

Leyden Select Board Meeting Minutes
Leyden Town Office Building
Regular Session
December 11, 2023
5:30 pm

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

Others Present: Michele Giarusso, Ginger Robinson, Liz Kidder, Carey Barton, Tom Raffensperger, Nik Adamski, Pam Brown, Jared Smith, Ken Medvetz, Sara Seinberg, Bob Anson and Peggy Brown-remote.

Glenn called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm.

Select Board signed the FY24 Warrants and read the correspondence.

Minutes

Erica moved the 11/29 Meeting minutes as written. Katherine seconded the motion with amendments.

Add to the flag policy motion *flag policy was approved and* under Selectboard updates the public computer was obtained through the *Digital Equity Grant Program not Age Friendly*. Erica approved the amendments, Katherine seconded. Unanimous vote.

Passed over the 12-04 meeting minutes until the next meeting.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Fire Department

Nik Adamski, Fire chief updates-Nik reported there are 8 personnel on the roster, one firefighter has graduated basic 6 training. Several firefighters attended the town of Colrain Fire department hosted training on solar panels put on by the state fire academy. Nik reported the squad brush truck is not working-he has taken out of service. The tanker and engine 4 are the only vehicles in operation at this point. Purchasing a mini pumper will complement the fleet. Nik has asked other firemen from other departments where to look for good used vehicles.

Tom Raffensperger, Deputy Fire Chief reported repeaters will need to be purchased for fire trucks for radio service. Bernardston Police have boosters in their vehicles for cell service, it helped but did not solve all their problems. Tom stated the fire department needs new radios and boosters for cell phones. Erica and Liz have met to brainstorm on where to order a mini pumper truck.

Draft policy on use of personal vehicles and taking home equipment-Tom sent the Select Board by email a draft of the policy prior to the meeting.

Fire department budget-Tom would like the Select Board and Finance Committee to look at compensation in other area towns. Katherine stated she had the data for tiny towns, and she would send to Tom. Tom would also like to add an Assistant Fire Chief to next year's budget.

Recruitment is going well. Rapid intervention course will happen this spring. More turnout gear is vital, cost for new turn out gear is \$53,000 and would come from the grant received plus \$10,500 from the Fire Department expense line item. Tom is working on this for new firefighters. The firefighter grant has been submitted for more turnout gear, if approved then there will only need to be 2-3 more complete sets of turnout gear required for purchase. All personnel need one complete set having two is ideal.

Fire inspection fees-Leyden's fees are outdated we charge \$25 per inspection while other towns charge between \$55-80 per inspection.

Motion: Erica moved to increase to \$40 all fire inspection fees, and the same amount be reimbursed to the inspector from the revolving account.

Complete Streets Discussion

Katherine read an explanation of what the complete streets program was all about. The program is an overall commitment by the town to put in place policies to make streets comfortable and safe not only for cars but for everyone (our population) who use the roadways. To apply for complete streets status, you must believe in the principle. One person from the town must attend training to apply for the grant money. The town could apply to an outside company to do an assessment and to write a written plan for us we do not have to do all ourselves. The goal of this program is to have 100% of the cities and towns in MA involved. April 1 is the deadline for the prioritization money. Some of the things the money can pay for are crosswalks, sidewalks, street signs such as pedestrian crossing signs. We would have to identify our goals first. Katherine and Liz Kidder met with Beth Giannini to learn about the program and Beth will be here at the next Select Board meeting on December 18.

Beth Kuzdeba asked about dirt roads. Katherine replied, "This is something to ask Beth G. next week." Tom stated we should come up with themes. Katherine thinks it would be best to reach out to all town committees and boards for their input. During the assessment and prioritization phase is where the goals will be narrowed down. Erica shared signage is a big part of this. Mirrors showing both sides of a road where there may be obstruction of one's view is important. Glenn asked for input from residents. Other ideas shared are traffic flow should be looked at, speed limit signs on dirt roads, having walking lanes white lines on both sides of paved roads, GPS-see if there is a contact to redo in Leyden where they send drivers.

Green Communities

Michele explained Chris Mason stated we can use criterion 4 (level 2 charging station).

Motion: Erica moved the approval of Criterion 1 and 4 for the alternative compliance for vehicle efficiency. Katherine seconded. Unanimous vote. Glenn will sign the letter that has to go to DOER as chair of the Select Board. Michele will be compiling all the requirements and submitting them. Glenn asked Michele about the Energy Reduction Plan and if there is anything that must be added. Select Board will need to vote on this and sign a letter they voted to approve.

Tax Collector

Motion: Erica moved to accept Roxanne Zimmerman's resignation as Tax Collector as of November 30 and to thank her for her many years devoted to Leyden as the Tax Collector. Katherine seconded the motion. Unanimous.

Town Coordinator Update

Michele spoke with the LeBlanc's about the Beaver situation. They have received the information Michele emailed in regard to Beaver Solutions assessment of the beaver dam on their property. They are aware of the situation and are concerned with the rise in water levels.

10-mile bridge bid-5 bids came in. Davenport construction is the lowest bid. Gill engineering has looked at all the bids for comparison and is okay with awarding to the lowest bidder.

Motion: Erica moved to award the bid to Davenport Construction for 10-mile bridge project for \$185,795. Katherine seconded the motion. Unanimous.

The stove in the town hall will be picked up tomorrow.

Cybersecurity audit and readiness-Michele had her first webinar with other towns and the company hired by the FRCOG. There will be further ongoing webinars and the company will be meeting with Michele and our IT consultant probably after the holidays.

Select Board Updates

Katherine would like to discuss the policy for Complete Streets and the letter of intent that will need to be sent.

Motion: Erica moved to accept the Fire Dept equipment policy V3. Katherine seconded the motion. Unanimous.

Erica spoke to Janell about helping the Tax Collector and learning VADAR. She is willing to learn tax collection and would like more hours. This will put her over 20 hours per week. There was discussion on how to cover the Tax Collector's time in January and can the select Board increase hours at this time. Michele to call town counsel for advice on this.

Agenda Planning

December 18 meeting will be filled by highway superintendent quarterly meeting, Eversource vegetation management plan and Beth Giannini on Complete Streets.

Motion: Erica moved to adjourn at 9:00 pm. Katherine seconded the motion. Unanimous vote.

Respectively submitted,
Michele Giarusso