



TOWN OF LEDYARD
CONNECTICUT
TOWN COUNCIL

Chairman S. Naomi Rodriguez

MINUTES
LEDYARD TOWN COUNCIL – REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 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	In-Person
Jessica Buhle	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
Carmen Garcia-Irizarry	Town Councilor	Present	Remote
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

• **Military Child Proclamation – Commanding Officer Captain Kenneth Curtin**

Chairman Rodriguez stated that April was “*Military Child Month*” and she stated that the Town Council and Mayor Allyn were wearing the color purple, which was chosen to represent all services in the military community. She stated in recognition of the Military Child that the Town Council has some special guests this evening and she invited Submarine Base Commanding Officer Captain Kenneth Curtin, the Taverniers Family, and Mayor Allyn to join her in front of the dais for the presentation of the following Town of Ledyard Proclamation.

TOWN OF LEDYARD
PROCLAMATION
RECOGNIZING THE MILITARY CHILD

WHEREAS: New London was designated as the First United States Submarine Base, and in 1916 was named the “*Home of the Submarine Force*”;

WHEREAS: On July 1, 1973 the all-volunteer Military Force was established returning to the tradition of voluntary service in the military. Every Soldier, Marine, Sailor, Airman and Guardian in the military today is a volunteer, and that effort has produced the finest fighting force.

WHEREAS: Former Defense Secretary Casper Weinberger designated April as the *Month of the Military Child* in 1986. As a symbol of our support and gratitude to our military children, the Department of Defense chose the color purple, representing all services in the military community.

WHEREAS: Today, the New London-Groton Subbase occupies approximately 687 acres along the Thames River serving an active-duty population of about 7,500 personnel accompanied by 12,000 family members. The Subbase is also the host to Naval Reserve Units, an Army Detachment Unit and a host for the Department of Defense. In addition, the United States Coast Guard Academy is located across the Thames River on the west bank, in New London;

WHEREAS: Ledyard and it’s surrounding communities have played a key role in welcoming the children of military families in providing support to see that these children grow and thrive as they work to navigate the uncertainties of a change in a station, a new neighborhood, the deployment of military parent, and call our community their Home;

WHEREAS: our Military families are an integral part of our community, with military children attending local schools, while their parents serve our nation. On average military children attend six to nine different school systems from kindergarten to grade 12 and face the challenges of transiting more than twice during their high school years, leaving friends and communities behind, all while continuously adjusting to the disruption of a parent leaving the family for extended periods of time, often missing milestone educational events, an exciting homerun hit, a masterful recital, birthdays and holidays;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: The Ledyard Town Council recognizes, honors and salutes the brave, resilient, and fearless *Military Child* who rises to the occasion, just as their military parents do;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED :as Military Families are part of the fabric of our local culture, the Town of Ledyard continues our principals of inclusion and our longstanding traditions to welcome and support our military families and their dependents. The people of our community value their sacrifices and dedication to our nation and will forever remain grateful for their service to our country.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: Given the significant role that the New London-Groton Subbase has held in history, the Town of Ledyard Hereby Congratulates the *United States Navy* as they Celebrates it’s 250th Birthday!

Presented to the Commander of the New London-Groton Subbase Captain Kenneth M. Curtin, on this Twenty-third day of April 2025 at Ledyard, Connecticut.

S. Naomi Rodriguez, Chairman
Ledyard Town Council

Chairman Rodriguez thanked Capitan Curtin, Chief Timothy Tavernier and his daughter Eloise for attending tonight’s meeting, noting that unfortunately Mrs. Taverniers was not able to attend because their daughter Caroline was sick. She noted that there were cupcakes on the table, and she invited Eloise to take some cupcakes home to her sister. She stated that she knows the tremendous sacrifice that our service personnel and their spouses, children, and relatives make when they have to leave for a deployment, and that Ledyard wanted to say how grateful we all were for their service and for protecting our country. She gave a special *Thank You* to Eloise for also serving our country as a Military Child.

• ***Linda C. Davis Woman of the Year Award***

Chairman Rodriguez stated in recognition of March being “ Woman’s History Month” Councilor April Brunelle of the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion launched the first Linda C. Davis Woman of the Year Award. In reviewing the several nominations from the community, highlighting the work and dedication of their friends and neighbors, the Committee selected Kathryn Strout to be the recipient of the First Linda C. Davis Woman of the Year Award and she invited Ms. Strout, Councilor Brunelle, and Mayor Allyn to join her in front of the dais to present the following:

TOWN OF LEDYARD

LINDA C. DAVIS
2025
WOMAN OF THE YEAR
Honors
Kathryn Strout

For her dedication to her Community;

Recognizing Her dedication to the operation of the Linda C. Davis Food Pantry; ensuring that those in-need were treated with kindness, compassion, and dignity;

And, for Her commitment to honor, respect, and value Ledyard's Law Enforcement and for her participation on the Ledyard Law Enforcement Appreciation Day Committee;

And, for Her dedication in working with Advocates for Young Adults with Autism who were ineligible for Services provided by the Connecticut Department of Developmental Service (DDS);

And, for always making time to meet with lawmakers, and to write letters to the Members of the Council for Developmental Disabilities (DDS); .

We proudly present the First
Linda C. Davis Woman of the Year Award to
Kathryn Strout

For her tireless energies in recognizing and working to help those in our Community
Who may be overlooked; ensuring that no one was left Behind.

Dated at Ledyard, Connecticut this Twenty-third day of April, 2026

S. Naomi Rodriguez, Chairman
Ledyard Town Council

Councilor Brunelle stated that she would like to share the letter that was written to nominate Ms. Strout. She proceeded to read the following letter:

“For this award there are so many people that I would like to nominate. But since I can only choose one, then I nominate Kathryn Strout. I have often referred to Kathie as an angel on earth. She has the biggest heart, and is so incredibly kind. She cares so much about others, and will work tirelessly to get the needs of others met. I first met Kathie when we were both working on the Committee for the Wicked Haunted Trail. It was so much work, and Kathie would work so hard trying to get gifts for the silent auction, food donations, and bake so many cupcakes to sell at the event. I also noticed that Kathie worked at the Linda C. Davis Food Pantry as a volunteer to help those in need of supplemental food, and she always helped during the town wide Thanksgiving and Christmas Basket events, this was hard work, lifting, and moving the heavy bags of food and donations. I saw her every single time when I would turn in donations from our neighborhood. I also knew when I organized a committee to help with the Ledyard Law Enforcement Appreciation Day that I wanted a woman like Kathie on the Committee. She worked tirelessly on the event, with getting donations, making meetings, providing creative ideas. She worked so hard, and I could not have done it without her. Despite her busy schedule, Kathie finds time to be an advocate, and works with the Advocates for Young Adults with Autism who were ineligible for CT-DDS services. She meets with so many lawmakers, attends so many meetings, writes letters, and so on. She also maintains a Facebook page regarding this issue. I don't know how she does it all. She cares for her family and ill family members too. Like, I said before, she is an angel on earth. She never does any of this hard work for a “Thank you”. She just does it because she cares. There's absolutely no agenda involved. She was a very good friend of Linda Davis, and I believe that Linda would be so happy if Kathie were to receive this award. In my eyes. Kathie is the Ledyard Woman of the Year.”

Ms. Kathryn Strout thanked the Town Council for their recognition, stating that she was truly honored to be the first recipient of the Linda C. Davis Woman of the Year Award.

V. RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS

Mr. Earl (Ty) Lamb, 95 Lambtown Road, Ledyard, Board of Education Member; and Historic District Commission Chairman, stated that he would like to address the following two items this evening:

- (1) **Advisory Questions - Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget** – Mr. Lamb noted that they were about 90% through the Annual Budget process and he thanked everyone for their work on both the General Government side and the Board of Education side to put the budget together. He stated that he was one of the four Elected Officials to submit the request for the Advisory Questions to be included on the Budget Ballot, noting that he received flak from members of the Board of Education. However, he stated that the data they received from the residents in responding to the Advisory Questions would tell them something about the budget; and he questioned why they would not want that data.
- (2) **Appointment Christian Allyn – Cemetery Committee** – Mr. Lamb stated that he met Mr. Allyn through his work on Ledyard Historical Society. He stated that Mr. Allyn has done a lot of work for the Historical Society and that he has been involved in different aspects of the town. He stated that Mr. Allyn attends the Historic District Commission meetings and that all he could say about him was good things. Therefore, he stated that he hoped the Town Council would approve his appointment this evening.

Chairman Rodriguez thanked Mr. Lamb for his comments.

VI. COMMITTEE COMMISSION AND BOARD REPORTS – None.

VII. COMMENTS OF TOWN COUNCILORS

Chairman Rodriguez thanked Captain Curtin for attending tonight's meeting in honor of the *Military Child*, noting that the Town Council was grateful and honored to have him as their guest this evening. She stated that she would also like to thank Chief Timothy Tavernier and his daughter Eloise for attending tonight's meeting as well, in recognition of the many military children and families in Ledyard. She stated that it was not only the military person serving, but their entire family, and she thanked them, noting that they were grateful for all that they do for our country.

Chairman Rodriguez continued by stating that she was happy to see that Ms. Kathryn Strout was the recipient of the first Linda C. Davis Woman of the Year Award. She stated that Ms. Strout works tremendously hard for others, and that she is an angel on earth. Congratulations again to Kathryn Strout.

Chairman Rodriguez wished a Happy Administrative Professional Day to our own Roxanne Maher, noting that she was extremely hardworking noting that the Town Council was extremely grateful for her.

Chairman Rodriguez stated lastly, she would like to extend a Congratulations to Dr. Maik Schuler, who is now a United States Citizen.

Councilor Barnes stated that he was proud to wear purple this evening in support of all military children, but more importantly his children Samantha, Will, and Sarina. He stated that he missed many events throughout their school years, as Chairman Rodriguez described well in the Proclamation that was presented to Captain Curtin earlier this evening. He stated that he was glad those days were done, noting that his children were friendly, open, and productive.

Councilor Saccone stated that he wanted to remind residents of the fire danger that was extremely high. He stated even though they may get rain once a week that when the winds pick up, it quickly dries everything out. He noted yesterday there was a fire at the Metal Recycling Plant that involved multiple fire departments. He urged residents to use common sense and not have open fires, or burn when it was dry.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry, attending remotely via Zoom, noted on Saturday, April 26, 2025 the Beautification Committee was holding a Earth Day Event at the Ledyard Senior Citizens Center, 12 Van Tassel Drive, Gales Ferry. She stated that she would have a table to provide information regarding Food Waste Composting. She encouraged residents to stop by and say *Hello*.

Councilor Dombrowski stated last week he received the sad news that former Town Councilor Tom Malone passed away. He noted that Mr. Malone served on the Board of Education Member from 2007 – 2011; and as a member of the Town Council from 2013 – 2021, during which time he served on the Finance Committee. He asked that they keep former Councilor Malone’s family in their thoughts.

Chairman Rodriguez thanked Councilor Dombrowski for acknowledging the loss of former Town Councilor Tom Malone. She noted that she has included his passing in the next Events Magazine.

Councilor Buhle noted as Councilor Barnes said many military children go through a lot of sacrifices. She stated that her family has been fortunate because her husband did not deploy for a long time; however, she stated that cycle has run its course, and that he was one of the many men and women who was currently out on a deployment.

Councilor Buhle went on to announce that the Economic Development Commission would be hosting a Ribbon Cutting at FRAG's Retro Zone LLC, located at 12 Military Highway, Gales Ferry, on Saturday, April 26, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. She stated that she thought the owners of the retro-game store had a great vision.

Chairman Rodriguez noted that Ledyard had a lot of events happening in town on Saturday, April 26, 2025 noting the following:

- Earth Day Event will be held at 1:00 p.m. at the Ledyard Senior Citizens Center, hosted by the Ledyard Beautification Committee.
- FRAG's Retro Zone LLC, Ribbon Cutting, at 10:00 a.m. at 12 Military Highway, Gales Ferry, hosted by the Economic Development Commission.
- Drug Take Back Day at 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. at the Ledyard Police Department.

Chairman Rodriguez encouraged residents to come out and attend these great events in town.

VIII. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

MOTION to approve the following:

- Regular Meeting Minutes of April 9, 2025
- Special Meeting Minutes of April 16, 2025 (as filed)

Moved by Councilor Dombrowski, seconded by Councilor Buhle

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 although the Administration Committee has not met since the last Town Council Meeting they had a couple of appointments on tonight’s agenda. She noted in place of their May 12, 2025 Regular Meeting that the Committee would have a Special Meeting at 5:00 p.m. to focus on the following: (1) An Ordinance Establishing an Ethics Commission for the Town of Ledyard; and (2) A Resolution Supporting the Town of Ledyard’s Continued Participation in the Sustainable CT Municipal Certification Program And Establishing A Sustainable CT Ad Hoc Committee.

Community Relations Committee for Diversity Equity & Inclusion

Councilor Brunelle stated that she was super happy that earlier this evening Ms. Kathryn Strout was presented with the First Linda C. Davis Woman of the Year Award. She stated at their May 21, 2025 Meeting the Community Relations Committee for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion would continue to discuss events coming up in June, as well as Conversations in the Parks that would take place as the weather gets nicer.

Finance Committee

Councilor Saccone stated the Finance Committee held their Regular Meeting on April 16, 2025; and that they also held a Special Meeting earlier this evening to address the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget, noting that the Annual Town Budget Meeting was scheduled for May 19, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.; and the Budget Referendum would be held on May 20, 2025 between the hours of 6:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. He stated in addition to the Budget that 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's next meeting was scheduled for May 5, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

Conservation Commission

Councilor Barnes noted that the Conservation Commission has one item on tonight agenda related to the transfer of funding to the Trail Maintenance Account from Fiscal Year 2023/2024 to Fiscal Year 2024/2025.

Economic Development Commission

Councilor Buhle stated as she mentioned earlier this evening the EDC would be hosting a Ribbon Cutting on Saturday, April 26, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. for the Grand Opening of FRAG's Retro Zone which was a Retro-Gaming Shop. She also reported that the EDC held a Public Hearing on April 15, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. at the Ledyard Senior Center, 12 Van Tassel Drive, Gales Ferry, to receive comments on the Route 12 Corridor Study that was prepared by Consultant Gorman + York.

Chairman Rodriguez stated that the April 15, 2025 Public Hearing regarding the Route 12 Corridor Study was well attended noting that Mayor Allyn, III and his wife were in attendance. She stated that it seemed like a very good meeting; and she noted that she did not know if the EDC was going to have another meeting.

Mayor Allyn, III, stated at the April 15, 2025 Route 12 Corridor Study Public Hearing that they had a number of boards that would tie into a survey. He stated that one of the things they discussed was the demographic of those who were in attendance which was ages between 65 – 80 years old. Therefore, he stated that they were going to create a Survey QR Code to appeal to some young people to participate in the process and to obtain more responses. He stated it was a good session.

XI. MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Allyn, III, reported on the following: (1) Organics Composting Facility – Mayor Allyn noted that he forwarded a April 1, 2025 letter from Southeastern Connecticut Regional Resource Recycling Authority (SCRRA) stating that their Materials Management Infrastructure (MMI) Grant Application through the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) was approved and that they would be receiving \$4,500,000 to fund the construction of a Food Waste Composting Facility. He noted that SCRRA Executive Director David Aldridge previously attended the Town Council's April 10, 2024 meeting to discuss SCRRA's work and grant application to construct an Organics Composting Facility located south of the road that runs east-west at the Preston Waste Energy Facility. Mayor Allyn stated with the receipt of the \$4,500,000 grant funding that SCRRA was in good shape noting that they have also received the approvals from the Town of Preston, but that they were now waiting to receive approval from the Department of Energy & Environment Protection (DEEP) for their permit. He stated the Organics Composting Facility would be a huge step in the right direction for the SCRRA Member Towns to dispose their organic food waste to the Composting Facility, noting that they expect to reduce the waste stream by about 25%; (2) Route 12 Corridor Study Economic Development Commission April 15, 2025 Public Hearing – Mayor Allyn stated as they discussed earlier this evening they had a good turnout at the Public Hearing with about 50 people in attendance, noting that

residents asked some good questions. He stated Gorman + York Consultants would be creating a Survey QR Code that would be shared on the town website with the hope to obtain more responses; (3) Road Resurfacing - Paving Work– Mayor Allyn stated road improvement work would begin on May 5, 2025 noting that the following areas would be addressed: (a) lower end of Colonel Ledyard Highway from the Board of Education Facility to the intersection of Gallup Hill Road; (b) Resurfacing work from the Gallup Hill Road intersection down to Pennywise Lane. He stated that a number of people have understandably complained about the mess from the construction of the sewer line in that area; (c) Paving will be done on Thompson Street; (d) Thomas Road and (e) several other cul-de-sacs would be paved; (3) Elgin Pelican Street Sweeper \$289,990 – Mayor Allyn stated the new Elgin Pelican Street Sweeper was delivered and that it has been deployed in Ledyard, noting that the Public Works Crew has been out for about two-weeks sweeping their roads. He stated that the five- year lease/purchase for this piece of equipment was a shared arrangement with the Town of Preston. He stated once their work in Ledyard has been completed the Street Sweeper would be heading to Preston for their spring cleanup; (4) National Opioid Settlement Disbursement – Mayor Allyn stated that Ledyard received a Settlement Payment from Walgreens in the amount of \$2,807. He stated that this was a smaller payment, however, it would help them to continue their drug and overdose prevention programs; (5) Take It To The Box – Drug Take Back Day April 26, 2025 – Mayor Allyn stated a Drug Take Back Day will be held on Saturday, April 26, 2025 from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. at the Ledyard Police Department. He stated this was a good opportunity for folks to dispose of old or unused prescription medications and to keep them from potentially getting into the wrong hands, and from being disposed of by putting them down the toilet and getting into the wastewater treatment facility, or their septic system; (6) Unfunded Mandates - Mayor Allyn noted that he forwarded the April 16, 2025 letter that Southeastern Connecticut Council of Government (SCCOG) sent to the State Legislature on behalf of the 22-member towns regarding a Proposal for Municipal Relations Reform in Connecticut. He stated the State now had 1,400 unfunded mandates that fall to local communities to implement. Therefore, he stated that SCCOG was asking for a Moratorium on New Unfunded Mandates; (7) Nip Bottle Surcharge Revenues \$16,252 – Mayor Allyn stated Ledyard received their biannual payment from the nip tax proceeds in the amount of \$16,252.30. He stated this equated to 325,046 alcoholic nips bottles being sold in Ledyard during the last 6 months; or \$54,174 per month in Ledyard alone. He stated to put this in perspective that during the same 6-month period that Montville’s nip bottle surcharge payment was in the amount of \$61,285; New London had 220,000 nip bottles sold per month; Groton had almost 144,000 nip bottles sold per month; and that Norwich again had the highest with over 200,000 nip bottles sold per month. He stated that he found this data stunning, because he has seen articles about alcohol consumption going down; however, he stated in Southeastern Connecticut that alcohol consumption appeared to still very high; (8) Ribbon Cutting – Saturday, April 26, 2025- Mayor Allyn stated that a Ribbon Cutting at FRAG's Retro Zone LLC would be held at 10:00 a.m. at 12 Military Highway, Gales Ferry. He stated that FRAG was the Federation of Retro and Arcade Gaming, noting that they had a standup model of Miss Pacman; Centipede, and other games. They would also have games that you could buy and take home; (9) May 20, 2025 Referendum – Mayor Allyn stated in addition to the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget that townspeople were also being asked to vote to increase the appropriation for the Juliet W. Long School Heating Ventilation & Air Condition System (HVAC). He stated that he supported the HVAC Project and he hoped that others would as well. He explained that initially the Juliet W. Long School HVAC System was designed as mini split systems in all the classrooms. However, he stated during the Grant Application Process the State changed the grant requirements stating that the HVAC Systems had to be designed as a full air conditioning system with outdoor CO2 (carbon dioxide) monitoring and outdoor intake. Therefore, he stated all the work that had been done had to be scraped; and they had to redesign the HVAC Project, which was the reason the project was costing more money. He addressed the importance to move the Juliet W. Long School HVAC Project forward noting that the town was eligible to receive a 61.78% State Grant reimbursement for these Board of Education Projects; and that the State has already provided Ledyard an extension to have the Projects completed by December, 2026; (10) Passing of Ledyard Residents – Mayor Allyn noted the unexpected passing of former Town Councilor Tom Malone, noting that he served on the Finance Committee. He also mentioned the passing of Belinda Hayward-McKeon, who was actively involved with their Ledyard Volunteer Emergency Squad (LVES) for decades. He stated that Ms. Hayward-McKeon also spent her time and energy during Ledyard’s election processes stating the work she did was incredible. He stated every single year whether it was a special election, a primary, or a general election that Ms. Hayward-McKeon was there, noting that she would be missed by many people.

Questions to the Mayor

Councilor Barnes addressed the Southeastern Connecticut Regional Resource Recovery Authority (SCRRRA) Organics Compost Facility and the \$4,500,000 Grant they received to construct the facility, noting that Mayor Allyn stated that composting organics would reduce Ledyard’s tonnage by about 25%. He questioned whether the Mayor had a sense of what a 25% reduction in their tonnage would provide economically for Ledyard.

Mayor Allyn, III, stated that the town would need to temper the 25% reduction in tonnage explaining that the current Organic Composting requirement was for large-scale generators such hotels, grocery stores, restaurants, etc., noting that they would be mandated to take their organic food waste to a Composting Facility, if they were within 20 miles of a facility. However, he stated for homeowners that there was no requirement to bring their organic food waste to a Composting Facility. Therefore, he stated as a community that they would need to impress upon their residents the importance of getting those organics out of the household waste stream. He stated currently residents could bring their organic food waste to the Blue Earth Bins at the Transfer Station; or they could purchase a Compost Bin from SCRRRA for \$45.00 that they could put in their backyard. He stated the SCRRRA Compost Bin was about 3ft X 3ft and was a great way to compost.

XII. OLD BUSINESS – None.

XIII. NEW BUSINESS

- ❖ MOTION to amend the Agenda to add the following:
MOTION to change the location of the Annual Town Meeting regarding the proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget scheduled for May 19, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. to be held at the **Council Chambers, Town Hall Annex Building; 741 Colonel Ledyard Highway, Ledyard, 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
9 – 0 Approved and so declared

VOTE

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

Chairman Rodriguez noted that this would be added as Item #7 on tonight’s agenda.

Administration Committee

- MOTION to appoint Ms. Vanessa Sotelo (D) 8 Cedar Ridge Road, Ledyard, as an Alternate Member of the Parks, Recreation, & Senior Citizens Commission to complete a three (3) year term ending June 28, 2027, filling a vacancy left by Ms. Hawes.
Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Dombrowski
Discussion: None.
9 – 0 Approved and so declared

VOTE

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

- MOTION to appoint Mr. Christian Allyn, (U) 1010 Shewville Road, Ledyard, as a Regular Member of the Cemetery Committee for a three (3) year term ending April 26, 2027, filling a vacancy left by Ms. Staley.
Moved by Councilor Dombrowski, seconded by Councilor Brunelle

VOTE

Discussion: Chaiman Rodriguez stated that she knew Mr. Allyn and his family, noting that he was an outstanding gentleman, and that he would do very well on the Cemetery Committee and other committees, should he choose to apply.
9 – 0 Approved and so declared

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

Finance Committee

3. MOTION to authorize the transfer (carry over) of all remaining funds the Conservation Commission CNR Fund #21090305-58922 (Trail Maintenance) from Fiscal Year 2023/2024 to Fiscal Year 2024/2025, in accordance with Ordinance 300-018 “*An Ordinance Establishing a Conservation Commission for the Town of Ledyard*”.
- Moved by Councilor Ryan, seconded by Councilor Buhle
- Discussion: Mr. James Harwood, 10 Eska Drive, Ledyard, Conservation Commission Member, explained that in accordance with Ordinance #300-018 “*An Ordinance Establishing a Conservation Commission for the Town of Ledyard*” that annual surpluses from the Conservation Commission’s operating budget, starting with the end of the Fiscal Year 2018 budgetary year, were to be appropriated to CNR Account #21090305-58922 (Tree Removal from Trails). He stated that Finance Director Matthew Bonin explained that the funds could be transferred once the Annual Audit for the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 was completed. Mr. Harwood noted that the Audit Report was provided to the Finance Committee at their February 5, 2025 meeting, and therefore, the funds could now be transferred.

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

4. MOTION to authorize overspending Account #10110101-5310 (Legal Fee) thru June 30, 2025.
- Moved by Councilor Saccone, seconded by Councilor Ryan
- Discussion: Mayor Allyn, III, noted that this Legal Fee Account was for Land Trust Issues, and he noted that as the Town Council was aware, the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation was actively seeking to take four additional parcels In-Trust.

VOTE: 9 – 0 Approved and so declared

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

5. MOTION to adopt a “*Fair Housing Resolution - Town of Ledyard*” as contained in the draft dated April 14, 2025.

DRAFT: 4/14/2025

Res : 004-2025/Apr _____

**FAIR HOUSING RESOLUTION
TOWN OF LEDYARD**

WHEREAS, All persons are afforded a right to full and equal housing opportunities in the neighborhood of their choice; and

WHEREAS, Federal Fair Housing laws require that all individuals, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, veteran status, or national origin, be given equal access to all housing-related opportunities, including rental and homeownership opportunities, and be allowed to make free choices regarding housing location; and

WHEREAS, Connecticut fair housing laws require that all individuals, regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, marital status, age, lawful source of income, familial status, veteran status, learning disability, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity or expression be given equal access to all housing-related opportunities, including rental and home ownership opportunities, and be allowed to make free choices regarding housing location; and

WHEREAS, The Town of Ledyard is committed to upholding these laws, and realizes that these laws must be supplemented by an Affirmative Statement publicly endorsing the right of all people to full and equal housing opportunities in the neighborhood of their choice.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Town of Ledyard hereby endorses a Fair Housing Policy to ensure equal opportunity for all persons to rent, purchase, obtain financing and enjoy all other housing-related services of their choice on a non-discriminatory basis as provided by state and federal law; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the chief executive officer of the Town of Ledyard or his/her designated representative is responsible for responding to and assisting any person who alleges to be the victim of an illegal discriminatory housing practice in the Town of Ledyard and for advising such person of the right to file a complaint with the State of Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) or the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) or to seek assistance from the CT Fair Housing Center, legal services, or other fair housing organizations to protect his or her right to equal housing opportunities.

Adopted by the Ledyard Town Council on _____

S. Naomi Rodriguez, Chairman

I Patricia A. Riley, Town Clerk of the Town of Ledyard, do hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of a resolution duly adopted at a meeting of the Town Council held on April 23, 2025, and that such resolution has not been modified, rescinded, or revoked, and is at present in full force and effect:

IN WITNESS WHEREOF: The undersigned has affixed his signature and corporate seal on this _____ day of _____ 2025.

(Town Seal)

Patricia A. Riley, Town Clerk

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Ryan

Discussion: Mayor Allyn, III, stated the "*Fair Housing Resolution*" was a "housekeeping" type of item. He explained that the Town Council was required to annually adopt a "*Fair Housing Resolution*" for the Town to be in compliance with state regulations and to be eligible to apply for and receive certain Grant Funds to support fair housing.

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

6. 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 Buhle, seconded by Councilor Saccone

Discussion: Councilor Saccone stated the Finance Committee met earlier this evening to review the residents comments that were provided at the April 21, 2025 Public Hearing at which he presented the General Government’s proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget and School Superintendent Hartling presented the Board of Education’s proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget. He stated of the 5 or 6 residents who attended the Public Hearing that only one resident provided comments, and one resident had a question, noting that they did not have a good turnout. He stated that the Finance Committee voted to move the proposed budget forward as presented this evening, noting that it came out of Committee with a 2 – 1 vote.

Councilor St. Vil stated that one of things he has learned over the last few years was that our community was extremely vocal when it concerned things that impacted them and about things that they do not agree with. He stated that this was evident with the numerous Applications that have come to the Planning and Zoning Commission. Therefore, he stated that he did not think the Town’s Annual Budget was any different. He stated that if their community was extremely against the proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget that residents would have vocalized their concerns to this Town Council. He noted as Councilor Saccone stated, the attendance at Monday's April 21, 2025 Public Hearing was minimal, and although he did not think that this was the sentiment for every single person in the town, that he thought that what that meant was that the larger community understands that the proposed budget represented the lowest dollar amount that they could possibly bring to the town to effectively run the town government and effectively run our school district. Therefore, he stated that he stood behind the proposed budget as presented this evening. He stated the proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget was reflective of all the hard work that the members of this Town Council and the folks that work in the Town of Ledyard put into being judiciously and fiscally responsible. He stated that he would like to thank Mayor Allyn, III, for being fiscally responsible in running the Town, noting that was evident.

Councilor St. Vil continued by stating that he wanted to restate something that he said in the past. He stated when folks take a look at Ledyard’s mil rate, and he noted that he recognized that their mil rate was higher than our adjacent communities; and they look at Ledyard’s Budget, that they would see the amount of money needed to offer the services to this community, of which he was a member, noting the Police Department, Curbside Trash Collection, Sweeping the Street; and the Quality Education for which two of his children graduated from, that Ledyard’s operational costs were among the lowest communities in Southeastern Connecticut. Therefore, he stated that this was a fiscally responsible budget, that he thought everyone in this community should vote for.

Councilor Ryan stated that he was going to sound like a broken record, but that he would make his comments more succinct this evening. He stated that he has voted “No” on the proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget; and that he would continue to vote “ No” on this budget. He stated that his reasons have been clear, noting that he did not think that it was responsible to pass this much of an increase when we have the specter of two major unknowns next year, those being: (1) 2025 Revaluation that would disproportionately affect households. Councilor Ryan stated because their commercial properties would be paying less property tax; that their single-family houses would be paying more of the town’s revenue; and (2) The proposed Legislation that was designed to eliminate 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 should this piece of legislation pass that Ledyard Residents were going to have a \$625,000 - \$825,000 hole in their revenue budget that they would need to fill.

Councilor Ryan stated because of these unknowns that he did not think the proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget was a responsible budget increase this year, especially given the fact that surrounding communities have been cited challenging their Board of Education Budgets.

Councilor Buhle stated not to repeat her comments, that while she understands that Ledyard would be facing a significant mil rate increase to support the proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget than what they saw last year; that her response to Councilor Ryan's suggestion to reduce the Board of Education's proposed 5.98% increase by 0.98%, would remain the same as last year, which was about the potential loss that their students would face. She stated in looking at the Board of Education's proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget that she sees things that they need to keep for our schools to continue to be excellent and competitive with other school districts in the area, and also to continue to make Ledyard a town that people move to because their education was top notch. She stated the 0.98% reduction to the Board of Education's proposed budget increase that Councilor Ryan suggested would have been about \$330,000. However, she stated that she did not know whether the Board of Education would cut the programmatic improvements or other things; stating that she did not know what those cuts would look like. She stated when she looked at the list of programmatic improvements, and the Board of Education's requests, that she sees a budget that represented the needs of our schools to maintain the status quo and to take it a step further. She stated in doing the math that the 0.98% reduction would have only reduced the mil rate increase by less than 0.25 mils. She stated that this would save her something like \$5.00 per month in her tax bill. She stated that she realized that she had the privilege that she could afford to pay the additional taxes. However, she stated that \$5 a month would improve their school systems; and that it would make sure they had the STEM Teachers for their elementary school students, which was something that many school districts already have, but that the Ledyard School District does not have. She stated that a lot of work has been done to make sure Ledyard's School District was continuing to improve; and that she did not see a massively wasteful budget; or overspending.

Councilor Buhle stated that she recalled a resident's comments in past years for every Department that had 10-people to cut it in half. She stated Ledyard did not have Department's with 10-people, noting that she does not see an abundance of extra teachers; or extra paraprofessionals, noting that there were no bodies wandering around the schools that needed to be cut. She stated the schools had shortages noting the librarians were not managing the library because they were substituting in classrooms, because there were not enough teachers, not enough substitutes, or not enough parents volunteering in the schools. She stated the proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget was working to fix those problems. She stated that she would continue to stand behind the proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget.

Councilor Brunelle stated that she wanted to thank and acknowledge the Board of Education, the Mayor and the Finance Committee for their work in preparing the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget, noting that it was a tough job. She stated that nobody likes to pay extra money, but our children were our future citizens. They were going to be the people who would be sitting here, sitting on the police department and on the fire department; and having businesses in town, because hopefully they would feel like Ledyard was a good place to live and to also raise their children. She stated that they do not want people to come to Ledyard get an education and run away, noting that was not how communities last. She stated that she agreed with Councilor Buhle's comments in that the Board of Education's proposed budget was scrutinized, it was conscientious, caring, and that she fully understood their budget request.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated that she wanted to provide some information regarding the Board of Education's proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget noting that it included Lists of expenses that the schools needed. She stated the Board of Education prioritized those things in colored Tables noting that the **Green Table** in the amount of \$668,939 were "*Recommended*" to be included in the proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget; the **Yellow Table** in the amount of \$1,250,384 were "*Considered*" to be to be included in the proposed Fiscal Year

2025/2026 Budget; the **Red Table** in the amount of \$870,558 “*Considered for Future Budgets*” and the **Blue Table** in the amount of \$139,915 were “*Budget Reductions*”. She stated all of the expenses in the **Green Table** were needed, noting that none of the items were frivolous. She stated, as Mayor Allyn mentioned during his report this evening, like the town, that the schools also had a lot of unfunded mandates. She stated as an example the State implemented a new Reading Program, and the Schools were required to buy the books from specific seller. She stated because the Board of Education could purchase the same books for a lower cost from another seller 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 seller that the State designated in the current fiscal year (fy 24/25), 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 stated if they bought the books from the less expensive vendor they would have had funding for other things. She noted there were other programs that the Schools were required to implement, and she provided another example, explaining that because Ledyard had secured about \$1 million dollars in Department of Defense Education Activity Grants (DODEA), they were able to comply with a state unfunded program for professional learning which included curriculum work and materials. She stated during the past several years they were able to purchase the materials needed using the DODEA Grants, which the taxpayers would have had to pay for, if the Board of Education had not received the DODEA Grants. However, she noted the DODEA Grants were sunseting; and now they would have to continue with that unfunded mandated curriculum work and materials; and therefore, these costs would now need to be paid by taxpayers.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated that some kids were luckier than others and they could afford private education, or private tutoring for SAT Testing preparation, and could afford more than others. Therefore, she stated that she wanted to make sure all kids receive a quality education, noting that public education was supposed to leverage all of these kind of things, stating that they have to look at education long-term. She stated a good education would help kids find good jobs and in turn someday pay taxes, so it also helps towns. She stated education contributes to everything.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry concluded her comments by stating that half of the budget was to pay for contractual salaries as well as the costs of inflation. Therefore, she stated that only a small portion was for the extras that they needed, and she noted that much of those needs were not included in the budget.

Chairman Rodriguez stated the proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget would be presented to the townspeople at the May 19, 2025 Annual Budget Meeting that would adjourn to a vote at the May 20, 2025 Referendum.

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

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

7. MOTION to change the location of the Annual Town Meeting regarding the proposed Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget scheduled for May 19, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. to be held at the **Council Chambers, Town Hall Annex Building; 741 Colonel Ledyard Highway**, Ledyard, 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 Dombrowski

Discussion: Chairman Rodriguez stated that this motion was to change the location of the Annual Town Meeting to the Council Chambers, noting that the Town Council previously set the date for the Town Meeting at their April 9, 2025 meeting.

VOTE: 9 – 0 Approved and so declared

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

XV. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Rodriguez stated before they adjourned that she wanted to provide a few comments. She noted that she wanted to thank Superintendent Jason Hartling and the Board of Education for preparing a reasonable budget. She also wanted to thank the Town Council for the many hours they spent working to prepare the proposed budget, as well as Mayor Fred Allyn, III; Finance Director Matthew Bonin, and all their department heads and town volunteers for their work throughout the budget process. In addition, she stated that she wanted to express her appreciation to their dedicated Town and Board of Education employees who each and every day continue to take on new challenges while looking for new opportunities to improve services and reduce costs for our residents. She stated that no one wanted to see increases, but they have to recognize that increases were needed for contractual obligations, higher utility costs, education, and town staff salary increases to be comparable and in-line with other communities. She stated that she believed that they have all worked diligently to put together a responsible budget for the upcoming year. She again thanked everyone for their time and hard work.

Chairman Rodriguez noted the following upcoming dates:

- May 12, 2025 at 6:30 p.m. Special Town Meeting to increase the appropriation for the Juliet W. Long Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning System (HVAC).
- May 19, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Annual Town Meeting Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget.
- May 20, 2025 Referendum 6:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. to vote on the following:
 - ✓ Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget.
 - ✓ Increase appropriation for the Juliet W. Long Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning System (HVAC).

VOTE: Councilor Buhle moved to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Dombrowski.
9 - 0 Approved and so declared. The meeting adjourned at 7:59 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 23, 2025.

S. Naomi Rodriguez, Chairman