

Bernardston Leyden Police Services Advisory Committee  
Date: Wednesday, September 27, 2023 Time: 10:00am  
Location: Main Conference Room, Bernardston Town Hall and online  
Minutes of the Meeting

A duly posted meeting of the Bernardston Leyden Police Services Advisory Committee was held in the Bernardston Town Hall at 10 AM on September 27, 2023.

Present: Liz Kidder, Erica Jensen, Emily Yazwinski, , Jane Dutcher, Lou Bordeau, Karen, Peter Nehs (arrived late), Chief Palmeri (arrived 10:42).

Audience:

Remote attendance: Mike Edwards

Absent: Ginger Robinson, Stanley Garland for Bernardston Select Board

Meeting was called to order at 10:11 am.

**Committee Organization, election of Chair, Vice-Chair, Minute taker**

It was noted that Jane was the only representative for Bernardston present and it was decided that, even though there was a quorum of the committee present, the election of officers would be done at the net meeting.

**Motion was made by Jane to allow Liz to continue as temporary chair until an election can be held.**

**Seconded by Emily.**

Vote: Jane – yes, Emily – yes, Erica – yes, Liz - yes

Liz suggested that the committee plan on holding their quarterly meeting the first Wednesday of December, March, and June at 11am in the Bernardston Town Hall. If issues to be addressed arise, the committee can schedule additional meetings.

**Motion was made by Erica to set quarterly meetings at 11am on the first Wednesday of September, December, March and June. Seconded by Emily**

Vote: Jane – yes, Emily – yes, Erica – yes, Liz - yes

**Review role of the Committee by Michael Edwards, Collins Center**

Mike Edwards reviewed the role of this committee which serves to oversee the implementation of the Bernardston Leyden Police Agreement. He noted that the supervision of the Bernardston Police Department is the responsibility of the Chief and the Select Board. This committee's role is to make sure the budget established for the BPD includes the full costs incurred by the BPD to provide services to both towns and that Leyden is paying their fair share. In addition, the committee will be there to make sure the BPD is performing the services for Leyden as identified in the IMA.

Leyden is happy with the level of service and this group can review each year if the services continue to meet the terms of the agreement. If there is inconsistency, then this group can review and discuss those concerns with both Select Boards. This IMA is to an advantage for both towns under the Police Reform Act. Each year, this

committee needs to review and make sure the split of costs is fair as things change overtime. Mike noted that the most likely Issues to change would be retirement costs and benefits –that can change every couple of years and impact the total budget. This board is here to support the chief not to get involved with his administration of his department. The IMA tries to minimize the administrative burden on the chief.

Liz was asked to email a final copy of signed IMA to everyone on the committee and Mike will send out a copy of the workbook. Liz noted that a copy of the signed IMA is available for anyone to review on Leyden’s webpage. Each town needs to keep official copies. Also consider a separate email account – with emails going to everyone on the committee, also records retention requirements need to be review. Options for ways in which the committee could all use the workbook for future planning were discussed, including Google docs. Town Counsel should be consulted on how to share this type of information as a review is conducted.

If another town wants to join, this committee would be involved and it is spelled out in the IMA how that works. Each town should make sure MIIA understands the agreement and what it means to each town’s insurance. In terms of any changes to the IMA, any changes have to be signed by both Select Boards. Written agreements can deal with many of the little things to the IMA over time, but unless the IMA says a revision can be handled in that way, any amendments would require legal reviews.

The main concept of this IMA is a single budget for both towns and then there is a fee for service to Leyden. The goal was to not require Jim to track each expense by town. Jim said he is now just tracking hours. Mike put up a simplified workbook spreadsheet on the screen and reviewed each part of it. This committee should track the indirect costs and also track the weighted percentage for Leyden’s share. Jim should track how often he does have to respond to calls in proportion to Bernardston after a few years. As we get call volume over the next year, we may be able to simplify the formula. Mike is going to tweak the final spreadsheet and send to the committee.

The December meeting will focus on a review of the workbook and start to get ready for budget review.

### **Efficiency and Regionalization Grant update**

Liz reported that to date under the grant the following has been accomplished:

- Completed the IMA for police services
- Signed a contract with CVAAL for ambulance services
- Signed a contract with Community 911 for emergency medical first response training
- Established an active emergency management committee which has prepared a new emergency management plan
- Rebuilt our fire department from 1 to 5 active members with at least 1 or 2 others considering joining; they are training with the Bernardston Fire Dept., Colrain, and Guildford
- Throughout all of this, Pete Shedd has been very supportive and helpful and he is very much appreciated by our public safety team. A year ago Pete advised us to rebuild our team, that would be the best way we could be a good partner to mutual aid, and that is what we have tried to do.

Using grant funds Chief Palmeri has purchased:

- A new police cruiser
- 6 solar power speed radar signs that go on poles that can collect 2 weeks worth of data
- 1 new portable speed sign that can also collect data.
- 5 cellphone boosters to be installed on the 5 Bernardston cruisers
- 2 cruiser tablets to use as needed

Leyden is still working on security systems for the Municipal office building and police sub station  
Leyden has hired a new administrative assistant, Janelle Howard, who will be assisting our public safety team with paperwork and the grant is buying a desktop and work station for that position. The grant received an extension through December.

Public Comment – none presented.

Motion to adjourn was made by Erica and seconded by Emily.  
Passed Unanimously

The meeting was adjourned at 11:37 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Liz Kidder, Acting Chair