

**Leyden Select Board Minutes
Leyden Town Hall
Regular Session
January 3, 2022
6:00pm**

Select Board Members Present: Jeff Neipp, Bill Glabach, Erica Jensen

Others Present: Michele Giarusso, Nik Adamski, Liz Kidder Tom Luck, Beth Kuzdeba, Carol Kuzdeba, James Brodeur, Christine Brodeur, Elaine Brooks Trish Saline, Nanette Rolstad, Michael Aiken Kathryn Lively, Mary Glabach, John Higgins, Michele Higgins, Denise Goodman, Lance Fritz, Kathleen Fritz, Sam Lovejoy-resident of Montague, Ellen Coty, Carlton Choiniere, Bob Hardesty, Domenic Poli-Greenfield Recorder reporter, Daniel Galvis, Robbie Milner, Andrea Zimmerman, Barbara Wallace, Anders Ferguson, Emily Yazwinski, Robert Depalma, Lewis Becker, Deidrick Neipp, Amy St. Clair, Jerry Lund, David Vreeland, Don Sadowsky, Aaron Dulles, Brenda Beck, Douglas Beck, Candace Hope, Pam Brown, Fred Feldman, Susan Bobe, Bob Bobe, Chuck Foley, Peter Siegel, Nancy Edwards, Nate Messer, Cliff Carlson, The Herron's (Deborah and Sid), Glenn Caffrey, Colleen Caffrey **The above signed the sign in sheet. One signature was unrecognizable. I observed the following names in the audience who did not sign in.** Robin Neipp, Gilda Galvis, Charles Brooks, Rita Klaus, Ed Klaus, Eric Johnson. I believe there were others in attendance who did not sign in.

Jeff called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm and stated the select board will be reading paperwork and signing warrants. At 6:28pm Jeff welcomed everyone to the meeting. He thanked everyone for coming and stated the Department of Local services (DLS) has certified our Free Cash as \$212,753 for last year. The Broadband Enterprise fund has a certified Free Cash of \$270,078. Minutes of 11/22/21, 12/6/21, 12/13/21, 12/15/21, 12/20/21 and 12/23/21 were read, voted on and approved unanimously with minor grammar changes.

Cultural Council Appointment

Motion: Erica moved to appoint Lewis Becker to the Cultural Council for a 3-year appointment. Bill seconded. Unanimous.

Conservation Commission Appointments

Motion: Erica moved to appoint Michael Morgan and Donald Sadowsky to the Conservation Commission. Donald will be a 3-year appointment and the other may be a two-year due to the unexpired term of Tom Luck. Michele will look into this. Bill seconded. Unanimous.

New Form for appointments on Committees

Jeff shared a form in Correspondence file he would like to use for appointments to committees in the future. Michele will have to retype form.

Motion: Erica moved to accept the new form. Unanimous.

Emergency Operations Site and Emergency Management Director office

Jeff explained he would like to use the downstairs room of town office building as one of two sites for the Emergency Operations Center and office. This will need to be registered with MEMA. Erica asked why we are keeping the old police station as a site if it is now the highway department's office. Erica stated she called MEMA and they said they recommend 2 sites. Jeff replied, the person's residence will be the second site. Erica asked if it is common to have a resident's home as a second site? Dan Galvis replied yes, it can be at my house. Jeff stated 95% of the equipment is already in the basement of the town office building. Deidrick Neipp asked Erica why she was speaking in a negative tone to Dan Galvis. Erica took offense with his

questioning of her manner of speaking. Erica continued, asking Dan what kind of training he will be doing in 2022. Dan replied, a certs program. Erica responded in 2020 and 2019 trainings were not done is that correct? Dan replied he did online courses. Erica asked Dan if he has an emergency management plan for the town. He replied yes, he does, it is in the police department office. Jeff stated he just wants a primary site registered at 7 Brattleboro Road at this time.

Motion: Bill moved that an Emergency Operations site be established at 7 Brattleboro Rd. Erica seconded. Unanimous.

Police Department Update from Michael Aiken Officer in Charge

Mike introduced himself as Lieutenant and Officer in Charge and read a prepared statement. He said there were currently four officers in the police department. They are all working diligently to transition after the retirement of the former police chief. He has applied for the administration authority of reviewing FIDs and plans on holding office hours for issuance of FIDs. The department had several setbacks where the telephone lines were disconnected, and a few numbers were discontinued from service. The voicemail and fax were also disconnected. The decision was made to do so without his knowing about it and he did not agree to do so. He still does not agree with this decision. A key to the police department was given to a select board member and he does not agree with this. He would like the select board to reconsider this decision as there is confidential and sensitive information in that office. In addition, a select board member is asking for computer sign on and password. He does not agree with this decision either. He stated the police mail is being open possibly by a select board member before going to him without his knowledge and this is unacceptable. He continued it is illegal for someone to open his mail without permission that is not addressed to them. Someone in the audience mentioned an investigation may be needed. Erica stated I do not think an investigation is needed here. I emphatically deny going into the police station. Mike, you and I have been texting back and forth and you never replied to me. The key is securely locked. I just want the town owned equipment to be accessible where it can be used by others. All computers in that room are password protected. Erica went on to say I was texting with you the entire time, I made the decision to change the phone lines. She then apologized for doing so. The interruption of not being able to use the fax was an interruption by Verizon, that line was not supposed to be discontinued. Mike said all computers in the room are accessible to all officers. Jeff stated I assign the liaison to the police department but there is no authority for the liaison to make decisions on their own. He asked Bill if this has not been the case in the past. Bill replied I don't think so. Jeff stated all 3 select board members will now work with Mike in the future.

Bob Depalma stated he spoke to a police officer and that officer told him the phone lines can all be tied up at once when they are calling in a report. Erica stated I apologize to everyone here. There is a lack of communication here and I apologize to the town. Elaine Brooks asked is there going to be a process for FID cards? Mike Aiken replied, yes, he plans on having a process. Jeff stated he hopes to have office hours on Tuesdays for FIDs. Liz Kidder asked about the police department email and if it is in use. Mike Aiken replied he is not reading any police department emails. Nate Messer from the Finance Committee asked about town owned equipment where it is and what is happening with it?

Complaint from BOH Chair Beth Kuzdeba in regard to Council on Aging (COA) lunches

Beth Kuzdeba stated she is asking that this kind of meeting does not take place again. Omicron is through the roof. She asked Jeff Neipp who prepared the agenda. Jeff stated Michele did. Michele stated Jeff you handed me a typed agenda and I have right here. Beth went on to say she emailed Jeff as a resident and not BOH member. I am a 60-year-old resident who has some concerns. I want to thank the COA for what they do but I would like to ask the COA if they could get us some funds for lunches, I can get a group of volunteers to hand out lunches. Michele Higgins read a prepared statement (attached) in replying to Beth's concerns. Andrea Zimmerman stated it is

easy to cancel a foot clinic you just call the people who signed up. You do not know who is going to come for a drive by lunch. Jeff Neipp thanked the COA for what they do and have done. He does not think others should get involved or complain. Bob Depalma asked Beth where did all the rapid test kits the BOH received go? Beth replied we received 90 test kits, 50 went to the school to be handed out. Homebound people and physically challenged people were next. She stated she asked for help at the last select board meeting with this and no one came forward. No more will be coming from the state right now. I did the best I could getting them out. Rita Klaus stated Beth called me and she delivered the test kits to our house. Gilda Galvis stated the COA usually have 12 people sign up for foot clinic. Bill Glabach stated there is such toxicity in this town right now, there are so many emails to read. A woman in the audience asked Bill if he is reading his emails. Nate Messer stated you are accusing of us of doing our job by email and reading emails.

Conflict of Interest Training

Jeff stated Michele got an email from the head of State Ethics and he got involved as chair of the select board. Residents have been calling Boston and the head of ethics wants a list of all employees who have not completed their ethics training by February. Michele is going to send a memo to all departments and committees that this training needs to happen. She will then make a list of those who have not completed, and the list will be sent to State Ethics in February. Lance Fritz stated that people forget when they have to do, and he is suggesting one month be set up each year where people have to complete the training.

Town Website updating

Jeff suggested the website needs updating, there is information on there that is outdated. Michele presented a yearly plan to the select board on what and who should be responsible for updating the information.

Date for Public Hearing for East Hill Strap Grant Project

Motion: Jeff moved February 28, 2022, be a possible date for a public hearing for the STRAP grant for East Hill Road at 6pm at the town hall. Bill seconded. Unanimous.

Date for Special town Meeting

Motion: Jeff moved to set February 23, 2022, at 6pm at town hall for a Special Town Meeting to transfer money for over spent accounts. Bill seconded. Unanimous.

Public Comments:

Gilda Galvis Town Clerk read a prepared statement (attached).

Eric Johnson asked what extra money would be needed for grants. Jeff replied not sure what may be needed for the East Hill road project yet.

Municipal Assistant Update

Projects/grants were listed on the agenda for 2022. Michele let the select board know she has signed up for the MMA conference in Boston end of the third week in January.

Jeff adjourned the meeting at 8:20pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Michele Giarusso