

Bakersfield Regular Select Board Meeting  
March 23, 2020

Meeting was called to order at 7:02pm by Lance Lawyer.

Members in attendance: Lance Lawyer, Sam Cribb, David Houston, Gary Denton, Josh Goss

Members absent: none

Residents/Guests present: Mac Newitt, Kathy Westcom, Jerry Brown, Tim Smith (remote), Tami Brennan

Warrants signed:

Selectman's order #7-2020	\$5,217.30
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Road Commissioner's order #11&12-2020	\$12,211.04
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Motion to accept March 9<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes made by Sam, seconded by Josh, and approved by a vote of 5-0.

Tim Smith, Governor of St. Albans and Board member of the Franklin County Industrial Development Corp., attended the meeting via speaker phone participation to update the town officers of current local conditions resulting from the effects of COVID-19, acknowledging that we are experiencing unique times and cautious economy. The State has issued a mandate that all manufacturing businesses collect and put forth their case to prove that they are considered an essential business if they are to remain operating through the COVID-19 crisis. All unessential businesses will be issued an order to close until further notice. Pharmaceutical, food production, medical service and products, etc. are considered essential, thus Mylan, grocery stores, medical providers, etc. will remain open. Also, the State is considering the trickle-down effect on the supply chain that may classify some businesses as essential, for instance the effect of totally closing Ben and Jerry's, (which has laid off some admin in Burlington and closed doors to public tours/visits to their Waterbury plant), and the businesses effected in the loss of their cream and other products, some clothing stores if there is a medical clothing element, etc. Also, that some businesses were adopting more stringent policies with their employees, such as taking temperatures before entry, requiring quarantine, limiting and cancelling travel, implementing working from home. The residential and business economy also reaches to the city and town level. Tim spoke of city loans that may be able to pay just interest for 6 months, to allow time for the economy to stabilize. The State has adopted a 4-Tier approach with Stage 4 being a COVID-19 incident which calls for immediate shut down and sterilization. Small business employees that have had job suspensions can fill out an unemployment form online for financial help. The banks are considering low-interest loans to help people, although many people may feel that a loan would not be a good thing right now. People, businesses and the Town are encouraged to track financial losses, due to COVID-19 circumstances, with documents dating from March 1, 2020, which the government is considering to be the Ground Zero date. Two weeks paid leave that is being discussed and would be provided from the Federal Level has not yet been voted on or

confirmed. The National Guard has mobilized 10 soldiers to convert the Collins Pearly tennis courts to a 50-bed medical facility with back up power and generators to provide less-urgent medical care which will free up limited urgent care space at the hospital. The Cadillac Motel will be converted for the same purpose, to reduce impact on the hospital. Tim assured the board that he would keep them in the loop as far as updates.

Tim also confirmed that the FCIDC had already sent the Town of Bakersfield \$5,000.00 to be used toward the feasibility studies for the proposed Brigham Academy Senior Housing Residence, and assured the Town another \$10,000.00 if the town moves to the Construction phase. He also reiterated the FCIDC was unanimously on board with moving forward to preserving the Brigham Academy in this way. Lance also stated that Vermont Housing and Conservation had agreed to contribute \$8,000.00 toward feasibility studies.

Jerry Brown came with a concern regarding The Right of Way Limits of the electrical company. He asked if the electrical company had any documents from the Town, giving them easements/right of ways for utility poles, etc. The Town assured him that there were no documents, that they knew of, from the Town, stating the rights of the utility company. He also reaffirmed with a neighbor that was also affected by the new pole position, the conversation the neighbor had with the utility company when they called to let him know of the work to be done. The neighbor asked the Utility worker if the issue had been resolved with his neighbor, Mr. Brown, regarding pole placement and the worker said that it must have been because they had received the work order. The utility contact being Mike Hemand. Jerry asked if the Utility company paid taxes, etc. on their poles, etc. and was assured that the Utility company does indeed pay taxes to the State on their service equipment.

Sam said that he had heard that FCSWD will be suspending their service to Bakersfield until the COVID-19 issue stabilizes due to staffing and exposure risk issues. Mark Doremus, contacted by the Select Board during the meeting, said he would call the FCSWD directly in the morning to confirm and would call Kathy to let her know to update the community.

A letter has been drawn up to be mailed to all Bakersfield residents to inform them of the safe/remote procedures to be implemented by the Town for accessing Town services. This is planned to be mailed on Thursday.

The Board discussed how to conduct future Select Board meetings according to the Open Meeting laws put forth by the State, in the safest way. Open Meeting Laws state that the meetings may be accessed remotely if all attending can be heard by, and can hear, all other attendees. So visual/audio remote access is permitted, but not email for example. All remote attendees must identify themselves, and all non-unanimous votes by the select board/etc. must be performed by role call. A physical location must be provided and open for the public to attend and access the meeting so the Town Hall will be open for

Public attendance and social distancing regulations will be in effect. The law allows for the approval by Select Board vote to give authority to one Select Board member to sign the warrants for payment, with the authority granted the entire board. Josh Goss will research the implementation of setting up a Zoom site meeting for the next Select Board meeting on Monday, April 13, 2020, with a link to access this meeting on the town website. This will be the protocol for future Select Board meetings until COVID-19 issues have stabilized. Sam made a motion that the Select Board authorize Josh Goss to sign warrants, that have been approved by the Board via electronic, remote, telecommunication meetings of the Select Board, until June 30, 2020. This motion was seconded by Josh and approved by a vote of 5-0.

The Personnel Policy is up for review and revision and Mac received a copy to review with the road crew employees, before discussing adoption with the board. The revised policy would only effect new hires as already contracted employees must remain under the policy in place at the time of initial employment.

All Select board members and any others available to attend a tele-conference meeting with FEMA, to be held at 10:00am on Tuesday March 24, 2020, were encouraged to attend. This meeting should last between 2-3 hours.

No public hearings will be scheduled until COVID-19 hazards have been resolved.

The rumor of the Fire Dept. requesting a new Fire Truck is not true, confirmed by our very own Fire Chief. He said he believed the current truck should last another 5-7 years before Federal mandates would declare it to be too old.

Road Report- Enosburg shut down the bridge at the intersection of Enosburg Mountain Road and East Bakersfield Rd., known as Mile High Bridge.

Mac to put a Road cone on a growing pot hole on East Bakersfield Rd, to warn drivers until they can fill it ASAP.

Mac continues to hold the bids offered in regards to buying a new Town truck from at least 3 companies, documented in the Road records.

Lance left a message with the zoning administrator to hold off on proceedings regarding termination of occupation of premises not in accordance with zoning regulations until after COVID-19 issues have been stabilized.

Sam made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:28pm, seconded by Gary and approved by a vote of 5-0.

The next Select Board meeting will be accessed through a link on the Town Website on April 13, 2020 at 7:00pm. Also, the town hall should be open to public attendance with social distancing required.

Minutes recorded by Tami Brennan.

Stay Home!!! And Stay Safe!!!

