

Bakersfield Regular Select Board Meeting
Monday, October 11, 2021
7:00pm

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

Members present: Josh Goss (chair), Gary Denton, Brenda Churchill, Terri Goss

Members absent: Lance Lawyer

Residents/Guests present: Kathy Westcom, Heather Jewett, Melanie Riddle, Maura Horne, Mac Newitt, Beth Horne, Sue Ann Coffin, Audrey Haselton, John West, Rosalie Williams

Warrants signed:

Road Commissioner's order #19&20-2021	\$7894.75
Selectman's order #22-2021 w/ Direct tax paid to School	\$1,419,957.72

Josh said that Vera had come in to work with Audrey to get the school portion of the taxes, ready to go, so the school has received their portion of the tax income. Josh asked Audrey for the treasurer report and how tax collection went. Josh asked if all the taxes have been deposited. Audrey said yes except for one of the tax bills that got paid twice. Josh asked Audrey if she had any questions for the board and she said no, and then she asked the board if they had any questions for her and the board said no. Josh told Audrey that board had accepted her resignation letter that said that Audrey's last day would be the 29th of October. He said that the board had received a letter from Vera saying that she is willing to help out and assist the new treasurer while she is being trained, for a limited amount of time.

Josh said that Paul Dryer has submitted a bill for \$1500.00 for the Brigham Academy Project. This bill will be reimbursed but needs to be paid by the town, so the town can submit for reimbursement.

Road Report- Mac said that they should be done with the excavator this Friday. Whitney is done, the guard rails and the big box culvert on the big hill. He has submitted Whitney Rd to FEMA, he just has one question still to submit tomorrow.

Road commissioner Job description- Terri said that it's hard because our Road commissioner position is not a paid position. Terri said that she asked Fairfield about theirs and she wrote a very rough job description. Our road commissioner would be managing personnel and safe construction of the highways, but that actually the job description would depend on who is filling it. If it wasn't Mac in the position, it would only be a wintertime position. Josh asked if VLCT said that this is a required position. Terri said that the town has a history of this position. Our Road foreman is our Road Commissioner. We have to decide what we want the Road Commissioner to be. The board said that

when Brian did it, it was a person to help with paperwork for FEMA and the bridge. If we didn't have a road commissioner, the position would be absorbed by the Select Board. Josh said he was not willing to man calls in the middle of the night for \$100.00/week. Mac said that they could re-word the road foreman position to include concerns, complaints, and access permits, and that they would come to the Select Board, like we're doing now. Kathy said that in the distant past, the position used to be elected from the floor at town meeting. Terri said that the board would revisit the Road commissioner job at a later time.

Brenda gave an update on ARPA- Brenda said that we have to use the money by 2023. We have about ½ million dollars in grant money, with a stiff reporting methodology, which we can make active without moving it through the town meeting process for approval. It can be for grants for families affected by COVID, schooling, etc. VLCT will be doing a town meeting style informative session.

Zoning- Brenda put before the board the suggestion that we offer the property owners in Bakersfield, amnesty in regard to zoning fee penalties only, until the end of December, to get their permits current, for those projects completed without a building permit, for 2020 and 2021 violations. As long as people will come forward and apply, we'll waive the penalty which is two times the amount of the regular permit fee. Terri asked how access permits for driveways are issued on private roads. Brenda said that Darlene is coming in tomorrow to work with her in training. She said that there can be complicated cases. For instance, somebody came in and complained about dogs barking and it turned out that the place was being leased by someone that claimed a homestead credit from another state. Terri said that the town has no noise ordinance for the dogs barking. Brenda said, not even considering the dogs, renting and leasing the property out and then claiming the homestead deduction, that's fraud.

Zoning Board of Adjustment- Brenda said that three people have stepped up and sent in a letter of intent regarding their willingness to fill the 3 places on the ZBA. Melanie Riddle, Heather Jewett, and Maura Horne, appeared before the board. Brenda made the motion to accept them as our new Zoning Board of Adjustment with their appointed term to end in September 2022, at which time, they can be considered for re-appointment if they so desire. Gary seconded the motion and the motion passed with a vote of 4-0.

Joyal Road Site-Inspection- Josh said that we all went and saw what was and wasn't there on Joyal Rd, and I'm sure we've all formed opinions. Lance forwarded some information from the state that states what they have deduced from their visit. Josh couldn't find the attachment and asked Rosalie if she could email a copy to the town clerk. Rosalie said she could. Josh asked for thoughts. Gary said that Bethany Reimers, from Better Back Roads, would be

the place to start, regarding grants. There is a lot to be done there and the town doesn't have the money to do it. We will need additional grants. Terri asked if they will come and look specifically. Gary said that they will come and look where we want, or they can do the Municipal Program and do a whole evaluation. Brenda asked Mac if there were specific trouble sites. Terri asked if it would be better to outsource the ditching instead of us renting the equipment. To rent the excavator for a month, it costs \$4500.00. We have 40 miles of back roads. To outsource it would be \$100.00/hr, for the operator and the excavator and then then \$85.00/hr, for one of the trucks. Gary said when you have the excavator, you should run 4-5 trucks to keep the excavator working and not have down time that you pay for. So, 185.00/hr for the excavator and one truck. Mac said the trouble with doing trench drains, the excavator sits waiting for the truck to get back, which could take 45 min to an hour, and you're paying a \$100.00/hour for them to twiddle their thumbs. Josh asked how many miles of ditching they do each year. Mac said that a rough estimate would be a couple of miles, it depends on where and what we have to do. The board said that it is Mac's determination as to where the road needs to be ditched. Gary said that to do 400ft/day, you need an excavator with 4 or 5 trucks. Gary said that we could try for a flat contract for Bakersfield. Determine what is Grass lined and what should be stone lined and try for a quote. That could free our guys up for grading at the same time. We could put that in the budget for outsourcing out ditching. Brenda said that we are going to take information to look into grants to improve what is there now. Rosalie asked if they were going to open up that culvert, that will put water on Mr. West and Sue Ann's property. She said that culvert has been plugged and the water is going down to the big culvert so why open it. Josh said it is state law to open a blocked culvert. Mac said if it is cracked, we'll probably replace it. John West said that you would need to move the cable line as well, because it gets corroded in the box down below the road, and goes out all the time. Mac said that they would locate the culvert with the metal detector and see if we can open it before spring. Josh told Mac to see if he could locate it and then give us an update. Mac said that they have been up on Joyal Rd and seeded and mulched to start growing before the snow flies. Rosalie said that she saw some near the sugar house and in another spot. Terri asked if we have to do the stone lined ditch down the hill. Josh said that a 12.4% slope would need to be stone lined, which is where we look to Bethany. Anything over 8% is supposed to be stone lined. Less than 5% slope can just be reseeded and 5-8% is seeded with matting, and anything over 8%, needs to be stone lined ditch. Josh said that between the telephone poles on Joyal Rd by Rosalie's, it has a 4-6% tapering slope. Mac said that he trenched a little of the 12% and put mats in. The next step is to contact Bethany Reimer. Rosalie asked how much the town has budgeted for dirt work. Josh said that he believed it was 130,000.00 for Dirt work and 170,000.00 for winter work, to include overtime, on-call, workman's comp ins. He said that he wasn't sure what we had left in there. Rosalie said that she was hoping there would be enough money in there to do something this year. She said that by the time we get a grant, it'll be a year and

erosion is taking place, we're already down to a telephone pole, as you saw, where the road has continued to wash away. The 2 culverts I've been talking about on my property, the fields are soaking wet. It's an issue and it hasn't even rained that hard. As you saw, a little bit of rain is a lot of water on that road, and I don't think it's going to hold up for another year, especially when spring gets here. It's too steep, unless you build it up with some gravel. Josh said that the slope of the road hasn't changed in a hundred years and that he would have to get a more definitive answer from our treasurer, but he didn't believe that we have enough money to do reconstruction to the road, especially this time of year because you don't have enough time for compaction adequate to send a plow over it. Rosalie asked if Mac was planning on grading the hill. Mac said yes but they had one more week with the excavator. Then they will be seeding and grading roads. Terri said it seems like we need more material added to it. Josh said that that we were saying, but we need money to do it. Gary said we have a lot of roads that need more material added but we don't have the money to do it. Mac said in the old days when they built a road, they took the farmers stone walls and pulled them into the middle of the road. The frost lifts them up and then there is the general wear and tear to the roads. Gary said that there are stumps in his road. Terri said what do we do to repair that. She said she was surprised that they don't scrape on the rocks. Gary said they do. But it's not just our roads, that happens in all the small towns. We are seeing heavier equipment on our roads, it's not just the sugar makers, but logging trucks, manure trucks, school buses, etc. Rosalie said she agreed with what Terri said, if it has more gravel, and was crowned the right way, ditched in the right way, the road would hold up better. Josh said that is why we are going to call Bethany. Literally, her job is about infrastructure and water standpoint for roads. Rosalie asked if Joyal Rd would be up to code on paperwork by April 2022. Josh said that according to a letter from Warren Weston, they couldn't find a culvert inventory. Josh asked Kathy if we had a road erosion inventory and Kathy brought the binder to Josh. Mac said that Dorothy Allard had received a grant, way back, and got it up to date in April 2010. Rosalie said that the state paperwork needs to be sent to the state. Josh said that Bethany may be able to do one and both at the same time. He said that it should have been on file but due to COVID, the extension is until April 2022. Terri asked if that was something that was new. Mac said no, the first time we did it was when Dorothy Allard, on the Conservation Committee, got a grant and did the whole thing. Mac said that we have a couple of erosion spots, one on King Rd, Joyal Rd, down by Kurt Muzzie's, Waterville Mtn, and Basswood. Josh asked if it didn't get filed on our end or their end. Mac said he would have to talk with Bethany. Josh asked Mac to look into that for our next meeting. Josh said that Lance had forwarded the emails that he had gotten from the State. That's our next steps. Josh asked if there was anything else to add.

Inside/outside Audit- Terri said that Jason Bapp is to begin the inside audit on Oct. 15th. He'll do Abbey's term first.

Josh asked Mac if the guys do any training offered by VLCT for water. Mac said they attended one about 7-10 years ago. Josh said that he felt the whole crew should be attending VLCT offering for training each year, the ones that make sense to attend, like grader safety, etc. It's not that I don't think they know how to grade, not at all, it's just that what crown works for different situations. Terri said that she sees other towns where there is a dump truck ahead of them and then the grader comes. Mac said that works in the Springtime. Josh said that decent gravel makes a difference. Mac said that they have pretty decent gravel right now. Gary said that if we think we want to haul better gravel, that's upping the Dirt work budget. 6' of gravel for 3-5 miles/year is 2151 yards at \$8.00 to \$10.00/yard and comes to another \$100,000.00 in the Dirt work budget. A resident attending said that road mitigation should be done every single year, that 2 years from now it will be so much worse. Josh said that the hard part is getting the town people to approve the budget. He said that from 2018 to 2021, we went up \$10,000.00 and that was hard to get that passed. The resident suggested that we have meeting before town meeting about the budget. Josh said we have had informational meetings that turned into complaint sessions. People complained about their road, etc. and we were trying to talk about the budget. Rosalie asked how many voters we have in town. Kathy said a little under 1000. We have a population of around 1200. Kathy said we have some voters have been challenged but they remain on the voter list until we hear from them. Rosalie said not all the voters are landowners that pay taxes, so they may not care when we ask for things. Josh said that is how we feel when we put things on the budget, it's not because we want to raise taxes, it's because we need the money to get things done. Rosalie said that they might feel like why should they want to approve a budget when they don't feel like they are getting the services. Josh said it's a catch 22. We can't fix stuff without the money, and we can't get the money unless we fix stuff...Catch 22. And it's more than just this past year. It's hard to make a change in a small town. Terri said that we end up getting the brunt of it, even though it's the school that gets most of the money. Kathy said that the town only gets .57 cents out of every \$2.20 cents. The school gets the rest, and not just our school, it goes to other towns as well... Josh said remember that the next time you vote on the school budget. Bakersfield voted the school budget down last year, but it didn't matter. Rosalie asked how many of the 1000, actually vote. Kathy said 200 or less for the average town meeting. Josh said when you are sitting here counting the votes, it feels like all 1000 showed up.

Heather asked what's the plan for the ARPA funding and is it in an interest-bearing account. Brenda said yes and that the whole VLCT crew, with Katie Buckley, will be doing a webinar and that we will make sure everybody gets their paws on it, and then there is to be a live presentation here to get idea of what people are thinking about. Brenda said she would also advocate that people read the material that we put out ahead of time. It is pretty simplistic and straight forward. So then people who ask if we can use it for new road

equipment, the answer is no. Can we use it for energy efficiency for everyone in town...the answer is yes. To make houses habitable...yes. Brenda said that the grants have to be written up specifically and we have to be towing the line on all government requirements and we need to get a report in on a very regular basis. The state has great resources, and we want to take advantage of all of them. And this is only half of the money. Next year we get the other half, a total of just shy of half a million. Brenda said that she would like to see us have a panel of towns folk and that we sit down once or twice a year when we have a whole pile of stuff. Town meeting day will be the day to make a lot of decisions. We'll listen to VLCT and see how we should move forward. Brenda said that we may get even more money from the Federal government. Terri said that honestly, she'd like to stop seeing money coming because somewhere we're going to have to pay for this money.

Rosalie asked if there was still a teen center fund. Kathy said no, there was hardly any money in it and several years ago, the little bit of money went to something else at the school. Terri said that she thought it went to the PTO. Rosalie asked if the upstairs of the town hall could be used for anything. The board said no, because it isn't handicap accessible and has no fire escape. That is something we should look into, making our whole building useful. Josh said he had some awesome town meeting dinners up there as a kid.

The board was asked if town meeting would be in person this year. Josh said that he would love to see everybody back here. It's so important for community. He said we could still stream it for those who don't feel comfortable coming in.

Brenda made the motion to adjourn at 9:27pm, Gary seconded, and the motion passed by a vote of 4-0.

Josh said that they called the adjournment too soon and he called an emergency meeting to begin at 8:30, to discuss Vera Lawyer, who has offered to sit in and observe the pieces and parts of the treasurer job that she does not know, in order to be able to help our newly appointed treasurer when we make that switch. Kathy asked that after Vera observes and Audrey leaves on the 29th, are you going to see if Vera will do the job until you get someone? Josh said that an advertisement for a new treasure needs to be put into a local paper and on facebook, with resumes to be sent to the town clerk. We need a motion to that effect. Terri made the motion to advertise for the Bakersfield treasurer position, to be filled from now until the first Monday in March. Brenda said that it needs to be a Bakersfield resident. Terri said that for an appointed term, it doesn't need to be a resident. Kathy said she thought that they might be able to appoint the position to a non-resident, but don't they want to hire someone that could potentially run for the position in the spring. Brenda said that since it is a vacancy for an elected position it needs to be a town resident. If it was an expired term, it could be someone out of town, but since it's an elected position it needs to be a resident. But we can hire help

from anywhere to be their assistant. Terri said that we are thinking of changing that this March. Josh said we need to focus on this motion for now. Gary seconded the motion and the motion passed with a vote of 4-0.

Josh said that Vera has offered to come in and fill in for the town until we get someone new. We would call her the interim treasurer. Terri said we need to talk to Vera about some things. She asked if Vera was retired. We need to know what she can do for income and for hours. Josh said that when he talked to Vera, it sounded like she was willing to come in one to two days/week, to observe, edit and train. We have to decide how long...until Dec? End of November? We have to find out what fits with her. Terri said it would be nice if she was willing to do it from now until March, there are so many moving parts this year, she said she would hate to be an auditor. Vera can train an assistant that can carry on in March. Terri made the motion to appoint Vera as interim treasurer of the Town of Bakersfield, from Oct 12 to Dec 31, for two days a week. Kathy said that the training fee that Abbey was getting was \$25.00/hour. Terri made the motion to offer 20.00/hour. Josh asked if we can amend the motion to \$25.00? Kathy said that the motion has been made but nobody has seconded it. Terri said we couldn't afford it. Josh said that we wouldn't be paying the current treasurer. Terri asked if that pay was more. Kathy said it was around 1400.00+ a month. Josh asked Terri if she was willing to amend her motion. Terri said yes and amended her motion to \$25.00/hour. Terri asked if we had to have an end date. So, the motion was amended to say, until as needed for \$25.00/hour.

Kathy asked if they wanted to limit it to two days a week. Terri said they would keep it at two days for now and they could amend it later.

Thus, the motion was made, by Terri, to appoint Vera Lawyer to the position of interim treasurer for the Town of Bakersfield, for two days a week, beginning on Oct 12 until such time as needed, at a pay rate of 25.00/hour. Gary seconded the motion and the motion passed by a vote of 4-0.

Gary made the motion to adjourn. Terri seconded the motion and the motion passed by a vote of 4-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:41pm.

The next regular Select Board meeting will meet on Monday, October 25, at 7:00pm.

Meeting minutes recorded by Tami Brennan.