

Bakersfield Regular Select Board Meeting  
Monday, February 12, 2024  
7:00pm

Meeting was called to order at 7:00pm by Josh Goss.

Members present: Josh Goss (chair), Lance Lawyer, John West, Terri Gates

Members absent: Tod Cosgrove

Residents/Guests: Tom Jamison, Dan Forand, Tami Brennan

Previous Minutes: The motion was made by Lance to accept the previous minutes as written, motion was seconded by John and the motion carried with a vote of 4-0.

Warrants signed:

Finance- Tom met with the board and gave them updated Finance reports. The reports reset as of January 1 and therefore the budget column is empty as no budget has been voted in yet. Josh said that he would get Tom the proposed budget numbers to plug in there until after Town Meeting Day. Tom told the board that things are coming along well and that he is catching on under Vera's good guidance. He said that he now familiar with the warrant process, the Road, Town, and Library accounts, grants, trusts, and has been exposed conceptually to Property taxes. Tom said that his plan is to remain as treasurer for 5 years and then retire. He said that if we received a resume from someone that is younger and interested in staying here for decades, then he would not be offended if they wanted to hire them instead and after he knows the job, would be willing to train them. The board said that they are good for now. Tami said that she and Vera have both signed at the bank for the change in signature cards and are just waiting for John to sign and then Tom will be good to go to sign checks. John said he would make sure to get that done this week. Tom asked the board if they were willing to see if he could produce a report that they could use from Quick books. He said if they were willing, that he would create the reports the way they are used to seeing them and also some from Quick books for them to take a look at for the next meeting. He said that he's not trying to eliminate anything, just maybe to simplify. He said that Quick books is where the information resides and then it gets pulled out and re-entered into the spread sheets. The board said they were willing to take a look. Josh said that the reason that they like this report is that it shows what we budgeted, what we're spending and what we have left, so we can see where we can cut. Tom said there is also a budgeting report in Quick Books. Lance said that he is used to seeing the checking account balance for the Margaret Cutting Trust Fund. He said that is the account that the educational grants/scholarships come from. Tom said he would make sure that Lance gets that. Tom said that we will be upgrading to the Quick Book Enterprise this

year, which is the desktop version so all our information will stay in house. Tom asked how that procedure works, if the purchase amount got added to a warrant before purchase. Josh said that Tom would use the credit card and then the credit card balance would go onto a warrant to be paid. Tom said that he would check with Quick Books to confirm that the payroll option is included with the Enterprise edition.

Road- Terri said the roads are a mess and that she had a bunch of calls on Saturday. She said can they put down any stone at all. Josh said that because of the way the weather has been thawing and wet, the stone will crush right down. He said if you go by Enosburg garage, they have 30 loads of crushed stone just sitting there and they are leaving it there until the weather changes and they can put it down. Josh said that Mac told him that they had both graders out today and it helped in some spots but made it worse in others. They are hoping that it freezes up this week so they can get on them. He said there is not enough frost, and once you cut into the frost, then it will just bubble up. He said you have around 3 inches of snow and if you drop stone in there it's just going to break up worse. Lance said you are just moving around mud. Josh said that he doesn't remember a year like this. Terri said she wondered what was going to happen when the sap trucks start running. Lance said the roads have been bad this year all over the state. He said now is not the time to do anything but hope to get a freeze. Josh said he works with someone on the board in Montgomery and she lives on Gibou Rd and drives a Tacoma. She said she would park the truck where it was safe and walk but she would be walking 5 miles because it's so bad. Terry asked about the edges on our roads. Josh said that when we had the woman from the state come here, she said that the crowns on our roads were good. He said that the edges have excess sand buildup from laying sand down in the winter and this gets pushed aside as cars ride over it. He said that having an excavator this year, they could go through and cut that off and grade it into the ditch, and then dig out the ditch. He said that Waterville took about a month to do a section of their road. He said they crowned, cut and got the ditches dug and sodded, and it looked good. He said it takes money and time to do it right.

Josh said if there is anyone out there with another idea to bring to the board, they would be happy to hear it. Terri said that it's not the crew's fault, it's the winter. She said that the crew cut up and picked up the branches in the cemetery from the windstorm and it looks so much better.

Tami asked about ATV stickers this year, and the board said to order 200.

Digital payments- John said that they had decided not to proceed with the digital payment system because people won't use it because of the fee. Tami said that she thought they had decided to move forward with that. She said we have a lot of people requesting to be able to make a digital payment.

MERP Update- John said that the inspections on all three buildings is scheduled for tomorrow. Mac is going to make sure they have access to all three buildings and be there for questions, etc.

Brigham Update- Lance said the architects came to look over Brigham again and they wanted some natural light in there, so we took 7 sheets of plywood off and then put them back on. He said the contractor and his architects, and NWRPC, and Historic Preservation Trust were all there and walked through. Lance said they dramatically changed the way the rooms would be laid out inside to provide 16 or 17 rooms. He said the contractor approved and is moving forward.

Lance said that \$32,000.00 if the \$45,000.00 had been submitted for repayment. He said that he discovered that we paid the May 2023 invoice twice and Dreher has been approached and we will not pay the current February invoice for \$1,000.00 because of it, which will even it out in the end.

John made the motion to utilize the over payment for May 2023, invoice #19, to be used as payment for the Feb 2024 invoice. The motion was seconded by Terri and carried with a vote of 4-0.

Lance said that he will take a brief time at town meeting to speak about Brigham. He said they plan to have an informational meeting in April.

The board discussed a ticket to be issued by the Town Constable for a dog running a large after multiple warnings to the owner. The fine would be \$25.00. The dog lives in Enosburg but comes into Bakersfield on its rounds. Since the dog complaint took place close to the constable's property, Terri said she thought it was a conflict of interest. John said he agrees with the ticket. Lance said he did too. He said that we need to have people take control of their dogs. Terri asked where it says that outside the village, your dog has to be on a leash. Terri said that this is conflict of interest because we've had multiple complaints on Facebook in other areas that have not been addressed. She said this one is being sited because he can see it from his front porch. Tami asked if she was saying that the constable should be responding to the complaints on Facebook. The board said no. Tami said he can only respond to someone who calls him as constable with a complaint about a dog and the Facebook crew haven't. Josh said that he could not use his position as Select Board chair to solve a problem with my neighbor. John said that according to the ordinance, the dog can't leave your property lines. Terri said the dog lives in Enosburg so they would be under the Enosburg ordinance. John said when it crosses the town line, then you have to follow the town rules. Terri said that she doesn't hook her dog because she doesn't live inside the village limits. Lance said that even outside the village limits, if the dog is off your property, then it's out of your control. The board said they would need a copy of the complaint form to consider this.

The board received a request from the Probation and Parole office regarding Bakersfield remaining on their service list. The board asked Tami to call and get clarification on this request.

The board received a questionnaire from Grand Isle regarding our town treasurer position changing from that of an elected position to that of an appointed position. The board filled out the questionnaire and Tami to send it out in the morning.

Josh said that we have to decide if we are willing to send our constable to the training. Josh said this is a mandatory position to be filled. Lance said that we have to get off our butts and make a decision. The board said to call the constable and let him know that they are looking into the liability, insurance and the cost. Terri said to call the constable and make it very clear that he is not a constable at this time because we have not moved forward. He has a title and no authority. Lance said that we have the ordinances and we have not empowered anyone to enforce the ordinances. The board said that Jeffersonville/Cambridge has a dog catcher, but they can't write tickets. They have cages and can pick up a dog and kennel a dog and charge fees but to do the rest of the job, they have no authority. Josh said the way society is now, the state is saying that you have to have x, but no one is willing to be x with the pay that is available in these small towns. John said that we are in analysis paralysis and we need to find out how to mitigate the liability and the insurance and decide what we are going to do. Tami to call VLCT and find out what is covered under our General Liability and Errors and Omissions policies. Also, to see what the liability limit and operating requirements would be for an ice rink.

Historical Society- Lisa Stone sent the board a request from the Historical Society for permission to sell coffee and donuts at the Town Hall on Town Meeting Day. The board said that they could sell coffee and donuts from 8am-10am, when Town Meeting begins, and then again after town meeting ends, throughout the day as people will stop in to vote by Australian ballot. The board doesn't want anything happening in the outer office during town meeting to limit excess noise during the meeting.

Alex Barkley sent a letter to the board with a list of possible grants that could be looked into for the town's benefit. The board to discuss this with Alex.

The board talked about the possibility of having an ice rink and what the operation requirements might be according to VLCT insurance.

Lance said that the CLA score (Common Level of Appraisal) is now called the Coefficient of Disposition and we are at 24.42% below what we should be at 100% appraisal rate. This would bring us to 75.58% on the CLA scale, way below the 80% limit before mandatory reappraisal. Lance said we've already

scheduled the reappraisal. We've done our due diligence. The board said that Sue told them that the business that we have scheduled the reappraisal with, and were on their schedule for this coming summer, has been sold, so we are waiting to hear from the new owners soon to see if the reappraisal will go as planned.

The board discussed the increase in the school budget. Terri said that they should have consolidated superintendents not districts. She said that we as a town could have saved money a lot faster than going through Montpelier. She said the money budgeted today is astronomically higher with 140 students, then when we were had 225 kids. She said we need to have a discussion at Town Meeting to see if the town is interested in finding out what it would take to get ourselves out of Act 46. She said in this year's budget they are adding 3 positions to the central office.

John made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Lance seconded the motion and the motion carried with a vote of 4-0.

The meeting adjourned at 9:04pm.

Meeting minutes were recorded by Tami Brennan.