

Leyden Select Board and Finance Committee Minutes
Leyden Town Offices
Regular Session Minutes
July 7, 2021
6:00pm

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

Others Present: Michele Giarusso, Michele Higgins, John Higgins, Gilda Galvis, Sarah Bartholomew, Carol Kuzdeba, Anne Zavaruha, Marcia Miller, Bob Depalma, Ken Spatcher, Zack Delucca, Brian Pelletier, Nate Messer, Beth Kuzdeba

Bill called the meeting to order at 6:15 pm. Bill and Jeff welcomed Erica. Gilda Galvis swore Erica Jensen in as select board member. Bill signed renewal contract for FRCOG inspection programs (building, plumbing, electrical) and FRCOG CoMirs contract. He also signed a letter to Frank Gervasio, at the Department of Local Services that Michele Giarusso signed in advance for the completion of the IT Community Compact grant.

Motion: Bill nominated Jeff as Select board chair. Erica 2nd. Vote-Bill and Erica-yes, Jeff abstained.

Motion: Jeff nominated Erica as vice Chair of the select board. Bill 2nd. Vote- Jeff and Bill-yes. Jeff appointed Erica as Police Department liaison, Bill as Fire Department liaison and Jeff Highway Department.

Motion: Erica moved June 28, 2021 meeting minutes as printed. Unanimous.

Assessors-Bob Depalma stated he would like to discuss a job description he gave to Michele G. to put in the select board correspondence to move the process along for hiring an Assistant to the Assessors. Carole Kuzdeba questioned how they could post a position without ever deciding or discussing this position at a select board meeting? She also wanted to know why the citizen's voted on this at Annual town meeting without having the details of the position worked out? Michele Higgins said when Bob Depalma presented the Assessor's budget to the Finance Committee he proposed how many hours there would be, an hourly rate etc. so the finance committee was under the assumption all the details had been worked out. Erica stated the select board needs to decide on a job description. Bob Depalma and Ken Spatcher stated they only had recommendations for a job description. Michele G. stated the deadline for people applying for the advertised position was yesterday and only one resume was received. Bob Depalma told her to put an ad in the Greenfield Recorder. Carole Kuzdeba asked if hers was the only one and Michele stated -yes. Jeff then made the decision to post pone a job description until next meeting and readvertise the position with a new deadline for applications.

Beth Kuzdeba-Beth as Board of Health Chair, asked for the answers to the possible rabies incident that Ann Zavaruha asked about in her letter to the select board and presence at the meeting two weeks. Beth stated this is a public health issue and the BOH needs answers. Jeff stated he has given Ann's letter to the police chief to answer the complaints. Beth would like to see a written policy and procedure from the police department on how to handle possible rabid animals. Gilda interjected the animal was still alive when Dan entered the property and Dan took the porcupine to a veterinarian in South Deerfield. Gilda stated Dan was told porcupines do not carry rabies. He waited 3 hours and vet would not test. Dan brought the animal back to his house and buried it in his back yard. Marcia Miller asked for the name of the vet who would not test because other animals including livestock were involved. Beth proceeded to reiterate the need for a policy and procedure in this town for all officers so they know what to do and what questions to ask of the residents so this information can be passed along to veterinarians. Ann stated rabies is 100% fatal to humans and this is ridiculous that she has not received any information since April. Marcia stated she sees two issues that need to be in a policy, one is the person who has the right

to carry firearms are the only ones to shoot the animal and the transportation of a possible rabid animal to a vet with questions answered so the information can be relayed to a vet. Marcia volunteered to help write a policy and procedure. Erica stated we do need a policy and procedure for the town. Ann asked when she will get the answers because at this point there has been no communication back from the police department and this should not have gone on this long.

Municipal Assistant-Michele stated she has received a phone call and follow up email that she has received a \$675,500 STRAP grant out of cycle for East Hill Road. She applied last August for this and was told in the first round it did not meet the specification. She stated at the time she assumed because we did not receive the grant because there were no engineering plans to submit which is a criteria for make ready. She also has received a “save the date” email from the DER for awards being given for culverts. She applied for \$395,000 for construction of the Coates Road culvert project. Ann Zavaruha stated she would like the “S” curve taken out of the road because over the years she and the town have made this curve by filling the sides in with gravel. Michele presented her job description and offer letter she signed in 2018. She also presented an email from Bob Hardesty that he and a former select board member updated the job description after calling several towns and redoing the job description before posting the position Michele is currently in. Michele also presented a complaint letter to the select board stating she has been discriminated against, bullied and harassed in her position. In her letter she submitted a proposal to receive compensation for covering for other departments in FY20-21 who did not show up to work or had left the position. This left many phone calls she had to answer and paper work that had to be done. She stated some of this qualifies under the Cares Act on all the extra work she did for the town learning how to get reimbursement for the town, submitting reports for the town to DLS and receiving the money for the town under the Cares Act. In addition, she would like compensation for being the project manager for the Simon Keets Road bridge project. The highway superintendent had told the select board he would not be the project manager for this project and everything fell to Michele to do. She also takes care of daily emails for the highway as well as bimonthly bills. The highway superintendent is highly compensated for his position and none of this is in her job description.

Michele also pointed out the email from Peter Wakelin that he would like to hold an event on July 18th on the property he is renting. He would like to sell beer and wine. Michele looked up on the ABCC website what a “special event permit” would entail. She read this out loud. Erica stated she would like to see a written plan from Peter next week before making any recommendations. Michele will follow up with Peter.

Motion: Bill moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:50pm. Unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,
Michele Giarusso