

**Town of Leyden Public Safety Advisory Committee
Minutes of the Meeting April 6, 2022**

A duly posted meeting of the Leyden Public Safety Advisory Committee was held in the Leyden Municipal Office Building at 6:32 pm, on April 6, 2022.

Present: Elizabeth Kidder (Chair), Marcia Miller, Jack Golden, Emily Yazwinski, Barbara Wallace, Candace Hope (Alternate).

Finance Committee: Nate Messer, Michelle Higgins, Ginger Robinson, Joyce Muka, Glenn Caffrey

Absent: Anders Ferguson

Audience: Michelle Giarusso, Tracey Rogers, Erik Johnson, Sara Seinberg, Erica Jensen, Bill Glabach, Beth Kuzdeba, Chris Larabee

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 pm.
Review of the minutes of March 16, 2022

Motion to approve the minutes of March 16, 2022 was made by Emily Yazwinski and seconded by Marcia Miller

VOTE:

Jack Golden: Yes

Emily Yazwinski: Yes

Marcia Miller: Yes

Liz Kidder: Yes

Candace Hope: Yes

Barbara Wallace: Yes

Regional Emergency Preparedness Committee (REPC)

- Emergency Preparedness Program (federal mandate) presentation by Tracey which included an overview of what is covered by the program and the trainings available through the program (Mohawk Public Health, emergency dispensing site, Cooperative public health service, etc).
- REPC is not currently a response unit but might be soon. They're exploring options, findings will be released 4/28. Next step will be strategic planning.
- REPC meets quarterly. In eleven years with FRCOG, Tracey has never seen someone from Leyden attend. Anyone who wants to be added to the mailing list for updates can email Tracey.

- Ideal EMD qualifications (from Tracey): It's hard when it's tacked on to the Fire Chief; they have the expertise but they don't have the time. Someone with emergency management experience is great. They should have time to participate in regional meetings, attend town meetings, and be able to make sure the emergency plan & emergency shelter site are prepared. They should

run an annual training or exercise to test the plan. Homeland security can provide funds to pay for training. They should also attend the annual NEMA conference in central Mass (when it resumes).

- Question about tracking vulnerable people: Dept. of public health has a tool that will tell you how many people there are but does not tell you who or where they are. LifePath (meals on wheels) has client lists, a town could contact them and ask them to reach out to their clients, but they won't share contact info with the town.
- Every town should have an E-911 coordinator; which is a liaison who collects information for people who have special needs, and tells 911. This person often keeps a list of vulnerable people in town in case of emergency.
- It's a good idea to allocate resources for creating an emergency operations center: high speed internet, computers, medical equipment. The operations center should be mobile.
- Leyden town hall is set up to be an operations center (which is why we need a generator there).
- Communication with other EMDs in neighboring towns will be an important component and should be part of the job description.
- Keeping track of town records is also important in case of emergency, Michelle is working on getting things backed up and cloud-based where possible.
- Chesterfield & Goshen share an EMD.
- Many small towns follow the state local emergency management plan template because they are required to, but find it doesn't truly meet their needs.
- EMD exists to develop the emergency plan and to be a liaison with the state, but isn't in charge of anything in case of an emergency.
- It's not necessary for the person assigned to be EMD to have emergency experience, but they should be a quick study and attend all the training available. It's more important that they're a good people person, good at making connections and being organized. They should be good at working with a team. It's also a good idea to have an assistant or deputy just in case the EMD is sick or unavailable during an emergency.
- Q: Most likely disaster? Outlined in our municipal vulnerability plan: roads being washed out, trees coming down, icy conditions. All very climate-based.
- Lack of cell service in the area is problematic. HAM radio could be helpful, there's a HAM radio club in Franklin County. Al Woodhull, Leyden resident, is an active member of that group.

Public Safety Budgeting, Finance Committee, Efficiency & Regionalization Grant/Feasibility Study regarding Interim Agreement for Police Services with Bernardston

- Interim agreement with Bernardston should be simple and straightforward. We should start working together so we can accurately gauge our costs to determine the budget for a long-term agreement.
- Liz provided an overview of what coverage will be included in the budget.
- Budgets are reviewed regularly, if costs (hours / admin) increase it will need to be reflected in the budget. Finance committee needs to be prepared for this, we should have a contingency budget allocated for the possibility of increased expenses.
- It seems there are mixed feelings in town about regular patrolling based on public comments the committee has received.

- There's a question of who received revenue from speeding tickets if Bernardston is patrolling Leyden—Liz will ask in the task force meeting with both town finance committees (Bernardston & Leyden) tomorrow. We'll have a better understanding of the finances after our task force meeting.
- Selectboard feels good about the agreement, but is keen to understand the finances. Bill looks forward to hearing what the Collins Center folks have to say.
- Jack believes regionalization is the path forward, but still feels slight concern about diving into the interim agreement before we're able to see results of the feasibility study.
- Liz mentioned the interim agreement can be terminated with 30 days notice, and the public information session on May 4th will help the town better understand the Police Reform Act and the impact it will have on Leyden.
- Ginger (speaking personally, not as chair of finance): 80-100 hours a month of patrolling seems like a lot. Is it possible to have a call-only agreement?
- Lengthy discussion about number of calls, what feedback the committee has received from people in town, what will be feasible for our town moving forward, and the importance of establishing relationships with the Bernardston Police Department.
- Bill reiterated July 1st is his preferred start date.
- Erik: Believes more people will be on board if the town understands we've done our due diligence with the Collins Center before moving into an interim agreement. Also expressed a concern about the 30 day termination. Liz said the timeline can be discussed in the meeting with Bernardston tomorrow.
- Discussion about the Interim agreement being a time for Leyden to test the relationship before developing a long-term agreement.
- Sara likes the idea of moving forward with a solid plan, in collaboration with our neighbors, after treading water for so long.
- Marcia agrees, but also knows we need to work with the older families in town to understand that we need to change and adapt. They need time.
- We need people who are engaged in this process to reach out to our neighbors and ask them to come to the meeting so more people in town can understand what is happening, why it's happening, and how we can respond to it.
- Jack: We have an opportunity to do something positive and constructive, and we need to bring the town together to get behind it.
- Beth: This committee has given her hope for the future of the town. How are we going to grow and move forward?
- Erica: Leyden can't afford the future of policing. It's too expensive. She thinks we're moving in a methodical and thoughtful way. Nobody wants to raise taxes to pay for it, we don't want to go without public services. It's time to move forward.
- Discussion about timing for Public Safety Committee to meet with Finance Committee (May 11th)
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Police: Interim MOA for Police Services with Bernardston

- A two-town, Leyden and Bernardston, task force is meeting for the first time this week to review the interim agreement and budget for shared police services. The Task Force is composed of

one Selectboard member, one Finance Committee member, and one public safety representative.

- In order to be in compliance with the Police Reform Act, Officer Brooks is working on the Bridge Training, he'll be finished on time. Mike Aiken is also working on his training.

Communications; Public Information Meeting

- The committee discussed the need to have a good turnout at the information meeting. The format of the meeting will be discussed in-depth at our next meeting.

Fire, EMS, EMD, Historical Research Updates:

- First time there was money in the town budget for police was in 1960's.

Priorities and Next Steps:

- Liz will participate in the Task Force meeting and continue working on the Interim Agreement.
- Liz will talk with Mike Edwards about the role he can play in the public meeting.

Review of correspondence:

- Received letters in support of patrolling on Mid-County Road.

Next meeting: April 20th, at 6:30pm. In person at the town office.

Adjournment: A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Emily Yazwinski and seconded by Barbara Wallace.

Vote:

Jack Golden: Yes

Emily Yazwinski: Yes

Barbara Wallace: Yes

Marcia Miller: Yes

Candace Hope: Yes

Liz Kidder: Yes

Meeting was adjourned at 8:47pm

Respectfully submitted by:

Candace Hope

List of documents: