

Leyden Select Board Minutes
Leyden Town Office Building
Regular Session
January 30, 2023
6:00 pm

Select Board Members Present: Katherine DiMatteo, Glenn Caffery, Bill Glabach

Others Present: John Higgins, Liesel Nygard virtually, Liz Kidder, Jim Bodeur, Erica Jensen, Sara Seinberg, Beth Kudzeba, Emily Yazwinski virtually, Ginger Robinson, Robbie Milner virtually, Mary Glabach.

Bill called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. The Select Board read correspondence file and reviewed and signed FY 23 warrants. Announcement from chair that the meeting was being recorded. There was a question of a bill under the Fire department that needed further researching. Bill instructed the Treasurer on the warrant to not pay this bill until there is a further explanation.

Motion: Katherine moved to accept minutes of January 17, 2023. Glenn seconded with following amendments – roads are not to be declared “non-maintained” but “discontinued” and to be declared as statutory private ways. Delete Road Runners Club from section under Other Business regarding the 50K race.

Discussion of amendment regarding the roads and proper language to what we are trying to do. Discontinued roads, abandoned, non-maintained. Sara noted that there is a legal definition of discontinuance. Erica noted that discontinued would not land-lock the landowners. Statutory private ways are open to the public but are not maintained by the town. Abandonment would make a road not a public way – owned by property owners.

The wording was agreed as Glenn amended. Approved unanimously.

Motion: Glenn moved to accept the minutes of December 28th joint MLP and Select Board meeting as presented. Katherine seconded the motion. Approved unanimously.

DISCUSSION

Auction decision on Impala

Glenn reported that the Chevy Impala is ready to be auctioned. The Surplus Property form was filled out. Everything we know will be in the posting for auction. Glenn proposed that local advertising would take too much time, so post on an auction site that both individuals and municipalities could bid on. Two citizens have expressed interest already. Glenn will confirm which auction site to use. Estimated value \$3,000.

Motion: Katherine moved to declare the Impala as surplus property and approve the estimated amount for auction. Glenn seconded. Approved unanimously.

Bill asked if there was a charge for the auction posting but supported going ahead. Authorized Glenn and Michele to find the auction site and place the Impala on the site. Glenn will be the contact for the auction site.

Letter from East Hill landowner on road status

Jim Brodeur, chair of the Planning Board, attended to answer questions, and presented the information that the turn-around used by the town is on private property. Landowners would like to build further away from the turn-around. They can't get a building permit without having access for Fire, Police, Ambulance, etc. Could put in a cul-de-sac to accommodate these types of vehicles. Glenn noted that the non-maintained roadbed is a reasonable lane to the proposed driveway – an old house site. Michele noted that there needs to be a number on the road in order to receive a building permit. Jim proposed that we ask to trade a new turn-around for keeping the lane as a town road up to the driveway for the proposed new house site.

Erica noted that when Bill Brooks did his measurements of the road to be discontinued, it was from their proposed driveway so this would not be impacted by a vote for discontinuance. Bill Brooks has reported that the town cannot get the big plow down there so some work would have to be done on it. Michele noted that the letters to the abutters can't go out until we confirm the measurements that Bill Brooks did last year. Sara asked if it was a private way, not a statutory private way, could they put the turn-around themselves? Jim noted that a private way would have to go through a sub-division approval process according to the bylaws. Liz asked if there was enough frontage on a town road? Jim responded that they need 200 feet on an accessible road, not necessarily a town road. Glenn and Katherine reviewed the map sent by the property owners and it is a rough draft, but they indicate that there is 350 feet from the current turn-around to the intended placement of entry to their driveway.

Next step: Michele is to confirm with Bill Brooks where the measurement was taken and if there is 200 feet or more before the sign that declares the road unmaintained.

Purchasing needed for remote meeting.

Glenn reported that the EMDs went out for a grant to get laptops and equipment for emergencies that could also be used for board and committee meetings. Additional equipment needed is a roller-cart and a locking cabinet. Glenn asked to proceed with a discussion with the EMDs about sharing equipment. Suggested that the Select Board pay for office software, and two zoom licenses. Still money in building account and some of the ARPA money – on our list of needs. Agreement to have Glenn move forward as proposed.

Town Office closure policy

Glenn is seeking clarity about closing the town offices. Katherine noted that there is a policy written into the Personnel Policy which hasn't been officially approved and completed but could be used as our guidance until approved. Agreed.

John Higgins asked that the website make note that the offices are closed whether an emergency or not.

Planning and scheduling for Stretch Code adoption.

Glenn reported that there is a new person from the State who is assigned to Leyden. We could schedule a meeting with this person to discuss the Stretch Code. The planning board is having a public hearing on the solar bylaw on March 1st. Erica asked if adopting the Stretch Code is related to the Solar Bylaw and Green Communities. They are related but separate – both Stretch Code and Solar Bylaw are needed to be designated a Green Community. Liz noted that in addition to adopting the Stretch Code, there has to be a vote at Town Meeting to become a Green Communities; suggested that anything related to Green Communities be presented on the same night. Erica asked if the goal for the Special Town Meeting was to accept the Solar Bylaw, Stretch Code and Green Communities. Glenn prefers that they are done at the same time at Special Town Meeting. Glenn will contact the person from the State and invite him to be at the March 1st meeting.

Selecting date for Special Town Meeting

March 20th is set for meeting at 6pm. Town Counsel needs time to review the warrant. Michele suggests by mid-February that warrant articles are completed to send to Town Counsel. Ginger stated that there may be some Free Cash articles that could be added. The accountant has asked that some old accounts get cleaned up but this could be done at the annual.

Password Security Policy draft

Katherine moved to approve the Password Security Policy Draft with the clarification that it is the Municipal Assistant who is notified if there are requests for passwords over the phone or email, whether the request came from organization personnel or not. (Second bullet under Incident Reporting). Glenn second. Approved unanimously.

Assign work on updating Code of Conduct Policy

Katherine volunteered to take up the revision of this policy.

First Responder appointments

Glenn reported that there have been two people who have indicated interest, but he is recommending that we hold off for now until there is someone to manage the process and follow-up.

Municipal Assistant Updates

AEDs are not working; batteries need to be checked periodically to keep them in working order. The last date on the equipment was 2019. Options are to purchase new ones, lease or not have them. Erica suggests that we should have them, and as a co-EMD she will take this on. Erica will work with Jim Palmeri to learn how to do the maintenance. Beth noted that we might be able to get AEDs donated from the hospital. Erica recommends purchasing new ones plus pads. Thanks expressed to Erica for volunteering. Michele noted that this is a perfect purchase for the ARPA money. John suggested we buy three: one for the office, one for town hall, one for the Tahoe Emergency vehicle. Ginger looked up online \$1500 for a whole set, could be \$800 to \$1000 without the box. Michele will check with the hospital about donations then proceed to order and purchase.

Purchase of a laptop. Money left in IT grant that needs to be spent in the next two weeks. Michele would like to replace her old laptop with one of higher professional quality. Also, the Vadar system has a maintenance program for tax collector, and this also could be purchased with the grant money. \$4,000 a year for maintenance is the cost of the programs we have for Treasurer and Accountant. Michele was asked to purchase a term for the tax collector maintenance program with money left in the grant after purchasing the computer.

Condenser pump replaced by Michele for town offices boiler. Michele used a brand-new pump she had personally when the one in the town office stopped working. She has tried to replace through Home Depot but they do not stock. Only available through Amazon. John Higgins volunteered to use his tax-free Amazon account. He would need to be reimbursed because it is his personal account he set up for recreation purchases. Agreed.

Michele noted that all bylaws need to be sent to Town Counsel before the Special Town Meeting. Jim Brodeur is asking if he can contact Town Counsel.

Motion: Glenn moved that we send Solar Bylaw to Town Counsel. Katherine seconded the motion. Approved unanimously.

Other Business:

Cost of living for retirement fund: Michele reported that the retirement fund board is asking for a 2% additional increase to bring the total increase to 5% for cost-of-living adjustments. Glenn asked if COLA happens on an annual basis. Michele was uncertain but thought that it was likely. Katherine clarified that the cost-of-living adjustments are annual, but this additional request is not. This additional request will not affect us until FY26.

Motion: Glenn moved to accept the 2% additional increase for the retirement fund. Bill seconded the motion. Approved unanimously.

Mileage reimbursement: Katherine noted that the mileage reimbursement is now at 65.5 cents. The Treasurer and Accountant need the Select Board to approve increasing mileage rate before they would pay any employees at this rate.

Motion: Glenn made a motion that the mileage reimbursement rate follows the Federal rates set each year. Bill seconded. Approved unanimously.

FRCOG DLTA survey: Michele reported that only the Conservation Commission responded to the Select Board's request for input on the priorities for the FRCOG. Agreed that Michele should submit what was agreed upon by the Select Board in a previous meeting plus the request from the Conservation Commission.

Public Safety Advisory Committee: Letter regarding changing the run order for the ambulance raised some questions: Was it reviewed by the Western Mass OEMS and are there additional ambulances in addition to the three that were indicated in the letter. Liz checked with Western Mass OEMS and the State does not have to approve changes to the run order. Liz drafted a new letter to send that clarifies our previous vote. The Select Board agreed to send the letter and thanked Liz for drafting it.

COA resignations: John Higgins made comment about January 9th meeting, noting that it is very disturbing that the Select Board dismissed the complaint of the COA. He also stated that, to his knowledge, the packet of documentation was given to the Select Board prior to the article in the newspaper. The minutes state that the article appeared before the packet was received by the Select Board.

Discussion on how to react and have a process that will be reasonable to implement the Code of Civil Conduct and complaints from citizens. Katherine pointed out that is why revising the Code of Civil Conduct was important so that process and expectations are clearly laid out. Discussion on how to deal with difficult people and difficult situations.

PVRS Budget: Katherine reported that the PVRS Principal and Finance Director will be attending our next Select Board meeting, February 6 at 10:30am to present the proposed budget for the next school year. Ginger as Finance Committee Chair will attend and has invited other members of the committee to also attend.

Motion: Katherine moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:44 pm. Glenn seconded. Approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Michele Giarusso
Municipal Assistant