a Bid Waiver to Groton Utilities in an amount not to exceed $25,000 for work to supervise the moving of fire hydrants for the Multi-Use Pathway (along Colonel Ledyard Highway from the Bill Library to Ledyard High School) and associated work required during the Pathway Construction, as the Water Pollution Control Authority's water services provider.
Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Saccone
Discussion: Mayor Allyn, III, explained that the Water Pollution Control Authority has requested a Bid Waiver to Groton Utilities to oversee moving Fire Hydrants for the Multi-Use Pathway that was being constructed along Colonel Ledyard Highway from the Bill Library to Ledyard High School. He stated they would be adding extensions to move the fire hydrants located by the Salty Heffer further away from the road. He went on to state because Groton Utilities was the WPCA water service provider, which included maintaining and servicing the fire hydrants, that it made sense for them to do this work.

Councilor Saccone noted the motion said that Groton Utilities would be supervising the work. Mayor Allyn explained that Groton Utilities would identify the location of the underground infrastructure so the contractor would not digging into infrastructure He stated that Groton Utilities would also do the work to connect the fire hydrants.

Councilor Ryan noted Groton Utilities' estimate for the work was $18,975; therefore, he questioned the reason the WPCA requested the Bid Waiver to be "*in the amount of not to exceed $25,000 to accommodate any additional work required during the trail construction"*. Mayor Allyn explained Groton Utilities stated in their estimate that additional labor may be needed, therefore, the WPCA requested not to exceed $25,000 to cover those cost, if needed.

VOTE: 3 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT:	**APPROVE TO RECOMMEND 3 – 0**
MOVER:	Tim Ryan, Town Councilor
SECONDER:	Tony Saccone, Town Councilor
AYES:	Jessica Buhle, Tim Ryan, Tony Saccone

3. MOTION to recommend the Town Council appoint CliftonLarsonAllen LLP to conduct auditing services for the General Government, WPCA, and Schools for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, in accordance with Chapter III, Section 11 of the Town Charter for a fee not to exceed $71,900.
Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Buhle
Discussion: Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated per the results of RFP #2022-09 (Auditing Services), that the contract was for Auditing Services for two-years Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2022 and Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2023 and it also included two one-year options. He sated Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2024 would be the first one-year option at this pricing, noting that their Fee included a 5% increase over last year's pricing.

Councilor Ryan questioned when the Town would find out the cost for the second option year. Mr. Bonin stated the town would get the cost for the second option year when they requested the cost. Councilor Ryan questioned whether the town could solicit Requests for Proposals for Auditing Services prior to exercising the second option year.

Finance Director Matthew Bonin explained that the town did not have to exercise the "*Option Years*". However, he explained when the town solicited RFP's for Auditing Services in 2022 they only received one proposal, explaining that there were not many Auditing Firms that provide Municipal Auditing Services.

Councilor Ryan noted the cost breakdown which include a 5% increase over the current year as follows:

- **$71,900 Breakdown:**
- General Government: $30,130
- Board of Education: $15,930
- WPCA: $9,700
- State Single Audit: $8,070
- Federal Singe Audit: $8,070
- **TOTAL: $71,900**

Councilor Ryan went on to state that last year the Finance Committee discussed the difference in cost between the General Government and Board of Education's Audit work. He stated the Board of Education was 70% of the annual budget; therefore, it did not make sense that the Board of Education's cost was half the amount of the Town's cost. He stated he understood that it was because the Board of Education was listed as one budget line in the overall budget; however, he questioned whether they could ask the Auditor to do more work on the Board of Education's side of the ledger.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry noted in reviewing the comments from last year that former Councilor Saums and Councilor Ryan questioned whether it was possible to ask the Auditor to take a closer look at the Board of Education's finances. She stated based on the discrepancies they have seen that it may be worth asking the Auditor to take a closer look at the Board of Education's finances instead of just looking at one budget line.

Finance Director Matthew Bonin explained that the Auditor's work on the Board of Education's side of the Budget was done in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GASB) Guidelines/Requirements. He stated the town could ask the Auditor to do more work, but that the cost would increase. He went on to explain that the Auditor does more than just look at the one Board of Education Budget Line, explaining that they review the Cafeteria Fund, Special Activity Fund, the Grants, etc.

Mayor Allyn, III, stated if the Town wanted the Auditor to take a deeper dive into the Board of Education's Operating Budget that they would need to identify the additional and include it in the scope of work they requested in the next Request for Proposals (RFP) for Auditing Services, so the Auditor would go beyond the GASB Accounting Standards. Mr. Bonin noted the Mayor's comments, and he stated that the Auditor would need to have a clearly defined scope of the exact work they would wanted the Auditor o

do. He went on to state that the Auditor could do additional work for the June 30, 2024 Audit, however, he stated that they would need to get out in front of Audit work and tell the Auditor what they wanted them to do, noting that the price would increase.

In accordance with Chapter III, Section 11 of the Town Charter: "*The Town Council shall annually designate an independent public accountant or firm of independent public accountants to audit the books and accounts of the Town in accordance with the provisions of the General Statutes".*

VOTE: 3 – 0 Approved and so declared

RESULT: APPROVE TO RECOMMEND 3 – 0
MOVER: Tim Ryan, Town Councilor
SECONDER: Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor
AYES: Jessica Buhle, Tim Ryan, Tony Saccone

4. Discussion regarding PILOT Composting Program.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry addressed the disposal of trash noting with the July, 2022 closing of the East Harford MIRA Facility (Materials Innovation and Recycling Authority) that 30 Municipalities had to find another facility, because all the Incinerator Plants were currently at capacity. She stated as she and Mayor Allyn, III, have mentioned at previous Town Council Meetings that the cost for trash disposal was only going to continue to increase. She noted the current Solid Waste Plan included trucking 800,000 tons of Solid Waste out of Connecticut every year to landfills in Pennsylvania and Ohio.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated in looking for ways to reduce our solid waste and its tonnage that they found by removing food scraps out of the waste stream would significantly reduce the tonnage, noting that 40% of food grown in the United States was wasted and was the number one material that was sent to landfills and incinerators. She stated a lot of residents do not have the space for a compost bin; and therefore, she suggested the Town offer some type of program to compost food scraps in an effort to get it out of the waste stream. She noted that there were some options noting that *Blue Earth Compost* located in Hartford, was a food scrap collection service for households, business, and events that was founded in 2013 and turned food scraps into soil/compost.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated Blue Earth Compost provides both 32 gallon and 65 gallon carts for households to collect their food scraps, noting that the town could provide the containers at the transfer station for residents to dispose of their food scraps. She stated she obtained two cost estimates as follows:

Low Participation

• One-time container Delivery Fee:	$ 75.00
• 2-64 gallon carts at the Transfer Station:	$ 96.00
• Weekly collection service Fee:	$140.00
• Cleaning Fee	$ 16.00
TOTAL:	$242.00 per week
	$327.00 (w/one time delivery fee)

High Participation:

- One-time container Delivery Fee: $ 75.00
- 5-64 gallon carts at the Transfer Station: $240.00
- Weekly collection service Fee: $140.00
- Cleaning Fee $ 40.00

TOTAL: $420.00 per week
$495.00 (w/one time delivery fee)

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry continued by stating because the Composting Program would be new, that the Town may want to start with the ***Low Participation*** 2-64 gallon carts to see how many residents would bring their food scraps to the Transfer Station. She stated residents would need to collect their food scraps in ***compostable bags*** *not biodegradable bags*, and bring the bags to the Transfer Station. She stated Blue Earth would pick up the food scraps from the Transfer Station once a week.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated Preston purchased Starter Kits to find out how receptive the residents would be to the Composting Program. She noted that Preston gave their residents the pails and compost bags for free on a first come, first served basis. She noted the Start-up Kit provided the following:

- 100 - 25 gallons pails $1,738
- 2,500 Compostable Bags $ 450

Total Cost: $2,188

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry went on to state for towns such as Preston where residents were already bringing their trash to the Transfer Station that the Compost Program she described would work well. However, she stated for towns such as Ledyard, where they have curbside collection, that they may have a lower participation because residents would have to make an effort to bring their food scraps to the Transfer Station.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry noted Public Act No.21-58 *"An Act Concerning Solid Waste Management*" in accordance with "*Resolution Regarding Revenues Received from Beverage Container Surcharges"* (Nip Bottle Revenue) stating that one of the uses was *Waste Management*. She stated that removing the food scraps from the Waste Stream would qualify for the use of the Nip Bottle Revenue. However, she stated that she was aware that these funds were already being used for other expenses.

Councilor Ryan noted that Southeastern Connecticut Resource Recycling Recovery Authority (SCRRRA) and Public Works/Town Engineer Steve Masalin were also working on a Compost Program; and he asked Councilor Garcia-Irizarry whether she could provide some information regarding the SCRRRA Compost Program.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated that she met with SCRRRA Executive Director David Aldridge in February, 2024 explaining that they were planning to build a Food Scrap Waste -Compost Facility in Preston that would hold 5,000 pounds of food scraps/waste. She stated it was her understanding that initially the Preston Food Scrap Waste – Compost Facility would be receiving food scraps from restaurants and large businesses, noting that it would not be aimed for residential, or picking up food scraps from homes. However, she stated SCRRRA may have plans to extend the Food Scrap Waste - Composting Program to residential use for the twelve SCRRRA Member Towns at a later time. She stated Mr. Aldridge was scheduled to give a presentation regarding

SCRRRA's Food Scrap-Compost Program to the Town Council at their April 10, 2024 meeting.

Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin stated that he was serving as Ledyard's Primary Representative on the SCRRRA Board of Directors, and that he oversees the management of Ledyard's Transfer Station. He stated Councilor Garcia-Irizarry has done a lot of research and covered the topic of Food Scrap-Composting Programs very well. He stated as Councilor Garcia-Irizarry described the disposal of waste, and its costs was a recognized problem. He stated SCRRRA manages a lot of different comedies on behalf of its twelve Member Towns and up to this point SCRRRA has absorbed the cost of those commodities for the towns. He stated as the Finance Committee was aware things were changing relative SCRRRA's financing and cash flow; noting that long term they were uncertain how all this was going to play out. He stated as Councilor Garcia-Irizarry described, SCRRRA has plans to construct a Food Scrap Composting Facility at the Preston Incinerator Site. He noted that the Preston Incinerator was centrally located among the twelve SCRRRA Member Towns and the project was favorably moving along with the permitting, etc. He stated ultimately the plan for the Food Scrap Compost Facility would be to accommodate all twelve Member Towns and would also include the disposal brush waste explaining that the food scraps and brush would be composted together to make a sellable topsoil commodity.

Mr. Masalin continued to explain that each of the twelve SCRRRA Member Towns manage their waste differently, noting that some have curbside collection, some use a pay as you throw with the purchase of bags, and some require residents to bring their trash to the transfer station. He stated that currently Preston and Stonington were the only two SCRRRA Member towns that were using a Food Scrap-Compost Program. He also noted that Preston was a Transfer Station town meaning that the residents bring their trash to the Transfer Station, therefore, it would be natural for the residents to also bring their food scraps. However, he noted that some Preston residents have a subscription for a private vendor to provide curbside collection. He stated because Ledyard had a curbside collection service their residents would have to make an effort to bring their food scraps to the Transfer Station. He stated as Councilor Garcia-Irizarry mentioned, SCRRRA Executive Director David Aldridge would be attending the Town Council's April 10, 2024 to talk about the Food Scrap Compost Facility at the Preston Incinerator Site. He stated Mr. Aldridge's presentation may provide some context on what Ledyard should consider during the interim period, explaining that it may be sometime before they know when the Food Scrap Compost Facility at the Preston Incinerator Site would be available for municipalities. He also stated Ledyard should look to SCRRRA to find out what they would do to subsidize the food scrap commodity. He stated that perhaps SCRRRA would consider subsidizing their twelve Member Towns for the cost to engage in other Food Scrap-Compost Programs like what other towns such as Preston and Stonington were already doing, until the Preston Facility was available for Municipalities to use. He stated for a town like Ledyard, who had curbside trash collection services, that they would also need to consider the logistics relative to the cost-benefit; and he noted that Mr. Aldridge may be able to help with these types of unanswered questions.

Councilor Saccone questioned whether there was any data on the amount of tonnage/savings municipalities have seen by removing the food scraps from the waste stream. Mr. Masalin stated that Stonington had some metrics, noting that the numbers were modest. He went on to state that because Preston just started removing food scraps from their waste stream in January, 2024 that they did not have any metrics yet. However, he stated the food scrap program seemed to be well received by the Preston residents. He addressed savings, noting that the cost to dispose of waste was a moving target, explaining that the dynamics was currently not trending well. He stated by the time they figure out a way to provide savings; and have everyone educated to do the right things, that waste industry has removed the ability to save. He noted as an example they used to make money on the disposal of recycling items, however, he stated they have wiped that out, and now the cost to dispose of recycling was almost as expensive if not more than the cost of household trash disposal. He stated waste management can become frustrating because they do not know where it was headed. However, he stated they cannot continue to change the trajectory with the population, noting that once they get something started that hopefully they could stay the course and get some benefit from it.

Mayor Allyn, III, stated a Connecticut Conference of municipalities (CCM) Legislative meeting was scheduled for April 11, 2024 at which they would continue to track a number of proposed Bills that were being considered in Hartford. He noted the *Removal of Organics from the Waste Stream Bill* appeared to have traction this year. He explained if Bill was approved it would mandate all towns remove organics from the waste stream; and would become effective July 1, 2027. Councilor Ryan stated it sounded like another unfunded mandate. Mayor Allyn stated he would have more information regarding the Bill next week.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated should the Legislation approve the *Removal of Organics from the Waste Stream Bill* which would not be implemented until 2027; that in the meantime, Ledyard could try using Blue Earth as a PILOT Program to remove food scraps from the waste stream, for a year and if it was not well received they could discontinue the program. She stated although she did not know how much money the town was receiving from the Nip Bottle Revenues that managing their food scraps would be a permitted use of the funds.

Councilor Ryan noted that he developed a Nip Bottle Revenue spreadsheet similar to the one they have for tracking the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Projects. He stated that he would add the Food Scrap-Compost Blue Earth Program to the Nip Bottle Revenue spreadsheet. He questioned whether the town would have to engage in a contract with Blue Earth, noting that it would be good to know what the obligation would be. Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated that she would talk to Blue Earth to ask Councilor Ryan's question.

Councilor Buhle questioned whether local businesses would also be allowed to drop off food scraps at the Transfer Station. Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated that businesses as well as households could drop off food scraps, noting that Blue Earth does not care who puts the food scraps in the cart, as long as the food scraps were in the compostable bags. She stated that she also asked Blue Earth about providing food scrap compost carts at the

Schools, however, she would need to obtain some information from the schools before Blue Earth could provide a cost. She stated that she thought having the compost carts at the schools would be great, because kids waste a lot of food, and that it would reduce their trash tonnage. It was noted that the schools have their own commercial trash collection dumpster service.

Councilor Buhle questioned whether residents could use any compostable bags or would they need to purchase the compostable bags from Blue Earth. Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated they could use any compostable bags, noting that they could not use biodegradable bags, stating that there was a difference in how the two types of bags decompose.

RESULT: CONTINUE	**Next Meeting: 04/17/2024; 5:00 p.m.**

5. Any other New Business proper to come before the Committee.

- ***Early Voting***

Councilor Ryan stated the Presidential Primary Election Early Voting began on March 26, 2024. He stated during the four days, which included Saturday March 30, 2024, that only 67 early voting ballots were cast in Ledyard. He stated he did not know the cost to staff the Registrar's Office for the Early Voting; however, he noted an article in the on-line Mirror Publication that reported the Secretary of State's Office allocated $5 million to support municipalities run the Early Voting.

Mayor Allyn, III, stated Ledyard received $10,500 from the Secretary of State's Office to support the Early Voting costs. He stated Ledyard averaged about two voters per hour for the Presidential Primary Early Voting, noting that they had four Registrars staffing the office during the four days (eight hours per day).

Councilor Ryan stated Ledyard had about 300 total votes cast for the Presidential Primary Election, noting they had a very low turn-out.

- ***Dispatch CAD/RMS System – COPS Grant- Congressional Direct Spending***

Councilor Buhle stated although the Town Council has included a two-year funding plan (FY 2025 $45,000; FY 2026 $89,500) to support the replacement of the CAD/RMS System that she has been working with Police Chief John Rich to seek financial assistance to minimize the impact on its taxpayers. She stated Senator Richard Blumenthal and Congressman Chris Murphy's Offices were sponsoring a Congressionally Directed Spending Initiative which included funding through the *"COPS Law Enforcement Technology and Equipment Grant"*. She stated that she has also been working with MIS Director Justin Dube to find out if any additional equipment, such as a new server, would be needed to support the updated CAD/RMS System. She noted the cost to replace the CAD/RMS System was $191,263 and that she was waiting to hear from Mr. Dube about

the cost of the server and if a new one was needed. Therefore, she suggested the Grant Application request up-to $240,000. She went on to state if the town does not receive the *COPS Law Enforcement Grant* that they would still have a funding plan in-place to purchase the new equipment in 2027. She noted the Grant Application was due by April 14, 2024, which was the reason she was bringing this to the Finance Committee's attention this evening. She stated it was her understanding that no local matching funds would be required. She stated in speaking with Senator Blumenthal and Congressman Courtney's Office they assured her that she could submit the Grant Application with Chief Rich, however, the Mayor would need to sign Grant Agreement should Ledyard be awarded the grant funding.

Mayor Allyn, III, explained the process for the Town to apply for a Grant, noting that typically the Department seeking the Grant would work with his Office and/or the Finance Director to complete the Grant Application, which would then be submitted to the Finance Committee to vet and conduct their due diligence relative to the cost to the town, such as local matching funds, the source of those funds, and whether there would be any on-going costs associated after the Grant was received/used. He stated then it would be presented to the Town Council for their review and approval, noting that some Grant Applications included a Resolution in which the Town Council would approve the town to apply for the Grant and authorize the Mayor to sign and submit the Grant Application. He noted in accordance with the Town Charter that the *Mayor was the contracting authority, with the approval of the Town Council*

Councilor Buhle noted that it was her understanding that a Resolution was not included in the Grant Application Packet; and that no local match was required.

- MOTION to recommend the Town Council authorize the Mayor to submit a *COPS Law Enforcement Technology and Equipment Grant* in the amount of up-to $240,000 through the Congressionally Directed Spending initiative, to replace the Ledyard Dispatch Emergency Communications CAD/RMS System.
  Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Buhle
  Discussion: (See above)

VOTE: **3 – 0 Approved and so declared**

RESULT:	**APPROVE TO RECOMMEND 3 – 0**
MOVER:	Tim Ryan, Town Councilor
SECONDER:	Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor
AYES:	Jessica Buhle, Tim Ryan, Tony Saccone

VIII. OLD BUSINESS

1. Continued discussion regarding the status and possible changes to Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and Capital Non-Recurring (CNR) Fund based on the *American Rescue Act* Funding (ARPA) and the process to approve ARPA Projects and expend ARPA Funding.

The Finance Committee, Mayor Allyn, III, Finance Director Matthew Bonin, Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin, and Park, Recreation & Senior Citizens Director Scott Johnson, Jr. discussed the status of the ARPA Projects

relative to the allocation of surplus funds from completed projects and to consider and prioritize remaining needs noting the following:

- ✓ ***Sewer Project Phase I $1.2 Million:*** Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin explained that Ledyard received a Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LoTClP) Grant in the amount of $2,540,000 to construct the Multi-Model Pathway from Ledyard Center to Ledyard High School. However, he stated there were some Administrative Engineering Costs, estimated to cost about $65,000 that were not initially covered in the Request for Qualifications (RFP)/Request for Qualifications (RFQ) that related to drawings and interfacing with the construction company during the course of construction. He went on to explain that this Engineering Work did not relate to the Resident Inspection that was covered by LoTCIP Grant noting that the LoTCIP does not fund some of these types of Administrative Costs. He stated that they have come to an agreement with Weston & Sampson Engineering pertaining to Administrative Engineering work and the cost under the Non-LoTCIP portion of the project.

  Mr. Masalin went on to explain that American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding in the amount of $1.2 was allocated for the Phase I of the Ledyard Center Sewer Line Extension Project. However, he explained because Phase I of the Ledyard Center Sewer Line Extension Project coincided with the Mult-Use Pathway in the area from the Bill Library to the High School that the costs came in lower than initially projected because there was savings with the overlap of work between the two projects (Multi-Use Pathway & Phase I Sewer Project).

  Mr. Masalin continued by suggesting that because both of these projects (Multi-Use Pathway and Phase I of the Sewer Line Extension) would require moving some of fire hydrants, as the Finance Committee discussed earlier this evening (see New Business Item #2), that it may be appropriate to redirect $90,000 of the remaining ARPA funding from the Phase I of the Ledyard Center Sewer Line Extension allocation to pay for the Administrative Engineering Costs related to the Multi-Use Pathway ($65,000); and to pay for the costs related to moving the fire hydrants ($25,000) noting that these amounts would include some contingency costs.

- MOTION to recommend the Town Council authorize the Finance Director to revise the tracking of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding in Account #21010103-53301-G0014 (Sewer Line Serwer Phase I- Sewer Capital- Construction Services) by reducing the amount from $1.2 million to $1.11 million.

  In addition, authorize the Finance Director to move $90,000 from Account #21010103-53301-G0014 (Sewer Line Serwer Phase I- Sewer Capital- Construction Services) to a new established ARPA Funding Tracking Account titled "*Multi-Use Pathway Administration and Engineering"* to pay for Administrative Engineering Work (approximately $65,000); and associated work with relocating Fire Hydrants (up-to $25,000).

  Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Buhle
  Discussion: (See Above): The Finance Committee agreed that redirecting $90,000 of the

remaining ARPA funding from the Phase I of the Ledyard Center Sewer Line Extension allocation to pay for the Administrative Engineering Costs related to the Multi-Use Pathway ($65,000); and to pay for the costs related to moving the fire hydrants ($25,000) was in-keeping with the Sewer Line projects.

VOTE: **3 – 0 Approved and so declared**

RESULT:	**APPROVE TO RECOMMEND 3 – 0**
MOVER:	Tim Ryan, Town Councilor
SECONDER:	Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor
AYES:	Jessica Buhle, Tim Ryan, Tony Saccone

- ✓ ***Phase II: $950,000*** ARPA Funding allocated and would bring the sewer line from the High School to Pennywise Lane.

  Mayor Allyn noted in response to Weston & Sampson Engineers cost estimate in the amount of $381,900 for the engineering work for Phase II; that the Water Pollution Control Authority was working with Weston & Sampson Engineers to obtain an updated cost estimate, noting they expected to see some savings with the change to not install the sewer pipe through the wetlands, but instead to install the pipe under the road.

- ***LED Message Signs - $70,000***– Mayor Allyn stated the sign in front of the Gales Ferry Fire Department on Route 12, Gales Ferry, was installed and was now operational. He stated he finally received approval from the State to install the second LED Message Sign in Ledyard Center that would be located in the arch of the stonewall in front of the Upper Town Green. He stated that he had to contact the Commissioner of the Department of Transportation to finally move Ledyard's request along.

  Chairman Rodriguez noted it was her understanding that the LED Message Sign located on Route 12 in front of the Gales Ferry Fire Department was a Town sign and that it was supposed to be used to provide information regarding town events such as recent the Presidential Primary Election as well as upcoming Public Hearings, Town Meetings, Referendum Votes, etc. However, she stated to date that all she has seen displayed on the Gales Ferry LED sign was the Fire Department Information and Bingo Night. Councilor Saccone stated someone from the town would need to notify the Fire Department's Foreman, noting that he had access to update the messages on the sign. Mayor Allyn, III, stated because the sign was purchased by the town that authorized town staff would need to also have access to the Gales Ferry LED Digital Sign for the purpose of emergency communications, noting to date no one has been trained on how to update the LED Digital Signs. Chairman Rodriguez addressed the importance to get town staff trained on how to update the messages on the signs noting that the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget Public Hearing was scheduled for April 15, 2024 and the Vote on the Budget was scheduled for May 21, 2024.

- ***Erickson Park Improvements $55,000 –*** Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Director Scott Johnson, Jr. explained that stone dust path was put down this fall (2023) noting that they rerouted the walking path to provide more room for the parking lot. He stated this spring (2024) that Parks & Recreation would be proceeding with the excavation work to create the additional parking spaces and install a retaining wall. He noted that they were in transition with staffing; noting that their Facilities Director retired and his replacement has not yet come on board.

- ***Ledyard Center Sidewalk Fill-in $35,000*** Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated that Requests for Proposals were in process to begin the sidewalk project.

RESULT: CONTINUE	**Next Meeting: 04/17/2024; 5:00 p.m.**

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

   Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Director Scott Johnson, Jr., stated that he has received the Emergency Narcan Kits from the Ledyard Prevention Coalition and that they would be installing the Kits at the agreed locations in front of the Gales Ferry Community Center and at the Town Green in Ledyard Center.

   The Finance Committee questioned the balance of the Opioid Settlement Account. Finance Director Matthew Bonin stated the current account balance was in the amount of $71,258. He noted in March, 2024 Ledyard received another $44,451 stating to-date the town has received a total of $106,758 from the Opioid Settlement, noting that $36,100 was already allocated to Ledyard Prevention Coalition.

   Mayor Allyn, III stated since 2022 the Town has been receiving National Opioid Settlement Funding that was coming from the Sackler Family Trust - Purdue Pharma, and others who were party to the case such as Johnson & Johnson, Teva, Allergan, Walgreens, CVS, and Walmart.

   Mayor Allyn went on to explain at their September 27, 2023 meeting the Town Council appropriated $36,100 from the National Opioid Settlement Funds to Ledge Light Health District/ Ledyard Prevention Coalition to implement programs to address opioid use disorder and prevention, and to expand access to intervention, treatment, and recovery options. He stated per the single year Agreement Ledyard Prevention Coalition was supposed to periodically report how the funds were being used and the progress they had made using the funding. He stated based on their performance, if the Town Council was satisficed they could choose to renew or not renew with Ledyard Prevention Coalition, and/or decide to take another path.

   Mayor Allyn went on to state that the Town Council could chose to distribute the Opioid Funding to other Community Partners that work in the field of Substance Abuse Disorder such as SERAC, located in Norwich, suggesting that they should research their options and consider Organizations that would help make a difference in their community. He noted a recent article reported that to date only 3% of the Opioid Settlement Funds have been spent in Connecticut.

RESULT: DISCUSSED	**Next Meeting: 04/17/2024; 5:00 p.m.**

3. Continued discussion regarding potential uses of the revenue received from Public Act No.21-58 "*An Act Concerning Solid Waste Management*" in accordance with *"Resolution Regarding Revenues Received from Beverage Container Surcharges"* adopted on June 8, 2022.

Public Works Director/Town Engineer Steve Masalin explained that a few years ago the town made a decision to off load their 20-year old Street Sweeper and to move forward with renting the machinery on an annual basis, noting the costs to maintain, repair and house Street Sweeper when it was not being used. He stated since the Nip Bottle Revenue became available that some of the funds were being used to rent a Street Sweeper. However, he stated last year they did not have a good experience noting that the rented Street Sweeper broke down every other day and it took twice as long than it should have to get the job done. He stated this year the town again placed a deposit to rent a Street Sweeper with a different company that primarily marketed and sells Street Sweepers. He noted the Street Sweeper was supposed to be delivered to Ledyard for use on Monday, April 1, 2024. However, he stated Public Works Highway Supervisor Joe Tillman was notified that the delivery of the rented Street Sweeper would be delayed and would not arrive until May 1st. He stated in researching other options to rent a Street Sweeper, companies told Mr. Tillman that they were getting out of the business of renting Street Sweekpers for the reasons he mentioned this evening. Therefore, he stated that they may be looking to once again purchase a Street Sweeper.

Mr. Masalin continued by explaining the cost of a new Pelican Street Sweeper was $269,000; however, he stated by taking a regional approach Ledyard may be able to lessen or offset the impact of the cost by sharing the Street Sweeper with neighboring towns such as Preston. He explained to comply with the State's MS4-Stormwater Mandate that Municipalities were required to sweep their streets once a year to keep the catch basins clear, etc. He stated to purchase a new Street Sweeper that it would probably use all the money that was available in the Nip Bottle Revenue Account plus more for a Five-Year Lease to Purchase Agreement. He noted the lowest cost for a *Five-Year Lease to Purchase Agreemen*t would be about $64,000 per year, explaining that this amount did not contemplate a deposit, or the off-setting amount that Preston would pay Ledyard for the use of the equipment. He stated based on road milage that Ledyard's costs would be about $40,000 and Preston's cost would be about $20,000, noting that the town would be responsible for the maintenance and repairs. However, he stated if the town was able to save some money to provide a reasonable down payment they may be able to get closer to the $30,000 per year that they were paying to rent a Street Sweeper. He went on to state the town was in a lease/purchase arrangement for their Loader and or another piece of equipment, because of the upfront cost versus the money that was available.

Councilor Ryan stated the Regional/Shared Resource approach was appealing since the town only used the Street Sweeper one month out of the year.

Councilor Buhle questioned if the town owned the Street Sweeper whether they could sweep the streets more than once a year. She also questioned whether North Stonington would be interested in participating with Ledyard's Street Sweeper, noting they were similar in size to Ledyard.

Mr. Masalin stated that he would be meeting with both Preston and North Stonington this week and would solicit their interest to participate in a shared Street Sweeper. He continued by addressing sweeping the streets more than once a year, stating they would

need to consider the cost-benefit from both the wear on the equipment perspective and relative to other work their crew could be doing noting the amount of work they have during the construction season. He explained to perform the sweeping it takes 3-4 people out of the crew, noting they need one person to operate the street sweeper, a one person to drive the water truck, and one or two dump truck drivers. He stated they could deploy the Street Sweeper for special needs, however, he noted with more use and with possibly two or three towns using the Street Sweeper they would reduce the lifecycle and may not get 20-years out of the piece of equipment. Councilor Buhle suggested that perhaps the town could do a second street sweeping on some prioritized roads that had a lot more traffic, noting that she was trying to find a positive in having to purchase the Street Sweeper. She stated that one positive was that they could use the equipment when they want.

Councilor Ryan noted for clarification that the town would stay on track with renting the Street Sweeper for this year, noting that they would need to discuss how they wanted to proceed for next year. Mr. Masalin stated that was correct.

Councilor Ryan stated that Mr. Masalin's announcement regarding the Street Sweeper would somewhat change the discussions the Finance Committee has been having relative to use of the Nip Bottle Revenue. He went on to note that he has been talking with Mayor Allyn, III, and Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Director Scott Johnson, Jr., about potential uses for the funds which included hiring part-time seasonal help to empty the trash bins and clean-up during the Farmers Market, noting that it would provide a paycheck to someone in their community.

Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Director Scott Johnson, Jr., stated that he had spoken with the Mayor about possibly using some of the Nip Bottle Revenue to pay for part-time seasonal help to empty the trash bins during the Farmers Market. He stated based on $20.00 per hour the cost would be about $180.00 per week for the 14 weeks of the Farmers Market Season, noting that currently the Farmers' Market was paying for a trash dumpster/totes service. He stated this would solve the problem of the trash cans overflowing, noting that between food trucks and Styrofoam containers the trash cans fill up quickly.

Mr. Johnson went on to note that ARC of Eastern Connecticut was willing to provide a Bottle and Can Recycling Box at the Town Green. He stated ARC would maintain/empty/clean the Recycling Box and would keep the money they received from returning the cans and bottles to help support their ARC Programs. He stated the ARC of Eastern Connecticut recently dropped off a box at the Senior Citizens Center, noting that it was a nice Bottle and Can Recycling Box.

Councilor Saccone questioned whether one ARC Recycling Collection Box would be large enough for the whole Town Green. Mr. Johnson stated that it was a large box and that he thought one box would be large enough.

Councilor Buhle stated that she liked the idea of the ARC Recycling Collection Box. However, she stated because of the size of the Town Green that she thought they should have at least two boxes. She stated human nature was to throw stuff in the container that

they were closet to, noting that if someone had to walk to the other side of the Town Green that the recyclables would most likely end up in the general trash cans. She questioned whether ARC of Eastern Connecticut would be willing to give Ledyard two Bottle and Can Recycling Boxes so they could have one box at the Upper Town Green and one box at the Lower Town Green. Mr. Johnson stated although he believed ARC would be receptive to giving Ledyard two Bottle and Can Recycling Boxes that perhaps they should start with one box to test the volume first. He stated the Bottle and Can Recycling Box was quite large noting that ARC had to use a box truck to deliver the Recycling Collection Box.

RESULT: DISCUSSED	**Next Meeting: 04/17/2024; 5:00 p.m.**

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

X. ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Ryan moved the meeting be adjourned, seconded by Councilor Buhle.
VOTE: 3 - 0 Approved and so declared, the meeting was adjourned at 6:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony Saccone, Sr.
Committee Chairman
Finance Committee