

Leyden Select Board Meeting Minutes  
Leyden Town Office Building  
Regular Session  
Monday, September 30, 2024  
5:30 pm

**Select Board Members Present:** Katherine DiMatteo, Jeffrey Baker

**Others Present:** Michele Giarusso, Janell Howard, Liz Kidder, Sarah Seinberg, Bob DePalma, Kenneth Spatcher

Katherine called the meeting to order at 5:32 pm.

The Select Board signed the 10-03-2024 warrant.

**Meet with Assessors:**

- Assessors are very busy.
- Most of the roads in town are assessed with pictures taken.
- Sometimes the assessors go into the house but usually they don't need to go in, they can assess it from the outside.
- Alice can do measurements off a satellite map down to a 4ft x 4ft.
- \$120,000,000 for the town assessments – a 5.5% increase. Next year a 5% or \$6M increase likely.
- Right now the town is below the levy limit by \$448,000. \$4M is available for a tax rate increase before reaching the levy limit.
- Tax rate can be set by November.
- A consultant, Roy Bishop, will do a sales analysis with Alice soon.
- The town is very fortunate to have Alice, it is hard for towns to find assessors.
- Interim adjustments need to be done every year.
- Revaluation of the whole town is next year.
- Alice fills out the cards, gets them online and ready for the consultant.
- One way the town helps aging residents is by taxing farmland according to use, this helps people to keep the farmland into their older years.
- The state coordinates the assessment of the Greenfield Water dam. However, the land only is assessed, not the dam and pumping station. May have to take an income approach – what is the sales value of the water.
- The Webb gravel bank assessment is also just taxed on the land, not the value of the gravel.
- There are people who do industrial assessments for towns.
- Susan, Alice, and Michele have a training session with Vadar on October 7, 2024.
- The assessors will be coming back in November with the tax rate recommendation.
- Bob talked to Roy Bishop about in-home assessments that need to be done inside the house, a whole house evaluation every 10 years.

**ACTION:** Katherine will look into open meeting laws and conflicts with upholding the laws in regard to emails/correspondence that were sent. How does the ethics law work within the town committees – between boards, committees and departments ?

**ACTION:** Bob will look into the assessment of the dam and reservoir.

**ACTION:** Bob will remind Alice the Select Board would like to see what programs can be applied for fixed income individuals, veterans, etc. who need help with their taxes so the town can have the information on the website.

Minutes Approval:

**Motion:** Jeff moved, and Katherine seconded to approve the 9-16-2024 Select Board meeting minutes, unanimously approved.

A quorum for approval of the 9/23/24 meeting minutes was not present; it will need to be approved at the next meeting.

**ACTION:** Janell will put the approved minutes on the website and email them to Michele.

Complete Street Policy:

Discussion on Complete Streets Policy.

**Motion:** Jeff moved, and Katherine seconded to approve the town of Leyden Complete Streets Policy, approved unanimously.

Public Comment:

None

Report on 3-Town Meeting:

- All three towns were represented well.
- A good representation from our town
- The meeting was stalled over wording on assessments for the capital costs. The document is being revised over wording.
- Foundation enrollment was also a sticking point.
- The 3-Town District Agreement is still an ongoing project. Next meeting Oct 10<sup>th</sup> at 6pm.

Town Coordinator Report:

- Katherine signed the final amendment for the extra money of the Ten-Mile Bridge Project. This money will be used for planning and engineering of the Bog. The Fair Share money will be used to make up the difference between the extra money of the Ten-Mile Bridge Project and the cost of the engineering estimate.
- Mold samples, Library insulation, and roof replacement are being scheduled in October.
- Building Needs is working on the town offices energy efficiencies study for Green Communities. Eversource will pay 50%, town can use AARPA money into January if not completed by end of year.
- Working on getting the generators yearly maintenance done, it's been very difficult to find a company to come and do the maintenance.
- Efficiently and Regionalization Act Grant for a feasibility study is well under way. Clarification was made that the feasibility grant is for shared services not a merger with Bernardston. DLS can help out with a feasibility study if the grant is not accepted.
- Michele will be attending The Citizen Legislative Seminar on October 29th and 30th.

- Michele attended the DLS conference on Friday, there is a new supplemental bill not to push the new tax law through until July 2025. By law cash has to be accepted for taxes, excise tax, and dog licenses.
- Kayla Bernard responded back and is still interested in being appointed to the East Hill Cemetery Commission.
- The Franklin County Technical school sent a letter with a roster by student location. The students going to the tech school this year are 6-9th graders, 3-10th graders, and 1-12th grader.
- Michele will be attending the MMA Constellation webinar on October 2nd.
- Michele will go on to the FRCOG website to the Northern Tier Rail letter to sign that Leyden supports the Northern Tier Rail and will also send a letter from Leyden in support.

**Motion:** Katherine moved, and Jeff seconded to appoint Kayla Bernard to the East Hill Cemetery Commission.

**ACTION:** Michele will sign the letter in support of Northern Tier Rail on the FRCOG website and will write up and send a separate letter from Leyden in support.

**ACTION:** Michele will send an email with a list of her vacation days to the Select Board.

**ACTION:** Michele will fill out the Chapter 90 survey.

**ACTION:** Janell will send an appointment letter to Kayla and update the appointment list.

Administrative Assistant Report:

- Personnel Policy is on the website.
- Muncibid procedures for surplus items are finalized and a packet is made for each sale.
- The Scheduled Highway Road Closures procedure was posted on the Highway Department webpage and under policies.
- The Select Board approved to have the analytics set up for the website.
- The KME truck has been sold on Muncibid for \$5,300 and the Fire Department requested the \$5,300 from the sale of the truck to be voted on to move to the fire stabilization account at a Special Town Meeting (STM).
- Compost bins could be a problem if invasives or food are put in it, maybe the compost will be for leaves only. Katherine and Janell will think of some ideas for the compost.
- The Annual Town Report is mostly finished, still waiting for a couple of reports.
- The Emergency Management Committee approved submitting an application for the EMPG Grant to purchase 11 Garmin Inreach Messenger devices.

**Motion:** Katherine moved, and Jeff seconded to approve the Emergency Management Planning Grant (EMPG) for the purchase of 11 Garmin In-Reach messenger devices for use by the Emergency Management Committee, unanimously approved.

**ACTION:** Janell will remind committees when she meets with them that any meeting or event outside of the regular meetings needs to be scheduled through Michele.

**ACTION:** Janell will ask Susan if a different procedure has been figured out for the payroll warrants.

**ACTION:** Janell will email Mik and set up a time to zoom to set up the analytics for the website.

**ACTION:** Katherine and Janell will think of ideas for the compost bins.

**ACTION:** Janell will send the Annual Town Report rough draft to Katherine.

Select Board Updates:

- Signs coming into town need to be updated or replaced.

ACTION: Katherine will contact Jim Palmeri about the citizens letter he received.

ACTION: Janell will remind AJ or Bill that the Gilford/Leyden sign needs to be replaced.

ACTION: Katherine will answer questions that the Highway Department has about the Personnel Policy.

ACTION: Michele will look into the Right to Farm sign.

Agenda for 10/07/24 Select Board meeting at 9:30am:

- Colonial Aggregation presentation
- Jo Comerford visit
- Regular reports and updates

**Motion:** Jeff moved, and Katherine seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:02pm, unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Janell Howard