

Bakersfield Regular Select Board Meeting
Monday, March 13, 2023
7:00pm.

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

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

Members absent: none

Residents/Guests: Gary Foote, Amber Foote, Vera Lawyer, Brenda Churchill, Sue Sonski, Dan Forand, Katie Forand, Alex Barkley, Sharon and Pat Evans, Mac Newitt, Tami Brennan

First order of business was to elect a chair. Terri Gates nominated Josh Goss for chair. Lance seconded the motion and the motion carried with a vote of 4-0, Josh abstaining.

Second order of business was to elect a Vice Chair. John made a motion to nominate Lance as vice chair, Todd seconded, and the motion carried with a vote of 4-0, Lance abstaining.

Previous minutes- Terri made the motion to accept the minutes as written for February 27 Select Board meeting, John seconded the motion, and the motion carried with a vote of 5-0.

Warrants signed:

Selectmen's order #6-2023	\$43,860.43
ARPA order #2-2023	\$161.48
Selectmen's order #1-2023	\$1,070.45
Road Commissioner's order #10&11-2023	\$36,999.36

Finance- Vera gave the board updated finance reports. She said she was working on the sub-recipient's annual report that was overdue, which requires correct numbers for how much we received and how much we spent. She said that she is talking to the library to get that portion of it. She said until we submit this form, then the state can hold up funds that we are supposed to get, and it will hold up getting future grants. She said she's just waiting to get the correct figures since she wasn't here last year. Vera said she's pretty much got QuickBooks sorted out. She said that she would try to make the first SB meeting of the month, but she has a commitment on Monday nights, that may make it difficult. She said she will make sure that the board always has updated reports and that they can email her or call her with questions anytime.

Roads- Mac gave the board a Road Access permit to sign for Edward Robtoy on behalf of Dan O'rourke. The board asked Mac if the work done met the specs and Mac told them that he told him what was needed. They signed off on the first page to do what he has already done and will sign off on the final page after the concrete is poured with the condition in place that if the plastic

culvert fails then he must replace it with steel. Tod said that would be a safety issue with a tanker crossing that if the plastic cracks. Josh said they are making some of the plastic ones stronger now.

Mac said that they need to start talking about replacing Dan's truck. It's as 2015 and is getting rusty and last week we had to replace 2 air valves, and that it's beginning to go the way Mac's did which eventually cost the amount of a full truck payment for repairs. Mac said that it's taking 2 years to get a truck once it's ordered, and Clark's isn't even taking orders right now. Mac said that Dan's truck will be paid off this year, Mark's will be paid off next year and mine will be paid off in 2025. And since it's taking so long to get a new truck, we should keep that in mind for Mark's truck as well. By the time we get three quotes and order, and then actually get the truck, Dan's truck will be 10 years old. Mac said if we get to the point of ordering a truck and then when it arrives, we decide not to take it, we are told that is no problem, it will just go to the next one who is waiting.

Mac asked the board if they had decided about the internet at the shop. Josh asked Tami what the quote was for internet at the garage and Tami said she didn't have that paper with her. Josh said that he believed that they had budgeted for internet for the shop. He told Tami to call get the quote and if it came within the budgeted amount, then have it hooked up. Terri said to bundle it with the phone.

Mac said that Dan is coming off the health insurance as of April 1st. Mac asked that as long as Dan is still employed with the town, will he get the stipend for not taking the Town's health insurance. The town's policy is that if an employee does not take the Town's health insurance, then they will receive a stipend of \$600.00 paid out to them, both in January and June, which averages out to \$100.00/month, so he was asking for a stipend of \$100.00 for each month he works, until he retires. Mac said there is a reimbursement to Dan on the warrant because he overpaid for his insurance since he won't be on for April.

John said that he had a conversation with someone at Town Meeting and they asked if the new grader will enable the road crew to grade the roads when they couldn't before. Josh said that the crew can't grade a frozen road because it just scrapes off the top of the road and they can't grade in slog. He said it's not the equipment that prevents them from grading, it's the condition of the roads. Mac said that with two graders, when the roads are good, we can have them going at the same time, if the older grader doesn't break down.

Lance asked if Mac had heard any more about the wing for the grader. Mac said he is still going with \$30,000.00, but he has heard nothing. John said that we need to get that information for the ARPA proposal, to get it done and submitted. Josh asked if Mac had gotten some stone yet and that maybe he should call Bordeau and see if we can get some loads some stone.

Terri said she had some calls about the barn that is leaning in the town Right-of-way on Waterville Mountain Road. She said we may need to give the owners a timeframe. Brenda said that the barn hasn't moved an inch in two years. She said if the owner volunteer to do it, then it's a different story. Mac said the owner's asked the crew a while ago if they could nudge it down and then they could have the Fire Dept burn it, but the FD said they can't burn it because there is a transformer right behind it. The board said it's zoning issue and for Brenda to notify the owner and ask for their presence at the first Select Board meeting in April and then to remove the structure by the 15th. Brenda said she would get the letter out tomorrow.

Mac said that they asked Tyler to respond to the last FEMA goodies, and he did but then we heard nothing. Mac said he checked in with her and she said she received it.

John asked who it was that did the cold patches on RT 108, and Mac said it was the state.

Treasurer position update- Josh asked if we had gotten any references and Brenda said that she hadn't gotten them because her mom was in the hospital again. Josh asked Tami to reach out for references. Josh said that he had spoken to Vera, and she said that she would like to hire an assistant treasurer and have them work with her to get trained, so they can see what the job is and all the busy seasons and to see if it's a good fit and make sure that they will stay. Josh said his only concern with that is the caliber of the candidates it will attract if it's only an assistant treasurer and we haven't budgeted for an assistant treasurer position. Lance said that it's going to cost us one way or another and we can't afford to lose another treasurer. The board asked Tami to run the ad in the Messenger and the Courier again.

ARPA Administrator position- Brenda said she had consulted Katie Buckley at VLCT and Katie said that she didn't see any reason that I shouldn't continue in the ARPA admin position. Brenda told the board that she has a great knowledge base and she and John has been working together on this since the beginning. Brenda said she has existing proposals and she has two meetings in the month of April to review them and look at new ones. She said that the board can make this position appointment ongoing. Terri said she wanted to discuss this. She asked Brenda where we're going with ARPA. Brenda said the money is in the bank and there are 6 or 7 projects that have been applied for. Brenda said that the town is coming up with expenditures and the newest request is from the Fire Department. Tod asked her when she is going to begin to disperse money. He said that so far, it was paying administration fees. Brenda asked when they wanted it to be dispersed, tomorrow? John said that once we get the citizen board together, we don't have to delay, we only have 6 or 7 requests. We could pick a date in April or May. He said the funds are

there. Josh said that as the Select Board we have to say what we want to do. Brenda said that admin costs are real, and my butt is on the line with the IRS. She said she doesn't want any claw back. John said even if the final rule changes, that we should be grandfathered. Josh said we can have multiple meetings in April and say we want the proposed ARPA projects in by May. Terri said that we need to vote on whether to keep Brenda in that position. She said it's supposed to be someone on the Select Board. Brenda said that isn't true. Tod said that he would like to see someone on the Select Board in the position. Lance said he was involved with FEMA and he's not taking on another project. Brenda said that she is already a town employee. Terri said that she would take it on. Tod said that he would make a motion that Terri be appointed but he doesn't want it to appear that he is showing favoritism. Lance said in a small town, we are going to have people that are related, and we can't help that. As long as you remain neutral from Terri, you have to be free to make motions. Tod made the motion to appoint Terri as ARPA administrator. During discussion John said, not to say anything against Terri, but if you just want it to be a board member, he has been working with Brenda since the beginning and attended all the trainings, etc, if the board would like him to take it over. Terri said she didn't care as long as it was someone on the board. Tod amended his motion and moved to appoint John West as ARPA administrator, Terri seconded, and the motion carried with a vote of 4-0, John abstaining. The board decided to make the deadline for ARPA proposals to be May 1st. All proposals collected and ready for the Regular Select Board meeting on May 8th. The SB will do a quick review and questions, and possibly set a special meeting for ARPA decisions. Mac asked if all the ARPA money will have to be spoken for by then. Josh said that we still have until 2026 before they take it back.

Grant Writer- Alex Barkley met with the board via zoom. Josh said that Alex had submitted a resume to the town for a grant writing position for all town entities. He said we are trying to figure out town funding. Alex said that what Brenda suggested was to bill in 10-hour blocks at \$500.00/block. Alex said that if writing a particular grant takes him 8 hours, he would be billing for only 8. Brenda said there is a grant for \$15,000.00 from VLCT for building maintenance for government owned buildings, which is not matching, just written, and there are many grants available. John said that would include the library and possible the town garage. He said that we know the furnace in the Town Hall needs to be replaced. The board asked Alex if he had looked into the grant that Brenda was speaking about from VLCT. He said no, he would have to speak with Brenda about it. The board suggested a shorter, probationary period to begin with, to see what they were getting, with the obvious understanding that you aren't awarded every grant that you have written. The board asked him if he was ok with him getting paid the second and fourth Tuesday of the month as all bills go on a warrant for SB review and signatures and then is paid the following day. Alex agreed but said that he would still appreciate a signed contract. Alex also let the board know that his father is currently in the ICU in Cleveland, so the next couple weeks is up in the air for

him. He said he will talk with Brenda more. Josh asked Alex if he would draw up revised contract with a shorter term of maybe 4 months and send it to the town Select Board email for the board to look over. Brenda said she believed the VLCT was a time sensitive grant, possibly due by or in April.

Zoning- John asked Brenda if the Zoning Administrator will have normal hours in the office or if it will continue to be just by appointment. Brenda said that it was beginning to get busier so she would have regular hours again soon, but that the zoning by appointment was working very well. Tod told Brenda to make sure that she is copying the Fire Dept on dwellings for new roads and road access permits so we can be sure that we can access the dwelling. Brenda said yes and that she was working with the Planning Commission to develop some new bylaws for that.

Sue Sonski presented the letter, that the listers had written to be sent out to the approved reappraisal companies to request that Bakersfield be put on their list for a Town reappraisal. The letter was printed and given to the board members to read and approve. She said that they had Deanna Robitaille look it over and she approved it, and we need the Select Boards approval, so we printed it out for you and also emailed it to Lance to forward to you all. The board read the letter. John said it was concise, to the point and just what we needed. John asked if Sue thought this would happen in 2026. Sue said that so many towns need reappraisal that we probably won't get on the list for a while. John asked if the listers were sending these to individual companies. Sue said they were sending them to the firms on the approved list given to them by Deanna Robitaille. John made the motion to approve the lister's letter as written, with Sue filling in the proper dates. Tod seconded the motion and the motion carried with a vote of 5-0. Sharon Evans said that she read an article recently that the State was talking about taking over the whole appraisal job since 2/3rds of the state needs reappraisals and there are not enough people to do the job, and that this might be the time for the state to take it over. Sharon said the concern is that the state has sent money each year to towns for them to put aside to be able to pay for the next appraisal when the state deems that it is needed, but Bakersfield has used that money over the years, to pay the listers. She said if the state decides to take do the appraisal themselves, they may require this money be paid back. She said the amount could almost be \$70,000.00 by now. We've been receiving this money since our last appraisal in 2009.

Town appointed positions- The board said the positions that still remain open after Town meeting are Constable, Second Constable, Town Agent, and 2 auditor positions. Someone said that Phil Bronz had shown interest in an auditor position. The board asked Tami to reach out to Phil Bronz and Jason Bapp to see if they would consider the appointment for the office of town auditor. Todd said that it's hard for constables to take the job because they are not trained, and the length of the term isn't long enough for the expense and

time of the training needed. Josh said we tried to get the term lengthened but the state wouldn't let us do it. The Select Board will assume the responsibilities of Constable, Second Constable, and Town Agent.

NWCUD- the board reappointed Heather Jewett and Brenda Churchill as representatives on behalf of the Town of Bakersfield to the NWCUD. Lance made the motion, John seconded, and the motion carried with a vote of 5-0. Amber Foote asked how a regular person, who has an interest in broadband expansion, can get information on progress. She said that she has a personal interest as she sells Real Estate and right now, Belvidere and Waterville are kicking our butt. She asked if the SB received a report. Lance said they do report to us, but that Amber could reach out to Heather Jewett. Todd said that these committees should be updating the SB regularly. The board asked Tami to contact Heather and Brenda and invite them to the next Select Board meeting for an update of the NWCUD.

The board read a letter from the State Department of Highways. Josh said the State wants us to sign an agreement to take over maintenance and repairs of the bottom of Town Road #20 which is Egypt Rd. Mac said that the state did not design it well. He said there is a long stretch of culvert that will plug since the water comes down the hill with such velocity that it washes gravel out into Rt 108. Josh said that he thinks they want us to take responsibility for all that washes off that town road and he said that he doesn't want to sign it. The board agreed and did not sign the agreement but will request more information and ask the state to take liability for a design flaw of theirs as they were supposed to design something to handle it. The board asked Tami to invite Bruce Marin to the next Select Board meeting either in person or via zoom.

The board received a letter from Harding and Mazotti regarding an incident to have taken place about 5 months ago, on East Bakersfield Rd and King Rd. Lance said that he tried contacting Harding and Mazotti, to request more information. He said he left a message with the secretary, and she is to have them call us.

Brigham update- Lance said that he has no updates at this time. Tod said that if there is any new information on grants for revitalization for Brigham Academy, we could have our grant writer look at it. Lance said the numbers being bantied around right now is north of 5 million. He said if the currently interested party decides not to pursue it, then we will definitely be interested in having our grant writer look into it. For now, if this party decides to take it on, they would be pursuing those grants.

Terri said she checked the electrical service on the pole by Brigham academy and it is on. She said the outlet is ok, it just doesn't have a cover, and the school pays for it. Tod said it was originally put in for the Fire Dept when they

were doing their field days and they used to use it for the skating rink. Terri said she did hit the breaker on it.

The board agreed that the second signer on the Town Checkbooks should be someone on the select board. Tami suggested that, since John will now be on the ARPA checkbook, that he just become second signer for all. Tod made the motion to appoint John as second signer on the Town checkbooks. Lance seconded the motion and the motion carried with a vote of 5-0.

Tod made the motion to adjourn the meeting. John seconded the motion and the motion carried with a vote of 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:40pm. Meeting minutes were recorded by Tami Brennan.