

Leyden Select Board Meeting Minutes
Leyden Town Office Building
Regular Session
Monday, August 18, 2025
5:00 pm

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

Others Present: Michele Giarusso, Liz Kidder via remote access

Erica called the meeting to order at 9:01 am. Katherine noted she emailed the town accountant questioning a Colrain Ambulance bill of \$1,114. Michele will follow up with the town accountant. Warrants signed.

Accept Meeting Minutes

Motion: Katherine moved the 8/11/25 meeting minutes as written. Jeff seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Bob Penfield

Erica opened the discussion with concerns about the water bars on Hunt Hill Road, which were lowered and removed without town knowledge. Bob acknowledged that the changes were made to improve access for cars. Erica stated the road is intended for limited motorized use related to agricultural and recreational activities, not regular car traffic. Bob stated he would not be able to plow the road with the 18-inch-high water bars, and they do access the property during the winter. Katherine emphasized that it is still a town road any future road modifications require prior approval, as it remains a town road under a conservation restriction agreement. Bob stated he interpreted the letter he received from the town that he could do anything he wanted to with the road. He understands he has to maintain the road should erosion occur. Both Erica and Katherine emphasized the CR stands, it is not being changed, and Bob should have a copy of the CR available to read. Bob agreed to notify the town of any future changes and offered to maintain the road according to town specifications.

The discussion continued about buildings on the property. Erica explained that there are construction restrictions on the property and clarified that only one building under 200 square feet is permitted according to the conservation restriction (CR). Bob said he built another small shed to house gas and oil cans, but there are no other buildings on the property. The group discussed an upcoming annual walkthrough of the property with the Massachusetts forest agent, which needs to be coordinated with town representatives.

Action: Michele will reach out to Bob's sons and coordinate a walk through the property with town officials for some time in September. Michele will also mail a copy of the conservation restriction to Bob.

Appointment of Poll Workers

Motion: Katherine moved the following names to be appointed as poll workers for FY26: Christine Brodeur, Stephen Richter, Sara Seinberg, Aaron Dulles, Ann Pratt, Corey Cusson, Doug Pratt, Joyce Muka, Karen O'Neil, Karin Parks and Nanette Rolstad. Jeff seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Long Term Planning

- Katherine is concerned with significant things that keep coming up and the board gets caught off guard-roads for example. The need for an accurate survey of town roads to determine widths, names, and intersections. Bill Brooks could potentially lead this effort. She thinks the board should focus on long-term planning and prioritization of town projects, for instance, whether the appearance and image of the town buildings around the center of town should be questioned as it pertains, for example to putting up storage containers. The board has previously agreed to them

rather quickly without seeing a plan. But is this what people want to look at in our town center? The Select Board should take a more active role in long-term planning. Liz suggested attending the Open Space Planning Committee meeting to discuss their findings and suggested initiatives. Erica will attend. The board should continue to meet with Building Needs Committee to align with them on green communities' priorities and ADA compliance. Public safety and schools should also fit into the broader planning picture. We also need to address the need for more parking and paving concerns at the town common. All of these initiatives and projects need to be considered as a whole and priorities identified.

- Liz pointed out that the town common's current state was funded by a 40-year-old state grant, maybe this should be looked at and verify if there are any restrictions on modifications.
- Jeff mentioned the town common is not ADA accessible, he remembers having to go down around until there was a break in the fence to get on the common.
- Erica mentioned each of these topics can be added to the agenda over the year.
- Erica added, long term budgeting is another area such as using Chapter 90 money for highway equipment rather than take from raise and appropriate each year. There is a lot of money, estimated \$608,000 left in Chapter 90 money after Bill's scheduled road work this year. A road survey can come from Chapter 90 funds.

Town Coordinator Updates

- Michele shared an update on the Building Needs Study Committee's last meeting as it pertains to green communities. Michele has been in touch with the person from Energy Resources and asked for further energy efficiencies that his company would suggest for door and window sealing and other energy efficiencies. Darek replied that he needs to do another energy audit so Michele will send him all the utility bills for this past year.
- Michele reached out to the FRCOG and asked about DLTA funds for shared services. She has not heard back yet.
- West Leyden Road "bog" project permits have been signed by one set of abutters; she has been in contact with Kibilio representatives.
- Michele has a Six Town School District Planning Committee flyer to submit to Leyden Life.

Select Board Updates

- Katherine reported that the E&R grant committee met last week, a survey will be going out the week of September 8.
- Mass in Motion grant has been signed by both parties; a planning committee is in the works to decide on what to spend the money on for the next year.
- The Conservation Committee meeting is tonight for the Notice of Intent for the Avery Field walking path. Katherine will attend remotely. Erica will attend in person.
- Erica reported that she met with the Fire Chief and administrative person Samanatha to discuss the reading of emails and responding as needed. The fire chief is looking for an enclosed trailer that is tall enough to house the utility vehicle. They are also in the process of correcting the wrong address numbers on West Leyden Road and giving address numbers to the rifle range property on River Road and Mid County Road for emergency response.
- The Building Needs Committee is saying the roof can be raised on the fire station by 3 cement blocks tall to house taller vehicles if need be. They did their annual walking tour of some town buildings.
- There are 4 antennas on the roof of the fire station and only one is needed so that one can be moved to the highway garage, the others can be removed.
- Liz has sent a letter of support for the Mass Ready Act to sign.

Motion: Katherine moved to sign the letter of support for the Mass Ready Act but to reword the paragraph regarding supporting PILOT reform as read by Erica. Jeff seconded the motion.. The motion was unanimously approved.

- Katherine will submit the report for Leyden life for September.

Agenda Planning Next Meeting

- Rebecca Bald-5pm
- Finance Committee/MLP to discuss payoff of broadband loan and then health insurance increase and future health insurance increases.

Other Business

- Scheduling and agenda planning for upcoming meetings. Michele discussed the need to adjust the September 15th meeting to the evening for Jo Comerford. There may be potential scheduling conflicts during Indigenous People's Day (October 13) and discussed the possibility of holding a meeting on October 14th or 15th, depending on board availability.

Motion to adjourn: Katherine moved at 6:31 pm. Jeff seconded the motion, unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted by: Michele Giarusso