

Leyden Select Board Meeting Minutes
Leyden Town Office Building
Regular Session
Monday July 29, 2024
9:00 am

Select Board Members Present: Katherine DiMatteo, Erica Jensen, Jeffrey Baker

Others Present: Michele Giarusso, Janell Howard, Tom Raffensperger

Remote Access: Liz Kidder

Katherine called the meeting to order at 9:01 am.

Approve minutes:

Select Board passed over the 7/22/24 minutes approval until next week

Library Award

The Robertson Memorial Library was nominated by Congressman McGovern office for an award by the Federal Government Library Institute.

- An application needs to be filled out.
- Congressman McGovern will write up a letter of support
- The town will need to submit three letters from residents stating the impact the library has had on them and the community.
- An audit form is usually submitted, but instead the library may ask for help from the town to show expenditures and revenue to fulfill the audit/financial requirements.
- The patronage for the library is high for a community of Leyden's size.

ACTION: Karin Parks will organize the three letters.

Fire Department Open House Update

Purposes of the Open House on August 3, 2024 at 12-3pm:

- To say thank you to the community and all those who have helped in the rebuilding of the fire department.
- Recruit Fire Fighters. The Fire Department has 7-8 Fire Fighters for now, 10 is really what the minimum should be. The Fire Department has 10 bays for gear.
- Showing the new trucks.
- Answering questions
- Providing pizza and soda to the public.
- To invite legislative VIP's to see what they helped accomplish and to say thank you.
- Katherine will introduce the VIP's and see if they want to say anything.
- There is a plan in place if there is rain.

Town Victim Response

Michele took the responses from the Select Board, is working on a draft, and working with the Finance Committee Chair for the dollar amount that needs to be put in the statement.

Discussion on the impacts on the town:

- Significant impact financially and socially/emotionally.
- Money was taken away from the town that could have been used to help the town.
- It caused a rift in the town.
- It was a distraction from what needed to be done.
- The town is the victim. A statement about the impact on the town is important.
- Sara Seinberg is a writer and would be a great resource to help Michele to write up an impactful Victim Response.

ACTION: Erica will ask Sara Seinberg and see if she would be willing to meet with Michele and help her write up the Victim Impact Statement

ACTION: If Sara agrees, Michele will work with Sara Seinberg to write up the Victim Impact Statement.

Town Coordinator Report

- Still tracking \$210,000 for reimbursement for grants. One of the contracts was lost in the mail, so going forward all mail will need to be certified. Most organizations use email, but some still use mail. The grants need to be in before September and or it will affect our bottom line
- The Bog design and engineering plan estimate needs to be in by Wednesday.
- Working on getting an audit done, two auditors were called, and no response has been received.
- The Procurement Officer training works best first thing in the morning with no distractions. The training is very interactive.

ACTION: Michele will look for an email to contact the auditors and try calling multiple times.

ACTION: Michele will post on the website that the Town Coordinator is out this week Tuesday and Thursday mornings until 12pm.

The Select Board signed the September primary form as requested by the Town Clerk and so it can be posted.

Motion: Erica moved, and Jeff seconded to accept the Town of Leyden Woodlands Partnership Proposal Grant for \$25,000 for the purchase of a rescue UTV, unanimously approved.

The Select Board signed the grant for the Woodlands Partnership Proposal Grant.

The Select Board signed the Bound Tree application as a vendor for the Fire Department.

Select Board Updates

- Some fraudulent emails are being sent to members of the town. A notice is to be posted on the website alerting folks to this fraud activity, and also Katherine will include in next Leyden Life. It was suggested that Michele contact Mik at Webworks to see if there is anything that can be done on his end to filter these emails. The person who is sending the fraudulent emails is using the website to get the email addresses of officials and others in town.
- Jeff was contacted by school administrators to meet on August 20th.
- Discussion on how to get people to volunteer for open spots on committees.
- The Select Board received a MIIA grant request from the Library.
- Conservation Commission is coming to the Select Board meeting on August 5th to discuss/review the beavers and updates on knotweed and Hunt Hill.

- The Town of Leyden received a \$75,000 grant from the Regional Woodlands Partnership to investigate a 21-town regionalization of the emergency response departments.
- Katherine wrote a note to the Open Space and Recreation Committee members and had it sent out to committee members and is also working on getting a date set up for the committee's first meeting.
- Katherine and Janell set a timeline for the 6 month annual report. The School Committee needs to send in a report by law.
 - August 30, 2024 - reports are due to Janell
 - September 25, 2024 - first draft due
 - Oct 15, 2024 - final draft.
 - November – have the annual report printed, maybe 35 copies.

ACTION: Katherine will check doodle poll for responses from committee members.

ACTION: Janell will contact Mic and let him know of the fraud issues that are happening.

ACTION: Janell will put on the website under news about the fraudulent emails going around.

ACTION: Katherine will have something put in the Leyden Life about the fraudulent emails.

ACTION: Janell will send an email reminding the people who were appointed to do their conflict of interest within 30 days with a hard deadline.

ACTION: Katherine will email Paul about those officials who have to renew their Ethics training and ask if he will send out reminders.

ACTION: Jeff can ask the school administrators at the meeting about the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE) assessment formula.

ACTION: Michele will talk with the Assistant Assessor about setting up a webinar training with VADAR with the Tax Collector.

Town Coordinator Annual Review

- The Select Board expressed a thank you for all the work Michele has done and accomplished for the town amid all the changes.
- Michele noted that the town clerk has been great to work with and is very professional. Having him fully take on the town clerk work has reduced her workload.
- Goals for the year - try to get the bog done and get construction money for it. Michele loves going out to get grants.
- Michele likes letting the legislators know what is going on for the small towns.
- This town lives and dies by grants. This is an important professional position for the town.
- Multiple grants aren't a time issue, Michele can handle multiple grants at once.
- Michele expressed kudos to the financial team - Very good professional team right now, in a good place.
- Town Coordinator role:
 - Resource to the town, walk in's, email, and phone calls.
 - Writing and managing grants. Writing grant final reports.
 - Liaison with state legislators, and government agencies.
 - Liaison with Town Counsel and other small town administrators.

Select Board added the following expectations of Michele:

- Town Coordinator must have office hours that are not open to the public to do quiet, concentrated work and trainings.
- Michele will provide background information in advance of the Select Board meeting for items on the agenda, especially for the Town Coordinator report and correspondence information.
- Michele will investigate other grants as well as those offered by the State, then communicate with committees and other town departments and help them with grants. Coordinate with committees to talk about the grants and how they could be done successfully including organizing community support.
- Michele will send a schedule for events when legislators will be in attendance for events that Michele attends or is invited to so that the Select Board chair can attend if possible.

ACTION: Janell will get a rendering of a sign with open office hours, tax collector, town clerk and assessors' hours as well as a note to delivery drivers to ring the bell for the front door. Also need a sign for where the doorbell is.

ACTION: Michele will call and schedule ADT to move the surveillance screen.

ACTION: Michele and Janell will keep the door locked on Mondays - the office is closed on Mondays during the day

.ACTION: Michele will notify Erica when the next financial team meeting is happening.

Next Meeting Agenda

- Vote on MIIA risk grant -
- Concom at 7:15pm
- Review Purchasing Policy
- Town Clerk position posting

ACTION: Michele will have the final Victim Impact Statement August 5th 5:30pm Select Board Meeting

Upcoming Meeting Agenda's

- The Committee Chair reviews is on Tuesday 9-3-24. That would be a good time to communicate with committee chairs about grants and about their goals for the year.
- 8-26-24 Select Board meeting Gary Ponce will be attending at 9am

ACTION: Michele will talk to Jack Golden to see if he can come in for the Select Board 8-26-24 meeting to talk about digital equity.

ACTION: Michele will follow up with Town Counsel about the policies Town Counsel is working on, tax delinquent, planning board ADU, and Procom bill for \$900.

ACTION: Janell will set up and send a doodle poll for committee chairs to attend the Select Board meeting on 9-3-24 at 5:30pm to see if they can attend.

Motion: Erica moved, and Jeff seconded to adjourn at 12:18pm, unanimously approved.

Respectively Submitted,

Janell Howard