



Chairman S. Naomi Rodriguez

TOWN OF LEDYARD CONNECTICUT

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MINUTES
FISCAL YEAR 2024/2025 WORK SESSION
THURSDAY, MARCH 7, 2023; 12:00 P.M.
HYBRID MEETING FORMAT
VIDEO CONFERENCE & IN-PERSON
COUNCIL CHAMBERS, ANNEX BUILDING

DRAFT

- I. CALL TO ORDER – The Work Session was called to order by Councilor Saccone at 12:00 p.m.

Councilor Saccone welcomed all to the Video Conference Meeting; and he noted that the remote meeting information for the Town Council Finance Committee Budget Work Session and members of the Public to participate in this afternoon's meeting was available on the Agenda that was posted on the Town's Website – Granicus-Legistar Meeting Portal.

- II. ROLL CALL –

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Location
Jessica Buhle	Town Councilor	Excused	
Tim Ryan	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
Tony Saccone	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
S. Naomi Rodriguez	Town Council Chairman	Present	In-Person
Carmen Garcia-Irizarry	Town Councilor	Present	In-Person
Gary Paul	Town Councilor	Present	Remote
Fred Allyn III	Mayor	Present	In-Person
Matthew Bonin	Finance Director	Present	In-Person
Ian Stammel	Assistant Finance Director	Present	In-Person
Kristen Chapman	Mayor's Executive Assistant	Present	In-Person
Karen Goetchius	Director of Social Services	Present	In-Person
Marisa Ianella-Rodríguez	Director of Human Resources	Present	In-Person
Tony Capon	Planning & Zoning Commission Chairman	Present	In-Person
John Vincent	Economic Development Commission Chairman	Present	In-Person
Steve Masalin	Public Works Director/Town Engineer	Present	In-Person
Scott Johnson, Jr	Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Director	Present	In-Person
Joanne Kelley	BOE Finance Committee Chairman	Present	In-Person
Roxanne Maher	Administrative Assistant	Present	Remote

III. PRESENTATIONS

DEPARTMENTS' PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2023/2024 BUDGET

12:00 p.m. Mayor Fred Allyn, III

Mayor Allyn stated in accordance with Chapter VII; Section 3 of the Town Charter he submitted his proposed Fiscal Year 2024/2025 to the Town Council on Monday, March 4, 2024 (first Monday in March) in the amount of \$67,082,148 which was an increase of \$2,537,008 or 3.94% over the current year's budget and would call for a 34.94 mil rate for a 0.38 mil increase.

Mayor Allyn noted the proposed Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget was comprised of a General Government budget in the amount of \$29,028,075 a \$395,503 increase or 1.381% over the current Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget; and a Board of Education budget in the amount of \$38,054,073 an increase of \$2,145,705 or 5.98% over the current Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget.

Mayor Allyn stated he believed the proposed Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget was manageable, noting that his overall concern continued to be affordability for the residents of Ledyard. He noted that Ledyard had the fourth highest mil rate in New London County, behind Norwich, New London and Sprague. He stated the projected mil rate to support the proposed Budget as presented, would move Ledyard slightly closer to the third highest mil rate in the County, which he believed was an indicator of increased unaffordability. He also noted that the United Way 2023 "Alice Report" showed Ledyard with having 29% of their residents below the Asset Limited Income Constrained and Employed Threshold (ALICE). He stated facing tax increases, that these vulnerable residents may have to make difficult decisions regarding heating, electricity, food and even housing.

Mayor Allyn went on to address the budget format noting that the *Committee to Review the Budget Process* Final Report dated October 31, 2022 recommended the town move away from the Clear Gov software and return to using Excel Spreadsheets. He noted by moving away from Clear Gov program provided a savings of the \$22,000 and would allow them to more fully utilize their Munis Financial Software for budget preparation going forward, noting that they would be still be able to provide graphs and charts for the public from the spreadsheets that Munis provides.

Mayor Allyn proceeded by presenting an overview of proposed Budget as follows:

Proposed Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget Summary (General Government and Board of Education)

- Fiscal Year 2024/2025 proposed budget combined total amount was \$67,082,2148 for a total budget increase in the amount of \$2,537,008.
 - General Government budget of \$29,028,075 (increase of \$395,503 or 1.38%)
 - Board of Education budget of \$38,054,073 (increase \$2,145,705 or 5.98%)

➤ Revenues:

- The Grand List net total was \$1,320,018,279; an increase of \$56,396,133 or 4.46%.
- Taxes \$43,846,477; an increase of 4.4% - Provides 68.2% of Ledyard's revenues.
- Intergovernmental \$16,365,250; an increase of 0.4% - Provides 25% of Ledyard's revenues.
- Charges and Fees \$2,552,674; provides about 4.8% of Ledyard's revenues.
- Investment Earnings \$550,000; an increase of \$250,000 - Provides 0.5% of Ledyard's revenues.
- Other Finance Sources \$1,000,000; provides about 1.6% of Ledyard's revenues.

Mayor Allyn stated the Assessor's Grand List for the 2023 Valuation of all Real and Personal Property yielded a modest overall increase of 4.30%; comprised of the following Real Estate increased by 0.75%; Personal Property increased 68.21%; and Motor Vehicles which decreased by 4.07%. He explained that due to the State's mandated Motor Vehicle Tax Cap of 29.00 mils that Ledyard was being reimbursed through a State Grant in the amount of \$117,151 to make up the difference of 5.94 mil spread between our 34.94 mil rate and the State's motor 29.00 vehicle tax cap. He noted that the State Legislature passed a new motor vehicle taxation model that was scheduled to commence in October 2024. He stated the new model would use the vehicles Manufactures Suggested Retail Price (MSRP - Sticker Price) in year one, followed by a 20% depreciation in year two, then a straight line 5% annual depreciation schedule. Currently, all Connecticut Municipalities use the NADA book value for motor vehicle valuations.

Mayor Allyn went on to state that Ledyard's Grand List growth was still lagging, and he noted the following comparisons to neighboring towns: Colchester with a population 15,555 has a Grand List that was +25% higher; Stonington with a population 18,347 had a Grand List that was +320 higher; Montville with a population 18,385 had a Grand List that was +28% higher; East Lyme with a population 18,693 had a Grand List that was +22% higher; and Waterford with a population 19,603 had a Grand List that was +320% higher than Ledyard's Grand List. He also noted that each of these comparable towns had a mil rate that was 28.15 mils or less. He stated the stagnation of growth in Ledyard's Grand List was their Achilles Heel. He stated a larger Grand List would allow for a more even distribution of the tax burden, because the taxes would be spread across Industrial, Commercial, and Residential segments.

Mayor Allyn went on to state that Ledyard has continued to aggressively seek Grant funding noting that the town was previously awarded Small Town Economic Assistance Program Funding (STEAP); Department of Housing (DOH); Connecticut Housing Finance Authority (CHFA) for a combined award of \$2.8 million noting that much needed improvements and upgrades at the Kings Corner Manor Senior Housing Facility were completed this year and included the replacement of windows, outside doors and installing storm doors with energy star rated products; as well as the installation of new split heat pump systems for improved and efficient heating and air conditioning in each unit, the tubs were removed and replaced with roll-in showers and grab bars, the toilets,

sinks and flooring materials were all replaced removing architectural barriers. Mayor Allyn also noted that the Town received CT Trails Grant of \$112,000; and the Local Transportation Capital Improvement Program (LoTCIP) Grant in the amount of \$3,190,724 to construct a Multi-Model Pathway from Ledyard Center to Ledyard High School, the Libraries Transforming Communities Round I & Round II for a total of \$40,000 that was used to expand programs for those with disabilities and for the replacement of the circulation desk which would also be handicap accessible; as well as grants for emergency and services. He stated the Town Staff understands the value in seeking these grants.

Mayor Allyn addressed education revenues noting the Education Grant Funding was currently projected at \$11,904,199 an slight increase \$110,000 or 1.1% that there continues to be issues regarding the methodology behind state funding for Special Education (SPED). He stated that Ledyard needed to continue to press for SPED funding so that funding would follow the student. He stated that if funding for special needs students followed them when moving from one school district to another that it would help mitigate mid-budget expenses that have a substantial impact on smaller towns annual budgets.

- Mill Rate Stabilization Fund current balance: \$3,430,279l; with \$1,000,000 transfer-in scheduled to balance the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget, to date this transfer-in has not yet occurred. The idea of the Mill Rate Stabilization Fund was to smooth out or keep the mill rate somewhat stable, noting that State Revenues to Municipalities can be unpredictable. The proposed Fiscal Year 2024/2025 also calls for a \$1,000,0000 transfer-in from the Mill Rate Stabilization Fund.

Proposed Budget General Government Budget Overview:

Mayor Allyn stated the General Government Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Expenses were made up of the following:

- ✓ Salary & Wages 12.0%
- ✓ Employee Benefits 14.5%
- ✓ Operating Expenses 72.6%

Mayor Allyn noted the General Government continues tight management of their expenses, seeking reductions where possible, noting that regionalizing efforts with the Tax Assessor and Human Resources (to Preston) have been positive, He stated that the town continues to work toward Department consolidations., noting they recently consolidated of the Tax Assessor with the Tax Collector Office and the Building Department was being combined with the Land Use Department. He stated the continued restructuring of Parks and Recreation with the Senior Center continued to gain efficiencies and increase programming for both seniors and Parks and Recreation.

Mayor Allyn continued by stating the proposed Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget has not funded the Youth Services Department which eliminated one Full-Time Employee and the Department's associated operating expenses. He explained that Ledyard Public Schools now had a robust in-school health program, and with all of the Youth Services clients being Ledyard Public School Students they found that there would be a duplication of services. Therefore, it made sense to eliminate the Youth Services Department at this time.

Mayor Allyn stated the General Government continues to seek additional regional opportunities, but recognizes that there few new opportunities for new areas of consolidation and savings, short of county form of Government. The Connecticut taxation model was unsustainable and proves overly burdensome to taxpayers. Per Forbes Magazine, Connecticut ranks the 9th most expensive state to live in.

- Debt Service – Mayor Allyn stated in the upcoming Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget that the Debt Service at \$3,955,030 saw a decrease in the amount of \$448,820 or 10% from the current year representing 3.02 mils in taxation. The percentage of current debt to the tax levy was now at 8.47%. Debt Service has been projected to remain constant for a number of years as school roofs and town hall complex roofs have been included in the town's bond obligations.

- **Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget increases:**

Mayor Allyn noted that 11 General Government Departments included increases that were greater than 5%; with 29 Departments keeping their increases to less than 5%, noting many were flat funded. He provided an overview of the Department requests that were greater than 5% as follows:

- Property Insurance \$29,579; an increase of \$517,196 or 5.7%
Insurance premiums has increased and the cost to add the cyber security policy.
- Human Resources Department \$134,650; an increase of \$42,700 or 46.4%
Moved Labor Attorney \$40,000 to Human Resources Department.
- Registrars \$48,257; an increase of \$4,317 or 9.8%
New Early Voting expenses for the 2024 November Presential Election.
- Tax Collector \$154,505; an increase of \$9857 or 6.8%
Seasonal help for collection during peak months.
- MIS Department \$387,818; an increase of \$39,583 or 111/4%
Software expenses included the addition of Land Use permitting, Zoom subscription, Website, computer maintenance and repairs.
- Land Use Department \$357,546; an increase of \$39,993 or 12.6%
Building Official position, and interim assistant.

- Planning Commission \$3,500; an increase of \$500; or 16.7% Increase in operating costs.
- Police Department \$3007,655; an increase of \$256,135 or 9.3% Salaries, Outside assignments, and new equipment chest plates.
- Dispatch \$669,249 an increase of \$34,448 or 5.5%
- School Nurses \$472,492; an increase of \$140,016 or 42.1%
Mayor Allyn explained that the School Nurses reside on the General Government side; and was a pass-through to the Board of Education. The increase was for School Nurses salaries, increased hours from 35 to 40; summer work and the increased use of Health Aides. Administrator of Nursing hours reduced to 19 hours.
- Public Works Road Upkeep \$184,800; an increase of \$20,000 or 12.1% Winter Operations sand and salt expenses.

• **Employee Expenses**

Mayor Allyn addressed General Government staffing levels, explaining that most Departments located within the Town Hall were staffed with one or two employees. The Police Department had 35 employees including the Emergency Dispatch personnel, and the Animal Control Officer (ACO). The Public Works Department had 18 full-time employees including the Public Works Director.

- Mayor Allyn stated the General Government wages saw a 3% increase.
- Healthcare General Government \$1,046,150 an increase \$18,590 or 1.8%.
Mayor Allyn explained the town's healthcare consultant recommended factoring between a 6% to 10% premium cost increase. He stated that the town would be considering moving their Healthcare provider again to try to chase savings.
- Healthcare Board of Education \$5,193,830; an increase of \$93,830 or 1.8%.

Mayor Allyn stated the Board of Education Healthcare was included on the General Government side of the ledger.

- Defined Contribution Plan \$455,000; an increase of \$90,000 or 24.7% (Acct. 10110253-53210).

The Defined Contribution Plan was gaining steam with employee enrollment to plan and save for retirement. The increase represented an increase in the employer funding match, and also takes into consideration negotiated contracts that require employee participation at some minimum level.

- The Defined Benefit Plan closed to new enrollees in 2013. Mayor Allyn stated in reviewing the Town's Retirement Plan, Ledyard's previous 100.4% funded rate in Fiscal Year 2023/2024 has decreased as the result of weak market conditions. Despite this decline, Ledyard still had nearly an 88.7 funded rate, and was considered one of the ten best in the State of Connecticut. This was positive news for our retirees as well as our taxpayers, explaining that it showed that the town was managing its legacy costs. He stated the town currently had twenty employees remaining in Ledyard's Defined Benefit Plan. He stated to provide some perspective, the State of Connecticut had \$59 Billion of unfunded pension and retiree healthcare obligations outstanding, while Ledyard has \$3.8M outstanding and a conservative assumed rate of return of 6.25%.

- **Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)**

Mayor Allyn provided an overview of the Capital Improvement Plan stating that it included Department's requests totaling \$8,748,864. He noted that he reduced the Department's CIP request by \$873,000 for a proposed CIP in the amount of \$7,871,864 which would require a tax levy of \$1,761,998; an increase of \$108,263 or 6.5% over the current year's budget.

Mayor Allyn stated the Town's Capital Plan included total project capital requests of \$19,750,000 which included Board of Education Bondable projects and potential Grant funded projects. Of that total, \$7,871,864 was included in the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget, which included Grant funded projects such as the Whitford Brook Bridge project and the Colonel Ledyard Highway Multi Use Path.

- Reserve Funds – Mayor Allyn stated the proposed budget included tax-levied cash set-asides for some facilities maintenance and for the acquisition of new fire apparatus and other large-scale purchases, meaning that some maintenance and future acquisitions of high value equipment would require some level of borrowing. He stated that he began implementing this type of funding model in the during the fiscal year (fy 20/21). He stated the modification was to provide for the many competing demands for the town's limited municipal resources, including annual road restorations, equipment, vehicles, facility needs, etc.

Mayor Allyn provided an overview of the Capital Improvement Plan Funding Sources as follows:

Taxes	(22.23%)	\$1,761,998
LoCIP	(2.24%)	\$ 175,367
Town Aid Road (TAR)	(3.65%)	\$ 295,778
Municipal Aid Grant	(5.36%)	\$ 421,085
Conveyance	(2.27%)	\$ 178,892
BOE Surplus Transfer	(2.67%)	\$ 217,387
Transfer in from Other Fund	(61.58%)	\$4,825,357

TOTAL		\$7,871,864
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Mayor Allyn noted the CIP included the following:

- Critical Needs
 - Planned technology replacements
 - Roads Improvements/Restoration
 - Vehicles and equipment and life safety equipment.
 - ✓ Replacement of two Police Cruisers
 - ✓ Emergency Service Apparatus
- Road Restoration - The Town Road Surface Rating (RSR) issued by Consultant, BETA Engineering, sees that Ledyard's RSR has remained consistent at 86.50 (on a 100-point scale) which was the best road ratings Ledyard has seen. Per the RSR Plan, Ledyard needed to invest \$1 million annually to road restoration to maintain a RSR between 83-85. Mayor Allyn explained that the proposed Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget funds road restoration at \$1,000,000 — funding at one of the higher levels seen in the last 5+ years. He stated determining Ledyard's comfort level in a road rating range was important, with the underlying premise that 90 -100 was neither feasible, nor financially practical. He stated in consulting with Public Works Director Steve Masalin, that the recommendation was to continue the current trajectory, with an annual rating of 83 or better, which they believed would represent an ideal rating for the Town of Ledyard. According to BETA Engineering, Ledyard boasts one of the best road ratings in the area. This budget funds Road Restoration at \$1,000,000 with \$225,695 coming from local tax dollars.
- Police Cruiser Replacement - The plan also recommended the replacement of two police cruisers. Mayor Allyn explained an internal Policy that was implemented several years ago would keep the cruisers on the road with mileage up-to and including 160,000 (previously disposed of cruisers at or near 100,000 miles). The total cost to acquire and outfit each new cruiser was approximately \$52,000.
- Board of Education Capital Improvement Projects came in at \$8,748,864 include:
 - New playscape at Juliet W. Long
 - Continued renovations to Ledyard High School classrooms; including the Science Labs
 - Recommissioning of both Ledyard Middle School and Gallup Hill School.

- **Mil Rate**

Mayor Allyn stated the proposed Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget assumes a 34.94 mil rate which was a 0.38 mil increase over the current year. He stated the Budget as proposed, required the use of multiple financial tools to assist in offsetting increased costs, including the Mill Rate Stabilization Fund (\$1,000,000). He went on to note that he has not proposed any transfer-in from the Health Care Reserve Account, which currently stands at \$240,000; explaining that this balance would serve as a partial failsafe should the Town need to consider moving to the self-funded model. He continued to explain in considering this potential move, that the proposed budget included a \$500,000 reduction in the Healthcare premiums as they were working to price out alternatives to their current Healthcare provider, as increases in the past several years have been dramatic.

Mayor Allyn concluded his presentation by noting the Fiscal Year 2024/2025 would be the second year of the State's biennial budget. He stated preliminary reports indicate that State Funding to Ledyard would remain generally flat, which in-effect was a 3% reduction given the inflationary environment. He commented that level funding does not help municipalities bear the brunt of inflationary costs impacting the operational costs (+20% increase in heating fuel; +40% increase in electricity; increases in gasoline) needed to provide services to its residents. He stated that he would continue to follow the many pieces of the proposed legislation and how it might impact our town positively or negatively especially in the form of unfunded mandates such as the Early Voting. He explained to support the Early Voting Legislation that it would require fourteen days of staffing for early voting for two primaries and a General Election, which included weekends, noting that this would undoubtedly come as a cost to the taxpayers of Ledyard. He stated as the budget process moves forward, that he would closely monitor this mandate and its true cost versus benefit.

Mayor Allyn stated as he has been doing each year that he would continue to ask the question "*What is the role of local government?*" He stated in doing so, that he would continue to refine what they truly must provide as a local government to help mitigate the burden on our residents.

Mayor Allyn deferred to Town Staff to review their budget proposals.

12:15 p.m. Youth Services Director Karen Goetchius

Department 10130301- Social Services

Ms. Goetchuis stated a budget was not submitted for the Youth Services Department in the upcoming Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget noting the operational costs along the responsibly to provide oversight of the Youth Services Interims. She explained with the changes to the school's health programs that Ledyard Public Schools now had an all-inclusive school health program which provided access to Social Workers, who would provide counseling services. She explained with all of the Youth Service's clients being Ledyard Public School Students, it made sense to eliminate the Youth Services Department from the General Government budget at this time.

Department 10130301- Social Services

Social Services Coordinator Kristen Chapman explained that a budget was not submitted for the Social Services Department in the upcoming Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget. She stated in years past \$3,500 was included in the Social Services Budget to pay for the electricity at the Linda C. Davis Food Pantry. However, she stated because the Food Pantry resided on Town Green, which was under the Parks & Recreation Administrative Control, that it made sense to move the funds to pay for the electricity to the Parks & Recreation Department to streamline the payment process, noting that they had been transferring the funds from the Social Services Department Budget to the Parks & Recreation Department to pay the electric bills.

12:25 p.m. Mayor' Executive Assistant Kristen Chapman

Department 10110201- Mayor's Office

Mayor proposed \$190,723; an increase of \$1,523 or 0.8% over the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 budget.

Department 1011023 – Administrative Support

Mayor proposed \$129,700; a decrease of \$6,300, or -4.6 from the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 budget.

The Advertising/Legal Notices was reduced by \$6,500. These expenses were moved to the Human Resources Department and Land Use Departments. As the primary users of these funds this would provide the Human Resources Director and Director of Planning & Development oversight and to enable them to manage their expenses.

Department 10110205 – Legal Services (Town Attorney)

Mayor proposed \$20,000; a decrease of \$35,000 or -63% from the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 budget.

This decrease was due to moving the Legal Fees to the Human Resources Department and Land Use Departments as primary uses of these funds. This would provide the Human Resources Director and Director of Planning & Development oversight and to enable them to manage their expenses.

Department 10110209 – Property Insurance (Liability Insurance) –

Mayor proposed \$546,775; an increase of \$29,579 or 5.7% over the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 budget.

Increases due to insurance premiums going up and the addition of cyber security policy.

10110211 Health District – Mayor proposed \$116,400; no change from the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 budget.

10110207 Probate - Mayor proposed \$10,000; decrease of \$575 or -5.4% from Fiscal Year 2023/2024 budget.

➤ ***No Mayor's Office Capital Improvement Requests Fiscal Year 2024/2025***

12:30 p.m. Finance Department – Finance Director Matthew Bonin

Department 1011201 – Finance Office – Finance Director Matthew Bonin

Mayor proposed \$505,449 an increase of \$12503 or 2.5 over the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 budget.

➤ ***Finance Department No CIP Requests Fiscal Year 2024/2025***

Department 10112111 – Assessors Office – Finance Director Matthew Bonin

Mayor proposed \$180,932; an increase of \$7,913 or 4.6% over the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 budget.

➤ **Assessor Capital Improvement Plan Requests – Finance Director Matthew Bonin**

Revaluation	\$30,000
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Revaluation of real property was required by state statute to be conducted every five years. The last revaluation was effective October 1, 2020. The next Revaluation was due for October 1, 2025.

Total Assessor's Office CIP Fiscal Year 2023/2024	\$30,000
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Department 101112131 - Tax Collector – Finance Director Matthew Bonin

Mayor proposed \$154,505; an increase of \$9,857 or 6.8% over the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 budget.

12:45 p.m. Human Resources – Administrator of Human Resources Marisa Iannella-Rodríguez

Department 10110251 Human Resources

Mayor proposed \$134,650; an increase of \$42,700 or 46.4% over the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 budget.

Increase included the addition of a New Legal Services Account in the amount of \$40,000, which was moved from the Mayor's Legal Services Budget.

Employee Expenses Department 10110253 – Administrator of Human Resources Marisa Iannella-Rodríguez

Mayor proposed \$10,420; an increase of \$266,422 or 2.6% over the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 budget.

Ms. Iannella-Rodríguez explained this budget included the following expenses: Healthcare for both the General Government and Board of Education, Pre-Employee Testing, Retirement, Defined Contribution Payments, Social Security, Unemployment Compensation, Workers Compensation for General Government and Board of Education, and other Insurance Expenses.

Ms. Iannella-Rodríguez addressed the combined total increase of \$1,519,093 in the Healthcare Premium costs. The following Accounts were noted:

- Account #10110253-52000 (General Government Healthcare) \$1,046,150; an increase of \$18,590; or 1.8% over the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 and
- Account 10110253-52100 (BOE Healthcare) \$5,193,830; an increase of \$93,830 or 1.8 % over the Fiscal Year 2023/2024
- Account 10110253-52106 (BOE Retiree Healthcare) \$575,000; no change from Fiscal Year 2023/2024.

Ms. Iannella-Rodríguez explained the town's healthcare consultant recommended factoring between a 6% to 10% premium cost increase. However, she stated the proposed Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget included a conservative increase. She stated that they were currently researching other Healthcare providers to find the best Healthcare option for the town and its employees.

- Defined Contribution Plan \$455,000; an increase of \$90,000 or 24.7% (Account #10110253-53210). Ms. Iannella-Rodriguez stated this represented the funding for the employer's match. She stated with the closing of the Defined Benefit Plan in 2013 that negotiated contracts require employee participation at some minimum level in the Defined Contribution Plan as employees plan and save for retirement. Therefore, she stated that they would continue to see the Town's contribution increase going forward, noting that some employees were contributing up to 10% of their salary.

➤ **Human Resources Dept. No CIP Requests Fiscal Year 2024/2025**

1:00 p.m. Planning & Zoning -- Planning & Zoning Commission Chairman Tony Capon

Land Use 10114301 (Includes: Land Use Director, Building Department, Zoning Department)

Mayor proposed \$357,546; an increase of \$39,993 or 12.6% over the approved Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Budget

Increase included the addition of a New Legal Services Account in the amount of \$10,000, which was moved from the Mayor's Legal Services Budget.

Account Number	Mayor Proposed	Change from FY 23/24
10114303 53400 Planning Pro Serv	\$2,000	No Change
10114303 56100 Planning Oper	\$1,500	Increase of \$500 or 50%

1:00 p.m. Economic Development Commission Chairman John Vincent

10114305 51600 EDC Oper.	\$750	Decrease of \$250 or -25.0%
10114305 EDC Dues & Fees	\$7,461	No Change

➤ **Planning No CIP Request Fiscal Year 2024/2025**

1:00 p.m. Land Use Commissions and Committees:

Mayor Allyn provided an overview as follows:

Account Number	Mayor Proposed	Change from FY 23/24
10114501 IWWC	\$500	No Change
10114507 ZBA	\$500	No Change

➤ **Other Land Use Commissions:**

Account Number	Mayor Proposed	Change from FY 23/24
10110107 Cemetery Cmt	\$2,000	Decrease of \$4,200 or -67.7%
10110213 Conservation Com	\$1,150	No Change
10110213 57300 Conservation Equ	\$1,150	No Change
10110213-58789 Conservation Misc.	\$ 975	No Change

1:30 p.m. Public Works/Town Engineer Steve Masalin

Public Works Director Department -Administration 10140101 –

Mayor proposed \$212,210; an increase of \$8,959 or 42% over the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 budget.

Highway Department 10140103 –

Mayor proposed \$1,249,527; an increase of \$31,573 or 2.6% over the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 budget.

Vehicle Maintenance Department 10140105 –

Mayor proposed \$287,051; an increase of \$3,866 or 1.4% over the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 budget.

Road Upkeep Department; 10140107

Mayor proposed \$184,800; an increase of \$20,000 or 12.1% over the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 budget.

Gravel \$3,000 and Drainage Improvement \$3,000 were moved from “*Road Drainage Budget*” to “*Road Upkeep Budget*”

Property Maintenance of Town Buildings Department 10140111 –

Mayor proposed \$86,050 no change from Fiscal Year 2023/2024 budget.

This budget provides for critical building improvements

Sanitation Department 10140113 –

Mayor proposed \$1,174,000; an increase of \$43,500 or 3.8% over the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 budget.

1:45 p.m. Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

➤ **Public Works Requests – Public Works Director Steve Masalin**

Colonel Ledyard Highway Multi-Model-Use Pathway \$2,540,000

This project comprises a multi-use (pedestrian/cyclist) pathway from Ledyard Center at the Bill Library to Ledyard High School at its access off Gallup Hill Road. This project has been approved by Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments (SCCCOG) through the Local Transportation Capital Improvement Plan (LoTCIP) Program.

Heavy Equipment Reserve Fund \$85,000

This account needed to be funded annually to meet long-term replacement needs in accordance with the equipment replacement plan. Funds were appropriated at a rate necessary to meet the anticipated future refitting and/or replacement.

Lantern Hill Road Bridge Replacement \$1,800,000

The existing bridge over Whitford Brook at the Ledyard-Stonington Town Lines was too narrow for normal traffic and was particularly unsafe in the event of a head-on large vehicular traffic. Senator Cathy Osten worked to secure \$3 million for the bridge and dam replacement and repairs. The town has an executed Agreement with the State to receive the \$3 million grant funding. Mr. Masalin stated the hope was to have the bridge replacement work completed this calendar year. However, there would be some costs that would be shared by Ledyard and Stonington for this project.

Large Truck Reserve Account	\$175,000
This account needed to be funded annually to meet long-term replacement needs of the large dump truck fleet. Originally, funding was sought to meet a 15-year replacement cycle for each of the trucks in the fleet.	
Light Equipment Reserve Fund	\$16,000
This account funds long-term requirements in accordance with minor equipment upgrade and replacement needs. This involved a large variety of light/small equipment assets.	
Small Truck Reserve Fund	\$40,000
This account needed to be funded annually to meet long-term replacement needs in accordance with the equipment replacement plan. A combination of internal reassignments of assets and new purchases continue to be undertaken to efficiently utilize the fleet.	
Pooled Vehicle Reserve fund	\$10,000
This account needs to be funded annually to meet long-term replacement needs in accordance with the equipment replacement plan. The State of Connecticut has privatized its sale of surplus vehicles and items, which has severely curtailed the town's ability to obtain lightly used vehicles at a low cost.	
Municipal Building Reserve Fund	\$100,000
This fund provides for ongoing capital level renovations and life-cycle maintenance for the Town's non-BOE municipal buildings. Maintenance and renovations were based on a combination of factors, including facility age, inconsistent capital investment and normal maintenance needs.	
Road Maintenance	\$147,889
Road maintenance for routine repairs, etc., funding to come from Town Aid Road (TAR) Grant funding	
Road Restoration Fund	\$1,115,000
Road restoration, reconstruction and resurfacing was programmed through a systemic plan derived through a comprehensive assessment and evaluation of the condition of all Town roads. From 1988 to 2008, the source of funding for this program was through bonding. Currently the town has a Road Surface Rating (RSR) 86.5 based on a scale of 100, which was reasonable. To continue to maintain the roads at 83-85 which was a reasonable level \$1,000,000 annually was required.	
Sandy Hollow Road Guiderail Replacement	\$335,857
The town has obtained a proposal in the amount of \$335,857 to replace the guiderails on the west side of the road with Oxidizing Weathering Steel Guiderails from Atlas Industrial Services, who was on the State's Contracts Bid List. The galvanized guiderails would remain on east side of the road American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding in the amount of \$300,000 would be used to primary fund the projects, with the balance coming from other grant sources such as Town Aid Road (TAR) and Local Capital Improvement Plan Funding (LoCIP).	

In addition, some savings were realized for this project because Industrial Services was willing to allow the Public Works Crew to work with them on removing the existing guiderails; and for traffic control. In addition, the town could receive some revenue (\$1,500) for the sale of the old steel cable, these funds could either be allocated to the

Total Public Works	CIP Fiscal Year 2024/2025	\$6,364,746
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➤ ***Parks, Recreation & Senior Citizens Capital Improvement Plan Requests – Director Scott Johnson, Jr.***

Storage Container	\$6,595
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The Senior Citizens Facility is running out of space to store equipment. The purchase of a storage container would allow them to store equipment that does not need to be in a temperature controlled environment.

The storage cabinet would be paid for by the Parks & Recreation Capital Fund 0203. This Capital Fund was funded by the allocation of 40% percentage of the Conveyance Tax from the Real Estate Transactions, in accordance with Ordinance #200-009 “*An Ordinance Providing for the Transfer of Certain Revenue From the Real Estate Conveyance Tax to Specific Town of Ledyard Funds*”.

Pickleball Courts	\$92,202
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To be paid from the Parks & Recreation Capital Fund 0203. This Capital Fund was funded by the allocation of 40% percentage of the Conveyance Tax from the Real Estate Transactions, in accordance with Ordinance #200-009 “*An Ordinance Providing for the Transfer of Certain Revenue From the Real Estate Conveyance Tax to Specific Town of Ledyard Funds*”.

Automated Locks	\$13,052
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Install automated locks at the Gales Ferry Community Center, Judge Crandall Field, Blonders Park and the Parks & Recreation Storage located in the Board of Education Building.

The automated locks would eliminate the need to make copies of keys, and allow better control of who has access to the facilities.

The automated locks would be paid from the Parks & Recreation Capital Fund 0203. This Capital Fund was funded by the allocation of 40% percentage of the Conveyance Tax from the Real Estate Transactions, in accordance with Ordinance #200-009 “*An Ordinance Providing for the Transfer of Certain Revenue From the Real Estate Conveyance Tax to Specific Town of Ledyard Funds*”.

Judge Crandall Doors	\$9,293
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Replace the two-lower garage doors at the Jude Crandall Field House. The doors were the original to the garage and parts for repairs were no longer available. The right door has been getting stuck preventing it from opening or closing.

Colonel Ledyard Park Basketball Court	\$12,750
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Repair cracks and low spots on the basketball courts. Includes paint touch-up and court cleaning.

To be paid from the Parks & Recreation Capital Fund 0203. This Capital Fund was funded by the allocation of 40% percentage of the Conveyance Tax from the Real Estate Transactions, in accordance with Ordinance #200-009 *“An Ordinance Providing for the Transfer of Certain Revenue From the Real Estate Conveyance Tax to Specific Town of Ledyard Funds”*.

Total Parks & Rec CIP	Fiscal Year 2024/2025	\$133,892
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2:15 p.m. Budget Work

During the work sessions the Finance Committee asked questions about line items in each category on the agenda. The Committee also explained to each Department that should there be any changes in State Revenues proposed by the Governor’s Budget, that they may want to meet again with the Finance Committee to offer alternatives, suggestions and recommendations as the Finance Committee works to put forwarded a recommended Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget.

The Finance Committee also noted during their review of the information provided by the Departments today that they were pleased to see that Department Heads worked to off-set General Government contractual increases with reductions in other expenses and to continue find efficiencies year after year.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

The Fiscal Year 2024/2025 Budget Work Session adjourned at 2:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony Saccone, Sr.
Committee Chairman
Finance Committee