

Bakersfield Regular Select Board Meeting
November 23, 2020
6:00pm

Meeting was in executive session from 6:00pm to 7:00pm.

Meeting was called to order for public forum at 7:09pm by Lance.

Members present: Lance Lawyer (chair), Sam Cribb, Terri Gates, Gary Denton, Josh Goss

Members absent: none

Residents/Guests present: Mac Newitt, Heather Jewett, Matt Hull, Tod Cosgrove, Rosalie Williams, Tara Williams, Tami Brennan

The motion was made to accept the November 9, 2020 meeting minutes, with corrections, by Gary and seconded by Sam. The motion passed with a vote of 5-0.

Warrants signed:

Selectmen's order #32-2020	\$14,010.00
Road Commissioner's order #23+24-2020	\$16,020.46
Selectmen's order #31-2020	\$17,923.89

Selectmen's order #30-2020 for \$72,367.00, to pay the Fire Dept Contract, was voided based on the updated negotiation payment schedule mutually agreed upon by the Select Board and the Fire Dept.

Rosalie Williams appealed to the Select Board for a waiver on the waiting period to begin the demolition project on Levi Joyal's home due to it's burning down after a lightning strike on Oct 10th. Her request for urgency was based on Levi's diagnosis of a terminal illness and his failing health. She said that she wanted him to be able to see progress happening to put a new home in the exact place of his life long homestead, in hopes that he would be able to return there for a time. The controlled demolition and asbestos abatement project is set to begin Dec 3rd or 5th. Rosalie said that she had spoken to the nearest neighbors, Wendall Bashaw and Sue Mason and that they were unopposed to the plans for a new building on Joyal's property. The Select Board asked Rosalie to bring the Select Board letters from the neighbors that she had spoken to, stating their agreement to that effect and Rosalie said that she would do so. The building plans are to put in a new foundation and place a modular home on the exact site of the previous residence. Lance acknowledged the special circumstances surrounding the request for the waiver of the standard waiting period and said that he had no objections to the waiver. The rest of the Select Board had no objections as well and Josh made the motion to give Lance the authority to sign the demolition permit on behalf of the Select board. The motion was seconded by Gary and approved by a vote of 5-0.

The Select Board is operating in the office of the Town Zoning Administrator while the office is vacant, and is actively searching for a person to fill this office.

Matt Hull and Tod Cosgrove, from the Bakersfield Fire Dept presented their proposal for a revised payment schedule for the town to pay their Fire Dept contract. The request from the Select Board to renegotiate the payment schedule for this upcoming year, due to a shortage of funds, was discussed at the November 17th Supplemental Select Board meeting prior to its entrance into Executive session. The time for the Fire Dept contract renewal will be coming up and the Fire Dept requested a meeting with the Select Board prior to that time to discuss their proposal. The Select Board said that they could meet with them in the Spring as soon as the Fire Dept knew what the proposal was that they had to bring to the Board. The Board thanked the Fire Dept for their willingness to work with the town in this situation.

Heather Jewett attended the meeting to update the Board on the progress of the CUD's (Communication Unification District) efforts to make wifi more available to residents in Bakersfield. They provide grants to make sure that no one in Vermont has to travel more than 15 minutes to reach a hotspot. Heather signed Bakersfield up for two locations and the CUD is planning on installing the devices at two sites in Bakersfield and the town has to decide where the two sites will be. The Sisco units (\$10,000.00-\$20,000.00 per unit, covered by the grant) will boost the building's existing internet wifi service to extend to a 400ft radius from the building providing strictly free public access signing on as a guest. The town would only pay for the permit which is 189.00/year. The grant will cover the permit fee for the first year. Possible sites discussed were the Congregational church, the Town Hall, the School, Jolly Gas Station, J & A auto.

Heather to speak to Sharon Evans regarding the possibility of having the device installed on the church and to speak to Rhoda about the possibility of having one site be at the school. Josh said that the school would make sense because of the need for internet accessibility for students to access class remotely and also because the school doubles as an emergency shelter.

Sarah Jo Marcotte and Ron Marcotte met with the Select Board to discuss having the electricity turned on in Cemetery Park for the Christmas Tree Lights this season. As per Select Board Discussion in Sept, the power at the park is to be turned on the weekend after Thanksgiving and shut off in January. Sarah said there are 27 trees, up from 10 last year, to be decorated and strung with lights before the lighting begins on Thanksgiving weekend and she hoped that it was possible to have access to electricity before the weekend so they have time to string and test the lights. Ron Marcotte said that the Cemetery Commission is on board with having the lights on in the park and to provide payment. The board said that the electricity at the park is in the town's name but that can be changed. Sarah said that she would purchase timers to put on the outlets in the park so that the lights would only be on from 4pm-7am. The Board said that they had heard nothing but good comments about what took place last year. The Board asked Tami to have the power turned on at the park before Thanksgiving and that they would plan to keep

it on for this purpose until the end of January. Sarah said that if this is to become an annual event, they could factor the cost for the electricity into the purchase of a tree. Sarah and Ron plan to meet with the Select Board and revisit the electrical cost for this event, possibly in February in order to be pro-active next year in discussing further plans. Tami to put Sarah and Ron on the agenda in February.

The Select Board signed the papers for the Skinner Hill Rd downgrade to a legal trail. The Select Board shared a question that they had been asked as to liability on a legal trail. The Select Board said that if someone gets hurt on the trail, then the town is liable. If someone wanders from the trail and gets hurt, then the land owner is liable.

Roger Lindala emailed the Select Board regarding help from Northwest Access TV to provide remote public access to the Select Board meetings.

The board discussed the possibility of having remote meetings. Josh said that he could put a link to a zoom meeting on the Town website for residents and guests to access and participate in the Select Board meetings, while the Board would physically meet at the Town Hall having enough room to social distance. Or residents who desire to attend the meeting in person would be able to if only one resident was presented at a time, while other attendees wait outside for their time to speak.

The Select Board adopted, dated, and signed the revised Bakersfield Town Personnel Policy and then gave it to Mac, along with the Health Insurance proposal, for him to take and discuss with the Road Crew, asking him to highlight any parts unclear or unacceptable, and then meet with the board to discuss changes.

The Select Board discussed the probable inability for the town to meet together for Town Meeting this year, due to COVID, and how that would be handled. While the usual protocol to transition the Town vote to Australian ballot requires approval by vote from the town, during this year of COVID, special permission has been given by the State to the Select Board to approve an Australian ballot for town meeting for this year only. Josh said that a considerable number of town folk at last year's Town meeting, showed an interest in the town going to Australian ballot for the town budget instead of a vote by hand at the town meeting, to allow people who were unable to attend town meeting, due to work, to be able to vote as well. In his opinion, this year they should plan on Australian ballot and add on a line item to the ballot, to give the town the opportunity to change the vote to Australian ballot permanently. If passed, that would effectively change town meeting into just an informational meeting and would most likely be held around two weeks before Town meeting day. Lance read the Statute that stated that the Select Board can vote to use Australian ballot this year and that the first step is that the Select Board needs to request it. Josh made a proposal that the Board request that Kathy fill out a

waiver to run town meeting by Australian ballot. The board to discuss how to put the budget on the ballot to be voted on. Mail in ballots would be available by request.

The Board also discussed seeking to change the Town Clerk position from an elected position under domain of the State through State Statutes, to that of an appointed position by the Select Board, which would place the position of Town Clerk under the authority of the Select Board and allow them to decide the wages, hours, etc. for that position. This change would require a voter approval by the town.

Road Report-

Mac said that the new truck may be out of NY today.

Vermont has been declared an area of official drought. Money is available for farmers who feel that their crops have been damaged by the drought.

The FEMA loan- the LOC - would give the town access to money as needed and the interest if 2.25%. The project on goat path has been split into 2 phases, demolition and restoration. The bridge contractor will want their money monthly so the LOC would work well. The state pays when all projects are complete in Bakersfield.

Mac and Lance had a conference call meeting with the State, the Federal, and reps from Leahy's office and started signing things with Leahy, Welsh, and Sanders.

Waterville Rd is done except for a culvert. Whitney road is complete, just needs a tap and mitigation. Jordan Rd needs 10 trees, 3" or smaller in diameter, taken down soon, if not removed by March 31, then the town will need to get a special permit.

The Ad seeking a new Bakersfield Zoning Administrator began running in the County Courier on Wednesday, Nov. 18 and will run for two weeks, at which point the Select Board will consider the response that they have gotten. In the meantime, until the Zoning Administrator position is filled, the Select Board will have Zoning on the agenda at the Regular Select Board meetings, in order to consider and review Zoning permit applications and procedures.

Gary made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:40pm, Sam seconded and the motion carried by a vote of 5-0.

The next Regular Select Board meeting will be held on Monday, Dec 14, 2020 with the public forum beginning at 7:00pm and special executive session beginning at 6:00pm.

Meeting minutes recorded by Tami Brennan.

