

Leyden Select Board
July 3, 2023 Meeting
Meeting Minutes

In attendance: Glenn Caffery, Erica Jensen, Katherine DiMatteo, Michele Giarusso, Jim Brodeur, Liz Kidder, Beth Kuzdeba, Roxanne Zimmerman, Susan Bobe, Sara Steinberg, person from Recorder (Julian)

Meeting called to order at 5:37pm. Minutes for June 30, 2023, were reviewed.

MOTION: Erica moved to approve the amendment to include that Michele would send Andy Baker a letter about his reappointment for zoning board of appeals. Katherine seconded. Glenn made an amendment regarding Social Media Policy. Glenn's amendment was accepted by Erica and Katherine. Approved unanimously with the amendments.

Glenn noted that the order of the meeting agenda has been made to move public comment to earlier in the meeting and to discuss whether the comments are for items on the agenda or just general comments. A full discussion not taken up but will be included in our reorganization discussions.

Citizen request for a vegetable exchange:

Beth Kuzdeba presented the idea of a vegetable exchange. No storage, not a BOH initiative – a citizen's initiative of Beth and Marcia Miller. They propose that extra vegetables from gardens in town would be available for other residents to take with any vegetables not taken to go to the Bernardston Senior Center. Erica asked when? – Beth responded when gardens produce surplus, who can contribute? – Beth responded anyone can contribute, what location? Beth responded town office or town hall, how to advertise? Beth responded through the Bernardston Senior Center, Leyden Life. Glenn asked if we needed Serve Safe? Beth responded: no, only at the Bernardston Senior Center and they are certified. Where at the town offices? Beth responded outside on a table staffed by Beth and Marcia. Glenn clarified that the initiative would be sponsored by the town and asked if this might not be a problem for insurance. Michele and Beth confirmed that it would be fine.

MOTION: Erica made a motion to accept the idea of a vegetable exchange that is free with no liability for the town when Beth confirms with Library whether they will be disbursing CISA farm shares. Katherine second. Approved unanimously.

Update from tax collector on outstanding tax payments:

Roxanne reported that she sent out the demand letters several times to everyone and will be sending them one more time before posting in the newspaper. FY 20-22 letters were sent (second demand) and getting responses and some payments. Vadar can print out the ad that goes to the newspaper. Glenn asked about the delay – Roxanne responded that it was the transition to Vadar and her training that delayed sending the demands. Glenn asked about the statute of limitations – Roxanne responded that this isn't the case unless the land is sold. Glenn asked about interest – Roxanne responded that the interest is based on when the letters were sent. When the taking of property is determined, the Treasurer takes over handling, the interest increases to 16%, Treasurer works out payments. If not satisfied would go to court for taking the property and the property owner would pay all the costs. The ability for a town to take property of low value is easier than property of high value.

Katherine asked Roxanne about the reappointment of the Deputy collector. Roxanne recommended reappointment.

MOTION: Katherine moved to appoint Arthur Jones as Deputy tax collector for one year, Erica seconded. Approved unanimously.

Other Appointments:

Katherine reported that she hasn't heard from Tom Ashley about Agricultural Commission and will reach out again.

Glenn reported he will ask Town Clerk about poll workers and registrar of voters.

Glenn asked Jim Brodeur to contact the Ethics office to ask if he, Jim Brodeur, can serve in both the planning board and zoning board of appeals.

Michele reported she has not heard from Deb Bernard and today sent the letter to Andy Baker.

Katherine asked Michele to check the contract with FRCOG about building inspections to confirm how long the contract is.

Katherine asked Jack about the Finance Committee and Police Services Advisory Committee appointments and he is reaching out to confirm volunteers for the open seats.

Glenn is reaching out to find a citizen rep for the Police Services Advisory Committee.

It was noted that we still need a co-EMD director.

Erica asked Liz Kidder if there was a term limit for the Police Services Advisory Committee (PSAC) – Liz responded no, it is not in the agreement but will check with the consultant.

Erica will ask the Finance Committee to appoint a rep to the PSAC. Meets at 11 am

Orientation:

The Ethics training is available on July 27 and the general orientation planned by the SB would happen at the same time.

After discussion, it was suggested that the general orientation be scheduled for a second session in the evening of July 31.

ACTION ITEMS:

Katherine will contact Ethics about setting up the meeting which would be only for Leyden elected and appointed officials and other towns' folk interested.

Glenn will draft out the orientation by the SB meeting on July 10th. 2 hours was decided as an appropriate amount of time.

Erica will make cookies and help Glenn do the one-sheets of information.

Not identified: who will contact and promote the orientation after Katherine confirms the 27th?

Organizational and annual planning:

Glenn presented his concept of how to share and collaborate on planning and scheduling. He noted we would need a Google account to share an online shared calendar.

ACTION ITEM: Glenn will set up a permanent Leyden account with all of us as authors to be used in public meeting and posted on the Select Board page. This should be compliant with Open Meeting Law. Glenn explained how this might work.

Erica asked how things get on the agenda – discussion of last year's decision that citizens should write (by email or otherwise) to have items put on the agenda and provide any relevant information to help SB

understand the topic and respond. Discussion continued on how to integrate into the on-line organizational tool.

Public comment: Glenn suggested this be at the beginning of the agenda for general comments, not those specific to the agenda. Katherine would prefer that the comments be specific to agenda items but will agree to this change for now.

ACTION ITEM: Erica will start a shared annual calendar for SB and town activities and deadline. How to handle questions/comments raised during the meeting? The chair can moderate comments, invite those in the room that have expertise, experience to share or to help inform the SB.

Sara asked for clarification on how a citizen requests for an agenda item that has been overlooked by the SB can be brought back. The online organizational tool that is being developed would be available to the public so the citizen could check how it was prioritized and to whom it was assigned.

Municipal Assistant update:

Michele shared a task list that has to be done within the next week. Discussion of setting up a schedule for not open hours for her. Michele expressed her concern that this would be a disruption for the citizens and she would be accused of not working. Glenn noted that this is the SB decision and will stand up behind the decision.

ACITON ITEMS: Glenn will work to set up a space for Michele to work temporarily until permanent space is available after the former Police Department room is divided. Glenn will do signs for door and website to announce change of hours for Municipal Assistant. Michele suggested Tuesday and Wednesday. SB took over some of the tasks to lighten the burden:

- Katherine will meet the building inspector on July 13 to inspect the town buildings.
- Katherine will contact the Highway Department about painting the electric vehicle lines, ordering, and installing the signs required to comply with ADA, and notify state when complete. This has to be done 30 days from the installation of the charging station so the end of July.
- Erica will cancel the fax line, so we do not receive FY24 bills.
- Erica will follow through with Whip City to delete the IP address for the police.
- Erica and Liz will finish the EMPG grant by the August deadline and do the closeout in September.
- Erica will contact Dave Pomerantz about the pollinator grant project regarding whether there needs to be a report filed.

MOTION: Katherine moved that the funds for the elevator repair be taken out of ARPA funds in FY23, in anticipation of reimbursement. Erica seconded. Approved unanimously.

Michele explained the conversations she had with Jo Comerford. Michele submitted \$5,000 for administration with documentation to the state for the East Hill Road project. \$2280 was for reimbursement for admin time from July 1, 2022 to May 30, 2023 – 80 hours of work. She was informed that the town could not be reimbursed for employee time – neither for admin nor highway. \$330,000 will be left over on the East Hill grant because we used Highway employees to do the work because contractors were unavailable, and we wanted to meet the grant deadline. It was unknown at the time that these costs were not reimbursable.

Recently it was announced that WRAP (Winter road maintenance) money would be divided and given to all cities and towns that had not met the deadline to use their WRAP money. Leyden had met the deadline so could not qualify. Michele spoke with Anne Gobi, Director of Rural Affairs and then contacted Jo Comerford. The state responded that they would give us the \$330,000 to the ten mile bridge project but the town does not need the money for this project. If there is left-over money from the ten mile bridge project, the State will allow the town to use the extra for any bridge or road work project of our choice without going through the grant process.

Michele asked for reimbursement for her time on the project. Glenn expressed appreciation for her work but noted that this could not be taken up now and would be included on future agendas.

Glenn asked Michele to record her hours on her time sheet. This will give the SB the information it needs to determine priorities for the Municipal Assistant and help us manage projects. Erica noted that this would give us an accurate picture of the work and the level of effort.

Town clerk duties: Michele asked to hand this off to someone else. Michele want the residents to know she has been doing the Town Clerk work. Erica noted that Amanda had assumed that Michele was appointed as the assistant town clerk. Michele confirmed that 3-4 years back she had been appointed but that was under a different town clerk and there was not a term noted.

ACTION ITEM: Glenn will speak with Amanda about how the authority to do the posting of the meeting can be given to someone else other than Michele. Glenn will take on working with the committees to get the agendas in order and posted. Erica noted that a template would help.

Michele reported that she completed the Fundamentals of Municipal Accounting, could be a backup now for the Accountant.

MOTION: Erica moved to set Chargepoint fee at .27 per kwh, Glenn second. Approved with Katherine abstain.

Agenda review for July 10th meeting:

Position descriptions/titles for new and existing administrative work

Approve purchasing through ERG grant.

Michele request for extra pay for East Hill Administrative work.

ARPA money for Fire Station.

MOTION: 8:10 pm: Erica moves that we adjourn to executive session according to MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21a. Katherine seconded. Glenn aye, Erica aye, Katherine aye.

MOTION: 8:35 pm: Katherine moved to return to open session. Erica seconded. Katherine, aye. Glenn, aye, Erica aye.

Select Board reviewed and signed the warrant.

MOTION: 8:55 pm: Erica moved to adjourn the open meeting. Katherine seconded. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,
Katherine DiMatteo