

Leyden Select Board Meeting Minutes
Leyden Town Office Building
Regular Session
April 10, 2023
9:00 am

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

Other Present: Ahmad Esfahai, Janell Howard, Bill Brooks

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

Approve Minutes:

04-01-24 minutes need to be corrected, Glenn read the edits aloud and will email the edits to Janell to correct the minutes. The corrections to the 4-1-2024 minutes:

Meeting Minutes

Motion: Erica moved to accept the meeting minutes of March 11 as written. Katherine seconded the motion. Roll call vote- Erica-yes, Katherine-yes, Glenn abstained.

Motion: Erica moved to accept the meeting minutes of March 18 as written. Katherine seconded the motion. Glenn commented that these were very complicated minutes. Glenn thanked Katherine for accurate and detailed minutes of a complicated meeting. He had a minor amendment under **Town Counsel Beaver Control** to add the wording *Donna said the town can decide how long an emergency will remain in effect. THIS WAS REGARDING DONNA'S STATEMENT TO US THAT WE ARE STILL IN AN EMERGENCY SITUATION REGARDING APPOINTING ONE PERSON TO BOTH TREASURER AND TAX COLLECTOR.* Erica accepted the amendment as well as Katherine. Roll call vote: Erica-yes, Katherine-yes, Glenn-yes.

Fy25 Stipends and Wages

Stipends-Katherine stated the Select Board has discussed stipends before and how to equalize or not stipends, also does the stipend get paid on hours worked. Glenn wanted to clarify if it was decided whether or not the Board of Health members would be compensated for their training hours. Board members agreed the new training for the Board of Health is a huge commitment from volunteers and should be put in the budget under "training". The Finance Committee will decide on elected officials' compensation and the Select Board will do the appointed officials compensation.

Salaries- Katherine reported except for 2 positions all positions in the town are in alignment with other towns. The two positions are the Town Coordinator and Librarian. In looking at some of the individual budget requests some have asked for a 5% salary increase this year. Katherine does not want to set a precedent just because last year 5% was given. 3% is more realistic. Glenn agrees the two positions should be compensated reevaluated based on position comparisons, and 3% is realistic for all others. The people that put in for the 5% increase may be thought since last year was 5% this year would be the same. Glenn would like to look at all the comps for the Town Coordinator.

Motion: Katherine moved 3% increase across the board except for the Librarian this should be 5% increase as recommended by the Library Trustees and to hold off on the Town Coordinator until there is more information.

Erica seconded the motion. Glenn would like to rethink the highway per diem hourly wages. The Board discussed one flat rate for Highway Per Diem Hourly wages. Katherine will discuss with Bill Brooks in an upcoming conversation.

Motion: Erica moved and Glenn seconded to approve the minutes with the amendments read by Glenn. Glenn and Erica approved the motion and Katherine abstained.

ACTION: Glenn will email the edits to Janell

Highway Quarterly Meeting:

- Spring work - snow damaged roads will be graded, the whips along the roads will be pulled up, the ditches will be cleaned out and other spring maintenance.
- East Hill RD held up really well this year from previous work that was done on the road.
- Highway is slowly changing out inferior road material products for better higher performance products creating better long lasting roads.
- Beaver Solutions is scheduling a date to start the project at the bog to install the water leveler device. Highway has a culvert that can be used for the project which will decrease the cost of the project. Bill is working on editing the document from Janell detailing the Town's reason for declaring an emergency to get the beavers in the bog controlled done.
- Bill keeps in touch with the Town Coordinator every week so they each know what's going on.
- The Hazard Tree list and Vegetation Management Plan:
 - June 10th is the earliest Planning Board meeting that Bill can attend to present the Hazard Tree List in a public hearing.
 - The Planning Board is involved because Leyden's roads are declared scenic roads.
 - Once Eversource has sent the official plan the Highway Department has 60 days to get the plan approved through the Planning Board
 - Eversource can schedule work 90 days from when they submit official plan.
- The Select Board is waiting for an approved agreement with the Penfield's from town counsel about Hunt Hill Rd. The Select Board will sign and then at the Annual Town Meeting a decision regarding Hunt Hill Rd discontinuance will be made.
- The driveway with a retaining wall built on an East Hill property with a culvert under the wall was approved by the Highway Dept. The Fire Department also signs off on a driveway in order for it to be approved.
- West Leyden RD Project-
 - There are concerns that funding from grants could be limited since the state is cutting back on grants.
 - \$220,000 Chapter 90 money will be used before July 1st. Three bids are out for bid right now and they should hear back by May.
 - West Leyden RD needs maintenance and is doing a lighter material to maintain the road so that if the Highway ends up cutting a big section out of the road to fix the problem with the bog, maintenance will be done with minimal cost as possible.
 - Gill Engineering is coming to do the assessment for the 10 mile bridge project and will also look at the bog at the same time.
 - The project is an all encompassing project but with the engineering done, it would have a better chance to be awarded the grant. If leftover money from the East Hill Rd. project is allowed to be used, the project could get done in a year.
- Chapter 90 is rolled over every year so that there is money for an emergency. Bill noted his minimum threshold for roll-over is \$100,000.
- Long range planning-
 - To get all the roads surveyed and have have a new plan in place to address discrepancies. This will make getting grants a greater possibility. Surveying could be expensive and would need to be budgeted yearly to have a certain amount of the roads surveyed each year until they are all done.

- Equipment replacement, salt shed repair, garage maintenance and the driveway in the Highway and Fire Department area is in dire need to have work done on it. The first step will be to find out how much it will cost to fix it.
- Snow and Sons vs Highway responsibilities - the Highway is responsible for maintenance of the grounds that involve weed whacking around highway building, sometimes Fire Dept building, other than that they have no equipment to mow. The roadside mower is used for brush mowing by internet triangle (MLP hut). Snow and Sons does the grass areas around the library, town commons, town offices and Avery Field.

ACTION: Katherine will get the LaBlanc's phone number to Bill.

ACTION: Bill will call and talk to LeBlancs about having them call Beaver Solutions to set up a time for the project to start.

ACTION: Bill will confirm with the planning board that the Hazard Tree list plan will be presented and approved June 10th.

ACTION: Bill will edit the document detailing the emergency status of the bog/beaver situation and send it to the Select Board.

ACTION: Bill will give Erica the number for the guy in the town of Guilford VT who oversees surveying in their town.

ACTION: Katherine and Janell will meet with and go around with Snow and Sons to see what they do for maintenance

Franklin County Technical School Superintendent Update: (Rick Martin joined virtually at 10am, left at 10:52am)

FY25 - The sources of funding increases is the usual 3% projected. The projected enrollment of students from Leyden will be 10 students next year so Leyden's contribution will increase dramatically. Enrollment is growing while the cost per student (\$13,000) is not increasing, making Franklin Tech cheaper than other schools. A new Aviation Program was funded through competitive grants creating a new Aviation Technician Program. The data on the report is from DESE data for enrollment to accurately predict the projected enrollment.

- Rick Martin went through the report that was given to each Select Board member explaining graphs and how to navigate the different graphs and information in the report.
- Each student accepted is based on whether the town they live in is a participating town or not. First priority goes to the participating towns then is open to the non-participating towns if there is room.
- Any text that is in blue on the report can be clicked on for definitions and explanations.
- The report is very thorough and organized. .
- Looking ahead—
 - FCTS has started a capital planning committee to see what they can do if they don't get certain expenses covered with funding. Critical areas that need to be covered is the electrical infrastructure. To protect the school they bought extra switch gear so that when one electrical circuit goes out, they could switch it out for a new one. Failure to have a backup would cause the closure of the school for three months. Electrical infrastructure will need to change. New roof eventually. Interior space for meeting all together

(Assembly room). Committee is looking into different options for future building needs. Keeping facility while working on seeing about a new building or renovation.

- The state dictates how much money is allocated per student. Then FCTS works to give the best education possible to the students with the funding. Vocational schools are becoming very popular and usually all of them have waiting lists, FCTS didn't have a waiting list until 2 years ago.
- Enrollment- FCTS is mindful of enrollment trends, while looking at the building. If FCTS were to build a much larger school, it would get very expensive. FCTS is mindful of the towns and the substantial financial strain it would be to build a bigger school. So they will keep it smaller and just keep a waiting list. First priority is to make it feasible for the towns and not unreasonable budget wise.

After Rick Martin left the zoom meeting, there was discussion on budgeting of FCTS vs Pioneer Valley and on projected student enrollment and discussion on the size of the schools vs quality of learning.

Budget Line Items Discussion

The Select Board discussed a series of emails from the Finance Committee about the budgets and looked at line items. Discussed whether or not the Select Board needs to invite some individuals in to have annual check ins to see what's working and what that individuals responsibilities are. The Select Board will meet with the Finance Committee to go over proposed budgets with suggested adjustments.

Select Board Updates (Jack Golden joined in person at 11:41am)

MLP Update -

- MLP is going great and the advisory committee with assistant manager has been great. John Wallace, assistant manager is good at keeping track of the finance work involved with the MLP.
- Redundancy with the five towns is up and running and is going great, Leyden is paying less money for greater bandwidth.
- MLP committee will work on the budget right before the next scheduled Select Board meeting.
- CAP 2 money coming in \$79,434.00 by the end of June.
- Jack said the job is sustainable and going well for him. He is learning each year and has a good committee and assistant.
- The MBI Digital Equity Program covers a wide variety of projects. An application needs to be sent in to apply for a grant. If no application is sent in, then the grant can't be applied to.

ACTION: Glenn will send an email to Jack telling him when the Select Board meeting will be as the MLP Board

Motion: Erica moved and Katherine seconded for the Select Board to grant permission for the MLP to send in an application for the MBI Digital Equity Program in order to be eligible to apply for the grant, approved unanimously.

ACTION: Janell will email the contact with the Colrain Ambulance Service the dates April 22nd 9am-12pm and April 29th any time after 5:45pm to see what works for him to come to a Select Board Meeting.

ACTION: Glenn will ask Donna for a template from other towns wording bylaw wording concerning existing driveways that create a public road hazard.

ACTION: Glenn will send an email to Michele reminding her of the draft of the annual town meeting and the annual town warrants is due on April 22nd to be finalized week of April 29th.

ACTION: Glenn will invite Michele to come to the April 23rd 4:30 combined Finance Committee and Select Board meeting to discuss warrants and take minutes.

ACTION: Erica will talk to John Richardson about the CO-EMD position to see his interest. Erica will also talk to the resigning CO-EMD about his role going forward in the LEMC.

ACTION: Janell will coordinate with Bill about surplus materials and bring a list to the Select Board to vote on.

Public Comment:

Ahmad Esfahai introduced himself and announced that he is seeking the Republican nomination for District 2 Senate.

Motion: Erica moved, and Katherine seconded to adjourn the meeting at 12:32pm, unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Janell Howard