

**Leyden Select Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Leyden Town Office Building**  
**Select Board Regular Session**  
**July 31, 2023**  
**5:30pm**

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

**Others Present:** Michele Giarusso, Bill Brooks, Liz Kidder, Andrew Baker, Phil Brodeur, Phil Brodeur, Jr., Jim Brodeur, Alice Wozniak, Bob Depalma, Aalianna Marietta from the Greenfield Recorder, Don Voner from Verizon remotely via zoom

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

### **Discussion**

#### **Pole Hearing**

Glenn officially called the pole hearing to order at 5:31pm. The hearing was to relocate 1 jointly owned pole between Verizon New England and NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy numbered T.125/E.43M to a point on the west side of East Hill Road approximately thirty feet south of its exiting location and approximately seven hundred ninety-five feet northerly from the centerline of Frizzell Hill Road. The reason for the relocation is the Leyden Highway Department requested relocation to accommodate a road widening project; and to provide for the distribution of intelligence and telecommunications and the transmission of high and low voltage electric current. Bill Brooks mentioned that his request was over 1 year ago and the pole move is still vital. Andrew Baker, an abutter questioned if this was a different pole than the one across the street from him that Bill Brooks told him about last year. Bill replied this was the same pole. Bill asked Don Vonner from Verizon who was in attendance remotely via zoom that he initially requested 3 poles to be moved. He asked Don if the other 2 would be moved also. Don will investigate this and get back to Bill. After discussing the location of the other poles with Bill Don he did not think the other poles would need a pole hearing because they were being moved several feet off the side of the road from their current location. After there being no more questions and no abutters objecting Glenn called for a vote.

**Motion:** Katherine moved to authorize Verizon to move the pole 30 feet south on East Hill Road. Erica seconded. Unanimous.

#### **Request to Make Stephan Lane a Public Way**

Phil Brodeur owner of Stephan Lane shared that after 40 years of living on Stephan Lane Phil needs help with maintaining the road. Erica asked what the current condition of the road is. Phil replied they have tried to maintain the road as best as they can, the road is flat so there are no washouts. Erica asked if the residents of the road share in the maintenance cost. Phil replied yes, but the time has come when we need help with plowing, especially large storms. Glenn asked if the private snowplow they have is undersized for the amount of snow we had last March. Jim Brodeur, Char of the Leyden Planning Board (no relation) mentioned he knows that Phil has come before the planning board with the same request in the past. Each time the planning board has made recommendations. Jim is recommending Phil have the road surveyed and have a civil engineer draw up subdivision plans. The plan would have to go before the Leyden Planning board, the planning board would have to approve then Phil would have to have the work done by a contractor making sure the travel lanes are large enough for emergency vehicles including turnarounds. The plan has to be voted on by the planning board following all the required processes and it meets all subdivision standards. Once the work is complete Phil Brodeur would ask the Select Board to put on a town meeting warrant to vote to have the town approve to accept

the road as a public way. Phil replied this sounds like a lot of money. Phil: I heard the town of Colrain plows for some of its private ways could Leyden? And what would the cost be? Glenn replied we would have to discuss this with our highway superintendent. There was concern from Select Board members that town equipment on private roads and private property is a potential liability to the town. Phil asked if the town could discuss this with the highway and come up with protocols to assist Stephan Lane should they need it and the costs associated with the assist. Erica replied, in a true emergency the town is obligated to respond. This concept is not new to the town. Phil asked what an emergency is. Glenn replied our EMDs, fire and police have a communication system amongst each other as well as plans/protocols. Erica stated she would share the EMD plans/protocols with Phil. Phil asked what his next steps should be. Jim Brodeur stated he would start with consulting with a civil engineer then Phil could get on the agenda of a planning board meeting.

#### General Public Comments

John Higgins thanked Glenn for updating the Recreation Committee page on the website and thanked Michele for contacting the Sheriff's office to paint the pavilion. He asked if there is an update on the BJ's account and the draft of the rental policy for the pavilion. He would like to be on a future agenda to finalize the policy.

#### Public Safety update regarding the Efficiency and Regionalization grant (E&F)

Liz Kidder commented that she would like to ask for the extension of the E&F grant from Sean Cronin at DLS until the end of December. The currently ends September 15. \$8,000 was set aside for Community 911 training for first responders from the grant. She and Tom Raffensperger have met with Matt Wolkenbreit and this could happen in the fall. Tom has looked at the training contract and Liz will send it to town counsel for review. Erica asked if there would be an \$8,000 charge each year. Liz replied training is good for 3 years. The Police station room reno estimates are still coming in, Dave Pomerantz is heading this up. The construction can probably happen before the end of December. A letter must be sent to Sean Cronin soon asking for this extension.

**Motion:** Katherine moved to send a memo requesting an extension until December 31<sup>st</sup> for the E&F grant. Erica seconded. Unanimous.

Liz handed out the Colrain Ambulance contract draft. Glenn asked if we would see extra charges for intercept service by AMR or other ambulances. Liz replied, the way the contract is now \$375 will be charged per call. Originally the thought was the amount would be \$300 per call. So, if the contract states \$375 I would say no we would not be charged. The contract has been reviewed by town counsel. Erica asked if wording could be added so we would not be charged for intercept calls.

Liz asked the Select Board if they receive an extension of the grant should the Public Safety Advisory Committee be extended through the end of the grant. She wanted to know in general if this committee will have value to the town by continuing and if it is to continue would it have to go to a town meeting for approval as a regular standing committee. Glenn asked if Liz has discussed the continuation with the rest of her committee and are they willing to continue to volunteer. Katherine thinks extended until December is reasonable. Erica prefers advisory vs. standing committee but also thinks more regionalization of public safety is in our near future and there will need to be a lot of planning for the future. Regionalization will need a concerted effort.

#### Amazon/ Staples purchasing policy

Michele had sent out an example of a preauthorization form another town uses for sharing of purchasing accounts. She thinks this is what is needed so accounts get paid for on time. Susan and Angelica think this form will work for us.

**Motion:** Erica moved to approve the form. Katherine seconded. Unanimous.

State Interest in landlocked parcel of land in Leyden that is in tax title

Alice Wozniak Assistant Assessor presented a possibility of the state acquiring some land that has been in tax title for many years. She handed out a map showing this parcel. The parcel is 27.5 acres, it is landlocked, and the state owns all the land around it. This is part of the Greenfield water supply land and they are looking to protect the water. The parcel has been in tax title since 1990s the heirs are not to be found and it would be good to if the state would take it over. They could probably clear up the title, they have the resources to do but for Leyden to do it would be costly. An attorney for the state contacted Alice about this land. He will be looking at land acquisitions sometime in September. Erica asked what the financial impact was to Leyden. Alice replied we will probably receive money in lieu of taxes and on our cherry sheet. Alice feels this would be a win-win for Leyden for the state to take over this property and have it off our tax books.

**Motion:** Katherine moved to approve to allow the state to pursue taking parcel #27. Erica seconded. Unanimous.

Minutes

**Motion:** Katherine moved to approve the July 17 meeting minutes as written. Erica Seconded. Glenn made 2 spelling amendments. Members present... should be Aalianna and under Fire Dept 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph the spelling should be Matt Wolkenbreit. Katherine made amendments under Minutes add **Motion:** *Erica moved that Glenn contact Donna MacNichol about editing minutes via email. Katherine seconded. Approved unanimously.* Under Fire Department add **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.* Under Municipal Assistant add 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph 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 work 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.*

**Motion:** Katherine moved to accept all amendments. Erica Seconded. Unanimous.

**Motion:** Katherine moved to accept the minutes of July 24 as written. Erica Seconded. Glenn had several amendments. Under Communication and notification expectations when cancelling office hours to delete the second and third sentence and replace with *A discussion followed about the policy for vacation time for these positions, the differences between compensation based on stipend vs hourly rate, and public notification about change in posted hours.* Additionally, *Sharing all input and edits for personnel policy. Because we have a new board member, Glenn shared to Erica and Katherine a compilation of all of the notes, comments, and edits. He thanked Katherine for leading this effort, combining the discussions from several meetings, two of which involved town counsel, and reaching out to other key town officials for input. Select Board members will review changes and set a future meeting to reconcile and approve a version to be sent to town counsel.*

**Motion:** Katherine moved to accept amendments to the minutes. Erica seconded. Unanimous.

Appointments

**Motion:** Katherine moved to appoint Tom Ashley to the Agricultural Commission for 3 years. Erica seconded. Unanimous.

**Motion:** Erica moved Christopher Cox be appointed to the Conservation Commission for 3 years. Katherine seconded. Unanimous.

**Motion:** Katherine moved to have Michele send the Poll workers and Registrars emails to see if they would like to be reappointed. Erica seconded. Unanimous.

**Motion:** Erica moved to send the letter to Fred Feldman as an honorary pound keeper. Katherine seconded. Unanimous.

**Motion:** Erica moved the Town of Leyden hereby names Elizabeth Kidder as the duly appointed representative to serve for a three-year term on the Board of the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership as established in 2018 state law, and now operating as the Woodlands Partnership of Northwest Massachusetts, per the 2022 Board vote recommending a name change. Liz's term will be until 2025. Katherine seconded Unanimous.

#### Limited Spending Authority

**Motion:** Katherine moved the Municipal Assistant can make independent decisions for repairs, purchases and repair authorizations as she deems necessary to operate town buildings in a safe and efficient manner as long as there is money in the budget and the purchase or repair does not exceed \$2500. Any purchase or repair beyond \$2500 will require 2 Select Board members' approval. Erica Seconded. Unanimous.

#### Town Clerk Transition

Glenn shared an email from Amanda with the Select Board members prior to the meeting that Amanda sent after she could not attend last Monday's meeting. She is suggesting the Town Clerk position be posted. Erica feels the Town Clerk position should be posted externally as soon as possible as well as the Administrative Assistant in The Recorder, North Couty Notebook, list serves. Erica will write the Town Clerk job description.

**Motion:** Katherine moved to have the Town Clerk and Administrative positions posted externally. Erica seconded. Unanimous.

Michele will work on the postings. Erica also feels we need someone to post meetings.

**Motion:** Erica moved to have Michele post the meetings in lieu of the town clerk. There was much discussion around this, and Michele felt she needed to be appointed assistant town clerk to do so. Erica withdrew her motion.

#### Municipal Assistant updates

Michele asked Glenn to sign as chair the contract for new Assessor's maps the Assessor's would like to purchase. Glenn signed. Michele received a letter that is in the Select Board correspondence file that as an abutter we received for logging to begin next to Avery Field. The letter states the logging will begin on July 31. Michele has been handling rentals at camp Lion Knoll. She has been sharing scheduled events with the police department and so far none of the events have requested a one-day liquor license. A letter must be signed for the pollinator grant. To increase the bond for the Tax Collector from \$100,000 to \$200,000 the cost will be \$550, and they require a management letter from our 2022 audit.

**Motion:** Katherine moved to increase the Tax Collector's bond from \$100,000 to \$200,000. Erica seconded. Unanimous.

Today a resident came in and said someone in a blue tractor was grading East Hill Road north end that comes out onto Simon Keets Road. She did not recognize the person. The resident is concerned that now that the road is graded there will be vehicles travelling on this road. The Select Board will investigate this further.

Review Action Items

Glenn suggested for the next meeting the following items be considered:

Donna could attend the working session meeting on August 14 at 11:30am

Warrants will need to be signed.

Continue work on the Town Clerk job description.

Work on plans for the orientation of town officials

A possible executive session may need to be held while Donna is present to continue discussion on Hunt Hill Road.

Award electrical fire station work

Glenn to update on Green Communities and donation policy.

**Motion:** Glenn moved to Executive Session at 9:21 pm according to MGL Chapter 30A, section 21 (3) and (6) and not return to public session. Erica seconded. Roll call vote: Erica-yes, Katherine-yes, Glenn-yes

Respectively submitted,

Michele Giarusso

Municipal Assistant