

Leyden Select Board Meeting Minutes
Leyden Town Office Building
Regular Session
Monday August 26, 2024
9:00 am

Select Board Members Present: Katherine DiMatteo, Jeffrey Baker

Others Present: Michele Giarusso, Janell Howard, Gary Ponce, Joann, Dan Dire
Remote - Jack Golden, Liz Kidder

Katherine called the meeting to order at 9:04 am.

Approval of Minutes

Motion: Jeff moved, and Katherine seconded to approve the 8-12-24 minutes, unanimously approved.

Colrain Ambulance

Annual Review-

Responses: 35

Average response time from dispatch to on scene: 20.14 minutes

Responses over 30 minutes: 2 (1 due to being on another call)

Mutual Aid transports: 2

ALS Intercepts: 2

- Colrain Ambulance service is working on staffing two full-time employees.
- Road conditions throughout Leyden are well plowed.
- Their services are transitioning from being more reactive, due to covid, to a more progressive service.
- Fire Department is working great with Colrain, everything from Colrain's side is going well.
- An option to prepay for the ambulance service for a year is available and is being done in Heath. It would remove the portion of the invoice amount that goes to Comstar billing. A discount is given to the town for paying up front.
- If Colrain had three emergency calls at once then mutual aid is called to assist. They also have a third aid if necessary but highly unusual to ever have that many calls at once.

ACTION: The Select Board will check with the Finance Committee and Accountant about prepaying for ambulance services.

ACTION: Gary will check the invoices to make sure they haven't already been paid and will contact Janell and let her know.

ACTION: Gary will give Janell a better phone number for Comstar.

Digital Equity Grant – Jack Golden 10:15:

- Jack used the maps generated by satellite which shows all structures not just homes and drove to each one and marked which were homes and which were other structures.
- He found only one house that is characterized as unserved.

- One house in Leyden is served by Vermont.
- Jack is working on the mapping process to identify correctly what type of structures are on the map. It will take a while to get it corrected.
- The Select Board needs to approve the plan from Franklin Regional Council of Government (FRCOG).
- Approval of the Digital Equity Plan doesn't commit the town to do anything but leaves the town open to do something.
- \$70,000 is available to the town of Leyden to work on the plan.
 - Internet availability programs and providing public Wi-Fi are examples of uses for the money, the money is not to bring internet to individual houses.
 - Some uses of the money could be for public Wi-Fi and devices made available at the library or to be checked out.
 - The librarian has many ideas that would fit in the Digital Equity Plan.
 - MLP advisory board or Select Board might have some ideas as well.
 - The timeline is next spring, which gives time to develop and come up with some ideas.
 - COA might have ideas as well – Jack is planning to talk to them.

Motion: Jeff moved, and Katherine seconded to accept the Digital Equity Plan from FRCOG July 31, 2024, unanimously approved.

ACTION: Jack will talk with COA about ideas for using the Digital Equity Plan money.

Appointments Update –

Motion: Katherine moved, and Jeff seconded for Devorah Vester to be appointed as the Planning Board Alternate until 2028, unanimously approved.

- Fence Viewer needs to be added back in as an appointment, the town is required to have at least two. Barbara Wallace is willing to be a fence viewer based on certain criteria. The town needs to do some work to come up with a structure for the Field Viewers.
- Open seats –
 - Conservation Commission
 - Emergency Management Deputy/Public Information Officer
 - Constables – 2
 - Agriculture Commission
 - East Hill Cemetery
 - Zoning Board of Appeals

ACTION: Janell will ask Bill if he can identify places where the fences have fallen, and town mowing is not possible.

ACTION: Michele and Janell look up what a fence viewer does from other towns, collaborate with the Highway Department about their needs, and get additional information from Barbara to write up what this position is going to do.

Committee meeting minutes:

- Town Clerk is the keeper of records.
- Past practice is to send the minutes to the Town Clerk to be put in a three-ring binder.
- Most chairs were keeping their minutes.

- Janell can upload the committee minutes onto the website as a courtesy not as official record keeping as well as let committees know that they can send them to her.

ACTION: Janell will let the committees know they can send their minutes to her to be uploaded onto the town website.

Agenda for Sept 3rd Meeting with Committee Chairs:

- Opening meeting law
- Conflict of interest
- Meeting minutes
- Have the committees introduce themselves to each other and have the committees chairs outline what they are going to be doing throughout the year.

ACTION: Janell reminder of the meeting for the chairs

ACTION: Michele will prepared to explain the requirements of the committees, agenda posting, meeting minutes, Conflict of Interest training, all the information they need to know to abide by the law, voting procedures, roll call votes if one member is virtual, email usage, quorum member requirement to meet - open meeting law, public hearings, purchasing/financials - submitting bill schedules and invoices, and accountant vs treasurer. Michele will create a summary of what she is going to talk about to print and hand out to the committee chairs.

ACTION: Select board will prepare to talk about when the committee chairs need to come to the Select Board like if they need to meet with town counsel, difference between appointed and elected, let the committee chairs know they are all considered municipal employees and that there can be communication between committees, and that there is the possibility of joint projects between committees.

ACTION: Janell will go over the website, Annual Report, and will clarify her role as a support to the committees.

ACTION: Janell will email the committee chairs in August to see if there are updates to the committees' webpages.

ACTION: Katherine will convene an Agriculture Commission meeting to get it going.

Town Coordinator Report:

- Michele passed the test and finished the course and now needs to apply to be the Procurement Officer.

ACTION: Michele will ask Karin if she wants the extra Board of Health (BOH) laptops for the library.

Motion: Jeff moved, and Katherine seconded to declare the BOH 1 laptop as surplus, unanimously approved.

- \$205,675 is due to the town for 10-mile Bridge and then the books can be closed out. The accountant and assessors are working on their part in closing out the FY books for the year.
- The MIIA grant for the library application is submitted and they will be looking at it today. Michele is working on getting two other quotes for the grant and not just one from Cozy Home since the cost will be over \$10,000.

- Michele is working with building needs on a roof quote. The plan is to get the roof done before the end of this year. Three vendors have emailed Ken and said they cannot do the roof, so we're all set on multiple quotes. Building Needs just needs to approve Michele to go ahead and schedule the roof replacement.

ACTION: Michele will get the go ahead from the Building Needs Committee to schedule the roof replacement.

Select Board updates:

Jeff-

- Jeff met with Patricia G. Rayna from the school committee and talked about the school district agreement.
 - The last District Agreement was made 25 years ago.
 - Subcommittees are working on a District Agreement. Hopefully it will be done by the end of the month.
 - The towns will then need to vote on whether to accept the District Agreement or not.

ACTION: Katherine requested the latest version of PVRD District Agreement to be shared with the town before their next three-town meeting on September 12, 2024.

Katherine-

- The Town Owned Vehicle Agreement will wait for Erica to be back.
- The Select Board retroactively approves the Victim Impact Statement, the completed Victim Impact Statement was previously sent to everyone.
- Town clerk won't be in the office on Friday's unless by appointment
- The Six-Town school district regional agreement is stuck on one of the sections so very little progress is being made but the discussions have been good.
- Katherine has received a request from Patricia to meet with Bernardston and the principals from Pioneer at a Select Board meeting. Katherine put the request as an item on the agenda calendar for a date to be set after Erica gets back.
- An annual review for Janell will be added to the September 16th agenda.

ACTION: Erica will add on the agenda calendar Janell's annual review on September 16th.

ACTION: Janell will contact Megan Rhodes at FRCOG about the ADA plan follow up.

ACTION: Michele and Katherine are working with the Recreation Committee on the Outdoor Activity Recreation Grant.

- Discussions with the Penfield's, neighboring property owners, and the Highway department have been ongoing about Hunt Hill. The Highway Superintendent confirmed the road is finished and is completed as stated in the Penfield Agreement and was done before the agreement date.

ACTION: Katherine will write to Town Counsel to let her know that the complaints about the road have nothing to do with the Penfield Agreement. The road is completed.

- Katherine noticed that the tree warden is elected and is also a paid employee as Highway Superintendent.

ACTION: Erica will put a special municipal employee vote on the agenda for Bill Brooks.

ACTION: Janell will give the paperwork to Bill to be a special employee for tree warden

- Discussion on road closures procedures.

ACTION: Janell will write up a procedure for road closures and run it by Bill, then bring to the Select Board.

ACTION: Janell will ask Jack who owns the spools of wire and what can be done with them.

ACTION: Janell will work with Michele to make an electronic list of phone numbers, emails, services, etc to store all the pertinent information that is needed to keep the town functioning when Town Coordinator is out of office.

ACITON: Janell will hang up the two no dogs allowed signs on the Town Hall doors.

ACTION: Janell will buy or find a locking file cabinet that Michele and Janell both have the keys to to lock up documents and items that both individuals need, like laptops, town vehicle titles, etc. Also ask Paul if he needs a fireproof locking cabinet.

- Discussion on who has permission to drive the fire vehicles. All town employees can drive the town vehicles.

Public comment

- The Planning Board is requesting to have town counsel attend the Planning Board meeting on September 11, 2024.

Motion: Katherine moved, and Jeff seconded, to give permission to the Planning Board to have town counsel come to the September 11, 2024 Planning Board meeting, unanimously approved.

Motion: Jeff moved, and Katherine seconded to adjourn at 12:00pm

Respectfully submitted,

Janell Howard

Administrative Assistant