

Leyden Select Board Meeting Minutes
Leyden Town Office Building
Regular Session
October 16, 2023
5:30pm

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

Others Present: Michele Giarusso, Roxanne Zimmerman, Liz Kidder, Nik Adamski, John Higgins

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

Motion: Glenn moved to convene an Executive Session according to MGL Chapter 30A, section 21A,

- (1) To discuss the reputation, character, physical condition, or mental health, rather than the professional competence, of an individual, or to discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaint or charges brought against a public officer, employee, staff member or individual.

The board will be discussing the satisfactory progress of the Tax Collector and related issues and we will reconvene in open session.

Erica seconded the motion. Roll Call Vote: Erica-yes, Katherine-yes, Glenn-yes.

Open session reconvened at 6:33 pm. The Select Board signed the FY 24 financial warrants.

Discussion

Minutes

Motion: Katherine moved the October 10 meeting minutes as presented. Erica seconded the motion.

Glenn had some minor amendments.

Motion: Katherine accepted the amendments. Unanimous vote.

Motion: Erica moved to amend the meeting minutes of September 25 to add the approval of version 2 of the RAVE policy. Glenn seconded the motion. Katherine abstained. Glenn-yes, Erica-yes.

Hunt Hill Road Update

Glenn shared that town counsel has sent a revised agreement to Attorney McLaughlin, Penfield's lawyer. Glenn exchanged text messages with Bob Penfield. Hopefully an update from Donna MacNicol will be coming soon so Bill Brooks can start work on Hunt Hill as discussed and agreed to previously.

Public Safety Efficiency and Regionalization Grant update

Liz Kidder sent an updated budget to the Select Board prior to the meeting. The Building Needs Study Committee has recommended purchasing ADT for the security system for the town office building. Erica asked if we did not want monitoring what the cost would be. Glenn stated he asked for quotes without monitoring. He does not think Bernardston has monitoring. There was discussion on the different combinations of monitoring and who emergency calls will go to. Michele will find out if Bernardston has monitoring and what the cost would be without monitoring.

Liz continued there will still be money left in the grant, she discussed with Tom Raffensperger if the department needs any more equipment. Liz mentioned Janelle met with Tom to learn how to pay the Fire department's bills.

Appointments

Motion: Erica moved to appoint Liz Kidder to the Planning Board vacancy until the next local election in 2024. Katherine Seconded the motion. Unanimous vote.

Motion: Erica moved to appoint Jim Brodeur to the Zoning Board of Appeals for a 3-year term until 2026. Katherine seconded the motion. Unanimous.

Fire Chief Disclosure to hiring spouse and signing of the forms.

Nik Adamski handed the board filled out disclosure forms from the Conflict-of-Interest Law that State Ethics recommended he fill out to hire his wife as an EMS First Responder. One form discloses the hiring of a family member, and the other form discloses financial interest. The board has seen Melissa Adamski's application previously. Tom Raffensperger told Glenn he has a process in place for signing off on payroll hours, (Nik will not sign his wife's), a process for disciplinary action and incident command (this is usually not a problem as an EMT will run the scene).

Motion: Erica moved to hire Melissa Adamski as a medical First responder with the Fire department. Katherine seconded the motion. Unanimous vote.

Nik gave some updates on the fire department; he had the engine on the Tahoe checked out and it is fine, he will need a gas card for the Tahoe. Michele will coordinate with the Treasurer for this. He has another person going through fire basic training and is optimistic there could be 9 total members of the Fire department soon.

Social Media Policy, Fire department request for Facebook page

Erica presented the Social Media policy and stated there is only one word change from the previous version.

Motion: Erica moved version 2 of the Social Media Policy as written on 10/11/23. Katherine seconded the motion. Unanimous vote.

Tom Raffensperger is asking for approval of a Facebook page for the Fire Department. Erica researched the description and this is consistent with our social media policy.

Motion: Katherine moved to approve Tom Raffensperger to create a Facebook page for the Fire Department. Erica seconded the motion. Unanimous vote.

Recreation Committee Request for a Pickle Ball Court at the Current Tennis Court

John Higgins had residents approach the Recreation committee with a proposal to restore part of the tennis court to a pickle ball court. John had sent an outline to the Select Board by email previous to the meeting outlining the costs. John would like to amend what he sent to just under \$400 not \$200. John stated people will still be able to play basketball. The equipment and netting would be stored at the court and construction would not start until the spring.

Motion: Katherine moved to permit the Recreation Committee to resurface and repair the tennis court for pickle ball. Erica seconded the motion. Unanimous vote.

Municipal Assistant Updates

Michele reported that Gillette equipment in Holyoke offered only \$100 for the stove in the town hall because of the cost to drive here and to remove the stove. Glenn suggested that we go to MuniBid instead, and Janelle can post the Hobart stove when she posts the other surplus equipment for sale.

MVP grant for West Leyden Road changes to restore bog. Michele reported that she spoke to the agency about why they denied the grant. It was suggested that we include more about restoration of wetlands in the area. Michele noted that the wetlands are on private property so is not sure how to describe the town's role. Suggestions were made regarding how to approach including how the wetlands would be restored if the road was raised. Michele also noted that generally consultants get higher scores on their grant submissions. She was encouraged to send an expression of interest to MVP for next year. MVP is looking for nature-based solutions and how environmental justice is achieved by the grant. It was noted that Bitterns, an endangered species, has been seen in the bog. Michele will send an expression of interest. She noted that the Small Bridges grant might be another possibility for that portion of the road.

Michele reported on the water leak in the pipes to the church. The plans for the Town Hall construction of the ramp were reviewed and it was found that the water line is under the porch. Bill Brooks will use sonar to find the pipe. Glenn reported that he called the well drillers and new wells in the area have cost \$20-

25,000. A small excavator might be able to do the work. Katherine asked if there was ever a contract with the church in accordance with the Town Meeting vote? Erica noted that the vote is clear so whether there is a contract or not, the church id responsible for the repairs.

The Electric Vehicle charging station is delayed again because Eversource sent the wrong equipment.

Michele emphasized that when money comes in from the state, it is not identified as to what is for and that is why it is important to have a central person who tracks grant funds and can identify for the Treasurer and Accountant what account should be credited.

Paul has been into the office and has been cleaning out the Town Clerk's office in anticipation of the move, but the police can't move out until November 1. Paul will be on vacation and can make the move when he returns. Michele has not been able to get information from Crocker about more drops for the computers, but she will continue to work on getting professionals to install.

Janelle is settling in and has begun to write bills for the town. Most of her orientation is done, and her computer is arriving this week.

Our Treasurer, Susan, does not want her name on any credit cards, doesn't want to give out personal information. So, if we are going to apply for the BJ's card, we will have to ask John Higgins or someone from COA or the Library if they are willing to apply with their personal information.

There is an opportunity to get up to \$10,000 for a grant for the Fire Department through the MIIA. Michele can't apply until she knows what it will be used for. Fire Department will come back with requests.

MVP Grant Resolution of Outstanding Issues

Glenn read through Dave Pomerantz's disclosure form from the Conflict-of-interest Law as well as the budget and he has many questions and concerns. Erica still has not received an updated budget for the grant or procurement information, she has asked for this several times. Glenn will write up a bullet list of outstanding items he would like answered, he will send to Katherine and Erica. Erica can add her items and send to Dave and John Lepore from all three select Board members. When the board meets with the Bernardston Select Board on Wednesday, they will emphasize the procurement process, an updated budget, and the risk Leyden will be taking on.

Michele's Upcoming meetings/appointments:

Wednesday, 10/25 Meeting with the Lt. Gov in Hadley at 2:30pm.

Thursday, 10/26 STAM meeting in Westhampton all day

Tuesday, October 31 medical appointment 2pm.

Motion: Erica moved to adjourn at 8:50pm. Unanimous vote.

Respectively submitted,
Michele Giarusso