

Bakersfield Regular Select Board Meeting
Monday, December 28, 2020
7:00pm

Meeting was called to order at 7:01pm by Lance Lawyer.

Members present: Lance Lawyer (chair), Gary Denton, Josh Goss, Terri Gates

Members absent: Sam Cribb

Residents/Guests present: Mac Newitt, Dan Forand, Kristin and Nathan Tuttle, Kathy Westcom, Tami Brennan

Terri made the motion to accept the meeting minutes for the Dec. 14th Select Board Meeting, Gary seconded the motion, and motion was approved by a vote 4-0.

Warrants signed:

Selectmen's Order #34-2020	\$206,500.48
Road Commissioner's Order #28&29-2020	\$9218.39
Road Commissioner's Order #12-2020	\$384.06

Kathy – Town Meeting

The legislature has given the Select Board the authority to vote, at a warned, regularly scheduled Select Board meeting, whether to hold the votes at town meeting this year by Australian ballot for the year 2021 only. To hold votes at Town Meetings by Australian ballot permanently in the future, would require a separate vote. Another option granted by the State for 2021 is to postpone town meeting for a later date. The problem with postponing town meeting is that the Town would be unable to borrow money without an approved budget. Everything would be voted by Australian ballot, all that would be normally be voted on the floor, including the vacant officer positions. Kathy advised that anything that could be condensed would make it easier to able to count.

All persons interested in running for a town office, must submit a consent form to the Town Clerk by January 25, 2021, in order to have their name placed on the ballot for Town Meeting. Consent forms can be picked up and signed at the Town Clerks office. There will be no petitions required in order to run for office in 2021.

Any offices that remain vacant after the vote can be appointed by the Select Board after town meeting.

The following is a list of positions up for renewal...

Moderator-	1 year term
Town Clerk-	3 year term
Treasurer-	3 year term
Select Board-	2 year term
	3 year term
Listers-	2 years remaining of a 3 year term
	3 year term
Auditor-	3 year term
Cemetery Commissioner	5 year term

Library Trustee-	3 year term
	3 year term
Trustees of Public Funds	3 year term
Hospital Committee	2 year term
Brigham Academy	3 year term
Planning Commission	3 year term
	2 year term
First Constable	1 year term
Second Constable	1 year term
Collector of Delinquent Taxes	1 year term
Grand Juror	1 year term
Town Agent	1 year term

The Board plans to hold an informational meeting before town meeting. Ordinances dictate that the informational meeting must take place within 10 days before Town Meeting. The decision to proceed with Australian ballot must be made 30 days before posting the warning for Town Meeting, so the decision must be made tonight. The Board also discussed possibly using the school to have a larger space to work with.

Lance made the motion to conduct all business held at Town Meeting by Australian Ballot, the motion was seconded by Josh and passed by a vote of 4-0.

The Board asked Tami to invite Roger Lindala to the next Regular Select Board meeting on Jan 11, to explain what is able to be done to provide remote access to Town Meeting for Town residents.

Lance shared an email that he received from VASA about issues they have with our ATV ordinance. There were two items that concerned the association. The first being the closing of E Bakersfield Rd from Kings Hill Rd to Rt 108 which will eliminate access to the stores for ATV's and the second is the requirement of a town issued permit. Other towns accept the VASA Trail access Decal in place of a town issued permit. They request discussion with the Board regarding these issues. The Board asked Tami to invite the VASA officers to attend the first Regular Select Board meeting in April to discuss their concerns.

Road Report-

Tatro has finished Trobridge Rd.

Hutchins finished Cook Brook Rd today and they plan to move the excavator out tomorrow morning.

Waterville Mtn Road designs are complete for 2 22inch culverts and a three-sided bridge and the situation is at the point that signatures are needed for the Federal Permits. FEMA allotted a percentage of the total cost of mitigation. There was concern regarding the Sap lines and the need for those who own them to have insurance in case a line drops and injures someone.

No word on Whitney Rd yet. It's to be a box culvert. But no one has seen the plans. Josh asked if what Mac is taking out of where the new culverts are going in would help the situation up at Beaver Pond road area.

Josh reported a complaint on Saturday night from residents on East Bakersfield Rd saying that the Road was impassable and that they had to clear trees and sand. The party also contacted Terri. Mac said that the road crew was there by noon. There was also discussion about the number of loads of sap that are being hauled along that road and that the roads were not made to take that kind of abuse.

The Select Board asked Mac what a typical winter schedule was for the road crew. Mac said that when it snows, they are on the road plowing by at least 4:00am. A usual run takes around 3 hours unless there is ice, which takes much longer. If it continues to snow, then the run begins again. If not, they are finished the run by 7:00am and then they go to the garage to begin the regular workday. Depending on conditions, many times the road crew begins plowing around 3:30am to make sure the route is plowed before the school buses run. The town has Class I highways, Class II, Class III and Class IV roads. The pavement gets plowed first with salt and then the trucks dump out the salt and then reload with sand and then plow and sand the dirt roads.

Mail-

Division of Policy and Planning has given the town notice that mileage maps are to be done differently this year.

The Fire Dept sent a letter thanking the Select Board for the town's donation. The State of VT Dept of Taxes notified the town that the town's appraisals are 93.03% of the commonly appraised value. The board noted that if the town appraisals drop much lower on the common appraisal scale, then the town is getting close to the point of a town wide re-appraisal.

The board received the resignation letters from Pat Debevac, as Town auditor and from Vera Lawyer, as assistant treasurer, effective immediately. Josh made a motion to accept the resignations of auditor and assistant treasurer, Lance seconded and the motion passed with a vote of 4-0.

Town Employees – Road Crew

Mac and Dan attended to discuss the change in what they were presented as regarding insurance plans at the last meeting. The results that the board published in the addendum to the minutes from the Executive session following the Dec 14 meeting, stated that the board had voted to offer the Platinum Plan, paying 80% of the premium, with the employee paying 20%, and that if the employee does not choose to take the insurance from the town and can show that they have health insurance elsewhere, the employee will be offered a stipend of \$1200.00 in place of insurance.

The road crew said that they left the last meeting under the impression, stated by Lance, Gary and Josh, that the board had decided in executive session,

prior to the Dec 14th meeting, that they had made the decision, in a quorum, to continue providing the Platinum plan fully funded. Based on that decision, the Road crew decided not to ask the town for on call pay. After reading the minutes left by the Select Board from the executive session held after the Dec 14th meeting and the change of the decision made earlier, the Road crew decided to request on call pay from the town for the days that those on call must stay in town, refrain from alcohol and get up periodically through the night to check weather conditions. Gary said that the Road employees in Enosburg get one hour of pay for each day that they are on call and that it is only fair that those employees, that are not free during their off hours, should be compensated. Lance agreed. Mac said that he was continually on call from November 1st until the end of April to organize on-call time. Terri stated that she felt the continuous duty to be on call without compensation came with the job. Mac pointed out that the town has yet to write a job description for the Road crew. Terri said that she was unaware that there was not a written job description. Josh said that he was unaware as well.

Mac said that if the insurance was to continue as fully funded, then the Road crew would not need to request on-call pay. To have to contribute 20% toward premiums without a pay raise is a pay cut. He also made note that many surrounding towns fully funded the insurance for their road crew. Research done at the time of last year's town meeting showed that Sheldon, Richford, Enosburg, Berkshire, Fletcher, Fairfield, Cambridge/Jeffersonville, and Underhill, all fully fund their road crew's health insurance. Just before the board went into executive session after the meeting, Tami said that a quick calculation of what it would save the town per tax bill, if the Road Crew pays 20% of their premiums, comes to around 10.66/year, less than one dollar a month. Terri said that she knew it would not reduce the town budget but that it was the principle.

Lance stated that he didn't vote for the decision to have the Road crew pay 20% of the insurance premiums. The rest of the board said that they took his yes to be a vote of approval. Lance said that he should have made it clear that he was abstaining from the vote.

There was some discussion as to what constitutes a sick day. Terri said that she believed a sick day was reserved for when you couldn't perform your job. Mac pointed out that on the old employee policy they were called sick/personal days. The personal days increased to 6 days on the new policy.

Terri made the motion to go into executive session to discuss the personnel policy. The board went into executive session with the Road Crew at 8:22pm until 8:37pm.

The board discussed making an effort to make sure there as at least one name on the ballot for all open officer positions to lower the need for write-in candidates, which would help when it comes to counting the votes. Josh said Abbey was working on contacting the remaining auditors to try to find a

someone to consider appointing the third position for the last 3 months of the term. Auditors are mainly needed just in January.

The Brigham Residence Group is still active. Paul Breuer said that it is still on going.

The next Regular Select Board meeting will be held on Monday, Jan 11, 2021 at 6:30pm.

Gary made the motion to enter executive session at 9:07pm, seconded by Terri and passed with a vote of 4-0.

Meeting minutes recorded by Tami Brennan.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!! AND MAY 2021 BE THE YEAR THAT WE ALL BECOME UNMASKED...☺

Addendum to the minutes recorded by the Select board regarding the decisions made in executive session.

Motion to add to our Dec 28 minutes

Road Commissioner will be compensated \$100 a week from Nov 1st to April 1st and not to exceed more than 22 weeks. If the road commissioner Decides to delegate another road crew employee to cover for him/her it will be the responsibility of the road commissioner to compensate that employee.

Motion made by Josh Goss and 2nd by Gary Denton
Vote 4-0 passed

