

Bakersfield Regular Select Board Meeting  
Tuesday, January 11, 2022  
7:00pm

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

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

Members absent: Gary Denton

Residents/Guests attending: Kathy Westcom, John West, Tami Brennan, Todd Cosgrove, Bill Irwin, Pat Evans, Robert Willey, Paul Stanley, and via zoom, Larry Gervias, Nathan Pickard, Linda McCall

Previous minutes from Dec 27, 2021. Lance made a motion to accept Dec 27 minutes, Brenda seconded the motion, and the minutes were accepted by a vote of 4-0.

Finance- Brenda said that she had a statement to share from Vera Lawyer. She said that there were rumors that there was a lot of money missing but all has been accounted for except for \$4.00. Fantastic work. Josh asked if that would be a reason that we could now accept Vera's resignation. Kathy said that currently Vera is the only person authorized to sign for the library, so we need to wait until that is sorted out. The board gave the library until the end of Jan to give someone else the authority to sign checks. When Vera is taken off, we can accept Vera's resignation at the Jan 24 Regular Select Board Meeting.

Kathy spoke to the board regarding Town Meeting. Kathy said that a bill just went through the House and the Senate that gives the town two additional choices besides having in-person town meeting on town meeting day. The town can choose to do Australian ballot like we did in 2021, for this year only, or the town can postpone Town Meeting to a later date. Kathy said that if they postpone town meeting, they would still have voting on the regular town meeting day because we still have officers to elect, and then have town meeting later and vote off the floor for the budget and donations, etc. The board has the authority to make a motion and vote one way or the other. Kathy said that we could do a mass mailing for ballots, but the 5-year track record is that we only get up to 1/3 voter participation. We had 238 voters out of over 900 last year. And a lot of people just threw their ballot out last year when they received it because they wanted to vote in-person. Anybody can get an absentee ballot by calling the Town office like any other year.

Josh made the motion to move this year's 2022 budget to Australian ballot for 2022 Town meeting. Lance seconded the motion and the motion passed by a vote of 4-0. Everything is going on the ballot. One thing that cannot go on this ballot is that they cannot ask the town whether they want to go on Australian vote for everything on a permanent basis. The board asked if we could have a separate ballot in November. Kathy said that they would have to contact VLCT to check that out.

**There will be no in-person Town Meeting this year.**

Kathy asked the board if they were going to have a 30-item budget again this year like we did last year or do we have it as a lump sum. And will we have an informational meeting via zoom. The board said that we will have a one item budget amount on the ballot. The General and Road together. Lance said that everybody has the option to read the Town Report, and all can read the budget broken down, but the board plans to condense it for the vote, like most of the neighboring towns, and like the school does. Terri said to have one item on the ballot for the General and Road budget, but to vote for donations separately. Kathy said that the ballot has to be posted 30 days from Town Meeting which is March 1<sup>st</sup>, this year. The last day to warn the ballot is Jan 30<sup>th</sup>, which is a Sunday, so everything needs to be into the Town Clerk by noon on Thursday, Jan 27. Nailed down, signed, and ready to go. And typed up? Kathy is to come to the Jan 19<sup>th</sup> budget meeting. Josh said that if the board doesn't have everything nailed down and signed by Jan 24<sup>th</sup>, that they can call an additional meeting to sign before the 27<sup>th</sup>.

Kathy said that all the officer positions have someone running.

Terri asked if the school board positions were on the ballot. Kathy said that School Board positions are on the school ballot. It's a separate ballot that you will be voting on during Town Meeting Day.

Larry Gervais from Enosburg Ambulance Service met with the board via zoom. Josh said that the board had reached out to some other ambulance companies and had received bids from them, and the board was looking to see what the Enosburg Ambulance service could do for us. Josh asked Larry if it was possible to do a 5-year contract instead of a 3-year and go with a 2% increase instead of 3%. Larry said that they had proposed a 3-year contract because the utilization of ARPA funds only goes out 3 years and then it's all on the taxpayers. He said that the estimate would go up and not down. Larry said that he hasn't been able to be in contact with his board regarding our board's request. Larry also said that Enosburg wanted to keep the same per capita charge between the town's that they service. He said that this whole increase can be covered by the town's ARPA funds for 3 years. Josh said that Bakersfield thought that their town's ARPA funds can be used in a better way. Larry said that Bakersfield could utilize their ARPA funds because Enosburg Ambulance had a huge decrease for 2 years due to Covid. They could request a % from all the towns. Josh said that words that Andrew, the head guy, used was mismanagement of Ambulance Budget funds. Larry said that he couldn't give the board a definite answer, he would have to check with the Town and Village and solicit the trustees to let them be aware that we want to access the ARPA funds. Josh asked Larry if the Ambulance Service has asked Enosburg for ARPA funds and Larry said they had not. Josh said that Andrew said that the Ambulance service had been running in the red for 5 years, which doesn't sound pandemic related. Larry said that the fund hasn't been paid off and there were some legal issues and not a huge profit. Back in 2014, the per capita charge came to \$40,000.00 and then in 2017, it was lowered and that shouldn't have happened. The contract of 5-years has been slowly chipping

away with the inability for the ambulance to operate. And they are having to pay employees more to retain them. We can't keep going down. We need to get up and maintain. Josh said the board is still in the negotiation standpoint. Josh asked Larry to take back to the Ambulance crew the request for a 5-year contract, maxed out at a 2.5% increase over 5 years. Josh asked Larry to work on that and get back to the board. Larry said that he will take it back and present it. He said it probably won't be a problem to go out 5 years but we'll have to pencil that out.

Todd said that the Select Board should get with the state but he's pretty sure that the ARPA funds cannot be used in a contract with Enosburg. Todd said that he is here to support Enosburg, but he doesn't want to see us get in trouble. The board wanted to know why Enosburg is not using their ARPA funds to pay overtime because that's what they are for. Josh said that he wasn't happy that they haven't asked to use the ARPA funds of their own town first. Todd said that Enosburg has had management changes. He said it's not mismanagement, it's just that their budget is hard to read and follow. Josh said that there were some keywords said at the last meeting that triggered some concerns. Terri said that they said that "We've been running in the red and everybody's ARPA funds can help us get back in the black." It's also the timing, Larry knows that we're building our budget. Enosburg taxes are due once a year on Nov. 15. Bill Irwin from Bakersfield Fire and Rescue told the Select Board that if the board was going to change the contract to someone else that they need to tell the Town's people because that's a significant change. The difference could be a difference between life and death. Josh said that we consulted 3 additional Ambulance Services, AmCare, Missisquoi, and Cambridge Rescue and we took the distance and all that into account. Josh said that we want speedy, quality service, and we would seek the taxpayer's input. Paul Stanley said that it's not just the citizens, it's the first responders who are used to working with the Enosburg Ambulance. If there is a change, we have to get used to a whole new set of people. Josh said that he completely agreed with him. He said to use an analogy, I'm not willing to go to the car dealership and pay sticker price. Terri said that it's not that we don't want to work with Enosburg, it's just that right off the bat, they were saying that you've got money from ARPA, and we want you to give it to us. And they haven't asked their own town. The board asked if Enosburg has added new equipment and the Matt said that they have added a Pedi transport that allows them to hook in infants for safe transport.

Pat Evans from the BCC spoke to the board about 2 items. He said that the BCC had a tradition of planning winter events such as cookie events or watching an unusual film and he asked the board if the BCC would be allowed to plan a snow shoeing event at the Gravel Pit for the end of February and was checking if that was a safe place to be. Josh said that he didn't foresee a problem with that. He said that Mac could give them more information about that. Lance said that it would be a liability issue in the mined section itself. He said they can travel the road through. Pat said that they would stay away from

the mined area. He said that they would have hot chocolate afterward and it would be open to the public. Pat said that the second thing has to do with the very same property. The BCC would like to pursue investigation in having a potential Town Forest, with the Select Board's blessing...not the gravel pit part. Terri said that she didn't think that they could answer that tonight. Pat said that they have wanted to make that area a town park for a long time. He said that they have the help of Franklin County Forester, Nancy Patch. He said we would have to put in a road. He said that it looks like half of the 104 acres is forest. Lance said there was probably 20 acres of woods. He said that it's a pretty narrow strip and it is mountain goat country. Pat said that the BCC is asking you if they can look into it whether we can have a town forest to find out what they need to do, but only with your blessing. Lance said that he would have to review the Act 250 permit. He said that there was specific verbiage on the mining permit. Pat asked if that verbiage could be amended. Lance wasn't sure, he said that part of it was specifically set up for a deer bedding area. He's not sure if they'd allow hiking through there. There are specified wetlands, mostly in the South land. There are some sedges in there that we can't touch. Lance said that he would review it. Pat asked if there were any objections for the BCC to look at it, think about it, and investigate it.

Pat said that there was a third thing. The barn that sits on the Town Park across the green. We could put some money into it to stabilize it but what can we do with it. He said it's an old building with some controversial ideas about it. It was built in the 1800's for training civil war troops. We can't get a grant from Conservation Trust because it's not agricultural. Lance said that his grandfather told him that those 3 buildings were together with the Hurst house. Pat thought that the property line was just on this side of the Hurst House. The board thought the barn was part of the Botman property and went with the house that burned. The Garage was the place to store Stanley Steamer. The barns were connected to the house. Pat asked for ideas of what they could use it for. Lance said you could put a picnic table in there for when it rains. Terri said for a creemee stand....Pat said a liquor store ☺

Nathan Pickard from Cambridge Rescue met with the board via zoom. Josh said that it was brought to his attention that Nathan would like to justify and explain their bid proposal. Nathan told the board about his background. He is currently full-time fire fighter/paramedic with the Williston Emergency Services. He was previously Chief of Morrystown EMS. They were looking at shutting down their agency to a for profit agency and they picked Nathan to make it a well-known, advanced life support, paramedic level service, to functions without having to make transfers. He's been working in this field for 20 years where he started in Dallas. He works with the Williston program for paramedics. He said that Enosburg's paramedics offer great service and are fantastic people, but Cambridge can offer a better level of care and protocols in advanced life support at a top certification paramedic level. He said he was here to discuss why their bid is higher and to ask what the town of Bakersfield is open to. He said when someone picks up the phone and dials 911, they don't

always realize what they are getting. Cambridge functions under District 4 which is an advanced level. District 4 can do a lot more than District 1 does, which is what Enosburg is. For basic transports, Bakersfield required around 50 basic calls a year. There are BLS rates and ALS rates. When an agency picks up an additional town, they need to add staffing at the paramedic level and that creates a price per resident. Cambridge is our hub. Nathan said that before they had heard back from Bakersfield regarding their bid, Nathan had gone to Cambridge to discuss it and they thought it would work well. The cost would be \$45.00 per resident, working with your current census. The state average is pretty much 40-45 dollars. A lot of lower bid services are sustained off from transfers which leave the emergency service vacant. In Cambridge all trucks focus on 911 calls and not transfers. They have a specialty in pediatrics with the most advanced technology, which we trained for under a grant to do this one thing. Nathan said if you google map anything between Cambridge or Enosburg to Bakersfield, there is no easy way. He said the cost is a little bit more expensive, but you are getting a higher-level service. Nathan said that he spoke with his board, and they are willing to work with numbers. He said that he's not here to take over anybody's area, but he said that Bakersfield would be happier with Cambridge, and you wouldn't have to worry about your people. Josh said the concern was that Cambridge came in \$20,000.00 higher than the others. Nathan said their board is willing to go \$10,000.00 less and bring it down to the bottom dollar of \$48,000.00. He said with 50 calls/year, they would try to break even with a new staff member. It would be hard honestly to drop \$20,000.00 and have to wonder how he can keep paid staff on 24 hours a day. He said that they maintain an operating reserve of between \$40,000.00-\$50,000.00, in their banking account. We are dedicated to transparency and always open to attend any SB meetings to explain things and answer questions or concerns. Josh asked Nathan if they were willing to offer a multi-year contract. Nathan said that their contracts usually run for one year. Contracting for 3 years would have to incorporate pay raises and the rise in insurance cost. He said that this year alone there had been a 5.9% increase to sustain service and equipment costs had gone up 7%, all of which would be divided by you, Cambridge and Fletcher. He said it would be important to have gradual cost increases, instead of a big increase. He said as a taxpayer, there is nothing worse than to have my taxes increase. The board asked Nathan, if their truck is out, who is their back-up? Nathan said that it goes to Regional Dispatch, which comes out of St. Albans, so it would depend on the location. It could be Enosburg that gets called, or AmCare or Fairfax. He said that their Dispatch, being in Lamoille County works with their Fire Dept. He said that we would work with Bakersfield Fire Dept. and make sure we can communicate with your First Response Team. Michael Curtain is on our board. We could pick up your agency and would also pick up their training. Bill Irwin asked about their paramedic coverage. Nathan said they have 4 paramedics and two Ambulances. Bill asked if he thought that those would be sufficient if they took on Bakersfield. Nathan said that Cambridge has about 450 calls/year. He said that they have had 10 calls in a day which is unusual, and they have been able

to cover the majority. Simultaneous calls happen about 4 times a month. The second call, we can usually cover. We also give mutual aid to Fairfax and Johnson who started taking transfers instead of doing 911. Bakersfield First Response would tie in with Cambridge which would move you over to a District 4. It would be our responsibility to train you. We are proactive and train twice a month. Josh West asked how many ambulances they have for training. Nathan said they have one crew assigned for a 24-hour day and people listening in to be able to jump. Sometimes they staff a second truck, if that second call drops. We have 30 members on our roster. Josh said that they would take his info and talk with our Fire Dept and get back to you.

Todd said that Nathan gave good factual statements. District 4 does have a lot more that they can do than a District 1. The level of care is higher. He said that you don't always need the higher level, but they can do things that Enosburg can't do. The fact that they would take us into District 4 would enable us to do more. Josh asked if this would provide better training and Tod said yes. Robert Willey said that would be huge. Matt said that the training would be greatly beneficial to us. They said that it would be 30 minutes to the village of Bakersfield's jurisdiction. Enosburg response time, depending on where the call is, could be 15 minutes. Tami asked if our First Response team had higher level training could and they always arrive the fastest, if this would help cover a longer response time and the FD said yes. The first response team would work closer with their hospital. We'd be part of their team. Cambridge could bring all our Fire Fighters up to EMR's. Cambridge doesn't do transfers because then they are offline. They have two riggs, the second one for jumpers. Josh asked our First Response team to meet with Nathan to discuss the training and how everything would work. Tod and Matt said that it would be a big learning curve that we are open to. Bill said that it sounded like Cambridge has a better relationship with their Ambulance Service and that Enosburg had problems. Tod said that Cambridge had the same downfall and Nathan Pickard brought them back. He said one of the nice things about District 4 is that you can say where you want to be taken...to Northwest, UVM, etc. District 1 has to transport to Northwest. Our first responders would have more expertise. Tod said that having more paramedics would be really beneficial to us. Josh said that the board would not want to make any decisions to change without having you guys meet with Cambridge and talk over details. Matt said that upside is that we'd have a year to work with them and see what they work like. At the end of the day, it's what is best for the community and the patient and their need at the time. Lance said we're with you on this. Tod said that Richford pays \$80.00 per capita because they have their own thing and only cover Richford. If Enosburg loses Bakersfield, their per capita will go up.

Paul asked who would be paying for Cambridge Dispatch? Would Bakersfield be paying for Cambridge and St. Albans Dispatch? We have to find out about the Dispatch. Paul said that another piece of the response is not only the time to get here but also to find the address. One of the FD said that they have an active 911 app that gives you the direction. Linda asked if Cambridge had a

subscription. Cambridge offers a subscription plan of \$50.00/annually and then you would pay nothing out of pocket for what insurance doesn't cover. The board called Nathan back onto Zoom to ask the question about dispatching. Nathan said there would be no additional Dispatch fee, that Cambridge would work with Bakersfield's Dispatch Channel through St. Albans when servicing Bakersfield. They would work off Bakersfield's own frequency. Everything is done off Regional Dispatch and you will not be charged out of Lamoille County. They asked if that would delay response time. Regional Dispatch is pushed and goes through a lot of agencies so no big delay. Robert Willey said it wouldn't make any difference in time. Nathan said we'd be communicating with you as we were coming in and we would train together so you would know who we are, and we would know who you are. Nathan said they are willing to come and meet with the officer team and hammer out some of the details. Matt Hull said that he thinks that the Enosburg contract expired Jan 1, 2022, and it's pretty much a gentleman's agreement to cover until the next contract is settled. He said he thought if we decided to change it would be common courtesy to negotiate a shorter contract while we make the transition. Even a 6 month one. He said that we need to make sure that the town is safe. Josh said that if we decide to make the transition, then you guys could have everything hammered out with Cambridge by Jan 1, 2023. Josh said that he hates to go with just a one-year contract, it should be a minimum of three years. Matt said we have to divide between the politics and the service. One example is Georgia, the Select Board was running the FD. It's a plus to Cambridge that they are a separate entity. Josh asked the FD what their recommendation would be. Matt and Tod said they would like to meet with Cambridge first, but they could go both ways.

Josh said we'd have to include Nathan from Cambridge in our Town Meeting Informational meeting, along with you guys to share your feedback on what he says. Josh said we should have given all this to you guys first thing. Tod said he wanted to meet with Enosburg last May, but Enosburg wouldn't do it. The board asked the FD to meet with them at their Regular Select Board meeting on Jan 24, and said they would put off making any decision until then. Matt said he would reach out to Nathan and set up a meeting with the officers and check out what it would look like for a start date of June or January. We'd need the price of 2023 instead of 2022. Matt said that their ability and willingness to train us speaks really loudly. Josh said we'll have to feel them out and see what a multi-year contract would be for budget purposes. We don't want to flop back and forth. We'd need a 3 to 5-year contract.

Josh said that the board had given Larry some stipulations to work out and meet back with us. Josh said we want to be upfront and straight with him, that we're looking at 2023 and want to get all our ducks in a row. We can ask for a 6-month extension or even a year at 2% increase and that we are looking at another option.

Josh told the FD to get the information and come back to us with a recommendation on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Paul said he remembered being involved between

Richford and Enosburg Ambulance, relying on a mutual aid system and working together as mutual aid. He said when you see the resources dwindling. He said you need a good medical system.

Road Report- Mac said that there are 7 or 8 windows at Brigham Academy that are broken, chipped or cracked. Insurance has \$1000.00 deductible. We need a police report to file a claim. There are about 50 total windows. It's \$230.00/day for the big lift and then the moving fee. Mac said the first step is getting the police report. Mac would give the police a tour and see what other windows and doors have been vandalized in the past that we have replaced. Plywood price today is \$46.00 per piece. We would need 50 sheets of plywood and screws which would come to around \$3000.00 plus tax. Josh said we should put \$4000.00 in the budget for that. Tami asked if we could get the amount of money needed to replace the windows from the insurance company and then use that money to board up the windows instead of replacing them. Lance said to call Kathy Lavoie for a key to get in.

ARPA update- Brenda said that we received the final letter from the Treasury Dept for the decision on ARPA funding. What the ARPA funds can cover is more extensive than we thought and will cover more than we thought. Churches and Fund-raising entities that have suffered from not being able to fund raise are eligible for ARPA funds. Brenda will be attending another meeting. She said that we are not allowed to spend ARPA money on a recurring fee or cost because the funds run out. We, as the Select Board, are the final arbiter of what we are going to do.

Brigham Residence- Lance said that the Market Study and Report is done. It's about 50 pages long on the feasibility of the project. He has a meeting to attend with Paul Dryer, Kathy Levoie, Tim Smith and Doug Kennedy a week from Wednesday at 10:00am via Zoom to go over that. Lance to send a copy of the report to Tami to print off at the office.

Mower bids- Josh said that we received 3 bids on the mower. The winning bid is Andy Broillette at \$5150.00. Tami to ask Mac to call Andy and work out payment and time to pick it up. The board to hang onto the other bids until the completion of sale. Deadline for payment is 30 days.

Outside Audit- Tami said that one firm has responded with questions so far and that they have said that we should have a quote from them by the meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup>.

Future Agenda- Fire Dept

The motion to adjourn was made by Brenda and seconded by Lance and passed by a vote 4-0.