

Bakersfield Regular Select Board Meeting
Monday, March 14, 2022
7:00pm

Meeting was called to order at 7:00pm.

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

Members absent: none

Residents/Guests present: Deanna Robitaille (Dept. of Taxes), Sue Sonski, Sharon Evans, Gary Foote, Cheryl DeRue Irwin, Paul Stanley, Linda McCall, Dan and Katie Forand, Tami Brennan, Ivan and Lisa Stone

Previous Minutes: Motion was made by Brenda to accept the Feb 28th Select Board Meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Lance and the motion carried with a vote of 5-0.

Warrants signed:

Road Commissioner's Order #4-2022	\$76.85
Equipment Repair fund	
Road Commissioner's Order #FEMA 1-22	\$64,544.63
Road Commissioner's Order #10+11-2022	\$18,320.80
Selectmen's Order #5-22	\$4,625.92
Selectmen's Order #6-22 BCA	\$1,358.78

First order business was to elect a Select Board Chairman. Lance made the motion and nominated Josh for the position of Chairman of the Select board, the motion was seconded by Brenda and the motion carried with a vote of 5-0. Josh said the second order of business was to elect a Vice Chairman. Terri nominated and made the motion to elect Lance for the position of Vice Chairman, the motion was seconded by Brenda and passed with a vote of 5-0.

Finance- Maria provided the board with updated Finance Reports. Josh said that he liked the way that the report is laid out. He said that one change that could be made is to take his name off under the Road. He said that he is not part of the road crew, that they do a fine job without him, that he helped once and that was a one-time thing. John asked if we could add a column that compared last year to this year. Josh said that might not be able to put on there at this time, because it could be a confusing year to do that due to the difficult year we just had. John said that he understood. Josh said that he would like to see a tri-column with the budgeted amount, the amount that we have spent, and the balance available, added to the report.

The board discussed the Town office heating units. John West was at the office when Mercy's Heating came to give us an estimate on replacement. John said that our current heating equipment is at the end of its life. Mercy said that usually they can certify the system, but he would be unable to do. He said that heat pumps would be efficient to 5 degrees about 0, then they would begin to lose their efficiency and we would still need an additional source of heating.

Mercy recommended putting one heat pump in the outer room and two heat pumps in the Town Hall area. This would require a concrete pad under the unit outside and a roof above it. The Town Hall electrical service is only 90 amps so would need to be upgraded. Mercy said the heat pump is cheaper but that we would need an additional heat source as well, for when the temps go below 5 degrees. One benefit to the heat pumps is that they provide air conditioning as well. And even if the board doesn't decide to put in the heat pumps, the electric should still be upgraded. For the additional heat source, Mercy recommended 3 propane heaters for downstairs. He said that propane was cheaper and more efficient and there are some rebates for propane via Efficiency Vermont. The quote that the town was given was \$22,000.00 for the propane heaters and to add the heat pumps it would bring it to around \$40,000.00, and the quote was only good for 5 days because of the unpredictability of the cost of materials. Josh asked Tami to keep Heating for the Town Office as a continuous Agenda item until something is decided.

John told the board that he was asked to review Maria's laptop because it was running very slow. John said that he began looking for Malware, etc. but what he found was that Quick Books needs a minimum of 8 mgs to run with a preferred 16mgs for efficiency. Maria's laptop has just 8 mgs. John said that after he made sure that the software is safely on a backup somewhere, he wants to try clearing the hard drive and to reload windows and add an additional drive that may make it run better. John said that he would do some research if we got to the point that we needed to get her a new computer. He said that he would need to know exactly what she needs. Josh said that he trusts John's judgement, and he said that anything short of replacing the computer, the board would give John the go ahead.

Town Reappraisal- Deanna Robitaille- the Bakersfield District Advisor from the Vt Dept of Taxes, spoke with the board and said that she was here to help the listers with anything they need for State of Vermont billing and regarding scheduling your next Town wide reappraisal. Sue Sonski said that the last reappraisal was done in 2009 and the price of Real Estate had gone up and our Common Level Appraisal (CLA) has gone down. Our CLA is 88.77% and when it gets to 85%, then the state would mandate a reappraisal.

Deanna said that current sales are not looking like they are going to reflect your Grand List. Josh said that is because of the crazy market where current market values have almost doubled. Deanna said that what we have found is that the reappraisals at times like these, have a long life and that Bakersfield's Grand List is dated and the inventory on our grand list is stale. She said the state likes to see a reappraisal every 10 years but usually that is not feasible to do. Deanna said that Bakersfield has 700 taxable parcels, and each parcel's reappraisal costs between \$100.00-\$130.00, so we are looking at \$80,000.00 to have a Town wide reappraisal done. She said that most reappraisal companies are booked for 2-4 years out. Deanna said that every year, the State issues \$8.50/taxable parcel, so about \$7000.00/year as shown on page 20 in your

town report, with the intent to supplement and offset reappraisal expenses, but Bakersfield has used those funds to offset lister expenses. While this has helped keep your municipal tax rate down, when you are facing a reappraisal, then you have to budget a larger amount. If the \$7000.00/year had been set aside for reappraisal for the last 10 years, you would pretty much have what it would cost to have the reappraisal done. Sue asked the board if we might start saving money toward reappraisal costs like we do for the trucks in the Equipment Repair Fund. Deanna said that you would have to vote at a Town Meeting to create a reserve fund. Lance asked if that could be on the ballot at a General Election like the August primary. Deanna said as long as it is dually warned the August Primary would be ok, but that ballot item would have to run as a local election. The BCA must warn it and have the ballots available 20 days prior. John said his only concern was for folks on a fixed budget to suddenly double their assessment. Lance said that if all the houses are appraised higher, then the tax rate drops because we still need the same amount of money that we determine to cover the budget. Deanna said that that was true for the municipal side. She said that the school taxes are based on the previous grand list. She said the first year after a reappraisal will always be an adjustment. She said that Farm Buildings used for farm use are always tax exempt. Josh asked what our next step was. Deanna said the first step is to send fishing letters to find a company who is interested in working with you. Deanna said that she would advise the board to let the listers do the vetting and come to you because they will be working with these people for around a year and half. Josh said that he thought this was a discussion that we need to have with the board and the listers. Lance asked Sue if she would be willing to take the lead on this and Sue said yes but that she would need help to know what to put in the letter.

Paul Stanley met with the board on behalf of the Fire Dept about the Fourth of July. Paul said that after being in conference with the Fire Dept, they came up with a plan for the 4th of July. He said the biggest thing is that we would not have any parade or afternoon activities. Things would begin at 6:00pm. Paul said that they had talked to Cheryl, and she said that the library would have activities for the kids at 6:00pm for about an hour. Paul said that they spoke to Lance Boardman and the Rusty Bucket about entertainment. Dave Stetson has done our sound for several years and is on board to be here for the evening to set up. Paul said we would have a prelude to the Fire Works with taps and comments. East Bakersfield Rd would not be closed until 6:00pm. Josh asked if they had spoken with the Historical Society and the Special Concerns Committee. Paul said that the Special Concerns committee has disbanded. Paul said that the FD thought that we could have hamburgers and hotdogs. No barbecue...the Scouts have usually done this, but the Scouts have disbanded as well. Paul asked Lance if he knew if the Church wanted to do something. Lance said he would talk to Sharon. Lance said that he still has the hot dog machine. Paul said the Historical Society said that they would do pie and ice cream. Paul said the Fire Dept is hoping the Select Board would take care of

the Port-o-lets and pay for them. We would need one regular and one ADA compliant one. He said that the Historical Society said that they would have their bathroom open. Lance said that he thought it cost about \$400.00 for the Port-o-lets in the vicinity. Paul said that they talked with Derek Krygier about the Fire Works. It has cost us \$3000.00 in the past, but Derek said that if we want the same type of show, it will cost closer to \$4000.00. Lance said that he thinks that we have \$3500.00 in the fireworks fund. Lance said that he was sure that we can come up with donations to make up the difference between what we have and what we need. Paul said that the Fire Dept is on board with taking care of crowd control and traffic. Paul said Cheryl said that she's heard that people are looking for the parade but that's too much. Paul said that the Fire Dept was adamant that they would not be doing a parade. Lance asked if that is be permanent from here on or not. Paul said that he didn't think so. He said there was some talk that if they did a parade in the future it was talked about 5:30pm. Lance asked about if someone wanted to set up a booth in the park. Paul said that should be ok, but it would have to be understood that the road is open. Lance said that if we do allow vendors that they would need to set up inside the fence. Josh asked if we would advertise a craft fair. Terri said that if we are setting up in the park then we need to have the road closed because there is no parking. Paul said that closing the road is a bear. He said it would have to manned all day and that people get upset with you because they can't go through. Terri said we should just leave it for 6:00pm. Josh asked if there would be a permit charge for these vendors. Terri said because there was not exactly a huge market for anyone coming to town. Paul said that the Road Crew had always done the roping off with ribbons. He said there would be no cowplop. The Fire Dept is not doing any fundraising. Ivan Stone said that we could pass the hat at the Fourth of July to offset the cost of the Fireworks, etc. Josh told Ivan that was a great idea to help the Fire Dept. Paul said that would work well if we did the circulation of the hat before dark because dealing with money after dark can be a tricky situation. Linda asked the Fire Dept to delete the cannonball blast at the beginning of the fireworks. She said that the vibration is not good for the Historical Society building and it terrorizes the animals and horses.

The agenda item of visitor Paul Dreher was a misunderstanding and placed on the agenda in error.

Cheryl Irwin asked the board to appoint Rebecca Ann Bennett as the new library trustee to fill the vacancy on the library board. Josh said to Cheryl that he was assuming that this appointment was acceptable to the library board and Cheryl said that it was. Brenda made the motion to appoint Rebecca Anne Bennet as a Library Trustee. Terri seconded the motion and the motion carried with a vote of 5-0.

Roads- Mac said that Nathan Reed, on Witchcat Rd, has made an agricultural access for sap. Mac said that they threw a used culvert under the road, not

planning on it being a permanent fix. Nathan is applying for this permit because he didn't apply the first time and it's already in and completed. Mac said he will bring the permit application back and the permitting process will be started. Terri asked if there were fines issued. The access permit violation on Belvidere Mtn. Rd had the permit fees waived because he had already paid the permit fee application and been denied the permit. The Zoning Administrator waived the permit fee for the second application but did charge the penalty fees. John said that board should kick this over to the Zoning Administrator. On Witchcat Rd, the second driveway was put in with no permit, so he needs to pay the permit fee and the penalty fines. The board decided to assess this again after the Zoning Administrator has a chance to check out the situation.

Mac said that Johnson is going to put their grader out to bid. Mac said that the day they were going to go up to look at it that it didn't work out. Mac said that the guy in Johnson had talked about \$140,000.00, and apparently he didn't have the authority to talk to us. Mac said that it sounded like Johnson would not be looking at a new machine until June or July. Josh said that the board would go into executive session after the public forum of this meeting is finished, to discuss the possible bid for the purchase of the used grader. Josh explained that this was because the discussion would be pertaining to a sealed bid to the town of Johnson.

Terri asked Mac where the road crew was on Saturday morning. Mac said they were out plowing. Terri said she was on Boston Post Rd and it was bad.

Brenda asked what the arrangement was with the Branon's on her road. Brenda said that she saw them dumping some sand on the road. Mac said the load that he dumped must have had a lot of salt in it and it bared up quick. Mac said they put a couple of trench drains so that should handle some of the wet. Josh said that if the Branon's are willing to sand the roads, then that is great, and we are grateful. Josh said that Branon's had said that now that the bridge was fixed, the sap trucks would be using that route most of the time instead.

John asked Mac what the bridge on Witchcat Rd was made out of. Mac said it was made out of cement. John said that it looked like maybe a pothole in it or if it was just a frozen dirt on top.

Lance said that the Northwest Supervisory Union is planning on paving the Bakersfield Elementary Parking lot. The question posed to us is that while they are paving, do we want them to pave the area around the Brigham Residence building. Lance said that we don't own much, no more than a car length on the western side of the building. Terri said that she would need to know the cost. Tami asked if that area would be an area that would be torn up during the work planned for the Brigham Residence project. Lance said that the question is do we want the contractors to give us an estimate. The work they would be

going to do is on the east side. John asked to clarify that this would be black top. Mac said that the State would prefer that the entrance to the school be a two to one T. Josh asked if he was saying to keep it dirt. Mac said dirt and grass would be good. The board said to have Vernon include us in the quote request for option 2 and do not do the South side, and to give us both options. Lance said it's just a bid and we can choose not to do it. Lance said that they would delineate the parameters, pitch, etc. Mac said option 3 would be the North and West side of Brigham. Josh told Vern that something would have to be done with drainage. John said that draining to the east would go on the Fire Dept. property and any septic that Brigham puts in for a leach field. Josh asked Tami to invite Vernon Boomhover to the next Select board meeting on March 28, to further discuss this project.

New mail- Bill Irwin had sent the Select board an email of support to the Select Board saying that Nicky Cribb was interested in the vacant position on the Planning Commission, and they were in full support of this appointment. Terri made the motion to appoint Nicky Cribb to the Planning Commission. Lance seconded the motion and the motion carried with a vote of 5-0.

Josh said that since the town voted to appoint instead of elect, our town treasurer, the board had said that if the town elected someone as Treasurer, that the board would honor that and appoint that person to the position. Terri made the motion to appoint Maria DeRosia to the position of Bakersfield Town Treasurer, Josh asked if that was for a three-year term. Terri said that there was no term. Lance said there was no term with an appt. Josh asked if they reappoint each year and Terri said yes. The motion was seconded by Brenda and the motion carried by a vote of 5-0. Terri added that if someone is appointed then they become an employee of the town and they don't need to be appointed each year, so unless she resigns or is terminated, she remains in the position.

NWCUD legislative body- Josh said that Brenda Churchill and Heather Jewett have been acting representatives for Bakersfield in this organization and are looking for reappointment. Brenda excused herself from the vote. Lance made the motion to appoint Brenda and Heather to the NWCUD as representatives for the town of Bakersfield. The motion was seconded by John and the motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

ATV stickers- Tami said that last year we ordered 500 stickers and we sold almost 300 of them. Josh said complaints were down. He said that the people who bought the stickers respected our rules. Josh said that he thought that we should do it again this year. Brenda said that this was a way we could actually look and see if they were registered. Josh said that the VASA group said that if they were not allowed to operate in the town they would not help us out any. Even though we did not tell them that they were not allowed to operate in the town, they said they would not do so if we sold the stickers. Josh said that the

Queen Lils, and ATV group out of Richford, may be willing to work with us. John asked if the money raised could be used for patrol. Josh said that if we are charging for the use of the town roads, then the money needs to be used on the town roads to justify the charge. Tami asked if since the Road is where the proceeds go, can the cost of the stickers come from the Road account. The board said that should be fine. Josh said he thought we should order another set of 500 stickers. Brenda made the motion to order another 500 stickers, John seconded the motions and the motion carried with a vote of 5-0. Josh told Tami to order them and pick a color that was bright.

Outside Audit- Josh said that we need to receive three apples to apples bids to choose from. John asked if we had put the bid request letter on front porch forum or in the paper. Tami said the letter was pretty extensive to place in a paper. Josh said that one reason was that we'd like to keep the money local. Josh said that he had the email that told who Tami had mailed the letter to. KBS; Young's; Parent, Khowassah, & Gagnon, Angeleno Associates, Sullivan & Powers; and Terri said that KBS said they never got a letter. Tami said she mailed them all out at the same time from the Town office. Terri asked if she could have one to hand deliver to KBS. Josh asked Tami to edit the letter and ask for bids to be in by 6/30/2022. He said that should be plenty of time after tax season to give them time to respond. Josh said that we received the one bid from Sullivan and Powers for \$19,000.00, which allowed us to place a number on the ballot. He said if we needed more funds than that, we would have to vote for additional funds in November. Lance said that it would come out of the General Fund and would not have to go to a vote. Lance said that the audit should be complete in enough time to be included in the Town Report. The board said they believed that the audit could be performed in two stages.

Other- Brenda said that we had discussed during our budget meetings but the three listers had asked for a raise and we had not finished considering that. The head lister asked to go from \$17.00/hour to \$20.00/hour and the two assistants from \$15.00/hour to \$17.00/hour. Josh said that they had looked at the listers hours and their average number of hours was not going to make or break us. Lance made the motion to give the listers the raise as suggested. \$20.00/hour for the head lister and \$17.00/hour for the two assistants. The motion was seconded by Brenda and the motion carried with a vote of 5-0.

John West brought up the bench chairs in the town hall. He said that most of them were broken down near the floor. He said that the Church has 65 individual padded chairs that they will give us. John said that he knows that these bench chairs are historic chairs but that we could offer them free to town members who would like to take them. Josh said there were an additional number of the bench seats upstairs that we could swap out for the broken ones. He said the amount John has set out right now is about 4 times the amount needed for the usual meeting, and they only get put out at Town meeting. And the people who come to Town meeting will want to know where

the benches went. John said that he was just saying that most of the chairs are broken. Brenda said that if we have to go back to the COVID protocol, then we would go to the school. Josh said he was making a strong suggestion that you do not remove the bench chairs, just change them out with the ones upstairs. Josh said that he remembered coming to Town meeting with his grandfather and sitting in the third row from the back and sliding those slats back and forth throughout the whole meeting. He said he has a special spot for those chairs and if John needs help swapping them out for the ones upstairs, that he would come and help him.

Lance said that he was approached by the gentleman who was currently in the process of removing the structure in the gravel pit and said that this person was offering to take down the Geddes barn for what he could get out of the materials. Josh said that his first question is regarding insurance. He said he would want to see that they had insurance. Terri said then she would like to see it go out to bid. Lance said that the barn is on the verge of collapse and Josh said that it is in Shambles and he is afraid that if he removes the wrong board, the building will collapse. He said the best way to do it is with an excavator. Mac said that he talked to John Guillemette, and he was afraid that if the barn collapsed it would take down the power line. Josh feels that it is not a safe enough building to allow somebody in there. Josh asked if we needed to vote on it. Terri said to respond and say that the board is not sure what they are going to do about it. We may put it out to bid this summer so to be watching that.

The barn at the section of East Bakersfield Rd and Waterville Mountain Road was also brought up. It is leaning way over the road. The board turned this barn over to the Zoning Administrator to pursue this. Brenda said that she was surprised that the owner's Homeowner's insurance had not dropped them because of that barn.

Brenda made the motion to adjourn open session to discuss the grader in Executive session. Terri seconded the motion and the motion carried with a vote of 5-0.

Terri made the motion to enter Executive session to discuss the grader purchase with Mac present for the discussion. Josh said that this would be the only business discussed in this Executive session. Brenda seconded the motion and the motion carried with a vote of 5-0.

The public session adjourned, and the Executive session was entered at 8:48pm.

Brenda made the motion to exit Executive Session at 9:20pm. Lance seconded the motion and the motion carried with a vote of 5-0. The results of Executive session were that no decisions were made.

Brenda made the motion to adjourn the meeting, Terri seconded the motion and the motion carried with a vote of 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 9:25pm.

The next Regular Select Board meeting to be held Monday, March 28, 2022, at 7:00pm.

Meeting minutes recorded by Tami Brennan.