

Leyden Select Board Meeting Minutes
Leyden Town Office Building
Select Board Regular Session
July 17, 2023
5:30pm

Select Board Members Present: Glenn Caffery, Katherine DiMatteo, Erica Jensen

Others Present: Michele Giarusso, Liz Kidder, Tom Raffensperger, Nik Adamski, John Higgins, Beth Kuzdeba, Aalianna Marietta from the Greenfield Recorder

Glenn called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

Discussion

Minutes

Motion: Katherine moved to approve the meeting minutes of July 10, 2023, as written. Glenn seconded with an amendment that the appointment for Sara Seinberg to the Cultural Council be for a 1-year appointment. Unanimous vote.

Motion: Erica moved that Glenn contact Donna MacNichol about editing minutes via email. Katherine seconded. Approved unanimously.

There were no public comments in general or about the agenda items.

Fire Department Updates

Nik Adamski has hired two firefighters, Carey Barton and Tina Riddell. Both candidates have been in the fire department before. This is a good move for the town. Tom Raffensperger questioned the Select Board asking if they should receive approval before or after they hire. Glenn replied Nik is a strong chief and he can hire on his own. You only need to recommend candidates to the Select Board; you have the authority to hire.

Nik noted he delivered 2 two loads of metal to WTE. He does not know how much they will receive in reimbursement; WTE will send a check to the fire department. Fire Tech and Safety will come to pick up the remaining outdated cylinders for disposal. The Tahoe will be going to Hale's Custom Signs to have the lettering put on the outside of the vehicle. He decided it should be professionally done. The battery chargers for the radios have been found, Tom has put them in the office. The vending machines will be going into the large trash container.

As for training we will be doing with Bernardston, Colrain and Guilford. Matt Wolkenbreit will be doing some firefighting training on July 24th. EMS personnel will continue to respond to medical calls only.

Tom shared they are excited to begin the Junior Fire Fighting program now that we know we are covered by the town's insurance. We are averaging 6 calls/month, mostly medical and some power lines down for the most part. Nik will call State Ethics about hiring his wife Melissa as a first responder.

Motion: Erica moved that the SB accept the Fire Department's report on surplus items and disposal with the exception of the vending machines which were not town property. Katherine seconded. Approved unanimously.

Nik will call State Ethics about hiring his wife Melissa as a first responder, how to proceed, and report back to Select Board.

Recreation Committee

John Higgins handed out a list of items he will be discussing.

1. Authorize Michele to contact Sheriff's office to scrape and paint the pavilion, field house and shed.

Motion: Katherine moved to have Michele contact the Sheriff's office to paint the pavilion. Erica seconded. Unanimous vote.

2. New description of the purpose of the Recreation Committee to post on the website:
The Leyden Recreation Committee is currently a group of five volunteers who are appointed annually by the Select Board. The mission of the committee is to enrich the lives of the residents of Leyden by providing a safe and welcoming recreation area. We are committed to providing an exceptional area, events, and cultural programs for people of all ages to play, learn, and build community. Summer art programs, monthly concert series, Halloween and winter holiday activities are a few examples of activities sponsored by the committee.
It is also our responsibility to ensure that the continued and future use of the Avery Field Recreation Area honors the intentions of the Avery family that deeded this land to our Town.
We oversee the use and rental of the Avery Field Recreation Area. The area is open for public use daily except when the area has been reserved for a private function. Information about renting the area as well as the rules for use of the area can be found on the Town website under the Recreation Committee or by contacting us via email at reccom@townofleyden.com.

Motion: Erica moved to accept the purpose of the Recreation Committee to post on the town website as written. Katherine seconded. Unanimous Vote.

3. Public camping and overnight usage-The Select Board agrees there should be no overnight camping. Michele will call our insurance company to see if overnight usage is permitted for clubs such as an Amateur Radio Club.
4. WiFi hook up at Field House-John has asked Jack Golden to look into how much it will cost for Whip city to run wifi to the field house.
5. The Rec. Com. would like training on the use and capability of the website. Katherine asked Glenn if he could do training for all committees. Glenn answered he plans on teaching some committee chairs who would like to update their own pages. When asked

of employees if they would like to learn how to use the website to update their page, most answered they would rather someone else update for them.

6. Emergency Management Committee "Ready Fest"
John asked who would be responsible for the ceremonial burn permit. The brush will need to be burned or moved and the lawn reseeded. Erica replied, the fire department will be at Ready Fest to do demonstrations and the pile will have to be moved anyways. The Select Board can award a once per year burn permit, either a department or EMDs will ask the Select Board to do. The Select Board is not responsible for initiating the burn permit but once someone asks for one the Select Board would be required to request one. Erica will follow up with Sara Seinberg on this since she is coordinating the program.
7. Vendor list- John would like to know how purchasing supplies through Amazon and Staples or other vendors will be handled. Is the policy for using the Amazon account finalized. He would like to know if the Rec. Comm. can purchase its own membership. Katherine will look into setting up a town BJs membership. Glenn asked John if the fire pit is used. John said on occasion. Katherine asked Nik if there are poster signs for posting of fire pits.

Bonfire Policy

Erica would like to add to Fuel Restrictions “fuel starters to light or maintain the fire is prohibited” and under Standard Conditions of Approval she would like to add “the use of fire quenching apparatus or fire-retardant substance be used to quench the fire”.

Motion: Katherine moved to approve the Bonfire Policy with amendments discussed. Erica seconded. Unanimous vote.

American Farmland Trust

Glenn shared the trust is about identifying farmlands of local importance. If the Select Board signs off on the designation an agronomist will do the tests required and let us know how we could receive money to protect farmlands or receive money through USDA. Glenn feels the Select Board should vote on this.

Motion: Erica moved to participate in the designation of farmland of local importance. Katherine seconded. Unanimous vote.

Social Media, Rave Policy

The Social Media Policy was initiated by the EMDs and Public Information Officer (PIO) who would like to have an Emergency Management Facebook page. Erica shared she is uncomfortable with the wording “instability” in the third sentence from the end of the policy. She would like to add a qualifier and use the words “documented instability.” She also wants to know if the Select Board is going to be the qualifier of social media sites. On the second page “Unacceptable Use” those terms have to be publicized. Katherine asked for further clarification on the meaning. Glenn replied all postings have to be archived. He spoke to the Library and Historical Commission chairs about this policy. They understand as public officials they must act as public officials on public pages.

Glenn will redraft the policy with the suggestions and bring it back to the board.

Glenn reported that he has learned what the RAVE application can do. We should let residents know what RAVE can do and get them to sign or resign up for the alerts. The recruitment of residents to sign up for emergency. It should be clear who is doing the recruitment. Erica will reach out to the Leyden Emergency Management Committee. Sara Seiberg is the one asking for a policy. Messages must be clear, concise and helpful. For Board of Health messaging, they will be brought into the process. Beth will read the draft policy and provide her input.

Municipal Assistant

Michele is asking for additional compensation for managing grants and being the project manager in some instances. She has kept track of her time working on days she was off and had already fulfilled her 40 hours of work each week. Because of the extra workload placed upon her throughout the year due to new committees, postings for all committees, deliverables for grants; reimbursement forms, required reports and communication with engineers, construction companies etc. this work had to be done outside her regular hours in a quiet, uninterrupted environment when no one was around. She shared with the Select Board her accounting of hours from July 1, 2022, until current by email before the meeting. She was keeping detailed documentation of hours working on the grants thinking one of the grants would pay for her admin time. However, the state made it clear that administrative costs cannot be reimbursed if the person is a municipal employee. She still completed all the work and deliverables and, in some cases, received extra money from the state to complete the project. None of this is in her current job description.

Glenn noted that in considering this request, there should be a process that is fair and equitable and applied to all. Glenn does not know how to compensate for retroactive pay and feels the Select Board needs to contact town counsel. Erica noted that going forward Michele should report on her actual hours on the payroll form just as Bill Brooks does so that the Select Board is aware

of hours worked as a tool to help manage time and priorities. Glenn will add this question to other topics he will be discussing with Town Counsel.

Michele that she is comfortable with moving forward now that we have an understanding of the work and time committed to get it done.

Michele asked how the board would like to pay our share of the intermunicipal agreement to Bernardston an annual payment or quarterly.

Motion: Erica moved to pay Quarterly installments. Katherine seconded. Unanimous vote. Pole hearing for East Hill Road pole move. Bill Brooks is the one who asked for this move approximately 1 year ago before the construction of East Hill Road. He still would like it moved. If heavy snow should take down the pole the entire new construction of retaining wall could possibly be damaged.

Motion: Erica moved to schedule the pole hearing for July 31st at 5:30pm. Katherine seconded. Unanimous vote.

Michele asked Glenn as chair to sign the MassWorks closeout form for the East Hill Road grant. Mass Dot has emailed Michele that all deliverables have been received for the grant. They will work with Michele to transfer the money that was not spent on this grant to the 10-mile bridge grant that will begin this fall.

Michele put in an insurance claim for the lift elevator repair. The insurance company sent a check for damages minus the \$1,000 deductible. Repairs are finished.

Michele has pushed back on the fire panel repair bill and has an email from United Elevator that they will submit a credit for the \$260 repair bill.

Verizon bill and Staples bills are still outstanding. Katherine will track down the Staples charge.

Woodlands Partnership annual appointment needs to be made. Michele reached out to Paul O'Neil, current Leyden rep., to see if he is willing to be reappointed.

Work continued to define current and new administrative positions. Erica will update suggested edits.

Action items reviewed:

Glenn to reach out to town counsel on several items: executive session minutes, compensation/overtime. Erica will reach out to Sara Seinberg on Ready Fest and Social Media Policy. Katherine will reach out to BJ's and Staples.

Suggested agenda items for next working session meeting on Monday, July 24, 9a-11:45a
Continued work on personnel policies, draft of final job descriptions for administrative positions, town clerk transition, compensation of positions, Hunt Hill Rd. updates.

Katherine reported the building inspector completed the annual building inspection of town public buildings and there will be a report forthcoming with recommendations for signage.

Motion: Glenn moved to adjourn at 8:40pm. Katherine seconded. Unanimous vote.

Respectively submitted,
Michele Giarusso
Municipal Assistant