

Leyden Select Board Meeting Minutes
Leyden Town Office Building
Regular Session
Monday, April 22, 2024
9:00 am

Select Board Members Present: Erica Jensen, Katherine DiMatteo, Glenn Caffery
Others Present: Michele Giarusso, Chief James Palmeri

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

Discussion

Police Chief James Palmeri-check in

This is an informal check-in with the chief. The chief has nothing outstanding to report to the board. He and his office conduct regular patrols in Leyden as outlined in the agreement. Manpower is challenging these days; his officers have a lot of vacation time to use up by the end of the fiscal year and scheduling that time can be challenging since he also has a lot of vacation to use up. He has been trying to hire part-time officers but there is no one out there to hire. The federal cops grant up opened up last week and Jim is applying for \$125,000 over 4 years. The grant will be on the Bernardston town meeting warrant next Monday. Jim will be applying for an additional 32 hours per week. The grant will pay approximately \$42,000 each year with the rest of the salary and benefits to be picked up by Bernardston and Leyden. Jim estimates the difference to be around \$15,000 for the full costs.

The Bernardston Finance Committee and Select Board support the grant and hiring of another 32 hour per week police officer due to the amount of overtime hours and dollars that is being paid out. The grant is due in June and should be awarded by October so if someone is hired this year it will not be a full year.

The new bodycams the department received are working out well. They are educational for both the police officers and the public.

A new cruiser is on Bernardston's Annual Town Meeting warrant. If passed, then Leyden can purchase the old cruiser for Leyden's EMS services.

A discussion followed on some Leyden resident's perception on speeding in town and Jim said that most Leyden residents are reasonable drivers.

Meeting Minutes

Motion: Erica moved to accept the meeting minutes of April 10 as written. Katherine seconded the motion. Glenn made an amendment that he would like the sentence deleted under Highway that states work on Hunt Hill will be done in the spring. Erica and Katherine accepted the amendments. Unanimous.

Motion: Erica moved to accept the meeting minutes of April 9 a joint meeting of the Finance Committee and Select Board. Katherine seconded the motion. Unanimous.

Woodland's Partnership Grant

Liz Kidder, Leyden's representative to Woodland's partner asked the board if they will approve of Leyden submitting a grant for \$25,000 for a UTV for our fire department. Liz is willing to write the grant as a volunteer since it is due May 9.

Motion: Erica moved to approve to submit a grant for \$25,000 for an UTV for public safety.

Katherine seconded the motion. Unanimous.

Town coordinator Salary Comparison information

Glenn shared a spreadsheet with other board members prior to the meeting with comparable for tiny and small towns. There was much discussion on what the recommended salary range for this position should be and incrementally moving this position to where it should be in the future. Erica is willing to increase the salary by 5% this year, the same increase as the library trustees is recommending for the librarian. This also will address the title change that was given. This also addresses that the new position has a focus on grant writing and management, unlike many of the tiny tow comps.

Motion: Katherine moved to increase the Town Coordinator's and Librarian's salary by 5%, these two positions are out of line with similar towns our size. All other town positions will receive an increase of 3% COLA, with the exception of on-call highway workers who make more than the standard hourly rate. These salaries will stay as they are until the standard rate catches up, at which point there will be one on-call rate. The on-call highway personnel will not receive an overall 3% percentage increase.

ByLaw for Existing Driveways that cause hazards on public ways -review before sending to town counsel.

This has gone to town counsel for review.

Review of Annual Town Meeting Warrant

Members reviewed the draft of articles. Recommendations made to add some and change some articles. Finance Committee will review tomorrow. . An informational meeting about the bylaw articles on the warrant will be held on May 28th at 7pm.

Town Coordinator Updates

Michele reported she submitted the DER grant for the West Leyden Road "bog" last week. She is working on the MVP grant that is due Friday. This grant still takes a very long time to fill out and MVP did not simplify the grant as they said they would.

Stephen Richter submitted a Conflict-of-Interest statement as a poll worker whose spouse is on the Town Election ballot.

Motion: Katherine moved to accept Steve Richter's Conflict of Interest Statement. Erica seconded the motion. Unanimous.

Michele has received a One Day Liquor License Application for the May 18 run from Pioneer valley Brewery. All paperwork is in order and a certificate of liability insurance received.

Motion: Katherine moved to accept the application for Pioneer Valley Brewery One Day Liquor License For May 18, 2024. Glenn seconded the motion. Unanimous.

Michele reported she has received a One Day liquor License Application and Certificate of Liability Insurance for a wedding at Camp Lion Knoll on September 7.

Motion: Katherine moved to approve a One Day Liquor License for a wedding on September at camp Lion Knoll. Glenn seconded the motion. Unanimous.

Select Board Updates

- Zoom License renewal -Glenn recommending renewing only one for next year. The current ones expire on June 13. A personal credit card reimbursement was the only way this could be paid last year. Michele and Janell should be the administrators instead of Glenn since he will be off the SB in June.

- Montague Webworks University-Janell will be attending an online course that Montague Webworks offers.
- Annual reviews should be scheduled in May.
- Password policy updates-need to change passwords on laptops. Michele has updated everything else.

Agenda Planning

- Draft Warrant articles.
- Michele to send out requests to paid/salaried employees to schedule their attendance at one of the May SB meetings.
- Glenn asked when the next quarterly team meeting will be held.
- FRCOG can help towns with Federal grants although it is unlikely that Leyden is eligible unless we were part of a regional or multi-town grant proposal.

Motion: Katherine moved to adjourn at 12:40pm. Glenn seconded the motion. Unanimous.

Respectively submitted,
Michele Giarusso