

Bakersfield Regular Select Board Meeting
Monday July 26, 2021
7:00pm

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

Members present: Josh Goss (chair), Lance Lawyer, Brenda Churchill, Gary Denton, Terri Gates (arrived 7:54pm)

Members absent: none

Residents/Guests present: Audrey Haselton, Mac Newitt, Eddy Woods, Tami Brennan, Deanna and Rodney Allen via zoom

Motion to accept previous minutes of July 12, 2020, as written, was made by Gary, seconded by Lance and approved by a vote of 4-0.

Warrants signed:

Selectman's Order #16-2021	\$9,271.92
Road Commissioner's Order #6&9-2021	\$5,839.68
Road Commissioner's Order #10-2021	\$3,157.02
Equipment Repair	

Finance- Audrey Haselton- reports/Tax rate

Audrey said that things are coming along better. She has had a lot of help with taxes. The more things are discussed, the more comfortable she is. Josh asked if access to all the accounts is working better. Audrey said yes. She said that the bank is requiring new signatures on the signature cards. Audrey said that she has been on the signature cards for the last 3 years and she didn't know it. The bank dropped off all the paperwork. Lance asked Audrey, whose name is going to on as a signer besides Audrey. Audrey said just hers. She said that Kathy doesn't want her name on. Audrey said that she understands that because Kathy has enough on her plate. Audrey said that Kathy does move money around for FEMA, but she doesn't have to be on the account to do that. Lance said that someone needs to have access to make payroll in case anything happened to Audrey, we need to have someone else on the account. Josh said that usually the second signer is the Assistant Treasurer or the Town Clerk. Lance said that he had been on for a short time when Vera had her accident. He said that we need a second signer. Josh asked if there were any volunteers. Brenda volunteered as she said she may need that in the case of the ARPA funds. Audrey said that the Community Bank rep will come back, and Audrey will get a hold of him and coordinate with Brenda so she can sign. Lance made the motion to add Brenda Churchill as a second signer on the various Bakersfield Bank Accounts, to be able to sign checks in an emergency or in the treasurer's absence. The motion was seconded by Josh and passed with a vote of 4-0.

Josh had a question about an entry on the third page of the Profit and Loss Report regarding Internet Expense. The amount recorded in the allotted column showed \$251.00, in the budgeted column showed \$13.98, showing that we'd used 1800.5% of the budget. He thought that something must be switched around somewhere. Gary had questions about the zoning fund but after a

closer look, it seemed to be accurate. Audrey said that we've been seeing an increase in zoning permits. Lance continued to look over the report and asked a few questions. He asked Audrey to take a look at the whole Profit and Loss Report because something seems not quite right. Audrey said that she would compare it to the last months report. Josh said he thought it might just be a matter of rearranging the columns. Gary showed the Select Board and Audrey, the Enosburg Format for reports and the Select Board liked that better. Audrey said that unfortunately, she didn't set this up and she just goes in and plugs in the data and it calculates it, but she is willing to pursue whatever they want. Audrey said that what needs to happen would be to look it over. Lance said that would be part of Audrey's job. Josh asked Audrey to get in touch with Enosburg to find out the name of the report. Gary said that Enosburg uses Quick Books. Audrey said that she thought that Enosburg used NEMRC. Audrey said that she would research anything. Lance asked Audrey if she had written the Cutting checks. Audrey said, yes, she had. Lance said that the Cutting Fund balance on the report didn't appear to show it. Audrey said that the balance for the Cutting fund was correct, that she had checked it. We still have 6 thousand... in the account. It was \$13,775.00 for the 19 checks. We received \$13,500.00 and we had a couple of checks that were returned. The board asked if Audrey had anything else. Audrey said that she had given the Select Board a blue binder with information for setting the tax rate. The anticipated municipal tax rate is .5707 which is to be added to the Vermont School tax rate set by the State, which is 1.7328 for non-homestead and 1.4789 for homestead. Giving us a Tax Rate of 2.0496 for Homestead, and 2.3035 for non-homestead. Lance wanted to make it clear that we, as a town, had no choice in the school tax rate. That is given by the state. We add the municipal tax rate needed to meet the budget that the town voted in last March.

Lance made the motion to set the municipal tax rate at .5707, which will bring the homestead tax rate to 2.0496 and the non-homestead to 2.3035. The motion was seconded by Gary and the motion passed with a vote of 4-0. The Select Board members present, signed to approve and set the tax rate and gave it to Audrey to send out the Property tax bills.

Audrey said that Vera was coming in the morning, and they will enter it into NEMRC and then they can start printing tax bills and start sending them out. Audrey said that she was going to need some help. She said that there will be adjustments, and copies to mortgage companies and some residents have paid in advance, plus photo copying, etc. The board asked if that was more than Tami had done with Abbey and Tami said that Abbey did all that, and that she had just come in on the day that taxes were due to help collect taxes as they came in. Audrey said that Vera was very, very helpful. She said that once we get it all printed out, there will be stuffing envelopes. Audrey said her thought was to ask for at least 20hrs to hire one person to come in late afternoons and evenings, so she doesn't tie up the photo copier. There will be a lot of work involved. Audrey asked her granddaughter, that if the Select Board agreed, if she would come in and help her. Josh said that Audrey doesn't need to worry

about using the copier during business hours as this is her office. Audrey said that she wasn't just talking about the researchers, that there are over 720 tax bills to be printed and photocopied, and she doesn't know how many more printed and copied for escrow accounts. Josh asked if the Select Board had any thoughts about this. Lance said that we need to get them out sooner rather than later, if you can get Vera to help you. He was concerned that this material contained confidential and semi-confidential information. Whoever is doing it needs to be discreet. Tami asked what about Sue Wooten, who the Select Board has already met and interviewed. Audrey said that she didn't feel comfortable asking Sue to come in. It would be photo copying, stuffing envelopes, taking a list and going through and pulling those on the list for escrows and photocopying. Audrey said it would be very little interaction with the tax bills. They would be punching holes in them and arranging them alphabetically. This is just getting the taxes out. She hasn't thought about who and how many people will be there to collect taxes. That's for another day. Oct. 4th this year. Lance said it was ok with him, as long as she is not interacting with confidential information. Gary agreed. Josh said he wants to minimize the hours. He said this is part of the treasurer's position. Audrey said that she would be working with them. Josh said that Abbey was here for 3 years, and Vera was here for a long time, and this is the first time that the board has been asked to hire out for more help to get taxes out and the town didn't budget for that. Josh said he was ok with a maximum of 10 hours with a set limit of \$15.00/hour. If it takes over 10 hours, and it takes two days to go out instead of one, then it takes two days. Brenda said that she was willing to volunteer to help if Audrey needed help over 10 hours.

Josh made the motion to approve an assistant to the treasurer, of Audrey's choosing, at a rate of \$15.00/hour for a maximum of 10 hours. Brenda seconded the motion and the motion passed with a vote of 4-0.

Audrey said that she would order enough yellow paper to print out the tax bills. Audrey told the board that if they had questions or concerns over the reports, if they would get them to her, she would research them. Lance said that if she could look at the highlighted areas on the reports that would be good, but right now the number one priority is to get the tax bills go out. Josh asked Audrey to send the Select Board an email when the tax bills are done and gone out. Audrey said that she didn't have their emails. Lance said that Tami or Kathy can give them to you.

Road Report-

The board asked Mac if Roadside mowing was working good. Mac said that it was. He said that Mark was working in the gravel pit screening gravel to have gravel lined up and the screeners were up and working good. Mac said that he had planned on taking vacation this week until FEMA got in the way. Mac and Lance have been working just about every day on the FEMA workbooks. There were some discrepancies between what Paul wrote down and what the town wrote down. They have all been working together to make them reconcile with the hard data that the town has. We're going to give our numbers again. Paul

had some mathematical errors that had to be tracked down. They estimate that it should be submitted by the end of the week. They have another meeting this Thursday morning at 8 with him, and they will both be in early to work on it tomorrow. FEMA reimbursement is 70% which should equal +/- \$108,000.00 and the state will be 12 1/2 %, when all the projects are totally done. The checks, when they come, will go directly to pay on the FEMA LOC loan that the town took to pay for the projects. Mac said that because of what FEMA allowed for the projects and the contract amounts that we paid the town should make out ok. They are going to set up two new projects for us, an engineering up front and an engineering ongoing. Further expenses is the Fox Culvert. Josh asked if we had a start date for Goat Path? Lance said not yet. They dropped the culvert off for Jordan on Friday. They are having a problem getting the cap for Waterville. They were waiting for the smell of the chicken manure to dissipate a bit.

Terri asked about the charge on the Road Warrant. Mac said that was for maintenance on screener that is 22 years old. The feeder belt was destroyed and the ??? had holes in it, so they got it fixed all at the same time. Equipment repair fund can be used in an emergency. There was concern that it showed that we were \$2000.00 over budget in July. The balance shows not enough in the Equipment Repair fund, so we'll need to transfer it from the TAN loan. We just want to check and make sure the balance is correct, since we grouped the Equipment repair fund in the Road accounts differently this year, to maintain a beginning yearly amount of \$35,000.00, and if so, transfer the amount needed. Josh asked Mac if the roads are in good shape? Mac said that Waterville potted a little bit and there is a place where the water goes right down a driveway. There is no issue with the culvert but an issue with the access itself.

Josh asked Mac if they were going to working on replacing the culverts up there this week? There was discussion about whether the sap lines would be affected when the excavator gets up there to work. The board considered making a call to Kevin Lawyer and ask him to take down the sap lines so that they wouldn't get damaged, or to let them know of their concern and let it be their call, because they will be putting precast culverts in up there and if they want to take down the sap lines just to be safe, while they do the work. Terri suggested that the board give the Lawyers the contact info for the contractors that are going to do the work so that they could talk with them directly. The contractor could also give them a better date as to when the work would be done. Gary gave Josh, Scott Goodhew's number to give to Kevin and Josh said that he will give it to Kevin.

Terri updated the board on Allen Hurlbut on a previous complaint. The potholes complained of are on the paved section of East Bakersfield Rd. Allen said that he had come to a SB meeting, but the board could not remember having him appear so they believe it to have been quite a while ago. Mac had mentioned tearing up the pavement but at the time Allen said that they couldn't do that. Mac said that they could pac some wrap in the potholes and that should patch it. We have 7 or 8 loads that look pretty good. There is swamp on both sides of the road. For paving grants our share is 20% and Mac

said that he was planning on using that on Boston Post Rd because it is more heavily traveled. Terri confirmed that the Mac is looking into a solution for it. Mac said the pac would be a temporary solution.

Terri said that she'd had people ask how the mower bar was working. Mac said that it was working perfectly. It's a very rugged piece of attachment. It's not a brush hog but it can cut through thin brush.

No Mail to review

Select Board compensation for additional reimbursable projects-

Lance and Brenda excused themselves because of their participation on the FEMA and ARPA funds/reimbursements.

FEMA and ARPA will work the same, first the town pays for the charge and then the organization reimburses the town. Josh said that he felt that since the town is being reimbursed, then why not allow the board member to be paid for the work that they do. Gary asked if FEMA had a payment schedule. Mac said he wasn't sure. Terri said that she thought FEMA said that they didn't want any interfering Select Board members on board. Mac said that this project began with Abbey, Mac and Lance involved in 2019, before Terri was on the board. Terri said that she was on the board when this was talked about. Mac said that they may have referred to it while Terri was on the board, but this began with the 3 of them from the start in Dec 2019, before Terri was on the Select Board. Lance said that Mac is, and has always been, the official contact. Terri asked how do we decide on hours. Mac said that Lance has been recording his hours. Terri asked where the money would be coming from. The board said that the money would be drawn from the FEMA LOC loan and then paid back when we get the reimbursement. Terri said, Oh, we have a FEMA loan? Ok. Terri wanted to know if Mac would get paid from FEMA and the town. Mac said that the town is paying him now and FEMA will reimburse the town. The town gets reimbursed for town equipment, gravel and time. Josh said, So, the actual question is about Select Board compensation for additional projects that allow for compensation for administrative work. It costs the town up front, but it all gets reimbursed. Terri said to make it a full umbrella that wages are to match reimbursement limits. Gary looked up the FEMA rates and they allowed 35.00/40.00 per hour. Mac said that he had been working everyday with Lance, on the workbooks for the last two weeks, difficult stuff, don't undersell him.

The board said they would only do this on reimbursable projects. If there is an emergency situation, keep track of your hours from the start, if it turns out to be reimbursable, then we can pay the wages allowed.

Mac said the Paul said that submitting for reimbursement for administrative costs would be the last thing to submit at the end of the project. Mac reminded the board that they had been paying Abbey \$25.00/hour when she was working on the project.

Josh made the motion that the town pay Select Board members, required to work on additional reimbursable projects, \$25.00/hour, for their reimbursable

hours. Terri added that she thought that they should do it by the project and made an amendment to the motion. \$25.00/hour will be the maximum amount allotted-not to exceed \$25.00/hour. Gary seconded the motion and the motion passed with a vote of 3-0, with Lance and Brenda abstaining.

Job descriptions for Road crew-

Section E- Mac said that he had no problem with that but he had a question...what are you going to do for a job description for the Road commissioner. If we need a Road commissioner and if he is not a Road foreman, he's going to need to know what he is required to do. Gary made the motion to accept the job descriptions for the Road crew and Foreman as written. Lance seconded the motion. Terri asked what are the responsibilities of the Road Commissioner? Mac said that the Road Commissioner informs the Select Board about access permits, for 24 weeks they are on call to call out the guys to maintain roads, etc.

The board discussed whether the position was voted from the floor at town meeting and was not on the ballot. Mac said that it was an appointed position for at least the last 20 years. Lance said that it has been an appointed position for at least since before he was on the board. Mac said that you really need some sort of blurb giving some kind of guidance for someone new. Josh asked Tami to put that on the next Regular Select Board meeting agenda...Job descriptions, Section E, Road Commissioner.

ARPA update-

Brenda said the town successfully applied and got accepted. There was a confirmation letter sent to Josh. Brenda needs to talk to Audrey and see if we need to organize the ARPA funds separately in our checking account to be able to keep accountable and for it to be easier to track. She would seek the advice of ARPA admin on this. She is thinking that the town should eventually receive up to half a million dollars. We don't need to spend any of our money on telecommunications since the state will be doing that. We will have special meeting and take ideas from town folk as to how we should spend the funds. We want all residents to give input. We also want to make sure it is posted so that no one can say that they didn't have a chance for input. We also have zoom as a tool to have those meetings.

Outside audit-

Terri decided to hold off. Our only auditor, Jason Bapp, was busy with Tax time. Since that is passed, Terri said that she would see Jason tomorrow night and she would ask him about it.

Other- Brenda said that she had received concerns from Bakersfield constituents, regarding how the town handles Airbnb's/short term rentals. They were wondering about the regulations and if there was one in place. There are 3 in town. It was not a complaint, they had questions regarding the regulations on pets, firearms, and open fires. The board thought that short

term rental guests would have to follow the same regulations as the property owner. Brenda said that she didn't think so, but that the property owner has the responsibility of insurance, etc. and that it would be a good thing to look into.

Mac confirmed that 4 trees at the bottom of the cemetery had been taken down. The remaining trees are a little sketchy and one might interfere with the powerlines.

Gary made the motion to adjourn. Brenda seconded it. And the motion passed with a vote of 5-0 at 8:53pm.

The next regular Select Board meeting to be held on August 9, 2021, at 7:00pm.

Meeting minutes recorded by Tami Brennan.