

Leyden Select Board Meeting Minutes
Leyden Town Office Building
Regular Session
November 13, 2023
5:30 pm

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

Others Present: Michele Giarusso, Ginger Robinson, Alice Wozniak, Bob DePalma, Ken Spatcher, Beth Kuzdeba, Liz, Kidder-remote.

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

Select Board signed the FY24 Warrants and read the correspondence.

Discussion

Tax Classification Hearing

Motion: Erica moved the tax classification hearing call to order at 5:31 pm. Katherine seconded the motion. Unanimous.

Alice stated Leyden does not have any commercial property, so the Assessors recommend a single tax rate.

Motion: Katherine moved one tax rate for the year. Erica seconded the motion. Unanimous.

Bob DePalma shared the new evaluations are up by around \$7ml this year. He handed out a copy of the LA4 Assessment Classification Report that the Assessors fill out for the Department of Local Services (DLS). Select Board members had several questions of the report that Bob answered.

Minutes

Motion: Katherine moved the meeting minutes of October 30, as presented with amendments. Erica seconded the motion. Katherine had previously sent by email to the Town Coordinator written amendments she read aloud. Erica accepted the amendments. Unanimous vote.

Motion: Katherine moved the minutes of November 6, as presented with amendments. Katherine had previously sent by email to the Town Coordinator written amendments she read aloud. Glenn had one amendment to take out *Attorney Mclaughlin* in the first sentence of the Hunt Hill Road Update. Erica accepted the amendments. Unanimous.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

ERG Budget update

Liz sent an updated spreadsheet on the grant budget by email to select board members prior to the meeting. She has also received updated quotes for the ADT security system for both town buildings. Liz stated there would be enough money in the grant to order lime green vests for walkers and some PPE for the fire department. She would like the board to vote on both items.

Erica asked if we needed a security system for the town hall as there is no equipment that can be removed except for large kitchen items and some furniture. The monthly monitoring would incur an added expense to the budget. Liz replied, the EMS office is in the building. Katherine and Glenn did not see the need for an ongoing monthly monitoring fee.

Motion: Erica moved to approve the ADT security system for the town office building and decline the security system for the town hall. Katherine seconded the motion. Unanimous.

Glenn asked if there was a survey done with walkers/runners about having reflective vests and if people thought they would be beneficial. Liz replied this has been brought up many times in the public safety meetings. Bernardston Police has given them out in the past to Bernardston residents. The Bernardston police see a lot more walkers in Leyden as they are patrolling and think it is a good idea to have the vests.

Some ideas that have been suggested for the vests is the library could have some to give out, people working the warming center for the day and at various town events could wear them. Erica likes the idea of community policing as a goodwill gesture to have the police have some to give to residents. Katherine agrees the vests being available for emergency management and town sponsored events then turned back in to be used again is a great idea. Glenn agrees purchasing around \$1,000 worth of vests is a good starter.

Motion: Erica moved \$1,000 to be spent on neon reflective vests for various purposes. Katherine seconded the motion. Unanimous vote.

Motion: Erica moved that any extra money in the grant get directed to PPE for the fire department. Katherine seconded the motion. Unanimous vote.

Green Communities

Glenn shared the Green Communities grant is not due until late December. He has learned that Solar installation is no longer funded by the first allocation of money we receive. Glenn sent drafts of letters to town counsel for review now that we have adopted a solar bylaw, a requirement of the Green Communities grant.

Allison Gage of the FRCOG is working on Leyden's Energy Reduction Plan (ERP) she has all the data of our utility bills. Since all our vehicles are exempt from the Fuel-Efficient Vehicle Policy, we have to choose one of seven Alternative Compliance actions to meet Criterion 4 of the grant. Glenn had sent out the seven actions to choose from prior to the meeting. Allison suggested Leyden choose action (1) Annual Miles Driven (or hours used) and total fuel consumption. Erica asked if this includes idle time for vehicles. Katherine stated we should adopt an anti-idling policy which is action (2). This seems like a lower hanging fruit than number (1). Erica thinks we should speak to Bill Brooks as to the possibility of lowering idling on town vehicles. Option 4 is a Level II charging station, since we are installing another station at town hall does this qualify. It was decided Options (1) and (4) are what we should answer. Someone has to track the data if we say we are going to adopt something. Katherine feels hours used will help with idling information. Glenn suggested we should ask how many of our vehicles can track idling hours, then Janell can track on a spreadsheet.

Building Needs Recommendations

Glenn asked the members how they see the recommendations by the Building Needs Committee moving forward. Since solar is no longer funded by Green Communities we need to look at cash back funding for solar or grants. The Inflation Reduction Act money may be one source. Erica stated it looks like we will have to use ARPA money to put a new roof on the town office building, then maybe Green Communities can fund insulating the roof. Glenn replied that \$50,000 was an estimate to replace the roof but we do not have actual quotes. We do not need to do a full array of solar all at once, we need to receive estimates on the roof and insulation first. If we have estimates for insulation, we can be ready when the Green Communities money is released. Glenn asked if members want to look at each of the buildings and decide where to focus on Green Communities future money. Maybe we should ask the Building Needs Committee to relook at larger scale HVAC and other needs. Glenn will summarize the intentions of the Select Board and send them to the Building Needs.

Tax Collector

Glenn asked what the strategy should be to fill the vacancy of the Tax Collector, should we see if the Treasurer is interested in a combined Tax Collector/Treasurer position or should we advertise. Glenn did speak to the Treasurer to see if she is interested in the position as an interim to help or long term. She told Glenn she would think about it and get back to him by the end of the week. Ericas asked how the position will be paid stipend or hourly. Glenn has not discussed pay; his preference is to pay hourly but currently both positions are paid by stipend. Erica feels having the Treasurer fill in for the short term will be great. Katherine feels the position should be posted both internally and externally. We should not wait weeks to move on posting. Michele will write up a post. All in agreement the best time to post externally is during the holidays, let's try and get a posting in The Recorder for the weekend after Thanksgiving.

Also agreed upon, 8-10 hours per week should be advertised and the salary range is \$25-\$31.00 per hour should anyone inquire.

Town Coordinator Update

Michele shared the following:

Michael Kane from Eversource stopped in to update the town on winter emergency preparedness.

Michele asked him to get in touch with our vegetation management person and ask that person to attend a Select Board meeting on December 18. Mike sent him an email. The person Michele had on file for this role has left and Mike has the new person's name.

Town building's oil burners are scheduled to be cleaned on November 30.

The data drops for the old police room are scheduled and should be finished in the next 2 weeks.

Michele gave an extra defibrillator to Chief Palmeri. He had one that was not working in a cruiser.

Select Board Updates

Hunt Hill Road-Glenn shared a baseline Conservation restriction (CR) report will cost around \$1750-2600. Glenn had called the Franklin Land Trust, and they gave him a list of recommendations of individuals/companies that do this work. The baseline report will probably be done in the January-February timeframe and does not have to be completed before the CR is signed. The report will include delineated wetlands, pictures, structures, roadways. Katherine asked what the cost estimate is for fixing the road. Glenn asked Bill to keep under \$25,000. Erica feels the town should pay for the baseline report and would like to see the report before the CR is signed.

Beaver Consultant-Beaver Solutions is the company that has been called to assess the beaver situation at both properties and make recommendations for long term solutions for the property owners. Bill Brooks is taking care of coordinating a date and time. Bill Brooks not sure if they will charge double the amount for assessing two sites.

Water to the church-Glenn went to the town hall after reviewing the site plan drawings from 2006 when the town hall was renovated and added on to. He took pictures of the area where the two men dug the hole and found water. Where the hole is, is not where the pipe runs to the church and not under the handicap ramp. There is a leak somewhere and a professional should take a look at it and make some recommendations. Glenn will send a letter to the church telling them the next steps that should be considered which include hiring a water professional and having a town representative present when the professional comes. Also, any work must go through the Leyden Board of Health and FRCOG public health inspector in case any permits are required. The FRCOG inspector has concerns with amateurs working on the water lines because of possible exposure to contamination.

Katherine would like an update on the surplus equipment to sell on Municibid. Glenn and Janell met last week to discuss Municibid and surplus equipment. Glenn will follow up with Janell. Also see if Janell can follow through on getting the donation form filled out for the town hall refrigerator.

Erica would like money coming back from PVRSD to be put in a special account if possible.

Agenda Planning

November 27 will be a morning meeting. Work on the remaining policies should be on the agenda.

Motion: Katherine moved to adjourn at 8:45 pm. Unanimous vote.

Respectively submitted,
Michele Giarusso

