

Leyden Select Board Meeting Minutes  
Leyden Town Office Building  
Regular Session  
Monday, April 7, 2025  
5:30 pm

**Select Board Members Present:** Katherine DiMatteo, Jeffrey Baker, Erica Jensen  
**Others Present:** Michele Giarusso, Alice Wozniak, Bob DePalma, Melissa Gerry, Stephanie Arroyo, Gerry Levine, Liz Kidder and Beth Kuzdeba remote

Katherine called the meeting to order at 5:02 pm.

Accept meeting minutes

**Motion:** Erica moved to accept the meeting minutes of 3/31/25 as written, Katherine seconded to approve. Motion approved unanimously.

Katherine and Erica worked on annual stipends while waiting for the third member.

One Day Liquor License

- Jeff Baker requesting a one-day liquor license at the town hall on April 12, 2025. He was having difficulty forwarding the certificate of liability insurance.

**Motion:** Erica moved to grant a one-day liquor license contingent upon reviewing the certificate of liability insurance. Katherine seconded the motion. Erica and Katherine voted in favor.

Assistant Assessor- Alice Wozniak

- Bob DePalma reported the full list and measure of properties should be completed every 10 years. The assessors have been doing on a revolving basis.
- Bob asked if the appointment of assessors if passes at town elections starts on July 1. Katherine replied yes.
- Erica asked Bob if Erik Johnson knew about the training required to become an assessor. Bob replied he explained all this to Erik before nominating him.
- Heroes Act exemption-Katherine asked Alice if Leyden should adopt this exemption as well as a work off program for seniors. Alice explained that Leyden already has a veteran's benefit for service disability, survivor spouse and we have a few residents utilizing this benefit. As for the senior work off program, a program would have to be designed, the assessors are the ones who would oversee the program, the seniors cannot work in the assessor's office nor the tax collector or treasurer's office. In Leyden the assistant assessor just doesn't have enough work hours to oversee the program. Leyden does have a hardship program; people have to qualify every year, and the town receives 75% reimbursement from the state. No one has applied for this exemption; assessors send the forms out each year. Alice questioned the amount of money the state reimburses for the Heroes Act.
- PILOT program -Bob questioned the status of a PILOT program being worked out with the Kibilio property. They receive public services from the town and the town will be seeing a decrease in taxes of around \$15,00/yr. He suggested a flat fee be negotiated in PILOT.
- Alice requested and Select Board agreed that the PILOT letter to Greenfield go out when the tax bills go out. Leyden Glen Reservoir valued at \$1.7M .
- DOR came to review Assessors today and are pleased with the work that is being done.

School Committee Representatives

- Katherine explained to the school committee members that the town must think of the future of the school budget as it has now reached 60% of our town budget. Both schools are talking about building new buildings and this would tip the scales as to how the town can afford to pay for any increases in both the school's and town's operating budgets.
- Gerry Levine shared that Franklin County Technical School (FCTS) is in the process with MSBA and plans to have a new building in place by 2028. He is not sure if it would be an entirely new building or renovations and build out of the current building. New building is needed because the current facilities are 50 years old.
- Gerry noted that the cost per pupil is going down, now at \$12,242.
- Erica stated she is concerned about how the town can afford these new buildings without the taxes going up even with the State reimbursement of 65-70% for the buildings.
- There was discussion on how many children have left Pioneer and going to other schools for their high school years. Erica reported that she is aware of 11 students who will not be attending PVRSD schools next year. The State has a benchmark for number of students attending a school for it to be viable, PVRHS does not meet this benchmark.
- Currently there are 10 students enrolled in FCTS and there may be more going.
- Katherine suggested a meeting with parents of junior and senior high school aged children to hear their perspective on why they are leaving Pioneer.

#### Public Comment

Melissa Gerry mentioned the April 17 meeting of the school committee is cancelled yet it is in Leyden Life. Katherine explained that Leyden Life submissions must be in by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the prior month and the meeting was not cancelled until the school committee's last meeting. Katherine suggested we can put on the website that this meeting is cancelled.

#### Town Coordinator Update

- Soil borings are now scheduled for Wednesday this week on West Leyden Road. Gill Engineering is coordinating with the police department for road details.
- Michele has prepared the April 17<sup>th</sup> executive session agenda and will have town clerk post.
- Beth Kuzdeba will become chair of the Board of Health, Macia is stepping down as chair but will remain on the committee.
- Michele has reached out to Verizon rep. on April 28<sup>th</sup> continued hearing about sending out notices again.
- FY26 budget line items Michele is responsible for. Michele emailed her budget to Select Board members ahead of time. She reviewed the line items with the Select Board with back up documentation. Insurance for equipment, due to new equipment we have purchase, is estimated at \$123,000. This estimate is based on paying by July 1, otherwise cost is higher. This will be sent to the Finance Committee prior to their meeting on Thursday.

#### Select Board updates

- Katherine asked the select board members if they would like a presentation of the new FRCOG charter before the annual town meeting. Members felt this is not necessary if there is a handout explaining the items that are changing in the new charter.
- Katherine asked if the board would like the Franklin County Tech superintendent to come before the board and explain his budget. Members felt if they received the budget booklet no in-person explanation is necessary.

#### Potential agenda items for next meeting

- Municipal Light Plant FY26 budget and loan repayment
- Town Coordinator review

**Motion** to adjourn: Katherine moved at 7:46 pm. Jeff seconded. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted by: Michele Giarusso