



TOWN OF LEYDEN

Meeting Minutes

Select Board Meeting Minutes

Where : Leyden Town Office

When: August 17, 2026

In Attendance

Members: Erica Jensen, Katherine DiMatteo, Jeff Baker

Audience: Michele Giarusso

Time meeting called to order: 9:01am

The Select Board signed the bi-monthly warrants with questions regarding the tree warden's stipend and expenses account noting discrepancies in the amounts. Erica will email the treasurer to clarify.

Review of Minutes:

Motion: Katherine moved to accept **Second:** Jeff **Vote:** Unanimous
the meeting minutes of 8/10/26 with
amendments

Discussions:

1. Interview with Eloise Tuell for the Administrative Assistant Position

Interviewed Eloise for a 4-hour per week administrative assistant position working with the new town clerk Molly Miller. Eloise, who is starting a GIS graduate program at UMass Amherst on September 8th, expressed interest in gaining work experience and learning how a town operates. Eloise stated Molly's public hours will work with her school schedule as she has mostly remote classes. She is comfortable with Microsoft office suite software and computers in general. The group agreed to arrange a phone call between Eloise and Molly to discuss the role further,

2. Interview with Kathleen Garmalo for the Administrative Assistant Position

Kathleen explained her previous experience working with the town clerk and treasurer and in the HR and Selectmen's office in Greenfield. She has experience in data entry, word documents and QuickBooks. She is flexible in her hours and mostly available in the afternoons/evenings. It was agreed that Kathleen would have a phone conversation with Molly Miller to discuss the role further.

3. Town Official Orientation

Erica has prepared an agenda and will do the introduction for the Select Board; Jeff would like the participants to introduce themselves also. Erica proposed questions and answers happen after each speaker. Handouts are copied and ready. 33 people have signed up to attend.

4. Warwick Tuition Agreement

The subcommittee of the school committee already had a meeting on Thursday so there is nothing to prepare. Will wait to see if this item is at the upcoming school committee meeting this Thursday.

6. Town Coordinator Updates

All the questions asked last week regarding the Gill Engineering contract for bid and construction oversight of the West Leyden Road project have been answered.

Motion: Katherine moved to sign the Gill Engineering contract for \$91,322. **Second:** Jeff **Vote:** Unanimous.

Motion: Katherine moved to sign the Woodland's Partnership grant for \$25,000 to have the Conway School of Landscape design create a site plan for Avery Field and a future walking trail on Herron's Habitat. **Second:** Jeff **Vote:** Unanimous.

- Michele emailed the Conway School to let them know about the grant and they will be sending a contract to sign.
- Michele spoke to Jeff Miller about the outstanding projects; he will get back to her with a timeline for completion.
- Digital Equity postcards are not done yet because the Town Clerk hasn't been able to print off the over 62 years old list.
- September 1st and 2nd confirmed for Michele to be out for medical reasons.
- Recreation Committee reported that 2 benches and 1 table was stolen from the Pavilion. Police suggest additional patrols be carried out at night and weekends. Also a camera should be installed and perhaps chain the benches to the posts.

ACTION: Michele will check on insurance reimbursement. Our deductible is \$500 and the benches cost more than that. Good to get some money to purchase replacements. Michele will ask recreation committee if they would purchase the cameras, otherwise we will take cost out of general expenses.

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7. Select Board Updates

- Katherine raised two main topics for discussion: the need to decide on a dedication for the annual report and questions about unfamiliar items in the DLS newsletter, including an electric aggregation adder fee and a recommendation for a wetland's protection revolving fund. She noted that previous annual reports had avoided specific dedications, opting instead for broad group acknowledgments.
- Katherine also mentioned her inability to attend the upcoming Board of Health meeting on Sept 10 due to a scheduling conflict with a school committee meeting.
- Katherine reported there will be a Mass in Motion meeting on Wednesday, and they will vote on the \$1,000 to go towards the Conway School's estimate for the site plan. They will also discuss the weed problem on the path.
- Erica weed whacked around the broadband hut property and Jeff Miller was working around the town office building. She discussed ongoing maintenance issues around town, particularly focusing on problems with the propane tank area where grapevines were blocking access. She expressed concerns about Jeff's ability to handle the workload due to his capacity being at 150%, and decided to begin looking for additional help to manage specific maintenance tasks.
- Erica also went to Avery Field and did what she could to remove/cut weed on the path, but it is a daunting task. Jeff did cut some behind the backstop but not much more can be done as the embankment is steep with invasives growing out from the bank.
- Eversource communication is not good but there is not much that can be done, we agree with residents that it could be better. Eversource is moving the electric lines to the new poles but not fiber; Whip City will have to do that. The poles are owned by Eversource and Verizon.

Erica asked if we have a contract for pole rental with Eversource so we can move the fiber lines. We will have to pay Whip City to move the lines although there will be some reimbursement.

ACTION: Michele will coordinate and manage the transfer of fiber lines with Whip City and Eversource.

- The next meeting of the Police Services Advisory Committee will begin discussion of the renewal of the IMA for another 3 years. Jane and Erica will work on the spreadsheet to calculate the costs.
- The battery at the MLP hut went out for the generator causing loss of internet for some of the town. The company that set up the generator is responsible for the battery replacement. MLP will ask that the battery be replaced annually, not to wait until it is dead.

8. Public Comment

None

9. Agenda Planning

- Dedication annual report
- Digital Equity grant update
- Admin Assistant Hire
- Update EMS meeting, FCTS and Mass In Motion meeting

Next Meeting: August 24 at 5pm

Meeting Adjournment

Motion: Katherine moved to adjourn at 10:55am. **Second:** Jeff **Vote:** Unanimous.

Submitted By: Michele Giarusso