

**Leyden Select Board and Finance Committee Minutes**  
**Leyden Town Offices**  
**Regular Session Minutes**  
**November 15, 2021**  
**6:00pm**

**Select Board Members Present:** Jeff Neipp, Bill Glabach, Erica Jensen

**Others Present:** Michele Giarusso, Michele Higgins, John Higgins, Ginger Robinson, Barbara Wallace, Liz Kidder, Aaron Dulles, Beth Kuzdeba, Carol Kuzdeba, Trish Saline, Ann Zaveruha, Karen O'Neil, Don Jacobs, Patricia Kinsella

Jeff called the meeting to order at 6:35 pm.

**Motion:** Erica moved to accept the November 1, 2021, meeting minutes as written. Bill seconded. Unanimous.

**Motion:** Erica moved to appoint Susan Bobe as Treasurer. Bill seconded. Unanimous.

**Don Jacobs of Jacobs Consulting-** Don went over the compensation he has finalized for the Town of Leyden. He went over the position rating position and how he came to the pay ranges with data he collected from other small towns in the area that the select board had previously asked him to survey. The proposed plan is + or – 15% either way of suggested ranges. He stated the administrative policies and procedures to manage this plan will be forthcoming as part of his obligation set forth in his contract with the town. He is proposing to the select board to accept this compensation plan. The select board should look at the grade levels, look at the salary survey charts and approve the minimum and maximum ranges. He is urging the select board and finance committee to go by the data and compensation plan going forward with town employee compensation and to not do an across-the-board percentage pay raise again. Erica asked what the next steps are. Don replied be comfortable with the plan I have given you and accept it. Jeff stated he would like the Finance Committee to look at also.

Bill asked if no percentage increase for the future what do you do with someone who has been an employee for over 15 years? Don replied you explain the minimum and maximum ranges of the compensation plan look at where they are in the plan and explain to them what you plan on doing going forward. The employee will appreciate the data and explanation.

**Patricia Kinsella Interim Superintendent of PVRSD-**Patricia introduced herself and stated she is going to each town to meet with the Select boards and Finance Committees. She has been here for a little over 2 ½ months. She would like to know how the towns feel about the current budget process. Her plan for the coming budget season is to let the towns know what is going on with the budget and be transparent. Erica asked if TMS is the interim Business Manager. Patricia replied yes, and they are doing a fantastic job. They have just finished up the year's end paperwork. Patricia would like the budget development process to be a hybrid approach this year, one that looks at what has been budgeted, what has been spent and where and meet with all department heads as to what they need. She would like the process to be as interactive as possible with the town Select boards and Finance Committees.

Jeff is concerned about Warwick leaving the district, it's impact on the other town's budgets. He brought up the District Agreement and maintenance of buildings. Patricia replied she has not seen any long-term master facilities plan. She said she feels this needs to happen and she may look at a coming up with a comprehensive proactive facilities process with the new Director of Facilities. Ann Zaveruha asked up the mold issue in the Bernardston Elementary School. Patricia replied, yes there was mold, but it got cleaned up with a quadrant solution and tested by an outside company, Environmental Occuhealth. Mold was found in the cafeteria, kitchen and stage area. In hindsight the stage area should not have been used a classroom. She went on to say the Pioneer

Valley has a higher spore content than the eastern part of the state. The Connecticut River Valley is known for this, and we need to be aware and ready for next summer.

Ginger Robinson asked what Patricia's thoughts were on the foundation budget formula. A report had recently come out that there is a problem, rural schools are not funded properly, and the formula needs to change. Patricia replied she agreed and stated she also approaches the unions straight forward and collaboratively. I do not see where a good, comprehensive staffing plan has ever been done, that needs to be looked at. I have a ton of work to do over the next few months, but I am up to it. Erica stated there is an east-west divide as she sees it in funding. More money goes towards Boston. Patricia stated it may or may not be true. I think we have to be more creative. We live in a lovely area rich with the outdoors, farming and arts. We need to research how do we get kids back from the Charter schools? Discussion evolved a round having a student handbook in Bernardston that mentioned Leyden and putting some brand that contained both names Leyden and Bernardston. Barbara Wallace stated we need to look at who we our and utilizing our own resources from around the communities. She said we are missing out on so much. Jeff asked about the 6<sup>th</sup> grade move. Patricia stated there was not enough planning nor budgeting for this to work for next September.

**Public Comments** -Beth Kuzdeba stated the BOH voted to keep the mask mandate in public buildings. The board will look at this each month and decide based on number of cases.

Aaron Dulles-asked about the archiving of town information. His work precludes him from organizing any committee and he would like to know if this is an official committee? Liz Kidder stated I see it as a research group. The Select board agreed.

Ginger Robinson asked the select board if they have any written determination that you have to share with the town on the former police chief requesting to use his private businesses to work on town vehicles and being paid in return. She stated the Finance Committee and the town as a whole deserve an answer to the question that was in writing to you 2 weeks ago. Jeff replied we will put this on our next agenda. Ginger replied, do your due diligence, and look at the documentation for DJ's Auto, Dillon Chevrolet and Carquest.

**Municipal Assistant update**-Michele stated there has been one reply from the Brattleboro Reformer for the laborer's position. Michele emailed and called the person no reply yet. Cornelia Reid would like to be appointed to the Cultural Council at your next meeting. Westfield Gas and Electric would like to join your Municipal Light Plant meeting on Wednesday remotely. Michele has possible jury duty on Thursday and on Wednesday she will be doing a 3 ½ hour webinar on Enterprise Funds.

**Motion:** Bill moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:55pm. Erica seconded. Unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Michele Giarusso