TOWN OF LEYDEN
Meeting Minutes

Select Board Meeting Minutes

Where:	Leyden Town Office
When:	July 27, 2026

In Attendance

Members:	Erica Jensen, Katherine DiMatteo, Jeff Baker
Audience:	Michele Giarusso

Time meeting called to order: 5:01pm

Review of Minutes:

Motion: Jeff moved the meeting minutes of 7/20 w	**Second:** Erica	**RC Vote**: Katherine abstained, Jeff-yes, Erica-yes

Discussions:

1. Yearly Animal Control and Animal Shelter Contract Renewal

Motion: Katherine moved to renew and sign both the animal control and animal shelter contract for 1 year**. Second:** Jeff **Vote:** Unanimous.

2. FY 27 Appointments

Michele reported Al Woodhull has resigned from the Open Space Committee. She has not heard back from the remaining poll workers. Erica would like the new town clerk to reach out to the poll workers and ask about reappointments**.**

3. Digital Equity Grant

Katherine suggested that the board have a working session to work on plans to roll out the digital equity grant at the next meeting which is a morning session on August 3.

4. Town Official Orientation

Erica discussed the upcoming orientation session scheduled for August 17th at 6 PM, which will cover topics including open meeting laws, conflict of interest, and procurement processes. She noted that some chairs had miscommunicated the purpose of the meeting, leading to confusion among participants. She outlined the agenda to include welcome introductions, a round-robin of committee members sharing their experience, coverage of the public records, ethics, and grants, with Michele agreeing to handle the grants section. The group also discussed potentially having Susan present financial information and considering whether to invite Ginger from the Finance Committee to discuss budget processes.

Katherine emphasized the importance of actively recruiting committee members and providing proper orientation for new members. She emphasized the need for committees to think strategically about future plans rather than just annual tasks, referencing existing town commitments like Age-Friendly and Green Community designations.
Erica discussed plans to formalize partnerships with boards and committees, including inviting school committee members to the session.
The session will be 60 minutes with pizza being served.

5. Town Coordinator Updates

Michele reported:

- She and Bill Brooks met with Peter Shedd this morning to go over some fire department matters, including inspections and emergency and snow removal issues and who to call.
- There is a water leak between the town hall and church again Bill and AJ discovered. Michele called Rita Klaus to notify her of the need for repair and Bill Brooks shut the water off going to the church for now.
- The speed sign delivery is scheduled for Wednesday, which will be placed by Jim after his return from vacation.
- Two candidates have applied for the administrative assistant position; end date for applying is August 7.
- Regarding the West Leyden Road construction, Michele is consulting with engineers about temporary bridge options, with the recommendation to avoid including a temporary bridge in the initial bid to potentially reduce costs. The discussion included concerns about emergency vehicle detours during construction, particularly for ambulances which would face a 12-mile detour, and potential coordination with neighboring towns like Greenfield and Colrain for emergency services coverage. She has mentioned this both to the police chief and fire chief and there will be ongoing meetings to prepare for this, but construction will not be until the spring.
- Received an annual bill from the FRCOG for communication services for the fire dept. Erica asked Michele to contact the FRCOG and let them know we have an MOA with Bernardston.
- FRCOG is hiring a consultant to work on the digital equity grant for ADA compliancy for town websites.
- Fire extinguishers in each building had their yearly inspection.
- Michele has an appointment tomorrow afternoon and will not be in the office from around 1pm on.

7. Select Board Updates

- Jeff reported that Camie Lamica has resigned as treasurer from the PVRSD and they have hired her new company as treasurer. Frank Ribero is the new school committee member from Bernardston, and the school committee discussed the outcomes of the strategic plan and the three top strategies the consultant concluded was to work to improve academic writing by offering creative writing expanding opportunities at Pioneer and strengthening communications and community partnerships. Michele responded that she brought up at the June school committee meeting why was creative writing courses were not offered in 2026-2027 program of studies. Erica questioned what does expanding opportunities for students mean.
- Erica worked on town calendar updates.
- Katherine briefly discussed a cybersecurity exercise scheduled for October 15th.

8. Public Comment

None

9. **Agenda Planning**

- Working session on digital equity grant
- Finalize orientation session

Next Meeting: August 3 at 9am

Meeting Adjournment

Motion: Jeff moved to adjourn at 6:44pm	**2nd** Erica	**Vote**:Unanimous

Submitted By: Michele Giarusso