

**Leyden Select Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Leyden Town Office Building**  
**Regular Session**  
**September 18, 2023**  
**5:30 pm**

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

**Others Present:** Michele Giarusso, Liz Kidder, Ginger Robinson, Roxanne Zimmerman, Susan Bobe, Angelica Desroches, Alice Wozniak, ken Spatcher, Nik Adamski,

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

FY 24 Financial Warrants signed.

**Discussion**

Minutes

**Motion:** Katherine moved the minutes of September 5, 2023. Erica seconded. Katherine amended to eliminate the sentence of the August 7 meeting minutes *Glenn made an amendment that Erica was not in attendance*. Erica was in attendance. Unanimous vote.

**Motion:** Katherine moved to accept the meeting minutes of September 11, 2023 with two amendments.

#1 amendment add the wording at end of agenda item *Quarterly meeting with Highway Superintendent, item a.... and maintain the parking area*. #2 amendment at the end of item c add a sentence *Bill noted that a tree warden email be added so tree warden emails do not get lost in the highway emails*.

Glenn seconded and added three amendments.

#1 amendment is to add to Katherine's 1<sup>st</sup> amendment to add the word *gravel* at the end of her amended sentence. #2 amendment under item g to change the word "*smother*" to *eliminate* and under item h to add *water bars and historic rock culverts* to the last sentence.

Katherine accepted Glenn's amendments. Erica seconded all the amendments. Unanimous vote.

Financial Team Meeting

Genn offered to facilitate the meeting. He asked if members would like to share with each other what information they would like from this meeting. Katherine started by asking how the assessors know when new people come to town. Alice replied, the Franklin County Registry of Deeds sends a monthly report to all towns of property transactions. Katherine explained she wants current information to send out cards to new residents welcoming them to Leyden. Alice continued she is still cleaning up files, this is taking quite some time. Angelica is working on end of year FY23 closeout and still waiting on information from the Tax Collector. She mentioned various accounts that may be over, or she has not recorded payment for. Susan felt having everyone at the table, so to speak, and understanding each other's roles was a good thing. She would like to have regular group meetings. Roxanne reported she needs to get caught up on collections with the Treasurer and Deputy Collector. Ginger asked about missing data on property cards that have building permits for various building. She asked why this data wasn't kept current. Alice replied she is trying to get caught up on putting the book and page on each property

as this was not kept up previously. This is her priority right now. She has a long list as to what is most important. She could put in many more hours for Leyden to get current. Katherine shared she would like to be informed of any problems in departments as well as progress departments may be having so she can answer citizen's inquiries. Alice feels the Select Board should send citizens' inquiries to the correct department to receive the answers. The Select Board cannot keep up with each department. Erica would like to understand each department as the Select Board are generalists of the town's operations. Alice feels the sense of urgency and getting answers can be overwhelming for part-time, one-person departments. Many emails only bog her down. Lengthy emails containing policies and procedures for example are not helpful. She would rather have them printed out and put in her mailbox. Paper copies are best for her personally. Susan stated she prefers emails. Erica asked Angelica if she accepts digital bill schedules. Angelica would rather have printed out because if she accepts digital, she must print out anyway for the warrant.

Ken Spatcher stated most of the building permits were looked at monthly. Glenn asked if there is a systemic plan already in place for keeping up with physical inspections of properties. Are there physical inspections of the properties after reviewing the building permits.

Alice replied it is taking a lot of time to unravel some of the missing pieces on property cards especially since the town has a property going back about 50 years that is in tax title. Alice is trying to research this property and it is very complicated. This property's back taxes should never have gone on this long. Glenn replied he appreciated what Alice was doing and trying to accomplish. Cleaning up things that have not been done for years is very stressful and time consuming.

Susan explained that she is working with Iris Lahey, our attorney who takes care of tax titles for us. Discussion followed on possible new legislation in regard to towns taking property for unpaid taxes then selling for a profit. This is currently going through the courts.

Glenn asked Angelica if she had everything to close out the end of FY23. Angelica replied she is still waiting for information from Roxanne and the Deputy Collector, and she needs all the cash received. Free Cash cannot be certified until September 30. Erica asked Angelica for monthly expenditure reports by email, there was discussion on how to process in VADAR. Susan will work with Angelica on the reports.

Glenn stated we have an opportunity to work with the Collins Center who will write a Community Compact grant for us for financial policies. Susan feels as long as the policies are followed and in one place, she does not want to spend time with consultants and then not have the policies utilized. Erica explained the grant will be over a 2-year period. The people at the Collins Center are retired, experienced people who know how to streamline and have efficient policies.

Roxanne explained the process for outstanding taxes at the end of a fiscal year. She reported she sent demand notices out at the end of the fiscal year but did not send letters out after, as she did know how to in VADAR. Once the letters go out if no response then subsequent notices need to be processed and sent out. Subsequents have to be done manually because of the interest that needs to be added on. The next step is publishing names in the newspaper. Once she does the initial lien with the Registry of Deeds the names are turned over to the Treasurer for collection. Susan has already put the properties

in VADAR as tax title. There was discussion back and forth if this was the proper procedure in VADAR. Susan will call VADAR to make sure we can proceed with tax title. Glenn asked if we are taking the proper steps to collect excise taxes. Angelica replied, "The Deputy Collector will continue to collect." Roxanne stated she will get caught up soon she hopes. In closing Glenn felt we should schedule the next quarterly meeting soon.

### Discussion of Candidates

#### Town Clerk

Erica feels Paul McLatchy is the best candidate for the Town Clerk position. He is fully up to speed as a Town Clerk having been one for several years. He is experienced, he belongs to the Town Clerk Association of MA, and has a network of Town Clerks to call upon. He knows election laws, has experience conducting elections federal, state and local.

**Motion:** Erica moved Paul McLatchy to be hired as the Town Clerk. Katherine seconded. Unanimous vote.

Erica proposed the hiring rate of \$27.50/hr. since he has experience as well as reimbursement for conferences and travel to meetings/conferences. We should let him know we expect public office hours of at least 3 hours/day. All in agreement.

#### Administrative Assistant

Katherine feels Janell would be the best person to do the work. Neither candidate has municipal experience. Jannell gave examples in her interview of conducting research, being systemic and demonstrating organizational skills. She has experience dealing with difficult people in different situations and can be sensitive. Katherine also likes the answers from her references. Katherine said she is sure Jessica Snow could also complete the tasks.

Erica feels neither has municipal experience. Jannell has experience with writing bylaws so her writing experience should be an asset communicating with departments. Erica stated she liked what Janell's references had to say about her. Jessica has also worked in an office setting and could probably do the job.

Glenn agreed with both Erica and Katherine in their point of views about both candidates. He feels Jannell's references were very specific, explaining her interpersonal skills. She had her own responsibilities as chair of a board and ran her own business. Glenn stated he is comfortable offering the position to Jannell.

**Motion:** Katherine moved to offer the Administrative Assistant position to Jannell Howard. Erica seconded. Unanimous vote.

There was discussion on public presence should be at least 3 hours per day to start. Whether 4 or 5 days per week can be worked out.

**Motion:** Erica moved to offer Janell \$21/hour. Glenn seconded. Vote: Erica-yes, Katherine-abstain, Glenn-yes.

Michele will call both candidates to verbally offer the positions and write up offer letters.

#### Agenda planning for future meetings

Glenn will draft up agendas from the Google doc calendar and send a draft to Select Board members.

**Motion:** Erica moved to adjourn at 8:30 pm. Katherine seconded. Unanimous vote.

Respectively submitted,  
Michele Giarusso  
Municipal Assistant