

Leyden Select Board Meeting Minutes
Leyden Town Office Building
Regular Session
Monday, October 7, 2024
9:00 am

Select Board Members Present: Katherine DiMatteo, Jeffrey Baker

Others Present: Michele Giarusso, Janell Howard, Liz Kidder, Jo Comerford, Elena Cohen, Karen Kelly, Jane Dutcher, Ken Bordewieck

Remote Access: Ginger Robinson, Denise Allard, Mark Cappadona

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

Approve minutes:

Motion: Jeff moved, and Katherine seconded to approve the 9-30-24 meeting minutes, unanimously approved.

Reports: Town Coordinator, Administrative Assistant:

- Oct. 14th the roof is being done.
- Michele went to the Building Needs Study Committee meeting. There is about \$20,000 left from ARPA. They are going to decide on what needs to be done for the next fiscal year. They are working on a plan for getting the town offices building more energy efficient.
- The ADA railing - Franklin County Technical school could weld the railings, David will inquire with the school.
- The Town Office building is worth doing the things that need to be done to make it more energy efficient.
- E&R grant has to be submitted by Thursday.
- Michele forwarded some emails regarding signs removed and new signs put up on Hunt Hill to the Select Board.
- Franklin County Technical School meeting in the Conference room at 4:30pm.
- Janell is following up with Susan on a new payroll procedure
- The analytics are set up for the website, if anyone wants the data, they can ask Janell
- AJ is working on putting up a new sign between Gilford and Leyden
- Compost bins for residents to put leaves by the wood chip pile by Avery Field.

ACTION: Michele will follow up with David Vreeland about the railing.

ACTION: Katherine will go to the Franklin County Technical School meeting.

ACTION: Janell will talk to AJ to see where the new sign is on Hunt Hill Road and check where allowed signs should be placed according to the statutory way motion approved at the Annual Meeting. Katherine will check with Donna about what is allowed for signage for statutory ways.

ACTION: Janell will work on getting a compost bin set up.

ACTION: Michele will post the town clerk position on the Recorder again.

ACTION: Katherine and Jeff will attend the Trunk or Treat on October 26, to give out the awards.

Colonial Power Aggregation Presentation:

- All residents who are part of Eversource will automatically be enrolled in the program unless they opt out, at no cost, and can opt back in and out at any time at no cost.
- This will need to be passed at town meeting
- A plan will need to be created which takes about 3-4 months. The tables in the plan won't make a lot of sense but it allows the utility company to do what they need to do.
- The plan would include a list of terms, prices, and if there are renewable sources available.
- The town makes the decisions, it will not be forced on the town.
- Discussion on the steps needed to be taken to go forward and the different choices and offering.
- Eversource will still do the servicing – downed poles, outages, etc.
- \$0 tax dollars at risk.
- The town can join the bigger group of multiple towns or just do this on our own, it's not necessarily less expensive if we are in a big group.
- Minimal time commitment from the town to go through the process. Michele will be able to do a lot of the correspondence and then the Select Board will need to do some approvals.
- People can come and go into the program, no fees or penalties to move back and forth.

ACTION: The Select Board will talk about the plan and Michele will be in contact with Colonial Power.

Jo Comerford:

Summary of ongoing legislation--

- We are at the end of a two-year session; it was not as productive as it should have or could have been. Some bills haven't yet passed but are being worked on.
- January 1st starts a new two-year cycle.
- Rural school discussion and research are one of the top priorities. A rural differential is needed, there are many complex issues.
- Number one goal, to work on rural school issues.
- Fix chapter 90. Why doesn't the state look at the increase of costs?
- Value the state land differently from Nantucket to Leyden for PILOT. Ecosystem services are in the discussions now.
- Revenues are down for the past fiscal year and there are concerns about what that means, making this a complex moment.
- Dirt and gravel roads are almost as costly as paved roads. Complete streets don't include dirt and gravel roads. There should be ways to help create safer roads on all roads, not just the paved roads.
- Look at the needs of the communities for grants instead of a point system. It's weighted against the rural towns.
- MVP grant focus group with Andrew (Add last name and title) is coming up. If MVP grants have been unsuccessful for the town Jo wants to know so that Jo can meet with Andrew and the town to find out why they've been unsuccessful.
- Jo will work with the town to tackle Complete Streets and MVP together.
- A discussion about the possibility of looking into shared administrative services with Bernardston.
- Using STAM helps the small towns with legislation.
- It is powerful for representatives from Leyden to go either in person or to join over zoom when there is a legislation bill that affects small towns.

- The California emissions program was adopted in MA. This is huge for our small town and is a complex issue. The heaviness of the batteries of these huge highway vehicles that are electric could cause major road damage on the town's dirt roads.
- The Tax Title Equity Bill puts a lot of work on the treasurer/tax collector.
- GCC is developing a police program which will remove the cost of training off of the towns.

ACTION: Michele will email Jo the information that the Town of Leyden was unsuccessful in getting the MVP grant.

ACTION: Michele will send the Efficiency and Regionalization grant draft to Jo.

ACTION: Michele will email Jo all the information on the electric vehicle laws.

Efficiency and Regionalization Grant- Bernardston representatives:

Discussion on starting the process of investigating sharing administrative services between Leyden and Bernardston.

- Erica sent an email saying that “merger” is too decisive in the grant and the wording used should be what was voted on in the Select Board meeting which is looking into shared resources.
- The grant is to get the analysis done and to have the information provided for the two towns to decide on what would be best for the two towns in regard to what the residents want.
- All communication about the grant and with the consultants if the grant is awarded will always be communicated to both towns.
- An advisory committee will be made for the study of the grant.
- Both Karen's and Michele's email will be on the grant so that all information will go to both towns.
- Collins Center or DLS could be the one to do the study.
- The purpose of the grant - to explore the enhanced regionalization of services.
- Discussion on taking out the wording “merger” throughout the document and changing it to support the purpose of sharing regionalization services.
- This is a phase one feasibility study.
- Tuesday October 8th the Bernardston Selectboard will meet to approve the E&R grant.
- Wednesday October 9th, the Leyden Select Board will be meeting at 6pm to approve the E&R grant.

Agenda for 10-15-24 5:30pm

The Select Board will decide at the Wednesday Select Board meeting what items will be on the next agenda.

Motion: Jeff moved, and Katherine seconded to adjourn the meeting at 12:15pm, unanimously approved.