

Leyden Select Board Meeting Minutes
Leyden Town Office Building
Regular Session
Monday, December 22, 2025
9:00 am

Select Board Members Present: Erica Jensen, Katherine DiMatteo

Others Present: Michele Giarusso, Orion Gordon, Carlos Rosario, Bill Brooks, Jim Palmeri, Madison Schofield from the Recorder and Valeda Roehl via remote access.

Erica called the meeting to order at 9:00am.

Accept Meeting Minutes

Motion: Katherine moved the 12/15/25 meeting minutes with amendments she sent via email. Erica 2nd the motion with the amendments. Motion was unanimously approved.

Kibilio-PILOT

Erica provided an overview of the PILOT process, which enables non-profit properties to contribute to local infrastructure costs. She emphasized the importance of reaching agreements with landowners and mentioned that the assessor's office would manage the necessary paperwork once an annual amount is established. Orion stated the Board of Directors are familiar with PILOT. Erica mentioned \$6,000-8,000 was a reasonable PILOT. Orion mentioned their board was thinking \$5,000 before today's meeting. Valetta Roehl indicated that their board needs to convene before the year's end to finalize their stance on the proposed amounts, while both parties expressed a commitment to collaborate on finding a mutually agreeable solution.

MassDOT Speed Signage Grant

Michele gave a brief overview of the new grant. The grant is on a first come first serve basis. Jim would prefer a speed sign on a trailer so it can moved, he also agreed to provide the state with any data they may be looking for.

Motion: Katherine moved to have Michele apply for the MassDot speed signage grant. Erica seconded the motion. Motion was unanimously approved.

Electrical Aggregation Updates

Katherine proposed a public forum be held on aggregation, which is crucial to schedule before the February 18 opt-out date for basic service customers. She proposed February 2 as a potential date for the forum, suggesting an evening time to maximize attendance. The conversation highlighted the importance of timely mailings to residents and the challenges of coordinating with other meetings, ensuring clarity amidst multiple public forums. Katherine will put something in the February newsletter.

Snow Shoveler

Erica added to the draft of responsibilities in the job description Michele emailed. Michele advocating for a threshold of two inches of snow before initiating snow removal. Michele noted she looked at what other towns' threshold is and called some towns. Effective communication between the town coordinator and snow removal staff is essential, especially during unpredictable weather. The need for a per-diem worker to manage snow shoveling and de-icing at town properties was discussed, along with logistics for a snow blower and storage and the timing of snow removal to ensure safe access for events at the town hall and library.

Salary range for the position is \$20-25/hr.

Motion: Katherine moved to approve the job description and posting as discussed. . Erica seconded the motion. Motion was unanimously approved.

Town Coordinator Update

- After reviewing the FRCOG signatory paperwork for bids and the Complete Streets contract for completing our prioritization plan Erica as chair signed both. Erica also signed the letter to Senator Comerford on the six-town regional school district vote.
- Michele shared that she has received a bill from Colrain ambulance, she called the billing service and explained we have gone to once a year billing. The billing service stated that intercept services are in our contract to pay extra. Michele could not find in the contract nor could the selectboard. Michele will reach out to Gary Ponce for resolution.
- Daniela Teaca is looking for an unpaid internship to learn more about government. Erica voiced her opinion that she does not like unpaid internships, she would like to consider paying her. There was discussion on where in the budget the money would come from since this was unplanned. Erica would like to interview Daniela at the next meeting.

Select Board Updates

- Katherine answered to a public comment from others present at the meeting and explained that the concept of regionalization emerged from a committee formed in 2017, which recommended exploring this option after evaluating current and future needs. The committee has engaged various towns, with Warwick, Bernardston, Northfield, Leyden, Montague, and Erving remaining actively involved. Discussions have included the creation of a district agreement to address governance and financial assessments, as well as the potential for administrative cost savings. The complexities of maintaining equitable assessments among towns were also highlighted.
- Katherine reported on the E&R meeting. The committee reviewed a final report from the Collins Center. There was quite a bit of enthusiasm for the fire department that quickly moved up to the top of the priority list at the meeting. To have an intermunicipal agreement sooner. Katherine has been speaking and exchanging emails with town administrators who shared services between towns. Some issues have surfaced so she wanted to hear what their experience has been. There are also towns that have shared town clerks and treasurers for example. The committee will still be working on all these issues. The public forum is all set for January 8 at the Farm Table. Karen Kelly has resigned as town administrator in Bernardston and their town Clerk will be retiring in December of 2026, but we are not quite ready to take on sharing of services. We may have to see if there is more grant money to continue our work as we will have spent all the money.
- Erica met with the town clerk about the website. He would like to possibly change to Civic Plus. Katherine questioned how we are going to go about deciding on how we will update the website as well as the cost and time to update. Erica replied we should ask other web designers to give us some quotes. Michele will contact Montague Webworks to possibly come in and pitch their updates to be compliant with the ADA law by 2027.

Agenda Planning

The next meeting is January 5 at 9am

- PVRSD FY27 budget presentation
- Interview intern
- Update on snow shoveler position if any candidates

Motion to adjourn: Katherine moved at 10:36am. Erica seconded the motion.

Respectfully submitted by: Michele Giarusso