TOWN OF LEYDEN
Meeting Minutes

Joint Select Board and Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

Where:	Leyden Town Office
When:	November 9, 2026

In Attendance

Members:	Erica Jensen, Katherine DiMatteo, Jeff Baker v
Audience:	Michele Giarusso, Liz Kidder, Ginger Robinson, Pam Brown, Carolyn Asbury, Nate Messer

Time meeting called to order: 5:00 pm

Review of Minutes:
Motion: Jeff moved to accept the minutes of 11/2/26 with amendments. **Second:** Katherine
Vote: Unanimous

Discussions:

1. Mass Trails Grant Discussion

The meeting focused on discussing the Mass Trails grant application, with Katherine explaining that while they previously applied for the grant two years ago, they decided not to apply last year due to lack of necessary information. Pam Brown stated that in the Open Space survey people mentioned wanting access to Leyden State Forest. Maybe this would be something we could investigate. The group determined that this year would be better suited for researching land ownership and obtaining rights-of-passage from conservation landowners, rather than pursuing the grant immediately. They agreed to look into hiring John Lepore for an assessment and to attend an upcoming webinar about the grant requirements on November 19th.

2. Police Budget Spreadsheet

Ginger called the finance meeting to order at 5:25pm.

The Finance Committee meeting began with a discussion about police budget assessments, where Ginger explained that Bernardston had not been updating their indirect cost calculations properly. Ginger discussed ongoing challenges with budget assessments and data tracking between the two towns, highlighting issues with incomplete and inaccurate spreadsheet data. She emphasized the need for a paid professional to maintain these spreadsheets and suggested simplifying the formula to focus on population and call data rather than a complex 23-page interactive spreadsheet. The discussion revealed problems with current data accuracy from Shelburne Control, including calls that may not represent actual police actions. Ginger noted the need to verify if past budget assessments were fully utilized by the police department.

Erica confirmed that FY27 calculations were completed with updated indirect cost formulas, and noted that the assessment percentage had increased from 17% to approximately 20% of the total budget.

3. FY 28 Budget calendar and Discussion

Erica led a discussion about the financial calendar and town meeting process, focusing on warrant article preparation and deadlines. The team reviewed key dates for starting to write warrant articles and various deadlines for public notification and town meeting preparation. Ginger emphasized the importance of maintaining a living document with constant updates throughout April to track warrant articles and ensure proper communication between the Finance Committee and Select Board.

The group agreed warrant article submissions will be due by April 19th and April 21st as the final date for Finance Committee to vote on warrants. They decided to send budget request forms to departments on January 11th with reminder emails on January 25th and February 1, and planned to start budget meetings in early February.

Ginger discussed scheduling the finance committee's next meeting and budget requests. The group agreed to set budget requests due on February 10th with a finance committee meeting on February 17th.

Katherine shared information about new DLS capital planning forms that the town could use to better track and manage capital assets, including inventory tracking and replacement costs for various town equipment and facilities.

Katherine reminded the group that a financial policy manual exists on the website under resource documents.

The Finance Committee left the Select Board meeting to continue their meeting.

4. Town Coordinator Updates

- Michele reported the two benches that were missing from Avery Field have been returned.
- Michele will be attending the training for the MA Energy Siting Hub (MESH). Did the Select Board decide who will be the Local Government Representative (LGR) for Leyden? Michele must report this person to DOER. The board agrees Michele should be this person.
- Vendor is coming tomorrow to look at and measure our windows for possible window inserts.

5. Select Board Updates

- Katherine composed a letter to the Chapter 70 Commission. Everyone has read it and when the commission is formed, we should send.
- Jeff mentioned there was a large tree down in East Hill Cemetery.

Action: Michele will contact the tree warden to look at it.

6. Public Comment

7. Agenda Planning

Next Meeting: November 16 at 9am

Meeting Adjournment

Motion: Jeff moved to adjourn at 7:02pm. **Second:** Katherine **Vote:** Unanimous.

Submitted By: Michele Giarusso