

**Leyden Select Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Leyden Town Office Building**  
**Working Session**  
**September 11, 2023**  
**9:30 am**

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

**Others Present:** Michele Giarusso, Liz Kidder, Bill Brooks, Cornelia Reid, Jessica Snow, Martha Hopewell, Barbara Wallace remote

Glenn called the meeting to order at 9:30 am.

**Discussion**

**Quarterly Meeting with Highway Superintendent**

Glenn handed out a list of topics to ask of Bill Brooks.

- a. What are the town properties the highway department maintains? -Bill stated he takes care of snow plowing the broadband hut and has mowed once per year around the hut since built 3 years ago. The highway has not plowed the library parking lot as volunteers used to take care of the parking area. Last year Karin Parks asked him to plow. He will continue to plow and maintain the parking area gravel.
- b. Written authorization for employees taking vehicles home- Erica asked if there was a written policy for taking home town owned vehicles. Bill replied there is not one and suggested if the Select Board wants to write up something with him, he is willing to do it. He would like the policy to include town equipment that may be left on vehicles depending on the situation.
- c. Katherine asked the scope of the tree warden's position – Bill replied he takes care of trees along roads and on the town right of way that are dead or dying and are about to fall. His #1 priority is public safety. There is a fine line between highway taking down or Eversource or Verizon taking down if it will affect power lines. Lewis Tree is currently taking down tree limbs in private driveways and right of way's for Eversource. Katherine was wondering when Eversource's tree plan will be implemented, it must go to the planning board to be discussed. Bill noted having a tree warden email would be helpful so tree warden specific emails wouldn't get lost in the highway emails.
- d. Mid County Road truck ban rationale -Bill stated Mid County Road is a shortcut to and from West Leyden, it is super steep, one of the narrow-paved roads in town and the sides of the road are built up. Cars and trucks have gone off the side into the ditch and cannot get out. He would prefer a sign to be put at both ends of the road for the traffic to use the main road and go through the center of town on snowstorm days. People speed down the road and there are areas where two trucks cannot pass one another going in opposite directions, not to mention the weight of the trucks, the road cannot handle, so that is why the signage at the bottom.

Glenn asked about the use of "jack brakes" on steep roads. Bill replied if the trucks have them, they should use them, it helps the vehicle to slow down.

Discussion continued on road signs, navigation signage, speed issues and hours trucks should be allowed on certain roads. Bill stated in the past the police department was in charge of speed limit signs he assumes with MassDOT. Erica thought this sounded like a long process. Bill suggested speed limits in town be 25mph like Greenfield has posted, the police would probably have to be involved with such a decision.

Navigation signage may be good because people using their GPS are being sent to various places they may not want to be on. There are other roads he would suggest "no truck

- traffic” signage such as Simon Keets Road. Erica asked if opening Mid County Road to through trucks would not be a good idea. Bill replied exactly.
- e. Complete Streets grant-Katherine asked bill what he thought about the town applying for a grant to paint white lines on the side of paved roads. Bill replied as long as someone else is paying for it. He did not have anything in his budget for the white lines. He would guess this would cost around \$13,000 to do since the recent painting of the yellow lines in the middle of the road cost this amount. His guess is they would last for 1 year and there are maintenance concerns like keeping sand off them so they can be seen in the fog.
  - f. Curb cut permit with signoff by highway department -Erica has written a draft of a policy for curb cuts in town. The planning board may have to add to the zoning bylaw. We have some problematic driveways with runoff onto town roadways that should have gone through the highway department first to sign off before being built. Maybe we should put something on the website for people planning to build a home to let them know what signoffs from town officials are required before they can begin construction of driveway or a structure.
  - g. “Invasive -free” gravel options-Bill stated products can be purchased that do not grow vegetation well, but it is much more expensive. Hardpack, stone dust and TRG are products that knotweed doesn’t seem to grow in. Knotweed seems to be everywhere in town now. The Conservation Commission is trying to manage the spread, if there was a multi decade plan to eradicate this will be the best way to attack it. He thinks it will take 3-5 years of aggressively attacking it to get rid of it. Trying to get vendors to answer calls he has made to get rid of the knotweed to eliminate it has been hard because when they see we are in Greenfield’s watershed they back off.
  - h. Signage for statutory private way- Glenn shared that only the town can maintain a statutory private way and not residents. Bill questioned whether declaring a road a statutory private way removes the town’s liability to maintain the road? What do the residents expect? Glenn replied for East Hill Road the town has no obligation, hopefully the same will be true for Hunt Hill Road soon. Bill-the town did not do anything to the north end of East Hill Road in over a decade. Glenn-for these two roads all we should be doing is maintaining the drainage, the highway should maintain the water bars and historic rock culverts so runoff can continue to minimize erosion.
  - i. Electronic road signs-Bill did have input on their location.
  - j. Total compensation package given to highway employees-Katherine reported that the Select Board needs to put in writing the compensation commitments made to employees does Boll have something in writing. Bill replied there are 3 part time employees that we have no obligation to as far as hours. He uses them on a per diem basis as needed. If they work more than 40 hours a week, they receive overtime. 2 years ago, they received pay increases and receive the percentage pay raise as all other employees do each year. Erica asked if there are other perks involved and is it in their offer letter. Bill replied, clothes have never been in the offer letters. Erica stated we should have a clothing allowance documented. Bill will write up a list for each person what the understanding is the supplies they receive.

#### Interview Jessica Snow

Jessica is a candidate for both the Town Clerk and Administrative Assistant position. Jessica’s resume is on file with the Town Coordinator as well as answers to interview questions. Jessica used to work for the town as a custodian and used to live in Leyden. She is available immediately and flexible in work hours.

#### Interview Martha Hopewell

Martha is a candidate for the Town Clerk position. Martha's resume is on file with the Town Coordinator. Martha is a resident of Leyden who has been wanting to get involved with the town in some capacity. After submitting her resume Martha came and picked up the Town Clerk job description to review. She was unaware the Town Clerk had so many responsibilities. After discussing with the Select Board the requirements of the position, her limited availability and personal commitments she has coming up she decided to withdraw her resume for consideration.

Town Coordinator updates

Michele shared that Bill Brooks decided to postpone the 10-mile bridge project until spring. The design plans are complete but with the weather and not much time to go out to bid and start construction before winter they decided to delay it until spring.

Michele has received two letters from the building inspector, one for the town hall and one for the Town Office building, of the findings of the recent annual inspection. There are emergency signage issues to be installed or repaired as well as emergency lighting. Michele will contact an electrician to resolve the problems.

**Motion:** Katherine moved to adjourn at 12:02 pm. Erica seconded. Unanimous vote.

Respectively submitted,  
Michele Giarusso  
Municipal Assistant