



TOWN OF LEYDEN

Meeting Minutes

Select Board

Where
: Leyden Town Office

When: June 29, 2026

In Attendance

Members: Erica Jensen, Katherine DiMatteo

Audience: Michele Giarusso,

Time meeting called to order: 5:01 pm

Review of Minutes: No minutes to review

Motion

Second:

RC Vote:

Discussions:

1. Mailbox Policy Review

The board discussed Version 2 of a mailbox damage policy.

Motion: Katherine moved to approve V2 of the mailbox damage policy. **Second:** Erica **Vote:** Unanimous. They read through the draft of a wood removal policy. Erica sent to the highway superintendent for his input.

2.. Approval of FY27 Wage and Stipends

The board reviewed the updated wage spreadsheet from the treasurer.

Motion: Katherine moved to approve the updated FY27 wage, salary and stipend spreadsheet.

Second: Erica **Vote:** Unanimous.

3. Danielle Rousseau Interview for Town Clerk's Position

Erica gave an overview of the position explaining that it's a 19-hour per week appointed role with significant responsibilities including managing five elections this year, maintaining town records, and creating the annual report. Danielle expressed interest in the role despite having no prior town clerk experience, highlighting her administrative background from Greenfield and relevant skills including experience with public-facing duties, technology, and design work. The board noted that while Danielle lacks direct experience, they have identified local town clerks who could provide support and training, and emphasized that the position comes with access to certification programs and a pre-existing template for the annual report.

Danielle discussed her current work situation at a dental office and at a fire station, she has experience in HR. Her fire dept position has been eliminated. She understands this position is not eligible for benefits at 19 hours per week in the town clerk position. She has been offered by the dental office to add more hours and she will know that in August. The group reviewed upcoming election dates and office hours requirements, with Erica confirming that while the position is 19 hours per week, the town clerk would need to be available for public-facing hours and election-related work. Danielle stated this is not a problem and she is comfortable with speaking to state agencies and providing public records.

4. Kathleen Garmalo interview for Town Clerk's Position

Erica provided an overview of the position. Kathleen discussed her experience in various administrative roles and expressed interest in a part-time town clerk position, highlighting her flexibility with evening and weekend hours and willingness to learn the required processes. Erica emphasized the importance of proper training, especially given the busy nature of the role and upcoming elections, and noted the need to manage priorities and handle essential tasks like death certificates, marriage certificates, and the street list. Erica also addressed the challenges of managing public interactions and deadlines, particularly regarding nomination papers for state ballots, and expressed confidence in her ability to handle correspondence and public inquiries.

Kathleen expressed interest in the part-time town clerk position, indicating she could start next week with flexible hours and expected to commit for at least five to six years.

5. FY 27 Appointments

Motion: Katherine moved to appoint Dave Pomerantz to the Building Needs Study Committee, Erica Jensen to the Fire Services Advisory Committee, all for one year. **Second:** Erica **Vote:** Unanimous.

Motion: Katherine moved to appoint Steve Richter and Karin Parks as poll workers for 2 years.

Second: Erica **Vote:** Unanimous.

6. Town Coordinator Updates

- Michele asked if the Fire department was forwarding their department phone to Bernardston Fire Dept. Erica will ask that they do. Keep the call forwarding for a year while the IMA is being discussed. The website should be updated with the new phone number.
- WRAP funds for winter highway maintenance overage-Michele reported accountant said Bill should fill out WRAP paperwork for highway winter overages. Michele will ask accountant if she can run a report for Bill. It is a good thing we did not use free cash to cover this. The accountant would have asked to undo and pay with WRAP funds. The free cash not used will go into our next free cash amount.
- End-of-year transfers-accountant and Michele discussed this, and accountant would like to have a joint meeting with Fin Comm. on July 13.
- Town Clerk-Michele has spoken with town clerk about being appointed as an assistant town clerk so she can swear-in people in after he leaves and do some other town clerk duties as needed. George appointed Michele as requested. She has been appointed 2 or 3 times before under previous town clerks.
- George has turned over the Town Clerk keys and computer. Intern is working and is very good and will be able to help Michele out with the town clerk tasks until a new town clerk starts.
- Appointment letters have not been filled out by town clerk. Erica is willing to help fill out.
- Vendors are pushing to get paid so they can reconcile their accounts.
- The EOED last payment for the West Leyden bog project is to come in 2 weeks. Waiting for final bridge approval from MA DOT, then can close out the year.

7. Select Board Updates

- Katherine sent an email to the E&R committee, and no one responded to her. The grant is over at the end of June.
- 250th celebration is July 8th at the town hall, various people will read the Declaration of Independence, there will be music and a potluck supper to follow. Katherine will give the welcome and introduction, several people will be reading. Dave Vreeland needs permission to hang screws in the ceiling of the front porch to hang the buntings donated by Robin Neipp. The cost of the buntings is approximately \$100.

Motion: Katherine moved to approve Dave Vreeland to put up screws in the ceiling of the front porch of the town hall and accept the buntings for the town, donation approximately \$100. **Second:** Erica **Vote:** Unanimous.

- Katherine would like permission to read on July 8th a statement she sent via email on indigenous people.

Motion: Erica moved to give permission for Katherine to read the statement on indigenous people at the 250th celebration. **Second:** Katherine **Vote:** Unanimous.

- Erica spoke to Bob Provost as he happened to be in the building about moving the sign on his property. Bob gave permission to remove the posts, sign and flag holder from his property.

8. Michele Giarusso, Town Coordinator review

Michele reported that work has been a lot smoother with town clerk and finance team. She emphasized that having a town clerk is essential and important that the town clerk have more face time with residents. Finance team meetings are happening regularly. Treasurer has made some suggestions for changes to procedures that need to be worked out with the team. Phone calls and in-person complaints or unhappiness from residents take up a lot of time and get in the way of getting other work done. Residents don't understand the roles of committees and who to go to.

Loves to do the grants and go after them. Leyden can't survive on only the tax rate, so grants are critical to keep residents in town and supplement our tax base. The Town Coordinator position does not have to be full time if grants are not included. Michele would be interested in the future to do grants and grant research for the town for 10-12 hours a week.

The clerical/administrative assistant was helpful when we had that position, would suggest that the position is reconsidered.

Michele would like to learn more about the treasurer and the tax collector roles and responsibilities so she can be more helpful to them and/or fill in when they are not available.

The quiet office hours have worked well – Michele locks the door to give her the time needed for focused work. Her posted work time is until 4pm but she stays until 6pm so has those two hours to get her focused work done.

Erica noted that Michele has improved her communication skills. The "Can't do that" answers have decreased to more like "I don't know, let me figure it out" style. Katherine and Erica complimented Michele on the work she has done and that she has worked this year on the goals set out last year.

Michele noted that when she is ready to leave the position, she will give six months' notice. She will stay until the West Leyden bog project is completed and report is filed.

Select Board proposed the following goals:

1. That Michele take on learning about the Treasurer/Tax Collector roles and responsibilities.
2. A process is set up for having complaints submitted in writing and a record of complaints and their resolutions
3. Add relevant documents that will be discussed at the Select Board meeting to the weekly report.
4. Better manage the building maintenance person so that more work is accomplished. Currently work is inconsistent. If time availability is the issue, find other solutions.
5. Update the "When I'm Out of the Office" document of contact information by the end of July
6. Initiate policy reviews and recommendations for processes so that operational tasks and projects run smoothly.
7. See yourself as a leader, not just a coordinator or a manager.

9. Public Comments

None

10. Agenda Planning

- End of year transfers with Finance Committee
- Set and approve FY27 Select Board calendar
- Continue appointments
- Plan orientation for newly elected and appointed officials

Next Meeting: July13

Meeting Adjournment

Motion: Katherine moved 2nd Erica **Vote:**Unanimous
to adjourn at 8:00pm

Submitted By: Michele Giarusso