

Bakersfield Regular Select Board Meeting
Monday, Jan 11, 2021
7:00pm

Meeting was called to order at 6:05pm by Josh Goss.

Members present: Sam Cribb, Josh Goss, Gary Denton, Terri Gates

Members absent: Lance Lawyer

Residents/Guests present: Brenda Westcom, Kathy Westcom, Abbey Miller, Matt Hull, Cheryl Irwin, Brenda Churchill

Motion to accept the amended Dec. 28 meeting minutes, with the correction that Pat Debevac's letter was not a letter of resignation but a letter notifying the board that she would unlikely be able to fulfill her duties as an auditor this year as she was in Ohio taking care of her elderly mother and was not expected to be back in Bakersfield in time for the Town Audit, was made by Gary, seconded by Sam and approved by a vote of 4-0.

Warrants signed:

Road Commissioner's Order #1&2-2021	\$9,454.92
Selectmen's Order #1-2021	\$2,857.57
Road Commissioner's Order #1-2021	\$1,382.86
Road Commissioner's Order #FEMA	\$21,553.96
Road Commissioner's Order #1&2-2021	\$31,662.00

Budget discussion- Abbey Miller-

The Road budget is to be voted on as a one-line item, but the itemized budget will be published in the Town Report.

The budget line item of Equipment repair fund is to include all Road equipment as a single line item instead of a line item for each piece of equipment.

The Board and Abbey discussed each line item, the previously budgeted amount, how much the town actually used this year or typically uses, what the funds were actually used for in that category and the anticipated needed amount for this current year Of 2021, which is the year to which this budget will apply.

The board decided that to rent equipment and have the road crew mow the roadsides themselves, instead of contracting out the position, would be more cost effective and satisfactory as to the performance of the job required.

Discussion as to whether to organize a small pool of people as substitute drivers that Mac could call in an emergency to drive plows, etc., in case one of the guys was sick during a storm, was decided against as it would cost more than anticipated. The board decided that we should just work with what we have and do the best that we can.

Discussion as to electricity usage at the North Station included the decision to reach out to Mark Doremus, the town rep to NWSWD, as to a possible monthly fee to cover electricity since NWSWD is using part of the interior.

Abbey spoke of paying the Bridge loan to get that off the books in 2020. Briefly reviewed the FEMA projects. Also, that the Town overpaid the Road account by 15,700.00 prior to the TAN loan and Abby said she should have deducted that.

She said the town has two options at this point...either pay it back from the amount that Road receives from the town at the time it receives Town money or carry it over and ask for 15,700.00 less for the road budget for this year.

Gary made the motion to carry over the excess to next year's budget, Sam seconded it and the motion passed by a vote of 4-0.

Abby said that before she leaves the position of treasurer in March, she will have a meeting with Mac to go over as much as possible from FEMA. And to make sure that all the requests have been submitted and all the paperwork done. There are still projects to finish this year but wants to leave them in the best possible position for all to be able to continue smoothly.

Abbey said that the Town has transitioned over to Quicken Books so the reports will look a bit different and should be a little more user friendly. The cost to the Town is \$400.00 dollars for the application, which needs to be upgraded every 4 years, and around \$375.00 to \$400.00 for the payroll subscription which needs to be renewed every year. This software offers employees direct deposit at no extra cost, but all the employees would have to opt for Direct Deposit for it to be feasible.

At 6:40pm, Terri made the motion to move into executive session to discuss personnel salaries, seconded by Gary and approved by a vote of 4-0.

The Board entered executive session at 6:40pm.

The Board ended executive session at 7:10pm.

The Board requested an additional meeting to take place on Tuesday, Jan 19, from 6:00pm until 7:30pm to finalize the budget.

Brenda Westcom and Cheryl Irwin came before the board, representing the Library. They reported that, due to COVID, the library was closed for most of the spring and summer which meant no heat, no salaries, etc., so the library is left with \$15,493.12 of their 2020 budget, and they would like to donate that back to the Town General Fund, since the town is in need of it. The library will be asking for \$35,000.00, which is the same amount they were granted for 2021, to be approved by voters this year on March 2nd, for the year 2022.

Brenda presented a report listing what they were able to accomplish this year in spite of COVID...inter-library loans were abundant, audio book loans doubled this year in spite of reduced library hours, our library loans to other libraries increased this year. The grant from the Currier was up \$120.00 from last year...this grant is based on how many books you loan to other libraries. The Board thanked the library for this donation and discussed whether its acceptance needs to be approved by a vote of the town residents. Abbey was going to check on this. If so, we need to make sure that "allowing the library to donate surplus budget back to the Town General Fund" is on the ballot for Town Meeting Day.

Matt Hull with the BVFD met with the Board about a change in addresses for two residents due to 911. There will no longer be a Gate's Maple Lane. #33

Gates Maple Lane will now be 513 Main St., and the other resident's address will now be 515 Main St.

Sam made the motion to accept the change of addresses, Gary seconded it, and the motion passed with a vote of 4-0.

The Board asked how the Fire Dept was handling COVID restrictions and Mat said that in order to keep all things needed to respond to an emergency continually at a ready status, the Dept has a staggered rotation of 2 people maintaining this task. The number of people in a vehicle depends on the nature of the call they are responding to. They didn't hold an annual meeting this year but are in hopes that by July they can do a big barbecue open house. And the first responders have gotten the vaccine and the booster.

Roger Lindala met with the board via zoom to discuss what Roger would recommend and what Northwest Access could do to help make Town Meeting accessible to town residents remotely this year since there will be no in-person Town meeting. Roger said that the Town can host a zoom call that can reach a large audience by having one or two people at a specific location to host and moderate the informational meeting and to keep the dialog going by managing microphones. Roger said that the most important thing in a zoom call is to have good audio so that people can hear what is being said. Roger explained that the Zoom app is continually searching for the attendee who is speaking to highlight them on the video while they are speaking so the video will change as the speaker changes. Depending on the number of attendees, it's possible that not all attendees will be seen on video but all should be able to hear everything. The board discussed possibly seeking the school's permission to hold the zoom host at the school to be able to offer a place for socially distanced attendance for those not able to access a zoom due to inadequate internet, possibly attending by appointment to ensure the ability to social distance. They also discussed the option of recording the entire informational meeting to be accessed by residents later.

The set up would include a camera and 3 microphones set up in the place that they are needed. There would be no cost to the town. Also, some towns have brought in larger TV monitors and hooked them up to laptops to make it easier to see attendees, especially for large Zoom meetings.

Roger is to reserve the equipment for the town with the informational meeting to be held the week before Town Meeting, on Wednesday, February 24, beginning at 7:00pm., with the location to be decided upon later.

All the Board is to be present during the Zoom Call.

This year's Town Meeting will be held by Australian ballot only, on Tuesday, March 2nd with voting booths set up at the Town Hall, COVID style☺

Roger said that Northwest access has been doing this successfully for every other town in the region...Fairfield, Swanton, St. Alban's city council, etc.

Roger is offering a free training on "How to improve your Zoom call", this Thursday at 4:00pm. In order to attend, you must email Roger for an invite at coordinator@northwestaccess.tv and he will send you a link to join in.

The Town Audit is to begin this week. Pat Debevac will be unable to serve as auditor this season. There are two auditors available this year, Courtney and Jason Bapp, who will be serving for his last term, which leaves the town short one auditor. Brenda Westcom cannot serve as auditor since she is a Library Trustee but has agreed to help put the town report together. Tami Brennan has been asked to help with that as well.

Zoning- The Board was presented with a resume from Melanie Riddle for the Town Zoning Administrator position and the Board asked Tami to contact the applicant to attend the Jan 19th meeting at 6:00pm for an interview. Also, Terri had questions as to a neighbor not having obtained a permit to build an addition to a shed that is potentially not far enough away from her property line. Josh said that the first step would be to contact the Fence Viewers and have them take a look.

Road Report-

Mac said the roads are good and there have been no complaints.

Terri was to investigate whether they needed a town vote or if the Select Board could vote to change the position of Town Clerk from an elected position to an appointed position.

Some discussion took place briefly about the possibility of changing Belvidere Mtn Rd to a Class III Road due to the increase of residents on that road. The road, at present, is not wide enough to classify as a Class III. It was also discussed that there is a resident living on a property on that road, that should not be living there year-round, that the deed states it is not a permanent residence and has an inadequate septic with no septic design. The zoning admin may need to have a certified letter sent. Will wait to see COVID protocol.

Motion to adjourn was made by Gary, Sam seconded and the motion passed by a vote of 4-0.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15pm.