

**Leyden Select Board Meeting Minutes**  
**Leyden Town Office Building**  
**Regular Session**  
**December 4, 2023**  
**9:00 am**

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

**Others Present:** Liz Kidder, Janell Howard

Glenn called the meeting to order at 9:00 am.

Minutes

Katherine moved to approve the 11/13/23 meeting minutes as presented. Erica seconded. Glenn amended the minutes regarding the communication from the Board of Health about FRCOG inspector's concerns with amateurs working on the water lines because of possible exposure to contamination. Glenn will email Michele with this wording change. Katherine accepted the amendment, Erica seconded. Approved unanimously.

**Discussion**

Efficiency and Regionalization Grant budget updates

Liz Kidder sent out an email to all Select Board members with details on the updates to the grant. Liz suggested to remove the previously approved item from the grant budget for Community 911 training for \$4000 to the same line item on the town budget for 911 training for \$4000 because it will be difficult to get training completed before the end of the year. Instead, she recommended using the line item on the town budget for Fire and EMS for \$4000 training so that the fire department has until June to complete the training instead of the end of December. The \$4000 from the grant that was for the training to go with the remaining grant funds to equal around \$14,000 to be used for PPE for the Fire Dept.

**Motion:** Erica moved to extend the Community 911 training contract until June. Katherine seconded the motion. Unanimous vote.

Fire Department

Tom Raffensperger and Liz Kidder filled out the grant application for \$10,500 for turnout gear for the Fire Department. Submitted on Thursday November 30th at 5Pm, they will find out in January if they get it and the funds will need to be used by the end of June 2024. Steven Folley is coming on December 14<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 pm to meet with the Fire Department.

The \$100,000 from the state needs to be spent by the end of June 2024 for a fire truck. Erica is getting ready looking into MGL section 30B to purchase a fire truck, Nik and Tom are looking for a fire truck to buy in state. Erica asked the state office if Leyden declared an emergency for the fire trucks because they can't drive on the roads instead of the full procurement and bid process. Because we're seeking funding for the purchase now declaring a state of emergency to get funding doesn't work according to MGL. Erica has a spec sheet to go over with Nik and Tom to buy a new engine/truck to get ready for a sealed bid.

Tahoe had service done on it and Nik was informed that the bottom is rusting out, a replacement for the Tahoe will need to happen sometime soon, the Tahoe is unreliable. Jim Palmeri has said that Bernardston has a spare cruiser Ford Explorer that's 10 years old with 144,000 miles on it with no rust or complaints, might sell it for a few thousand dollars, suggesting the town should investigate it.

Fire Department has two fire trucks that are not road worthy and need to be disposed of. Squad and Engine #4 need to be stripped. Engine #4 belongs to DCR, Nik and Tom are looking into how to dispose of the fire truck.

#### Ambulance Contract

Four towns including Northfield work together for ambulance service. The price is going up 30%. Right now, we're in a three-year contract with Colrain Ambulance however, the town needs to monitor the calls and cost over the period of the contract and look into options as it gets close to the end of the contract.

#### Public Safety

Liz Kidder said Public Safety has its final meeting on Wednesday December 6<sup>th</sup>. Public Safety will be merged into the Emergency Management Committee. Glenn expressed heartfelt thanks for all that Liz has done for Public Safety and for the town.

#### Bill Brooks/Beaver Dam

Beaver Solutions did a virtual inspection of the area off West Leyden Road. LaBlanc's need to be brought into talk in person so that they are aware they are financially responsible for the beaver dam situation. A wholistic approach being accomplished before winter is very unlikely. Town can work with the LaBlanc's to get a possible grant. Randy Crochier of FRCOG indicated in a meeting with Katherine that the town in a public safety emergency could pay for the work done on the property.

#### Appointment:

**Motion:** Erica moved to appoint Robert Reilly to the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) for a three-year term ending in June 2026. Katherine seconded the motion. Unanimous vote.

#### Select Board Updates:

##### Board of Health

Erica noted that Beth from the BOH has been notified that FRCOG has received money from the state for public health training. The state is putting a condition for each BOH committee member that by March they will complete 35 hours of training. FRCOG will start with foundational training and then move on to more training over time. The training is free, but the BOH committee members are having difficulties finding the time for training. Erica suggested creating a line item in the town budget for a training fund so that BOH committee members could get paid a stipend to do the training.

##### Complete Streets

Two meetings coming up, December 11<sup>th</sup> and a public hearing December 18<sup>th</sup>. Glenn reported that the SB should reach out to as many people as possible to inform them of these two meetings. The meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> is preliminary discussion with the SB, the meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> is a Public Hearing with FRCOG Transportation Department staff. As a Public Hearing this will need to be posted in the newspaper. Katherine noted that the town has to commit to the principle that roads are open to everyone who uses the road in any form and integrate that principle into decisions made by the SB and all town departments and committees. Katherine suggested that the Fire Department be informed of the meetings and Erica suggested inviting Jim Palmeri to the Dec. 11th meeting.

##### Church Water Line

Erica will call Gary Lynde to look at the water line from the Town Hall to the church.

Janell Howard left the meeting. Katherine recorded the minutes of the interviews and subsequent discussion.

##### Tax Collector Interviews

Glenn reviewed the possible questions to ask the candidates and confirmed our understanding of hours and salary range.

Susan Bobe: Currently Leyden's Treasurer, is familiar with the Vadar software and Tax Collector's responsibilities. Susan indicated she wants to help the town and believes she would be a good bridge to assessors, and accountant as she is experienced working with them. She has reviewed the state description of Tax Collector position and spoken with other Tax Collectors. Susan is comfortable working with Roxanne during a transition as she has worked closely with her. She noted that the time commitment works for her and is realistic that there are times of the year that will require more time but will average out. Susan estimated that the two jobs combined would be 12-15 hours a week with more hours per week depending on the season. Susan is bonded at a higher level than required for Tax Collector. Susan indicated that she prefers a stipend to an hourly wage, and that an assistant would be helpful to cover when she is not available. She is familiar with the certification process for municipal employees and is a member of the Massachusetts Tax Collectors and Treasurer's Association. Open to continue to develop her professional skills through training.

Janell Howard: Currently Leyden's Administrative Assistant, has a flexible personal schedule, can work additional hours. She noted that the Tax Collector is an important job for the town and needs to be done with integrity. She wants the town to function well and is confident that she can learn the job quickly. Asked about what she meant by integrity, she responded that it is about following through on what should be done, and to call attention to issues/situations that are questionable. Janell does not have Vadar software experience but is comfortable with computers and software and willing to learn. She can be bonded, nothing in her background that would prevent that. Janell noted that getting the online payment process working would be a priority. Asked about transition and training, she responded that she is prepared for an intense transition time and very willing to take whatever training is available. Janell noted she wants to do her work well, get professional certification and work professionally. She emphasized that communication is essential to the position – value those she interacts with, being responsive is important. Feels comfortable with municipal work, and working with the Treasurer, Accountant and Assessors Assistant.

Discussion of candidates followed the interviews. Other candidates have not yet come forward but need to consider other qualified candidates if they send a letter and resume by the close of day today.

**Motion:** Erica moved that the Tax Collector position be offered to Susan Bobe at a yearly stipend of \$13,366 unless a candidate with municipal tax collector experience applies by today's deadline. Katherine seconded the motion. Approved unanimously.

Erica will speak with Janell and pursue the possibility of her interest in a Tax Collector assistant position.

**Motion:** Erica moved to adjourn at 12:09 pm. Katherine seconded. Unanimous vote.

Respectively submitted,  
Janell Howard