



# TOWN OF LEYDEN

## Meeting Minutes

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### Select Board

**Where** : Leyden Town Offices – 7 Brattleboro Road

**When:** April 6, 2026

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### In Attendance

**Members:** Erica Jensen, Katherine DiMatteo, Jeff Baker

**Audience:** Michele Giarusso, Beth Kuzdeba

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**Time meeting called to order:** 5:00: pm

#### Review of Minutes:

Katherine expressed there is a statement in the minutes she would like changed to Bill from herself and to Erica regarding landowner notification. Erica noted that Katherine mentioned Eversource has been more responsive.

**Motion:** Katherine DiMatteo moved the minutes of 3/30 with the amendments of name changes previously mentioned

**Second:** Jeff with amendments

**Vote:** Unanimous

#### Discussions:

##### 1. Finalize Wages and Salaries:

Erica shared a spreadsheet on wages and salaries for employees at 2.5%, 2.8% and 3.0% increases. She expressed concern we are near our levy limit for the overall FY27 budget and not sure where we can cut. Property taxes will be going up. Already the decision has been made to level set stipends for FY27.

**Motion:** Katherine moved the salary increase for FY27 to be set at 2.8%, to level fund all stipends and the librarian increase set at 5% to bring her closer to other librarians in the area. Jeff 2<sup>nd</sup> . Vote: Unanimous.

##### 2. 3 town Meeting Update:

Katherine reported on the 3 town meeting where budget concerns were discussed across three towns, with Bernardston being \$300,000 over their levy limit and Northfield having the smallest budget increase at 4%. The group considered creating joint talking points or an opinion piece for The Recorder prior to town meetings, but no consensus was reached, with ultimately deciding against sending out notes due to concerns about interpretation and the different needs of each town. The conversation ended with a plan for each town to send three key points prior to the next meeting this Friday about why the school budget shouldn't be recommended as is, though Katherine expressed reluctance about this approach. Both

Erica and Katherine think the conversation about schools should be on the town meeting floor not in the newspaper

### **3. BOH update regarding Battery Energy Storage (BESS):**

Beth reported Board of Health discussed battery energy storage systems (BESS), with Beth explaining that the Planning Board is designated as the point person for these systems per Massachusetts law. Beth discussed the need for formal involvement of the Board of Health in future battery storage facility projects, suggesting an email to Jim as a starting point. They discussed the challenges towns face when dealing with these facilities after they are established, including potential environmental impacts and the need for proper infrastructure.

Erica clarified that while the Board of Health should be consulted on individual projects, the town is not planning to create its own regulations since state regulations are expected this spring. Erica explained that NEHB is working on new regulations that would shift financial responsibility for legal challenges to the companies rather than the towns. The conversation also touched on the varying fees paid by companies for these facilities, ranging from \$10,000 to \$500,000, and the potential involvement of Con.Com in future special permits.

**Action:** Beth with contact Jim Brodeur about the BOH being involved.

### **4. Town Coordinator Update:**

#### **Discussion:**

- Michele reported she has received word we will be getting a new speed sign from the grant she applied for through MassDOT. Jim Palmeri is responsible for data collection.
- Brooks and DeRensis Attorneys at Law contract needs to be signed for them to review the Fire department MOU with Bernardston. On the contract they put Michele's name to sign.

**Motion:** Katherine moved that Michele be able to sign the Brooks and DeRensis contract. Second by Jeff. Unanimous vote.

- Sean Berthiaume has agreed to be Animal Inspector starting April 1.

**Motion:** Katherine moved to reappoint Sean Berthiaume as Animal Inspector. Jeff 2<sup>nd</sup>. Unanimous vote.

- Voltrek contract needs to be renewed for the vehicle electric charging stations for another year.

**Motion:** Katherine moved to renew the Voltrek contract for \$1460.00 for another year. Jeff 2<sup>nd</sup>. Unanimous vote.

**Motion:** Jeff moved to appoint Tom Raffensperger as a constable for one year. Katherine 2<sup>nd</sup>. Unanimous vote.

- Jim Brodur is asking that the land donated to the town behind Avery Field be voted on as an official name so we can now refer to the parcel of land. There had been discussion at a previous meeting on the name.

**Motion:** Katherine moved the 8 acres adjoining Avery Field be named Herron's Habitat. Jeff 2<sup>nd</sup>. Unanimous vote.

- Snow and Sons has provided a spring cleanup for the town common which Michele shared by email. Since Jeff Miller had already cleaned up for this year the budget suggested we did not need the cleanup.
- Michele asked if she could give the used solar lights that were in the parking lot to the Recreation Committee for Avery Field since we have. Board approved.

- Green Communities initiatives, Michele had a conversation with Allison Gage about new guidelines and potential window renovations, while noting that energy audits would be required for any improvements. \$75.00 per window is the maximum allowed by Green Communities. Next step is to get an energy audit for the windows or confirm that if there are professionals on our energy committee/building needs could they do the audit.

## 6. Select Board Updates

### Discussion:

- The group decided not to implement early voting but to allow mail-in voting for the Franklin Tech school building project on October 6th.

**Motion:** Katherine moved that we opt out of early voting for the FCTS ballot question on October 6<sup>th</sup> but we allow mail in voting. Jeff 2<sup>nd</sup>. Unanimous vote.

- Katherine will be attending the Recreation Committee meeting tomorrow to discuss the Woodland Partnership grant. The proposal for the grant would be to pay for a study for potential trails in Leyden. This grant guidelines state this must be supported by the Rec. Comm. The grant is due May 15<sup>th</sup>, and she will ask Liz Kidder to help
- Jeff reported he called the PVRSD superintendent asking about the strategic plan that was supposed to be presented to the school committee in January. The consultant is working on a presentation for the school committee for May.
- Jeff called The Pioneer Valley Veteran's services for a speaker on the Sunday before Memorial Day, May 24<sup>th</sup> at 10am. He has not heard back.
- Erica stated that IPADs are the best for the digital Equity grant and she will be looking into purchasing.
- Erica has been completing her own spreadsheet for the FY27 budget and is very concerned we are over our levy limit with all the requests so far.
- Michele noted that she has submitted the work order for the street light repair online as she has not had success calling.
- ADA grant is dropped on May 1. Estimate for ramp is \$138,000.
- Michele will be out on vacation from April 8 through April 15.

## 7. Public Comments

None

## 8. Agenda Planning

- Colrain Ambulance contract and FY 27 Budget
- MLP meeting and FY27 budget
- Town Clerk discussion of FY27 budget requests

**Next Meeting:** April 13, 2026, at 9:00 am

### Meeting Adjournment

**Motion:** Jeff moved to adjourn at 6:45 pm      **2<sup>nd</sup> Jeff**      **Vote:** Unanimous

**Submitted By:** Michele Giarusso

