



TOWN OF LEDYARD  
CONNECTICUT  
TOWN COUNCIL

Chairman S. Naomi Rodriguez

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

DRAFT

- I. CALL TO ORDER – Chairman Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. at the Council Chambers, Town Hall Annex Building.

Chairman Rodriguez welcomed all to the Hybrid Meeting. She stated for the members of the Town Council and the Public who were participating via video conference that the remote meeting information was available on the Agenda that was posted on the Town’s Website – Granicus-Legistar Meeting Portal.

- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

- III. ROLL CALL –

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

- IV. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS/PRESENTATIONS

- Proclamation for David Holdridge



Be it known that the  
Town of Ledyard  
Recognizes

*A Lifetime of Community Service*  
**DAVID HOLDRIDGE**

*For his more than Fifty years of dedication to the Town of Ledyard*

*In serving as a volunteer and leader on numerous Town Committees, as President of the Ledyard Ecclesiastical Society, Civic Organizations, and as a Member of the Ledyard Town Council for over five decades; .*

*Mr. Holdridge as a husband, father, grandfather, history professor, and avid lover of the outdoors, he also made time to serve his community;*

*During his Sixteen years on the Town Council Mr. Holdridge served on the Community Services Committee and Land Use/Planning/Public Works Committee; and as its Chairman from 1977 – 1979; and again from 1983-1985. In addition, he served as the Liaison to the Conservation Commission, Historic District Commission, and the Inland Wetlands and Water Courses Commission.*

*Mr. Holdridge has passion and commitment to preserve open space and maintain the beauty of Ledyard’s rural community with its rolling hills, farmland, and woodlands.*

***Amongst his Many Accomplishments in 2008*** Mr. Holdridge played an instrumental role in the vision, design, and construction of the Tri-Town Trail from Bluff Point to Preston Plains Park; working tirelessly with his fellow residents, Ketih and Karen Parkinson, Barbara Kil, and others to establish a regional network trail for passive recreation that would improve residents quality of life for years to come. The Tri-Town Trail Committee; later became the Non-Profit Tri-Town Trail Association; and in 2022 Mr. Holdridge sought and received a Greenway Designation for the Tri-Town Trail from the Connecticut Greenway Designation CT Greenways Council (CGC).

***Mr. Holdridge viewed Public Health, Safety, and Education*** as being essential to a viable and healthy community. He was a proponent of providing reliable potable water to Ledyard residents, supporting the many water projects that now serve 1,200 households. In addition, he supported the construction of a new Gales Ferry Elementary School in 1999; the expansion of the Vo-Ag Wing in 2000; High School Critical Needs Improvements in 2001; the construction of the Emergency Services Building on Fairway Drive in 2002; and the construction of the Police Facility in 2013 to house the Town's Independent Police Department, which included improvements to the Town Hall Complex.

***Mr. Holdridge*** also recognized the need to prevent rural sprawl, and he encouraged smart growth, responsible development, and valuable initiatives to address Ledyard's current and future infrastructure demands, its ability to increase its tax base, its impact on the future of his community, and the importance to take care of Ledyard's aging population as well as its youth by providing affordable housing and creating neighborhoods where the residents could retire comfortably and where families could raise their children.

***Those of Us Who Witnessed*** his quiet, but steadfast demeanor will attest that ***David Holdridge*** has been motivated by the highest ideals of public service. The citizens of Ledyard have benefited and will remain grateful for his tenacity and tireless years of service, commitment, integrity and perseverance during a period of growth and change. The citizens of Ledyard are fortunate to have been, and will continue to be served by his forethought and leadership qualities.

***We Also Thank*** his wife Sarah for graciously sharing Dave with all of us... for all these years!

Given this Ninth day of July, in the year 2025 at Ledyard, Connecticut.

S. Naomi Rodriguez, Chairman  
Ledyard Town Council

• ***Proclamation for Daniel and Laura Troy***



Be it known that the  
Town of Ledyard  
Recognizes  
And

***Honors***  
***Daniel and Laura Troy***

*For their Forty-Five Years of dedication to their Community*

***Mr. Daniel Troy*** as a teen began working as a Produce Clerk when Stop & Shop was a small neighborhood grocery store in Groton, that was then locally owned by a Massachusetts Family.

***Mrs. Laura Troy*** as a teen also began working a Stop & Shop as a Payroll Clerk. Her steady presences, organizational skills, and knowledge of store operations made her a trusted aide to the store manager and associates; and an essential part of the Team.

***In 1980*** while working at Stop & Shop Daniel and Laura met and began dating, and later married in 1985; and have remained devoted to each other, the Company, and to their Community.

***Mr. and Mrs. Troy*** chose Ledyard in 1990 to build their home and raise their family; inspiring their children to choose to reside in Ledyard and raise their families as well. Mr. and Mrs. Troy are devoted Grandparents, taking every opportunity to spend time with their Grandchildren and their Grand dog.

*In Addition* to celebrating Forty-five years of continuous service as dedicated employees of Stop & Shop, Mr. and Mrs. Troy not only found time for their family and coworkers, they understood and valued what it takes to make a community.

*Mrs. Troy* spent many hours volunteering in the Ledyard Public Schools, supporting students and teachers in the classroom, chaperoning field trips, helping in the school library, and with the music boosters. She also volunteered with the Girl Scouts of America, and helped local churches with fundraisers, as well as doing charity work with the Groton Chapter of America.

*Mr. Troy* was a steady source of warmth and familiarity for shoppers each week because of his dedication to providing quality produce, his great pride in his work, and his friendly interactions with customers and coworkers he made everyone feel like family.

*Now Therefore, be it Resolved that* Daniel and Laura Troy are recognized as outstanding citizens and neighbors for their selfless contributions, for always stepping up to volunteer their time to help their Friends and Neighbors in need; and for Making Ledyard a Welcoming and Great Community for all to call it their Home.

The townspeople will remain extremely grateful for their generosity, commitment, and dedication.

And under this Charter Daniel and Laura Troy shall hold and enjoy a place of high esteem in the minds and hearts of the people of the Town of Ledyard.

Given this Ninth day of July, 2025 at Ledyard, Connecticut.

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S. Naomi Rodriguez, Chairman  
Ledyard Town Council

• **State of Connecticut Citation for Town Council Chairman S. Naomi Rodriguez**

*State Senator Cathy Osten* presented Chairman S. Naomi Rodriguez with the following State of Connecticut General Assembly Citation that was introduced by herself, Representative Kevin Ryan, Representative Greg Howard, and Representative Brian Lanoue:

*Be It Hereby Known to All: That the Connecticut General Assembly in recognition of Chairman Rodriguez's many years of dedicated public service in the Town of Ledyard. Your hard work and dedication have left a lasting positive mark on the community, and will be greatly missed.*

*We join with your friends and family to offer our congratulations to Chairman S. Naomi Rodriguez, and we wish you the best of luck for the future.*

*The entire membership extends its very best wishes on this memorable occasion and expresses the hope for continued success.*

Given this eight day of July, 2025 at the State Capitol in Hartford, Connecticut.

Martin Looney  
Senate President

Speaker of the House  
Matt Ritter

Secretary of the State  
Stephanie Thomas

Senator Osten noted that she stopped by the Ledyard's Farmers' Market this evening and picked up some flowers to present to Chairman Rodriguez, and she thanked her for her service.

- ***Proclamation for Town Council Chairman S. Naomi Rodriguez***

On behalf of the Twenty-seventh Town Council Councilor Buhle presented the following:



BE IT KNOWN THAT THE TOWN OF LEDYARD RECOGNIZES  
**S. NAOMI RODRIGUEZ**

For Her more than Nineteen Years of Service and Dedication to the Town of Ledyard

***2006 to 2025  
As a Volunteer and Elected Official***

***Ms. Rodriguez*** began her service in Ledyard's town government in 2006 when she was appointed to the Planning Commission; serving as the Commission's Vice Chairman from 2012 – 2016. In 2016 she was appointed to the Gypsy Moth Committee, serving as the Committee's Chairman working to mobilize residents to address the infestation of gypsy moths in her community in an effort to protect Ledyard's trees, woodlands, and picturesque rural environment. In addition, she served on the Charter Revision Commission in 2009, on Senior Citizens Commission from 2016 to 2019; and on Parks & Recreation Commission from 2018- to 2019.

***Ms. Rodriguez viewed Education*** as an essential component of the future of her community's youth. In 2007 she began volunteering to help students and teachers in the classroom, she also served as a member of the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO); and as a Ledyard Center School Shining Star Friend. Also, Ms. Rodriguez was a cofounder of the Ledyard Public Schools Recycling Program that was launched in 2008.

***In 2019 Ms. Rodriguez was elected to the Board of Education***, during her term she was an advocate for diversity, and she worked to help foster a school environment of inclusion, where Ledyard's children would excel in academics, social, and emotional development. As a member of the Board of Education Ms. Rodriguez served on the Board of Education's Strategic Planning Committee, helped with the vision and district goals to ensure that when all students left their schools they were able to thrive and succeed in any endeavor. In addition, she served as the Ledyard Public Schools Representative to LEARN and on LEARN's Negotiation Committee for the administrators contract; and organized and participated in Ledyard Public Schools Teacher Residency Program through LEARN to bring minority teachers to Ledyard.

***In 2021 Ms. Rodriguez was elected to the Town Council*** serving two consecutive terms where she was a member of the Land Use/Planning/Public Works Committee and served as the Town Council Liaison to the Agricultural Commission, Ledyard Farmers Market Committee, the Retirement Board, the Parks and Recreation Commission, Senior Citizens Commission and the newly combined Parks, Recreation and Senior Citizens Commission.

***During her time on the Town Council*** Ms. Rodriguez was instrumental in the 2021 establishment and the success of the Black History Month Essay and Poster Contest working with the Board of Education and the Community to ensure that all Ledyard Students including their Public Schools, Magnet Schools, and Homeschooled Students had the opportunity to participate. This program brought the entire community together for parents, educators, and students to recognize the accomplishments of their community's youth.

***Ms. Rodriguez was elected Town Council Chairman*** by her peers in 2023 and served in this role until her departure in 2025 when her family relocated for employment reasons. During her short time as Chairman she presided over the financial and legislative body of the town; working tirelessly with her fellow councilors as well as local, state, and federal officials to help secure grant funding which included the COPS Law Enforcement Technology and Equipment Grant to modernize and increase the functionality of the Police Department's software to maintain their records and to interface with the judicial system; ***and*** the 2025 STEAP Grant to replace the Playscapes at following Parks: Town Green, Aljen Heights, Blonders Park, and Chirsty Hill Park.

***rs. Rodriguez viewed Public Health and its Youth*** as critically important working to arrange the Ledyard Summer Meals Program through Groton Public Schools in 2020; and securing a portion of the Town's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding to hire licensed professional clinicians through the Child & Family Agency School-Based Health Centers to provide her community's youth mental health support. In addition, each year Ms. Rodriguez invited the Brian Dagle Healing Hearts Foundation to the Ledyard Farmers Market to discuss grief support, mental health, and suicide prevention providing lifesaving outreach programs to her community.

*Those of Us Who Witnessed* these actions will attest that **S. Naomi Rodriguez** motivated by the highest ideals of public service. The citizens of Ledyard have benefited from her years of service, commitment, and perseverance during a period of growth and change; and are fortunate to have been to be served by her steadfast and compassionate qualities.

Given by the Twenty-seventh Town Council on this Ninth day of July, 2025 at Ledyard, Connecticut.

The Town Council presented the Chairman Rodriguez with a bouquet of flowers.

## V. RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS

**Mr. Steve Munger**, 12 Nutmeg Drive, Gales Ferry, stated that he would begin his comments this evening as he usually does, noting that we disagree a lot, but that he respected everyone on the Town Council, noting that the list of what Chairman Rodriguez has done for the town was mentioned in the Proclamation that was presented to her earlier this evening.

Mr. Munger went on to state that the town has had some controversial topics, noting that the *Flying of Third-Party Flags* was one that they recently debated. He stated because certain people disagreed, they were called names; however, he stated they worked though the name calling, and that he thought they now understand each other.

Mr. Munger stated he attended the Town Council's June 11, 2025 meeting at which the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget was discussed. He noted the importance of unity, stating that everything he talks about was unity. He stated because some people disagreed on certain aspects of the budget that certain members of this Town Council basically said that those people did not like kids. He stated that he has been dealing with kids since he was a kid, noting that he worked at summer camps; and when he was in the Navy that wherever he went he visited the orphanages and took kids out to play, noting when he was in Scotland that he took kids out of the orphanages to play in soccer matches. He stated kids were their future electorate, noting that was the reason he fought for the magnet school kids to be able to participate in sports in town, which he believed was still not allowed, noting that was the not so nice part. However, he stated that he thought the wonderful part was that although they can totally disagree a lot of the time, they could be respectful to each other. He stated that he recently saw a member of the Town Council at the commissary; and he noted that he walked up to that person and said *"We don't know each other very well, but do not take anything that he talks about personal"* He stated the Town Councilor replied back to him saying *"You do a great job, and you're very respectful"*.

Mr. Munger stated that he has known Town Council Chairman Naomi Rodriguez and her husband Maik Schuler for a long time, noting that his son was the co-coach with them when their kids, (his grandkids) were growing up together. He stated at that time they were not political, noting that he did not know where they stood, because they did not talk politics, they were just having fun. He stated when Ms. Rodriguez was elected to the Board of Education that he was one of the first people to shake her hand and congratulate her. He stated when his house burned to the ground about 13-years ago; that one of the first people that called him was Chairman Rodriguez. He stated that she organized a fundraiser for his family and that she has helped them out during the years she has lived in Ledyard.

Mr. Munger noted during the 2021 Local Election that he and Chairman Rodriguez were at one of the polling locations and that they were talking, laughing and joking outside the School, noting that anyone would have thought they were best friends. He stated some guy came over and sat down next to them, noting that neither he nor Chairman Rodriguez knew who the man was. He stated as it turned-out the man was a New London Day Newspaper Reporter. He stated the next day the Newspaper printed a picture of him and Chairman Rodriguez with the following caption: *"This is probably the last civil election in the State of Connecticut"*. Mr. Munger stated that he hoped this story would resonate with everybody; especially when the town was discussing hard topics. He stated let's discuss and disagree on the topic, but remember to stop short of insinuations or throwing names out there, just because they disagreed. He stated if we start doing that they all could have a great relationship, like the one that he and Chairman Rodriguez have had for so many years, even though they do not always agree. Mr. Munger thanked Chairman Rodriguez for everything she did for her community.

**Mr. Jake Troy**, 53 Vinegar Hill Road, Gales Ferry, stated that he was the former Chairman of the Democratic Town Committee; he was also the former Chief of Ledyard Volunteer Emergency Ambulance, which was now outsourced to American Ambulance, and that he also worked as an Emergency Dispatcher for many years for the Police Department. He stated that he wanted to extend his thanks to Chairman Rodriguez for all of her service. He stated Chairman Naomi Rodriguez has been synonymous with education and with advocating for the public, noting that it was going to be a sad day to see her leave public service for Ledyard. He stated when he thinks of Public Service, that he thinks of Chairman Rodriguez, noting that she was literally present at every function he could think back to. He stated that he has seen her at every music performance that he ever participated in, noting that she was just everywhere. He stated that he wanted to say to Chairman Rodriguez *“Thank you very much for your leadership and for your guidance throughout the years”*.

Mr. Troy continued by addressing the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget, noting that he watched the discussions over the last several weeks. He stated as someone who used to administer a town department and its budget, and that he would say to those who think there was a lot of fat left to cut; that there was not. He stated that it was not as cut and dry as some people make it seem; and unless they were going to start laying off police officers, firefighters, and dispatchers, that there was really nothing left in terms of fat. He stated that Ledyard does not have a large business tax base for better or for worse, and unfortunately, the hands that were on the steering wheel for many years has left them in the situation that they were now in; and that they were trying to do the best that they can. He thanked everyone for their hours of tireless work on the budget and for sitting through the long, boring budget meetings. He stated that he was glad they finally got to a place where they can move forward. He stated that he was also glad that the July 8, 2025 Referendum to provide the additional funding to facilitate the Heating Ventilation & Air Conditioning System (HVAC) passed yesterday for the students at the Juliet W. Long School. He concluded his comments by thanking all for their time, stating that he appreciated it.

**Ms. Caitlyn Greco**, 9 Stone Court, Gales Ferry, addressed the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget, noting that the Town Council made insignificant cuts and passed a budget that was voted down twice by the taxpayers. She stated every time a dissatisfied taxpayer tried to address their concerns that the members of the Town Council and their friends who voted *“Yes, to pass the budget”* pointed their finger to someone else. She stated that these members of the Town Council say that it was not their fault, because the Mayor sent them a high budget, or because the Board of Education sent them a high budget; or because the Republicans did not raise taxes enough historically. She stated not only do these members of the Town Council refuse to accept that this was entirely their fault; that they also have the audacity to say that it was what the taxpayers wanted; or it was because they were misled and did not understand the budget; or the people who voted *“No”*, don't care about the children. She stated that was a mighty big assumption make, noting that she has children in this town; and that she was one of the *“No”* voters.

Ms. Greco went on to state that she was formerly a licensed financial advisor, and that she was very qualified to read a budget. She stated that she spent more time reading the budget to make sure that she was placing an informed vote. She stated that it was quite disturbing to see people assuming that her vote was uninformed, assuming that it would have passed if more voters showed up. She stated the people showed up; and they voted *“No”*. She stated as Town Council members that it was their job to find additional revenue sources to support their town's budget; and not to just raise taxes forever. She stated that they failed to find revenue sources; just like their State Representatives, who pat themselves on the back every time they pass another damaging, unfunded mandate. She stated members of this Town Council was also busy patting themselves on the back for securing a playground grant, when playgrounds were a *“Want to have - Not a need”*. She stated that other towns have successfully used that grant funding for much more necessary expenses. She stated that children do not need big playgrounds, noting that they have plenty of state parks. She stated that their town has no shortage of yard space, noting that her kids were perfectly happy playing in their own yard. She stated wasting a single penny on frivolity when the country was in a *Cost-of-Living Crisis*, showed her that they cannot be trusted with their tax dollars, noting that her neighbor



lost her house this year, and was homeless, noting that playgrounds would not solve their problems. She stated moving forward their town needed to be led with logic and reason, not emotion, and not by your personal desires. She stated that she looked forward to voting for new candidates this fall. Thank you.

**Mr. Jacob Hurt**, 6 Nugget Hill Drive, Gales Ferry, stated he was speaking for himself this evening and that he wanted to add his congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Troy and to Chairman Rodriguez who were recognized earlier this evening with Proclamations and a State of Connecticut Citation.

Mr. Hurt continued by thanking those who were involved with the Pizza Picnic in the Park and Pride Event that was held on Saturday, June 28, 2025. He stated it was a muggy, humid, rainy afternoon noting that there was really never a time for folks to make it out. He stated anything they could do as a town, and as an elected government to show that everyone was welcome in their town was appreciated, especially when there were no signals from Hartford or from Washington DC. He stated that they had a good turnout for Pizza Picnic in the Park and Pride Event this time, noting that he thought it was well done. He stated that he appreciated Chairman Rodriguez and Councilor Barnes for attending the event; and he also thanked the rest of the Town Council for supporting the event.

Mr. Hurt went on to state that he also appreciated that the July 8, 2025 Referendum to provide additional funding to facilitate the Heating Ventilation & Air Conditioning System (HVAC) at the Juliet W. Long School passed. He stated that he knows that per their Bond Counsel Attorney they had to use the original wording for the Referendum Question each time it was presented to the voters. However, he suggested if the town had to do something like this again in the future that it may be worth taking a look at the original wording because he thought that it left a lot to be interpreted. He stated there may be some room for a working group to make sure the words get in there to reduce the amount of interpretation that leads to the misinterpretation of what the Referendum Question was asking.

Mr. Hurt commented on the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget noting that he appreciated the efforts that were made particularly by all nine members of this Town Council and their State Delegation this year. He stated that it was a marked contrast from what they have seen in the past. He stated although some State Policies have a double-edged sword, that the intent was good. He stated if they continue to work to bring in some revenue that it would be one way they could offset the Grand List, noting that this type of growth happens much slower than a whole budget cycle. He stated the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget was a tough budget cycle and that he appreciated everyone's work, noting that nobody was happy with it; which meant that it was probably a good budget. Thank you again.

**Ms. Febie Herndon**, 16 Bittersweet Drive, Gales Ferry, thanked everyone for attending tonight's Town Council Meeting to say goodbye to their beautiful Chairman Rodriguez. Ms. Herndon stated because of their kids that she and Chairman Rodriguez have known each other for many years, noting that her daughter was the Class President and that she was the founder of the first Fencing Team in Ledyard. She stated that she hoped Chairman Rodriguez would not forget their Ledyard girls, noting that they would not have made it without the support of Chairman Rodriguez's husband Maik Schuler. She stated that she wanted to thank Chairman Rodriguez for all of her service to Ledyard, noting that she has been spontaneous; and that it was nice to meet her and to call her a friend, noting that her service made their town a community.

Ms. Herndon addressed the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget. She stated that she knows that some were not happy with the budget, and that the members of the Town Council really worked hard. Therefore, she stated that she wanted to congratulate everyone for their effort noting that they now have a Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget.

Chairman Rodriguez thanked the residents for their comments.

## VI. COMMITTEE COMMISSION AND BOARD REPORTS – None.

## VII. COMMENTS OF TOWN COUNCILORS

Councilor Brunelle stated that she wanted to echo the sentiments about the June 28, 2025 Pizza Picnic in the Park and the Pride Event. She stated that this was the second year they held the event and they had a great turnout. She stated the weather was not so nice, but that people still came out. She stated that the Congregational Church helped with the pizzas; and that they had games, balloons; and a Disc Jockey (DJ), noting that it was a fun afternoon. She went on to state the Congregational Church invited everybody who attended the Picnic to attend their Church Services the next day, noting that she and her family were able to attend and that they had a great time. She stated that she personally liked to see different places of faith in the town, and that she planned to do more of that this year.

Councilor Brunelle continued by noting that the Highlands had a Block Party this past weekend; and she thanked Rocky's Landscaping for hosting and paying for the event, noting that she only learned about it at the last minute. She stated they had food and drinks and that she did the balloons for free. She stated that it was a great event, and that she would like to see more community events where they bring everybody together.

Councilor Brunelle concluded her comments by saying that she truly loved Chairman Naomi Rodriguez. She stated that she has been inspired by her, noting that she has always seen her at all the different meetings. She stated when she was a volunteer serving on the Farmers Market Committee that Chairman Rodriguez inspired her to do more, noting that she has learned a ridiculous amount from her. She stated that she had nothing but respect and love for Chairman Rodriguez, noting that she would be sorely missed.

Councilor Saccone stated rather than talk about summer safety and fire safety this evening, which was mostly common sense; that he would like to talk about volunteerism in town. He stated that Chairman Naomi Rodriguez was amazing noting that she has volunteered in this community for twenty years. He noted her time serving on the Town Council stating that it was a thankless job; stating that once in a while they get a "Thank you" from Steve Munger; and that the Town Council appreciated Mr. Munger's comments. Councilor Saccone went on to note the amount of time the members of the Town Council spend attending many meetings and events throughout the town. He addressed the challenge in trying to find a clear and concise Budget that everybody could live with; and he noted that Chairman Rodriguez has done all of this without being paid; commenting that she was amazing. He concluded his comments by stating as a town citizen that he wanted to send his congratulations to Chairman Rodriguez and thank her for the number of years she has put in, stating that their town was better off because of the work she has done. Thank you.

Chairman Rodriguez stated the July 8, 2025 Referendum to increase funding to facilitate the Juliet W. Long School Heating Ventilation & Air Conditioning (HVAC) passed, which was very good news. She stated that this would allow work to start this summer and for the project to be completed by the State's required December, 2026 Deadline. She stated that it has been so hot and humid lately, and that she was sure that the children and staff at the Juliet W. Long School they would be very appreciative.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry stated that Sustainable Connecticut invited her to participate in a tour of the Covanta SECONN Waste to Energy Plant in Preston. She stated that seeing the operation was an eye opener, noting that she had never seen so much trash in one place. She stated during the tour the Plant Operator explained and showed them the process noting that there was a guy behind a glass who operated a machine which was like the claw grabbers you would see in the machines that grab a stuffed toy. She stated this machine was huge, and that it would take big amounts of trash and put it in a hole where it would be burned, and the heat and the steam would go into a turbine, where it produced the electricity to operate the Plant. She also explained that the excess trash that does not burn would go into a Grinder. She stated seeing this operation made her think even more about Ledyard's recycling efforts noting that they need to do more outreach for residents to understand the importance to recycle. She stated the town pays almost a million dollars every year to pick-up and haul trash; and for the tipping fees to dispose of the trash. She stated the less trash they make the less tipping fees they would have to pay to dispose the trash, which would be a savings for their taxpayers. She



also explained that after the trash was burned that the Plant would then recycle or sell off the metal that was remaining. Therefore, she stated that the Town was paying the Trash Hauler to pick up the trash and bring it to the Waste to Energy Plant who was making a profit from their trash. She stated that residents needed to work harder to put all their recyclables into the appropriate recycling cart because they would save tax dollars. She stated the tour of the Covanta SECONN Waste to Energy Plant in Preston was very informative, noting that she learned a lot about what was happening with their trash.

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry continued by thanking Chairman Rodriguez for all of her contributions to Ledyard. She stated as a first term member serving on the Town Council (2023 – 2025) that she really appreciated all the guidance, and the help Chairman Rodriguez has given to all of them. She stated that no one starts this job knowing everything, noting that Chairman Rodriguez was always there to answer questions, and to provide guidance stating that she has learned a lot from Chairman Rodriguez, which she really appreciated. She stated there was a lot going on in town, and as a resident that you might be involved in certain things, but serving as an elected official that they have to be involved in everything. She stated that she was going to miss Chairman Rodriguez and that she hoped that she would come back to visit Ledyard. Thank you.

Councilor St. Vil thanked Chairman Rodriguez for her mentorship and her volunteerism. He stated when he first began his civic journey a couple of years ago he was putting in about 10 – 15 volunteer hours per week. However, he stated what he has seen and learned from Chairman Rodriguez was that she was putting in 3, 4, 5 times more than that, and so he could only imagine all that she has done over the past years for the town. He thanked Chairman Rodriguez for her dedication, noting that he has also benefited from her volunteerism, even when he did not even know it. He stated that his prayer and his hope for their community was that Chairman Naomi Rodriguez would come back in the future and see that her legacy was one where people worked really hard because they cared about the community they live in; and because it was the right thing to do. He congratulated Chairman Rodriguez for her accomplishments; and he thanked her; stating that he loves her and wishes her good luck.

Councilor Dombrowski stated in-keeping with the community spirit he noted the recreation of *Battle for the July 4<sup>th</sup> Holiday* that happened in the Highlands. He stated that he was surrounded by everybody who was shooting off the fireworks right outside his home. He stated at one point his wife asked him from which direction the fireworks were coming from, and he had to reply that they were coming from all directions. He stated that he was glad everybody had a good time; and that nobody got hurt.

Councilor Dombrowski continued by addressing the departure of Chairman Rodriguez, noting that he and Chairman Rodriguez have traveled together over the last number of years. He noted that Chairman Rodriguez previously served on the Planning Commission when he was serving on the Zoning Commission, when the two Commissions were separate, noting that they have been working with each other over the past 20-years in various capacities. He stated that he wished Chairman Rodriguez and her husband Maik the best in the future, and that she would be successful in all of her future endeavors.

Councilor Buhle stated because tonight's Administration Committee meeting was 6-minutes that she immediately got up and went to the Farmers Market. She congratulated the Ledyard Farmers Market for being ranked "*The Best Farmers Market in Connecticut*", by the Connecticut Magazine which was absolutely amazing. She stated the hard work that the Farmers Market Committee puts in every single week shows, noting that it was a Shining Star in their community. She stated every week when she visits the Farmers Market that she was reminded of how proud she was to live in this town, and how amazing it was, noting that every week they offer new things, and it was absolutely great.

Councilor Buhle continued by addressing the June 28, 2025 Pizza Picnic in the Park and Pride Event noting that she wanted to apologize to Councilor Brunelle that she was not able to attend the event because she had to work that day. However, she wanted to thank Councilor Brunelle for continuing to organize the event and for being a voice for those who may feel unwelcome.

Councilor Buhle responded to Ms. Greco's comment regarding the playgrounds earlier this evening, noting that she has also seen some messages online as well. She stated that she has worked with this Town Council to apply for two Grants, as was mentioned in the Proclamation that was presented to Chairman Rodriguez this evening. She stated every single grant opportunity that she has suggested to the Finance Committee and that they pursued was to find things that would improve the quality of life in Ledyard and to reduce costs to their taxpayers. She stated their challenge was how do they make it better to live here, but not more expensive. She stated that she knows that Councilor Ryan, who was attending remotely this evening was listening, noting that the first question out of his mouth every time she comes up with an idea was "*What is the long-term maintenance cost on this?*" Councilor Buhle stated they toured the town's existing playgrounds in an effort to replace the ones that were at the end of their life, were falling apart; and were really not safe anymore, noting that it was a major liability for the town to have a playground that was not safe for children to play on. She stated all four of the playgrounds were being replaced with solid surface play areas which would reduce the labor and maintenance costs. She went on to state that the other part for her was that playgrounds and parks were an expression of how a town valued its children and its families. *Full. Stop! That's it!* She stated that she has taken her son to playgrounds in Groton, where she has heard the same sentiments, noting that she had heard so many families say that they live in Gales Ferry, but that they drive to Groton because there were no good playgrounds in Ledyard. She stated that she thought that they deserve to be in a town that has amazing playgrounds that show how much they love being a community with families. She stated that when they applied for this 2025 Small-Town Economic Assistant Program (STEAP) Grant the town put forward \$179,000 of local funding from the Undesignated Capital Account, as required by the grant program, explaining that Ledyard received \$892,000 in Grant funding to replace the playscapes at four parks in town. She noted as an example comparison that if you went out to the parking lot and gave somebody \$20 bucks, and they gave you a \$100 back that you got to keep, that she would think that it was a really good deal. She stated one playground alone cost \$600,000 to replace, explaining that it was not because it was absorbent, but because playgrounds were expensive. She stated that they were getting all of that for a \$179,000 of local tax dollars; and she thought that it was actually a really great use of taxpayer money. Therefore, she stated that she would get defensive about it because it was something that she has worked hard on; and she was really passionate about, because she thought their kids deserve to live in an amazing town, that shows how much they were loved. She noted Mr. Munger's comments from earlier this evening and she stated that she was not saying that he did not like kids if he did not support the playgrounds; she was just saying that she thought that it was something that was worthwhile to pursue, noting that it was respecting the long-term expenses of their taxpayers.

Councilor Buhle went on to state like everybody else this evening that she wanted to say to Chairman Rodriguez that she was wholeheartedly inspired by her. She stated that she has learned a lot from Chairman Rodriguez, and she was so grateful for all of her leadership and everything that she has taught her and all of them. She stated that she could not say *Good Bye* without telling her how grateful she was. Thank you.

Councilor Ryan, attending remotely via Zoom, stated that it was July, and it was hot outside. He reminded everyone about the importance to make sure they stay hydrated. He stated the Ledyard Parks and Recreation Summer Camp was in full swing right now, noting that both of his daughters were participating in the program, stating that they were having a great time with all the kids. However, he stated that it was important for everybody to stay hydrated, especially the young children who were out in the sun with the hot temperatures they were having.

Councilor Ryan went on to note that July also means Tax Season; and there were a lot upset people; and that he empathized with them. He thanked Tax Assessor Adrianna Hedwall and her staff noting that they were fielding a lot of questions from residents every day. He stated the Tax Assessor's Office was extremely busy this month; and so he appreciated all their efforts to field the public's needs on that front.

Councilor Ryan continued by noting that he wanted to address a couple of public comments regarding the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Budget. He stated that he did not think it was any secret that he was disappointed with the Budget outcome, noting that he thought there were changes

that could have been made, and should have been made to reduce the tax burden on the public this year given what they have coming in front of them in the next year, and in the years to follow with revenue challenges, unfunded mandates, and especially with the property revaluation. Therefore, he stated empathizes with the residents who were disappointed with the budget outcome.

Councilor Ryan stated that he echoed Councilor Buhle’s comment regarding the Farmers Market, noting that he also stopped by this evening as well, and that the Market was always amazing. He stated he was happy that they were voted the “*Best Farmers Market in Connecticut*” because they do an excellent job every week, and the choices they offer were always outstanding.

Councilor Ryan concluded his comments by thanking Chairman Rodriguez for her years of service to the town. He stated that he wished her, and her husband Maik all the best in their travels and in their future endeavors. He wished them the *Best of Luck; and Fair Winds, and Following Seas*.

Chairman Rodriguez thanked the Town Councilors for their comments this evening.

VIII. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF PRIOR MEETING MINUTES

MOTION to approve the following:

- Regular Meeting Minutes of June 11, 2025
- Special Meeting Minutes of June 18, 2025
- Special Meeting Minutes of June 25, 2025

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor Dombrowski

**VOTE: 8 – 0 Approved and so declared**

IX. COMMUNICATIONS

Chairman Rodriguez stated a Communications List has been provided on the meeting portal for tonight’s meeting, and she noted referrals were listed.

X. COUNCIL SUB COMMITTEE, LIAISON REPORTS

Administration Committee

Councilor Buhle stated the Administration Committee met earlier this evening and addressed the following: (1) Proposed “*Ordinance Establishing an Ethics Commission for the Town of Ledyard*” – Councilor Buhle stated the draft Ordinance was forwarded to the Town Attorney and that she had a telephone conversation with him. She stated that the Committee was awaiting the Town Attorney’s legal review and recommendations; (2) Job Description – Councilor Buhle noted the Committee reviewed with Human Resources Director Christine Dias the following Job Descriptions: Assistant to the Land Use Director; Office Assistant Mayor’s Office; and Executive Assistant to the Mayor; and (3) Reappointments. Councilor Buhle noted the reappointments and job descriptions would be forwarded to the Town Council’s August 13, 2025 Agenda.

Community Relations Committee for Diversity Equity & Inclusion

Councilor Brunelle stated the Community Relations Committee for DEI had a wonderful Pizza Picnic in the Park and Pride Event on June 28, 2025. She also noted that the Committee’s July 16, 2025 meeting would be cancelled.

Finance Committee

Councilor Saccone stated the Finance Committee would be cancelling their July 16, 2025 meeting. He stated although the Committee does not have any items on tonight’s agenda that they would be amending the Agenda later this evening to address an Emergency Bid Waiver as requested by the Board of Education to replace the Chiller at the Gales Ferry School.

Land Use/Planning/Public Works Committee

Councilor St. Vil stated the LUPPW Committee will be meeting on August 4, 2025.

Retirement Board

Chairman Rodriguez stated the Retirement Board’s July 15, 2025 meeting has been cancelled.

Farmers Market Committee

Chairman Rodriguez noted as Councilor Buhle and Councilor Ryan mentioned earlier this evening, the Ledyard Farmers Market has been voted as *Connecticut Magazine's Best Farmers Market in the State*. She congratulated the Ledyard Farmers’ Market for their hard work to be the very best! She quoted the Ledyard Farmers’ Market Facebook page as follows: “*You love us, you really love us!. Thank you all for nominating and voting for us this year. Kudos to our great vendors, awesome volunteers, both past and present, and our amazing patrons. It takes a village, and we did it*”. Chairman Rodriguez stated the Town Council agreed with the statement, and she thanked the Ledyard Farmers’ Market Committee for an amazing and wonderful achievement.

Library Commission

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry noted the Library Commission met on June 16, 2025 and discussed the following: (1) Library Commission’s Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Investment Accounts; (2) Consortium Working Group; (3) Approved Meeting Room Regulations; (4) Delayed the implementation of Annual Appeal to Spring of 2026; and (5) Federal Library Funding Education.

Board of Education

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry noted the Board of Education met on July 8, 2025 and addressed the following: (1) Juliet W. Long School New Playground – The Parent & Teacher Organization (PTO) worked hard to hold fundraising events to install a new *Inclusive Playground*. The work has begun to demolish the existing Playground; (2) Federal Government Title Grants were expected to come in \$58,000 less than the amount budgeted. Councilor Garcia-Irizarry noted School Superintendent Hartling explained that the \$58,000 was a hold back, but that he wanted them to be prepared just in case the Board of Education does not receive all of the funding that they budgeted; (3) Pre-K Grant Funding - Councilor Garcia-Irizarry noted that School Superintendent Hartling stated the Pre-K Grant was locked-in for two years, but that the State was removing the Local Council Funding Allocation Recommendations. In addition the Office of Early Childhood would make a determination on how they were going to allocate the policy. Local Councils that were specific to other towns were now being forced to form a Regional Coalition that would create a Needs Assessment to give to the Office of Early Childhood. However, none of this was built-out yet and that they were trying to adapt as they receive more information; (4) Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Final Budget Adjustments – Councilor Garcia-Irizarry noted School Superintendent Hartling presented the following Account Adjustments to meet the \$205,000 reductions to their Operating Budget:

- \$38,000 – Reduce the initial request was to hire three STEM Teachers to two.
  - Gales Ferry School will have one STEM Teacher
  - Juliet W. Long will have one STEM Teacher
- \$99,711 Art Teacher Gallup Hill School
- \$23,000 Substitute Teachers Gallup Hil School
- \$3,000 Central Office Surge - Standard of response stay status quo/delayed
- \$10,000 Food Service Debt – The state has allowed using Grant Funding for the past two years
- \$10,000 Unitrends Delay
- \$56,100 Special Education Gallup Hill School Needs Based on Numbers
- \$22,289 Adjust Non-Public Tuition
- \$58,000 Not fill Gym Teacher Vacancy
- \$90,900 Excess Cost Sharing – Reduction in State ECS Grant Funding
- \$48,000 Custodian

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TOTAL: \$205,000

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry continued by stating that she wanted to address a question that was raised at the Board of Education’s July 8, 2025 meeting regarding the Annual Budget Process and why a third Referendum was not held after the second Referendum failed. She stated that the Town Council follows the Budget Process that was laid out in the Town Charter, and she noted the following:

**Chapter VII; Section 6**

*The Town Meeting may, by failing to approve the budget presented at referendum, refer the entire budget back to the Town Council for further consideration and changes.*

*Should the referendum on the budget refer the budget back to the Town Council, the Town Council shall reconsider the budget and present it for a second vote on the voting machines three weeks (June 10, 2025) following the previous referendum.*

*In the event that the second referendum does not approve a budget; the Town Council shall adopt a final budget by the fourth Monday in June. Should both the referenda and the Town Council fail to adopt a final budget by the fourth Monday in June, the budget that was presented at the second referendum shall be deemed to have been adopted, and expenditures made in accordance therewith for the ensuing fiscal year.*

Councilor Garcia-Irizarry went on to state that the Town Council also follows Roberts Rules of Order, which provided guidance on the conduct of governmental body meetings. She stated that this Town Council followed everything to the letter of what's written in the Town Charter, as they do for every meeting. She stated that she wanted to clarify this because she did not want there to be any doubts. She stated the nine dedicated members of this Town Council both Republicans and Democrats might not agree on everything; but that she could tell them the one thing every single member of this Town Council agreed on was that they follow the procedures and processes in place. She noted as Councilor Dombrowski always says that there is a process, and that it was important to follow that process.

**Planning & Zoning Commission**

Councilor St. Vil stated the Planning & Zoning Commission continued their Public Hearing regarding the proposed Zoning Regulations Amendments to their July 11, 2025 meeting.

**Inland Wetlands and Water Courses Commission**

Councilor St. Vil stated the Inland Wetlands & Water Courses Committee met on July 1, 2025 and have continued their Public Hearing regarding an open Application to their August 5, 2025 meeting.

**Economic Development Commission**

Councilor Buhle stated the Economic Development Commission met on July 1, 2025 and discussed the following: (1) Draft Route 12 Corridor Study – Councilor Buhle stated the EDC received the draft Study and it was posted to the town’s website. She encouraged residents to visit the town’s website and review the Study noting that there were still a lot of moving parts; (2) Connecticut Main Street – Councilor Buhle stated the EDC was working on a Connecticut Main Street town visit and potentially putting together an afterhours event.

**XI. MAYOR’S REPORT**

Chairman Rodriguez noted the Mayor was not present this evening

**XII. OLD BUSINESS – None.**

**XIII. NEW BUSINESS**

- ❖ **MOTION to Amend the Agenda to add**  
**MOTION to grant a Bid Waiver in the amount of up-to \$390,782 to Tradesmen of New England, Bloomfield, Connecticut, to address the emergency replacement of the Chiller at the Gales Ferry School.**  
**Moved by Councilor Saccone, seconded by Councilor Buhle**
- VOTE: 8 – 0 Approved and so declared**

APPROVED 8 - 0

MOVER: Tony Saccone, Town Councilor

SECONDER: Jessica Buhle, Town Councilor

AYES: Buhle, Brunelle, Dombrowski, Garcia-Irizarry, Rodriguez, Ryan,  
Saccone, St. Vil

EXCUSED: Barnes

Chairman Rodriguez noted that this item would be added as the first item on tonight's agenda.

1. MOTION to grant a Bid Waiver in the amount of up-to \$390,782 to Tradesmen of New England, Bloomfield, Connecticut, to address the emergency replacement of the Chiller at the Gales Ferry School.

Moved by Councilor Buhle, seconded by Councilor St. Vil

Discussion: Board of Education Director of Facilities & Grounds Wayne Donaldson stated replacing the Chiller at the Gales Ferry School was included the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Capital Plan. He provided some background information noting that the Chiller had two operating systems, noting that one of the systems failed last year and the repair costs were between \$30,000 - \$40,000. He stated because the Chiller was 25-years old that they tried to limp along until they could replace the entire unit.

Mr. Donaldson continued by stating about two- weeks ago the second operating system failed causing the Gales Ferry School to have no air conditioning in that facility. He stated they went through a number of processes to see whether it was possible to take parts from one side and put them together on the other side, however, he stated that it was going to be costly and there was no guarantee that it would work.

Mr. Donaldson went on to explain that because the Chiller Replacement for the Gales Ferry School was approved as a Bond Project in the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Capital Plan they started to look at what their options were for a new Chiller. He stated because the lead time for a replacement was going to be at least 19-weeks they were able to find two-units that were each half the size of the current Chiller; explaining that instead of having two-units built into one, that they would have two-separate units. However, Mr. Donaldson stated he learned at the close of business today that although the two-units were still available, they were on a first-come-first-serve basis; and that the delivery time would be two-weeks. He stated this time frame would allow them to put everything back together before the start of school; which was one of the reasons the Board of Education has requested a bid waiver to Tradesmen of New England, noting that the other reason was because this contractor currently has the Service Contract on their current Chiller and they have agreed to credit them back for costs of the repairs for that section of the chiller work. He stated although the Board of Education was asking for the Bid Waiver for the total amount that they expect to receive a \$30,000 Credit off that bill. In addition, he noted that the Contractor was providing the Chillers at their cost.

Councilor Saccone questioned since the exiting Chiller was 25-years old whether it would be fair to say these two new units would be more efficient. Mr. Donaldson stated that the two units would be more efficient, explaining that they would be a screw compressor which was much more efficient than the reciprocal compressors were. He also noted that they would check to see if there were any rebates for the new units.

Chairman Rodriguez noted Board of Education Chairman Favry's July 8, 2025 letter in which he mentioned budget compliance. Mr. Donaldson stated the funding for the Chiller Replacement Project was approved as part of the Fiscal Year 2025/2026 Capital Plan Budget as a Bond allocation, and he noted that the total \$380,000 cost for the proposed Chiller Replacement for the Gales Ferry School would keep them within the approved budget.

**VOTE: 8 – 0 Approved and so declared**



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

XV. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Rodriguez stated before they adjourn that she wanted to announce that tonight would be her last Town Council Meeting, noting that she would be stepping down from the Town Council as its Chairman and as Deputy Mayor sometime in July. She stated that her family will be moving to New Jersey because her husband has taken on a new employment opportunity, and she needed time to look for a house. She stated that it has been her utmost honor and privilege to serve the people of Ledyard. She stated that she hoped her passion and care for Ledyard has been evident. She stated that her family would truly miss Ledyard and that they plan to make trips back to this lovely town. Please be kind to each other, take care, and God Bless.

VOTE: Councilor Buhle moved to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Dombrowski  
8 - 0 Approved and so declared. The meeting adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

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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 July 9, 2025.

\_\_\_\_\_  
S. Naomi Rodriguez, Chairman