

Bakersfield Regular Select Board Meeting
Monday, October 24, 2022
7:00pm

Meeting was called to order at 7:02pm by Josh Goss.

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

Members absent: none

Residents/Guests: Linda McCall, Dan and Katie Forand...briefly via zoom because of poor connection, Tami Brennan

Previous minutes: Motion was made by John to accept the Oct. 10 minutes as written, seconded by Brenda and the motion carried with a vote of 4-0, Lance abstaining having not been present at the October 10 meeting.

Warrants signed:

Selectman's Order #24-2022	\$342,585.44
Selectman's Order #ARPA 5-2022	\$121.10
Road Commissioner's Order #21&22-2022	\$10,348.86
Dirt work	

Finance- Kathy provided the board with a delinquent tax report as of 10/10/2022 and included a copy of the letter that went out to those who are still delinquent.

The board also looked over the risk management report for the library.

Linda McCall said that the audio on zoom was buzzing really loud and she couldn't hear so she was leaving the meeting. John said that he is in the process of getting the buzz out. The Northwest access recording that can be accessed on the Town website is buzz free.

Visitor- there were no visitors on the agenda or in attendance.

Road Report- Mac was unable to be present so the Road report was tabled until the next meeting.

Lance said that they did submit for a paydown on two projects, and we are waiting on those.

Terri asked the board how much of Hyde's Hill Rd that the town owned. Josh and Lance said up to the end up at Dan Shook's place. Terri said that the top is getting quite narrow. The board thought it was probably because there was one house up there. Terri said it is still the town's responsibility to keep it accessible.

New mail- the board reviewed a series of confidential emails for information only.

Multi-town Zoning Administrator- Brenda said that she had attended a Select Board meeting in Fletcher, and said that they are having similar issues in needing to hire a Zoning Administrator. Brenda proposed hiring a Zoning Administrator to share among three towns, creating a full-time position with benefits. Fletcher said they would be amenable to that. Brenda will look into that and keep the board updated.

Financial Policies-

The board updated the Purchase/Payment Policy by adding John West's name to it and removing Gary Denton and re-signed the document.

Lance said the State of Vermont is requiring that we update our financial policies and have adopted written policies in order to be eligible for grants for Brigham.

Lance read aloud the Accounting, Auditing, and Financial Report Policy, customized to Bakersfield from the VLCT model. Lance said this is what we are currently doing but this is formally written so the State will accept it. Lance made the motion to adopt the Accounting, Auditing and Financial Report Policy as set forward by VLCT to be effective as of today, 10/24/2022. The motion was seconded by John and the motion carried by a vote of 5-0. The board signed the adopted policy. Policy to be posted on the Bakersfield Town Website.

Lance read aloud the Balance Model Budget Policy, customized to Bakersfield from the VLCT model. The board noted that these are practices that we've already been doing with the addition of transferring one line item to cover a deficiency on another line item with majority vote. John made the motion to adopt the Balance Model Budget Policy as set forth by VLCT, effective as of today, 10/24/2022. The motion was seconded by Terri and carried with a vote of 5-0. The board signed the adopted policy and the policy to be signed by Maria and then posted on the Bakersfield Town Website.

Lance read aloud the Model Capital Program and Budget Policy- saying that the board can discuss parts as read. After reading, Lance said that, in other words, we could incorporate a new grader and updates to the town garage into a CIP. Lance said the numbers that he inserted into the form, are proposed numbers and can be changed before adopting. Lance said that he chose those numbers because they reflect the expenses of the past. Josh asked if they adopted this plan, when is the 5-year plan required. Lance said not this year, we can work on it in the coming year. Josh asked if 5 years down the road, there is a different board in place and the new board doesn't want to follow the policy, what happens. Lance read the section in the policy that said the policy is effective as of this date until amended or repealed by majority vote, so they have the option to amend it or repeal it.

Lance said the State and Federal governments are requiring that we have these written policies in place. Lance said that he has more information on each of these and will share the link to access the info.

Brenda made the motion to adopt the Model Capital Program and Budget Policy as written and effective immediately. The motion was seconded by Terri and the motion carried with a vote of 5-0. The Policy will be posted on the Town website.

Lance said that 3 of the policies should be tabled to discussion later. John said it would be helpful to see what they are signing and would like to see the VLCT suggestions to customizing the forms. Lance said he would print them out and provide them to the board members to be read prior to the next meeting.

Lance identified three policies to be tabled until later: the Town Investment Policy; the Fund Balance Reserve Policy- to consider money to set aside for emergencies, such as if we total a truck and we can't replace for the insurance payment amount; The Debt Management Policy- debt ratios, etc. Lance said they would be better able to discuss these policies after they do their budget meetings, not before.

Terri asked what the truck fund in the budget was for. Josh said that is expressly for the truck loan payment. The New Equipment fund is more for replacing road maintenance equipment.

Lance also showed the board three more policies: the Cash Receipts, Petty Cash and Returned Check Policy; The Model Credit Card Policy, both of which need to be signed by the Town Clerk; and the Fraud Prevention Policy that just requires the Select Board to sign. All require the treasurer's signature.

These are all written policies, and we have no written financial policies at this time.

Lance read out the Trustee of Public Funds Investment Policy and said it should be read by each board member and discussed. Discussion was tabled until the next meeting.

John asked if reimbursement of funds is spelled out in any of the policies. He said if not, we should talk to VLCT to see if they have one.

John said that he believed that the board should modify the Purchase/Payment Policy that was signed last February. He said that the list of those approved to make incidental purchases up to \$500.00, without prior approval by the Select Board, should be reconsidered. He said the Select Board members didn't need to be on it. John said that the only ones that really need to be able to make purchases without prior approval were Kathy and the Road Commissioner or Road Foreman. Brenda said that the Zoning Administrator needed to be included on that list because of the expense of certified mail to notify people of hearings or abutter notices. The board approved that those three persons were approved to purchase up to \$500.00 without prior authorization. Payments still need to be approved by the Select Board on the warrants presented before going to the treasurer for payment.

Terri asked where the money comes from to pay the ARPA secretary for taking meeting minutes. Brenda said that comes out of ARPA. Terri asked who votes on that and that she thought the board had to approve to spend ARPA funds. Brenda said not for admin salaries. She said this is the second payment to the secretary since this was the second ARPA meeting. Josh said that would be the person that the board appointed to manage the ARPA funds. Josh said that John is to go to the next ARPA meeting to represent the Select Board regarding the grader and town equipment that the town needs. John said that he brought it up at the last meeting. A written request needs to be filled out by Mac.

John said that there is a new update on the ARPA rules.

Brenda said that we have received the last and final installment and the last deposit has been deposited. She said the state said this payment would be partial. Brenda will check the deposit amount on the statement.

Town Hall Furnace Update- John said that we are down to three companies that are willing to give us bids to replace or service. John said that Bernie Gage said that he would send an estimate and we are still waiting for that. Holbrook said they would service the one that we have, and we could use it for the season. Josh said we should look into it more in the spring. Josh asked John to contact Holbrook and see if he could set up a service appointment. John said that 2 of the 3 keep saying that the split unit heat pumps are not a good option below 20 degrees.

Hearse House Update- Lance said that he was cutting logs for the Hearse House this week. He wasn't sure yet who was going to saw them.

Tami gave the board an email from NEMRC giving prices to purchase their Land Records Module with support, to digitalize our records, and then to eventually attach to their host portal where NEMRC would manage accessing our land records and collecting payment remotely. Tami also presented the board with the ballpark quote of around \$25,000.00-\$30,000.00, to mass scan our land records off-site, which would be added to the cost of the NEMRC set up. She said this company quoted 30.00/hour and 7 cents a page. Tami said the office staff didn't think removing the land records off site is a good idea. NEMRC can set us up to scan our own records during hours that the Town Office is closed and use our own printer/scanner, like they have done in Fletcher. Tami said that our book fund already has about \$27,000.00, collected toward the cost of digitalizing and preserving our land records. She said this could go toward us scanning our own records. She said that if we added about \$20,000.00 from the ARPA funds to go toward this, we could pay someone for the extra hours to work on scanning our records in house. Tami said that she and Kathy agree that it makes sense to scan our own records in house, and to scan the permits, etc, into the system for easy access as well, starting with the present and working backwards. John said that he would talk to the NEMRC support person, Adam Saunders, to get more information regarding this.

John made the motion to adjourn, Brenda seconded the motion and the motion carried by a vote of 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:57pm.
Meeting minutes were recorded by Tami Brennan.