

Bakersfield Regular Select Board Meeting
December 27, 2021
7:00pm

Meeting was called to order at 7:01pm by Josh Goss.

Members present: Josh Goss (chair), Lance Lawyer, Terri Gates, Brenda Churchill via zoom

Members absent: Gary Denton

Residents/Guests: Josh Pryor, Josh West, Mac Newitt, Maria DeRosia, Douglas Nelson, Sue Ann Coffin, Dan and Katie Forand, Shirley, Linda McCall, Tami Brennan

Previous Minutes from the December 13th meeting were not considered for approval because there was not a quorum present that had attended the December 13th meeting. The board will consider the minutes at the next board meeting.

Warrants signed:

Road Commissioner's Order #30&31-2021	\$16,892.42
Road Commissioner's Order #17-2021	\$72.56
Selectman's Order #29-2021	\$132,552.26

Finances: Maria met with the board and told them the good news that Community bank had been able to furnish the town with images of all the checks from each deposit and had charged the town nothing. She said that Vera is being a detective and getting us closer to balancing. Maria said that it was hard because many paid in cash and the cash could have been miscounted. Lance asked if any FEMA money had come in lately. He said that they were expecting a little over \$400,000.00. Maria said that she had checked the account this morning and it had not arrived yet. Lance and Mac said that they would make a call to check the status. They said that they were told around 5 weeks ago that it should be arriving in our account very soon.

Douglas Nelson met with the board about the use of his land. Doug said that he is the last full-time resident on Skinner hill Rd, and when we get snow, the plows have used his dooryard as a turnaround for about 35 years. He said that the trucks have gotten a lot bigger and that now it takes about 3000 sq ft for the snow and the plows to make the turn around. He said that he's given up the rights to that section of his property for a long time, but now he would like to build a building that would affect the ingress and egress. He said that he did a bunch of work to that same area this summer, but the plow came early and basically took out the work that he had done. Doug asked if the town owned that area. Mac said that the town doesn't own it. Mac said that the town has a right-of-way, but that the plow goes way beyond our right-of-way. Doug said that there is a domicile beyond his house and the road really ought to be improved. He said that all the water from the ditch runs down and erodes the road. The board thought that Claude Sheridan could be approached regarding a turnaround for the plows, since he owns both sides of the road up beyond.

Mac said it could be a quick fix in the summertime to upgrade the road, dig a ditch and maybe put a culvert in with some gravel.

Josh confirmed with Doug Nelson that he was issuing a formal request to the town to find a different place for the plow to turn around by next winter and Doug said yes. Lance said to make sure that any damage done to Doug's property is repaired.

Josh told Doug that the board understands that He has plans for his property and that this is the only step that Doug has to take. The board thanked Doug for allowing the town to use his land for so long.

Previous minutes: Terry arrived which formed a quorum from the December 13th meeting. Brenda made the motion to accept the Dec. 13 minutes, Terri seconded the motion and the motion passed with a voice vote. Josh-yes, Brenda-yes, Terri-yes, Lance-abstained.

Roads- Mac said that we are still waiting for FEMA. He said that he was on the portal today and it still says that the money is obligated. Mac and Lance will contact Kim or Penelope regarding the funds. Mac said that the guard rail is done on Waterville and the corner of East Bakersfield Rd.

Terri asked Mac if the crew went out and plowed yesterday. Mac said yes and they were out the night before as well. She said that Waterville Mtn Rd was slick. Brenda asked Josh whether there has been any resolution from the King's Hill issue from the last meeting. Mac said that it seems to be resolved. Dan plows up as far as George's, and then does the rest of the route, then he comes back to King's Hill, and goes up farther.

We have received ambulance quotes from AmCare, Missisquoi, and Enosburg and we are just waiting for Cambridge.

The bids close for the side-mower that the town has advertised to sell, on December 31, 2021. The bids are being held until then.

The board rescheduled the budget meetings that were purposed at the last meeting, due to conflicts with the board. The first Special budget meeting is scheduled for Monday, Jan 3, from 4:00pm to 6:00pm. The second Special budget meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 10, at 6:00pm-8:00pm. The Regular Select Board meeting is rescheduled for Tuesday, January 11, at 7:00pm. The third Special budget meeting is to be held on Wednesday, January 19, from 4:00pm-6:00pm, if needed. And the second Regular Select Board meeting for January will be held on Monday, January 24, at 7:00pm. The board noted that Kathy needs the budget, and all ballot consent forms for those wanting to run for a town office, by the 24th. **Any resident that would like to run for a town office, please visit the Bakersfield Town website and click on Open Positions. You will find the petition form required and the ballot consent form that you must sign to allow your name to be placed on the ballot. There is also a Town Officers manual that contains brief job**

descriptions of each position. The board believed that the number of signatures needed on the petition was 5% of the town's populace, which they believed to be about 30 signatures, which is one page.

Brenda asked if we could distribute town reports electronically to save on printing costs. Josh said that the town report is available on the town website but that we have to also have hard copies. Bakersfield prints their own town reports which saves a lot of money on printing.

The board noted that one of the items they want to place on this year's ballot is to ask the town if they want to change the position of treasurer from an elected position to an appointed one. If approved, then the board would appoint and unappoint a treasurer as needed, and the town would no longer vote to elect someone for the position. The other item the board wants to place on the ballot is whether to change the way we vote on the proposed budget, from a vote off the floor at Town Meeting to a vote by ballot on a permanent basis. Last year, we voted on the budget by ballot due to a temporary special order of the State due to COVID.

The question was asked if ballots are getting a blanket mailing this year and the board said that provision for mail in ballots are already in place and always have been. Anyone who would like a ballot mailed to them just needs to call the Town Office and ask for a ballot to be sent.

ARPA- The question of whether there will be ARPA items on the ballot was asked. Brenda said they she is still waiting for a quote from the Water Dept about a usage monitor for the town Spring that automatically signals the reservoir to fill depending on usage rather than just time. Other projects, brought forward by residents via ARPA meetings, etc, will be discussed about whether or not to put them on the ballot.

Terry asked if there have been any ARPA meetings held. Brenda said yes there has been one and the recording of that meeting is on the Bakersfield Town's YouTube channel and can be accessed there. Terri asked if there were a lot of people in attendance and whether there were minutes from the meeting.

Brenda said that attendance was low. Her concern is that everybody is going to say that they didn't know. She said that we advertised the best that we could, and the minutes are on the town website.

Brenda said that the first report to the US Treasury Dept, regarding the management and distribution of ARPA funds, is due by April 1st. She said that there was a lot more to accounting for, and reporting on, the ARPA funds than originally anticipated. Katie Buckley is offering her support in guiding through the process. It's a lot of work. The ARPA funds are to be distributed in the form of grants. Brenda said to think of it like a reverse grant. We approve and issue the grants. It's a lot of paperwork. We are to solicit people to put in for grants.

Brigham Residence- No updates. Lance said that Paul owes him an update report soon.

The board updated Mac on the discussion from the last meeting regarding the pigeon problem and the broken windows at the Academy. The board said to board up all the windows from the outside. The concern was that if we do it from the inside, the windows can still be broken. Josh said that if that required getting a lift, then go ahead and get that done. Mac said that Green's rents the Blue Genie lifts. Brenda said that Jeff Machia has a lift, and she was sure that he would like to donate to the town the use of that. She said she would touch base with him when she gets back to town after the holiday.

Brenda said that the town has received permission to use the school gym for Town meeting, Rhonda is just confirming that with the Superintendent.

Reminder: According to State Election Law- In order to vote on items that are voted on at Town Meeting off the floor, you must be physically present to have a vote. Anyone attending the meeting via Zoom will not be able to vote over Zoom.

The board asked Linda McCall if the Historical Society would be interested in holding the traditional town meeting luncheon this year and Linda said that the Historical Society would be interested in holding the dinner if COVID restrictions will allow them to do so. Lance asked if they would hold the dinner at the school and Linda thought they would probably hold the dinner at the Historical Society Building since it will be opened back up after the winter by then. John West asked about the board's search for someone to run for Moderator at Town Meeting, since Euin does not want to run again. Lance said that it would be nice to know if someone is interested ahead of time but that the position is nominated from the floor after Town Meeting opens by the previous moderator, and then voted at immediately. Then the new moderator will take over from there. Brenda said that she would clarify with Euin that she has definitely decided not to run again. John also asked about how ballots were counted. The board explained that the ballots are counted by the board of Civil Authority and those invited to help. Part of the Select Board's job is to come in and cut the seal on the boxes and count ballots. All counting teams are formed of one republican and one democrat and if someone is running for a position, they will not be included on the counting for that position. Josh asked if the people that are running for the positions are there to oversee the counting of the votes and the board said no.

There is a meeting scheduled with the school principal this Thursday at 4:00pm, that anyone interested is welcome to attend. Lance said that there is a simple agenda: to discuss the usage of the gym for Town Meeting and to discuss the school removing the rest of their property from the Brigham Academy Building. He said that the town left the school with the use of one room in Brigham, for storage but that has spread. He said that the school may need to add money into their budget to build a storage shed. Josh said that a great way to provide immediate storage would be to order Storage containers. They cost about 2500.00 and they get delivered on a flatbed and placed exactly where you want them placed, hands free.

Outside Audit- Tami said that letters requesting quotes for an External Audit to be received by Jan 17, were mailed to six accounting firms on December 22. The board said that there would be two different line items placed on this year's ballot regarding the External Audit. The first is whether the town will approve the monies needed to conduct such an audit for 2022, and the second being the frequency that such an audit should take place. The board believed that the town agreed to have External audits conducted every 5 years, but Tami said that she and Kathy couldn't find an actual vote that had taken place determining that fact, in the past Town Meeting minutes, and that it is possible that an assumption is all that it was. The last External Audit was conducted in 2009. Lance and Mac said that an External Audit may be required to be eligible for FEMA funds. FEMA has asked when the town's last External Audit took place. FEMA's requirements are that External audits are to be conducted periodically.

Future Agenda- Brenda commented on the board's mentioning that they were restricting agenda's during this time of budget building. Brenda wanted to clarify and make sure the town understood that the board is not restricting visitors or guests at the meetings, on the contrary, all meetings, including Budget meetings, are open to all visitors and they are indeed encouraged to come. What the board is trying to limit at this time is topics that can wait, while they focus on determining a Budget.

Brenda made the motion to adjourn the meeting, Lance seconded, and the motion was approved by the voice vote of Terri-yes, Brenda-yes, Josh-yes, and Lance-yes. The meeting adjourned at 8:08pm.

The next meeting of the Select Board will be a Special Budget meeting on January 3, 2022, from 4:00pm to 6:00pm.

The Second Special Budget meeting of the Select Board will be held on Monday, Jan 10, 2022, from 6:00pm to 8:00pm.

The next Regular Select Board Meeting will be held on Tuesday, Jan 11, 2022, at 7:00pm.

Meeting minutes recorded by Tami Brennan.