



TOWN OF LEYDEN

Meeting Minutes

Select Board

Where : Leyden Town Offices – 7 Brattleboro Road

When: April 21, 2026

In Attendance

Members: Erica Jensen, Katherine DiMatteo, Jeff Baker

Audience: Michele Giarusso, Pam Brown

Time meeting called to order: 5:30: pm

Review of Minutes:

Motion: Katherine DiMatteo moved the minutes of 4/06 with the amendments sent by email

Second: Jeff with amendments

Vote: Unanimous

Motion: Katherine moved the amended minutes of 4/13/26. Jeff second the motion. Unanimous vote.

Discussions:

1. OPEB Discussion:

The group discussed an actuarial study on Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEBs) that the AFS Associates conducted. Erica could not find any towns under 1000 residents that pay for OPEB. Katherine expressed concerns about the financial implications and suggesting they consult with David Kaufman, an OPEB expert from MMA, to better understand the requirements and costs.

Action: Michele to contact David Koffman to see if he can hold a remote session with the Select Board.

2. 1st Draft of STM and ATM warrant articles:

Michele sent drafts of the warrants by email ahead of the meeting.

STM

The group reviewed and discussed the STM warrant first. Article 1 covers last year's bills, some figures pending confirmation from Susan regarding health insurance. Article 2 regarding a potential transfer from the broadband retained earnings account to an old police detail account.

ATM

Each article was reviewed and discussed with changes made as the Select Board felt was needed. They will be discussing the warrant articles with the Finance Committee on Thursday, so these are only suggestions on each article.

The group discussed formatting and content updates for town meeting articles, focusing on budget-related items and consent votes. They agreed to remove the word "approval" from the language under each article and decided that articles would state "Select Board recommends" and "Finance Committee recommends". The discussion also covered the need for a separate vote regarding the operating and school budgets, though they did not finalize this separation during the meeting.

Key decisions included consolidating multiple highway-related projects into one article titled "Highway Building Improvement Project" with a total transfer of \$43,500, and specifying the purpose of fund transfers for transparency. The group also discussed transferring \$30,000 to the fire stabilization account for a future new truck and \$15,000 to the police capital stabilization account per the Intermunicipal Agreement.

The discussion also touched on a debate regarding the assessor stabilization account and reval account,

Michele discussed the new warrant article to transfer \$39,924.91 from various old special fund accounts to offset the FY27 operating budget. The group drafted potential language for this article that could offset the raise and appropriate amount of the overall budget and where this article belongs in the warrant.

3. Ongoing Budget discussions:

The group discussed using remaining free cash to offset the budget though Michele noted this is not best practice according to DLS recommendations. The current budget increase is around 8.14% and with these potential one-time transfers from a previous year account that are no longer needed this could reduce the tax rate to 6.34%. They noted that the school budget represents approximately 50% of the total town budget.

4. Town Coordinator Update:

Discussion:

- Michele presented a typed letter for the Woodland's Partnership grant. Chris Curtis from the Deerfield Wild and Scenic River designation committee is asking for a letter of support from Leyden to continue the work they started a couple of years ago.

Motion: Katherine moved to sign the letter of support for the Deerfield Wild and Scenic designation committee to continue working on the designation for the Deerfield River. Second by Jeff. Unanimous vote.

- Janell has agreed to lend her support for the remote monitoring for the special and annual town meetings. She asked if there would be a practice session . The group answered yes.
- Dumpster rental price for 15 yards is \$665.00/per 7 days and a 10 yard is \$610.00.
- VADAR contract renewal for 3 years is \$8,712.50. This amount comes out of the accountant and Tax collector's budget. Group agreed to renew since both departments need this software.

- Attorney Hoffman has replied he will look over the MOA for the fire department this week.
- Michele has requested a quote for iPads for the digital equity grant from two vendors who have state contracts for IT equipment.

6. Select Board Updates

Discussion:

- Jeff reported Stacy from the Pioneer Valley Veterans has agreed to speak in Leyden on Sunday, May24th at 10am at the town common.
- Katherine asked the group if childcare should be offered for the town meetings. Group agreed it would be appreciated by parents.

7. Public Comments

Pam Brown clarified there was no town wide clean up, so a large capacity dumpster is not needed. Some residents wanted to know when they take their regular walks and find trash if they could use the town dumpster at the town offices to throw the garbage.

8. Agenda Planning

- Final review of warrant articles and discussion with the moderator.

Next Meeting: April 27, 2026, at 9:00 am

Meeting Adjournment

Motion: Katherine moved 2nd Jeff **Vote:** Unanimous
to adjourn at 7:51 pm

Submitted By: Michele Giarusso