

Bakersfield Regular Select Board Meeting
Monday, November 29, 2021
7:00pm

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

Members Present: Josh Goss (chair), Lance Lawyer, Gary Denton, Brenda Churchill, via zoom: Terri Gates

Members absent: none

Residents/Guests: Vera Lawyer, Mac Newitt, Kathy Westcom, John West, Tami Brennan

The motion was made to accept the previous minutes from November 8 and November 22 as written. The motion was seconded by Brenda and passed by a vote of 4-0.

Warrants signed:

Road Commissioner's Order #FEMA 19-21	\$4,911.14
Road Commissioner's Order #27-21	\$4,519.46

Finance- Vera handed out the reports that she had prepared for the Select Board meeting last week. She said that she has been through all the receipts, expenses and payroll for everything. She said that Quick Books had been corrected as much as possible. She said that from way back, the payroll liabilities were put where they're not supposed to be put, and they can't be corrected. She said that she would recommend is to finish the year using the spreadsheets that Vera has set up and then start the new year with a new company on Quick Books, so the mistakes in payroll liabilities don't carry over. Josh asked if we would lose information from the previous years, and Vera said no. She said we can print it all out and the company stays there. She said she wasn't sure how many companies that we can make on Quick Books, but we can make a new company and bring all the vendors and employees into that new company.

Vera said that she has worked with Sue and balanced the taxes down to \$464.00 off. Vera said that they don't know where it is. All is balanced in Delinquent Taxes and Quick Books. Total taxes could be off up to \$1000.00, and we cannot find it. Vera said that she knew coming in that she might not be able to get the taxes to balance. Josh asked if it was an acceptable amount to be off. Vera said not for her, that she always wants to balance to the penny, but that the \$464.00 could be either a homestead value or a non-homestead value. She said that she has been over every last tax bill. It could be a NEMRC program glitch. Sue also checked and can't find it. Vera said that Brenda put Vera in as a witness for the insurance claim that the town is filing to try to recoup some of the penalties and loss accumulated from the errors of the previous treasurer. They will either decide to recompense us or they won't. Vera submitted her resignation as interim treasurer to the board and told them to read it at their leisure. She said that she still has a few things to do, and she will be here to help Maria. She said that they still have a lot of stuff to go over. There is still so much of the treasurer's job that has not been addressed until

it's needed in the year. Josh noted that there is no date on the resignation. Vera said that she wanted to be able to sign checks next week for the library. She said there is still an issue with the unemployment. She said that she can't find where two quarters were filed in 2020. Vera said that Abbey said that they were submitted on paper because she couldn't file them through the computer for some reason. Josh said that the board would wait to accept Vera's resignation at the Select Board meeting on December 13th meeting, to give Vera time to do what she needs to do.

Kathy asked about how after the board accepts Vera's resignation, and Vera is still coming to help Maria, if she would still be able to continue getting her current pay. The board said yes. Josh asked if Vera would consider being appointed as Assistant Treasurer. Vera said that she would think that over. Josh said it would make it easier to pay her if she had a title. Vera said that she would give the board her answer at the next meeting. She said that she has been thinking about this, especially because of COVID. Josh thanked Vera for all she's done and for considering this.

Brenda asked if we needed to register signatures again with the bank. Vera said that the signatures are done. Brenda would need to sign checks if Maria is not able to do so.

Vera said that the 401Ks are all done. America Funds are correct for the Road's portion and the town's portion. Everything that wasn't paid is now paid, to the State, Federal and America Funds. Vera said that she thinks that she has found everything that needs to be found.

Kathy- Town Meeting- Kathy said that Town meeting is coming up faster than you think. And the current situation with the townhall and having Town Meeting in person is not going to work. There is not enough room for all the people that come to the meeting to be socially distanced. There is now a new variant going around that is supposed to be more contagious. Kathy asked the board if they wanted to see if the town could use the school gym. There would be more room there to have the 3 ft. social distancing. The school has chairs and bleachers. The board has been given the authority by Governor Scott to issue a mask mandate for the meeting. Kathy said that she has two portable voting booths. She said it would be too hard to have the meeting at the school and then have the voting booths manned at the Townhall. She said that she couldn't be in two places and the people manning the voting booths want to hear the meeting and be able to vote on articles off the floor. The two portable voting booths gives us 8 places to vote. Brenda asked if the board needed a motion. Josh said he didn't believe that we need a motion to move the polling site. He said isn't that why there is no school on Town Meeting Day anyway, since most towns vote in their school gym. Kathy asked the board about getting permission to use the gym, and also said that she would need help moving stuff back that night because there was school the next day. Josh asked Kathy if she could reach out to the State to see if they had any portable voting booths that we could use, or maybe we could use some of the COVID money to buy some portable voting booths. Brenda said the cost should be covered by ARPA,

if we can't get them from the state. Josh said we should purchase two or even four more, since the town is growing. He said the school gym may be the polling place from now on. He said the last in-person town meeting at the Townhall was packed. Brenda said that she would reach out to the school and see if we can use the gym. Josh said that if she received any pushback on that to let him know. He said there shouldn't be any, and it would be an easy solution. Kathy said that she would look into the extra voting booths. Josh said that the school would have all the chairs that we would ever need.

Kathy said that **all our voting for the budget is done off the floor**. She said that she knows there will be attendees on zoom but **ANYBODY ON ZOOM WILL NOT BE ABLE TO VOTE. THEY HAVE TO BE PHYSICALLY PRESENT, ON THE FLOOR, IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO VOTE**. Someone asked if they could watch zoom and then come to vote. Kathy said that they could vote by ballot for the things listed on the ballot, but any article that is discussed on the floor, is then voted on immediately on the floor. She said that the board needs to add the article to the ballot this year that allows the voters to decide if they want to vote the budget and big items by Australian ballot. If the town approves it, in the following years, people can come in and vote for the budget, and the people that are voted into town offices, by Australian ballot and not off the floor. The small things can still be voted off the floor, like getting a moderator, the day taxes are to be due, to accept the reports, etc. Lance said that our current moderator is declining to participate as moderator. Kathy said that our moderator will be here to open the meeting and then pass it on. She said if the board knew of anyone who wanted to be moderator, there are moderator classes. Brenda asked if the moderator had to be a resident of the town and Kathy said yes, because you vote them in, they needed to be a registered voter in the town. Kathy said that when the board does their article to see if the town will vote to go to Australian ballot, if passed, it would take effect the following year. Kathy also told the board to consider combining their budget articles on the ballot. She said that Abbey had to jump through hoops to get your TAN loan this year because of the way our budget is voted in. Everything funnels through the General Fund, which goes in as one lump sum, so they question why it isn't voted in as one lump sum, like the school. Then, in your town report, it is itemized as to where your budget goes. Kathy showed the board ballots from Fairfield, Sheldon and Berkshire, which have their budget itemized in their town report, but the budget is voted on in one lump sum as one article on their ballot. She said she would get the board the model printed off from VCLT. Kathy said that this is what she was trying to get the board to do last year to simplify such an extensive ballot. She said that she was not planning on coming to the next Select Board meeting, but she would probably come to the first meeting in January. Terry asked how you keep the general funds, and the road funds separate. Josh said that it is basically how we built the budget last year. It is itemized but it would be voted in as one lump sum in one line item. Lance said that a mask mandate can be voted in by the Select Board for 30 days, so we can vote it in during the first or second meeting in February to cover Town Meeting. Kathy said she would email the

Secretary of State about the voting booths, and she would email each of the board about what she finds out.

NWCUD- Brenda said that there was nothing new to report.

Roads- Mac said that the roads were pretty quiet. Lance and Mac are to contact FEMA to see what's going on. There is a warrant being signed tonight to pay the interest on the FEMA LOC, in order to be able to renew the FEMA LOC for 2022. Mac said that no news and no questions is probably good news. Josh said he just wanted to make sure Mac didn't need anything.

Josh also said that the little people at the school have been asking if they could name our town trucks. Josh said he didn't know how much it would cost to get little Aluminum plates to put on the trucks. Mac said as long as they don't name it something weird. Josh said like Salt Princess?

Brenda asked Mac if they did any brush hogging in the winter. Mac said no because they don't have the tool for that. He said that some towns do.

Lance wanted to make it clear that the town is required to pay off the interest on the current FEMA LOC since the loan is only good for the year. He said that Robin Ware from Community Bank was unable to get the papers ready for tonight, so they were going to have to warn a special meeting to sign the contracts to renew the FEMA LOC into the following year. Lance said that we need to warn a meeting for Monday December 6 at 6:00pm. He said this year's FEMA LOC will be \$1,100,000.00, which is down from last year's, \$1,500,000.00. Lance said that after the contract is signed and the check to pay off this year's interest is ready for the meeting, he would hand deliver it all to Community Bank the following day, since it is due December 7. The FEMA LOC current balance is \$479,701.57.

Mower Bids- Mack said that we have received one sealed bid for the mower that the town has advertised for sale. He said that it will be held for later since he expected at least one more bid to come.

Snow Mobile Club- Brenda said that she talked with the Smuggler's Snow Mobile Club about exactly where they needed permission to cross, and they said that it was a section on Gambler Rd that they've been using. They need written permission each year, and they are asking for a 5-year permission this year. Brenda said to add the clause, "either party can revoke this agreement at any time." The motion was made to grant permission to the Smuggler's snowmobile club, for five years, as amended, by Gary, seconded by Brenda and the vote passed 4-0.

Josh informed the board that there is a Franklin County Court Budget meeting on Dec. 7.

Josh spoke of the ADA letter regarding the Town Hall's compliance with ADA standards for polling sites. Josh said that if we didn't poll here, at the Town Hall, and moved it to the school, the school is in compliance.

ARPA- Brenda said that there are no ARPA updates since the last meeting. She reminded all that there is a Dec 7 informational meeting coming up, to be held in person and via zoom, at the Bakersfield Town Hall.

Brigham Residence- Lance said that Paul Dryer submitted invoice #3 for \$1500.00 and will be on the agenda for the 13th.

Next Agenda-

Firm up the language for Town Meeting

Begin discussing the budget and we will need Vera and Maria here for that.

The board asked to minimize the agenda to allow time for that.

The listers and Deanna Robitalle, regarding town reappraisal

Josh said that due to some of the concerns regarding the roads in the town that have been brought to us, we may need to up the Road budget, so that those repairs that people say need to be done, can get done. You need money to be able to repair the roads. All expenses are up...salt, chloride, fuel, etc. Gary said that Chloride has gone from \$69.99 to \$108.00/bag. The board said that they need to start thinking about the budget because the deadline is coming up fast.

Gary made the motion to adjourn, Brenda seconded the motion and the motion passed with a vote of 4-0, at 8:05pm.

The next Regular Select Board meeting is scheduled for Monday, Dec. 13, 2021, at 7:00pm.

Minutes recorded and submitted by Tami Brennan.