

Bakersfield Regular Select Board Meeting  
Monday, October 25, 2021  
7:00pm

Meeting was call to order at 7:01 by Josh Goss.

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

Members absent: Gary Denton

Residents/Guests present: John West, Vera Lawyer, Susan Wooten, Kathy Westcom, Mac Newitt, Josh Pryor, and via zoom: Linda McCall, Katie and Dan Forand, Tim Joyal

Warrants signed:

Selectman's Order #23-2021	\$14,800.77
Road Commissioner's Order #21&22-2021	\$16,460.55
Road Commissioner's Order #FEMA 16-21	\$116,800.00

Motion to approve Oct 11 Select Board meeting minutes, with the correction of 6" of coverage on the roads, not 6'...and the change of Terri Gates name from Terri Goss. (Sorry about that ☺), was made by Terri Gates, seconded by Brenda, and passed with a vote of 3-0, Lance abstaining since he wasn't present at the Oct 11 meeting and Gary being absent.

Josh opened by calling the board's attention to the warrant reflecting the two days permitted by the board for the work of the interim treasurer, along with an additional record of extra hours that Vera needed to work on correcting our accounts. He said that they as a board had underestimated the work that was needed. Josh made the motion to pay the remaining hours, that were left off the current warrant, and that Vera worked to make corrections to our accounts. Lance seconded the motion and the motion passed with a vote of 4-0.

Kathy said that Jason Bapp has completed the audit of January and February, the time that Abbey Miller was still treasurer, which took 2 mornings. Joy Doane has offered to be appointed as temporary auditor to help Jason with the audit needed for March to the present, and then again in January, when the end of the year will need to be audited as well. Josh made the motion to appoint Joy Doane as Interim auditor, Lance seconded the motion and the motion passed with a vote of 4-0.

Vera- Finance

Vera said that Audrey was not in a few days last week, except to sign checks, so Vera did the reports using her own method and not that of Quick Books. She included the approved budget balances voted in by the town in March and the reports on Dirt Work, Winter Work, and General Expenses. She told the board that the report form may be different than what they have been used to and asked the board to let her know exactly what they wanted in a report and the form in which they wanted it. She said that she has gone back and reconciled statements since January 1, 2021, and she had double checked in

the town report as to the approved budgeted amounts in the Town Report, which she wasn't sure if those had changed at all. Quick Books has not yet been audited for the rest of the time frame which Jason will do. Vera said that Audrey had asked for help last week to reconcile, and that it took some time, but it is all reconciled to balance with Kathy's Bank Statement, which are now correct to the end of September. Vera said that the expenses were there on the spreadsheet that she gave the board. Lance had a question on the Gravel Pit expenses which he said showed interest payments of \$40,000.00 but nothing on the principle. Vera said that she didn't have the breakdown and it was not on the bank account and that is something that she still is yet to get to. She said that she has the Library done. She said that she is catching onto Quick Books fairly quickly and did warrants except accounts payable. She is still trying to find reports and will continue once the audit is complete. She doesn't want to touch anything until then. She's caught up a fair number of spreadsheets. Vera said that the W99-2021 was erroneously paid out of the road account, which she can pay back after the audit. There are Federal, Social Security, Medical, and State taxes that we owe. The Road owes a tax payment due 7/26 for 1298.97, the town owes a 4/26 tax payment of 1311.40 for payroll and a 7/26 tax payment of 63.00 for a change on a warrant. These are way overdue. The 941 form needs to be done, it was not done the end of June and the end of Sept payment is due the end of this week. Vera said that she would put it in the correct quarter, but the town will have late fees and penalties. The library taxes for the end of the June quarter and Sept quarter have not been paid. Vera said she had the 941 filled out and was waiting for the warrants to send in the checks. She said that the Road Account had paid too much and then after May 10, nothing has been paid for the town and she needs to reconcile with the State to see what was paid and what is owed. Vera said that the Road and the Town have the same Tax ID, so she thinks that she might be able to just pay the difference. The unemployment was not done for two quarters. Vera said that her priority for tomorrow after warrants is to get the 941s done and paid. She said that she is trying very hard to get things done and done right. Lance asked if he could come to the office tomorrow to ask a few questions after she has completed the warrants and Vera said yes. Vera said that working on Quick Books is fairly simple and that the Federal and State need to be done first. Terri told Vera that we appreciate you coming forward and helping us with this. Vera asked the board what they would like for reports because she's not sure what they have been used to. She said for now she would stay with the report form that she gave them tonight until we can get Quick Books to be correct. Josh said that the reports that they got last year were similar to this one, they had what we spent to date and the budget amount. Brenda asked if at some point, Vera would have a column for ARPA funds and Brigham Residence grants and Vera said Yes, when she has time, she will get these in. Josh told Vera to turn in all her hours because the board was not aware of how much work and time it would take and that they had clearly underestimated the work. Vera said that she had spoken with Jason about the past due amounts, and he said just to pay them and then call him

with she has the spread sheets up to date. She said that hopefully he won't have to wait until too late in November. Also, she said that we have things in place to have Vera able to sign checks and to take Audrey off. Vera said that balancing property taxes may be a little more difficult because she was not present at the time they were received. Overpayments need to be returned and homestead declarations updated. Josh thanked Vera for everything that she is doing for the town.

#### Treasurer Candidates-

Brenda said that she failed to confirm with Maria DeRosa and that she is absent tonight because today is her birthday and there was a birthday party planned. We can discuss her resume, but we won't be able to question her. Susan Wooten gave the board her resume and appeared as a candidate for treasurer. She said that this is her third time appearing before the board, plus running last March. The board said that they are looking for an interim treasurer to finish this term and we have two candidates. Brenda asked Susan if she had heard Vera speak about the problems she was working through, and Brenda pointed out that Vera had had experience in that position for over 20 years. Brenda said that Vera is getting a handle on the situation with Jason. Brenda said that there is really no training with this job, it's just come in and work. Brenda said that the systems that we have in place right now are not that intuitive, and that it is not an easy job, and we can't afford to do what we just did. Josh said that he had thought that Vera said that she would train but Josh found out that he did not speak correctly. Vera said that she would answer questions but not train. Vera said that it takes a year to train for this job because many of the tasks only happen once a year, such as taxes. Susan asked if she was right to understand that Abbey would not be a resource at all. Josh said that Abbey may answer a question over the phone, possibly, but she is no longer a town resident, and she is working a fulltime job. Terri said that the new treasurer may be able to sit with another town treasurer at this point. The board said that any training that they could provide for the new treasurer, they would try to do so. Susan said that she had worked for Klienfelter, helping with budgets and worked on a little bit of payroll and she left that company in 1989. Susan said that she has no accounting experience and she said that she is computer illiterate. She said that she worked for Jones and Stokes environmental firm and left when the company became no longer employee owned. She then took some classes and worked on her and her husband's tie-dye business, which she kept the books for. Then she said that she got sick and ended up in dialysis and then the transplant. She said that if she got the treasurer position, she could start right away and that she would continue to work for Branons, 15-20 hour/week, in the evenings. Susan said that she had met with Abbey before she ran for the position last March and Abbey went over the job description with her. The board thanked Susan and said that they still had one more candidate to interview. Brenda explained that because the treasurer position is an elected position, the person who is appointed needs to be a registered voter residing in Bakersfield. Brenda said that this was not a

forever job, and that the person who is appointed would need to run for the position in March and get elected to retain the position. Brenda said that VLCT has detailed role and responsibilities for town treasurers in chapter 32 and that could give some information. Susan said that she is registered voter and has not missed an election and she was willing to run in March. Susan said that it has been about 4-5 years since she worked with Quick Books.

The board said that they needed to arrange to meet the other candidate before the next Regular Select Board meeting. Brenda made the motion to hold a Special Meeting of the Select Board to meet with the candidate and discuss the interim treasurer position, on Tuesday, November 2, 2021, at 6:00pm. Lance seconded the motion and the motion passed with a vote of 4-0. Tami said she would warn the meeting.

Tim Joyal met with the board, representing Northwest Vermont Wheeler ATV club. He asked the board what the initial reason for the \$10.00 ATV sticker was. Josh said it was to take the fees for riding our roads and put the money into repairing and maintaining our roads. Tim asked if it was enough to fix the roads and could they use more. Tami said that she thought it had brought in more than 2000.00. Josh said that they were able to purchase some loads of gravel to fix bad corners and offset the time for the grader to work on the roads. Josh said that we did not have the complaints about the roads being torn up that we have had in previous years. He wasn't sure if that was because it was not a good riding year or if it was because Bakersfield roads were not on the VASA maps this year, road damage from ATVs was down. Tim said that it sounded like the board was happy with the outcome and asked if they planned do stickers again next year, instead of asking the club to see what they can do. Josh said that, as a board, they have not discussed it. Josh said that he thought it would be good to wait for the new board in March. That there will be new faces on the board and the club could get on the agenda for April. Tim asked if the board had noticed any ATV traffic on the West side of Rt. 108. The board said that side of 108 is closed to ATVs. Tim said that some people would still ride there. Lance said that he lived well into the west side, and he saw no more and no less than the year before. Lance also said that the riders have been more respectful this year. Tim said that they would get on the agenda for April and to have a good winter.

Brenda said that she would like to take a casual survey of the town before Town meeting and have Tim do a casual survey from his members of what the effect was for them.

#### Road Report-

Mac said that they have a tire issue on the grader. The front one has a gouge and a leak. Four tires have bunions, and another has a leak. He said we are looking at 6 tires. He asked the board how long they are planning on keeping the grader. He said that Bias tires cost \$736.00/ea and radials cost, which last longer cost \$1235.00/ea. And Mac said if one goes flat next week, you can't get

them. Josh asked if there was any possibility of rotating the tires. Mac said that the only one that doesn't have a big problem is one of the front ones and that one is bare being 4 or 5 years old. Josh said with the balance in the checking account, we can't afford ½ of one. Someone said that there is more money in the Repair account that is in an interest-bearing account. Josh said that they would check with Vera to get a balance. The board asked if there was anything else on new equipment and Mac said Not really. Josh said if we do the Bias tires and get them all to match, that's \$500.00 less per tire and you could do all six. Mac said that the Bias tires have not been lasting that long and that the Radials last longer, so it might depend on how long you want to keep the grader. Mac said that he had never run Radials, but you're supposed to get more traction. Mac said that he wasn't sure if that price included installation, since they have to make a trip up here to install them. Lance and Terri said we should go with the cheaper and do all 6, Josh agreed. We might get 4 years out of them.

Terri had a question about the Road warrant. She asked why we do mileage for the guys everyday. Mac said because he brings the signs and the fuel everyday in his own truck.

FEMA- Mac said we have the bill for Whitney and the guardrails. He said that Tyler had a call into Mac about extra guardrails needed. He wanted to pay for the extra guardrail because it was his mistake. We think we can try to get FEMA to pay for it. Tyler and anybody can see that this needs to happen for safety, it's just a matter of who is going to pay for it. Terri asked about the guardrails on Waterville Mtn Rd. Mac said that they've been up there putting guardrail up and Tyler said that Lafayette is coming again next week so we'd be getting them finished next week when they come back. Josh said if FEMA will pay for it, we'll take the money from FEMA, if not, we'll have Tyler pay for it because we don't have the money and we didn't have it budgeted. Mac said it would about 50' more on Waterville.

The board asked if the water at the Cemetery had been shut off yet? Mac said not yet. The board said that they had received a call to remind Mac.

Josh asked Mac if the gravel Pit gate was being locked. He said that it didn't get shut on Friday and he had reports of a little white car and a little red car with lights shining in the fields around dusk, up where the old camp was. He said that the gate needs to be shut. Mac said he didn't know who would be up there unless it had something to do with the hay. He said that Kurt was able to get a second cut off the lower section this year and it might be good to ask for some money next year if he hays again.

Mac said that he has a meeting with Bethany from Better Back Roads tomorrow or Wednesday. He said he received the emails from Lance and the

ANR guy, Jim Ryan, and Lauren Weston from the Conservation district in St. Albans.

Brigham Residence- Lance said that the revised budget had be uploaded to the database and that he has found it to be as difficult to navigate as FEMA. Doug Kennedy reached out to Lance regarding the Brigham Academy residence. He wanted to check with the board about being present for a Thursday conference call at 9:00am. Brenda said she could be there. The board discussed the broken windows in the building and how to keep the weather out and that it had been broken into. They decided to get plywood for the first-floor windows to keep weather and animals out, but to put plywood on the second floor would take a lift. Josh said that he would check to see if he can get a roll of 8ml poly that they could double up and put it on the second-floor windows to keep the weather and birds out. Terri asked if it was insured. Lance said yes, through VLCT as a town building. It is also on the National Historic Register.

ARPA- Brenda said there was no change. The money is in the bank earning interest. She said that she and Bill Irwin had attended a meeting and there are 66 categories of things that we can spend it on, such as paying our network security system for our computers. Josh asked if we could use some to make our second floor of the town hall, handicap accessible. Brenda said that it had to be COVID related. She said that she had contacted a grant writer who works exclusively with historic and old building to look into that. She said, beginning in November, Katie Buckley would be posting a recorded info session on YouTube and we can refer town members to watch it for information.

Zoning Amnesty-Brenda read what she had written to be shared with the town regarding Zoning Amnesty until end of 2021. It read as follows:

“As mentioned at the last select board meeting, I proposed zoning amnesty for folks in the Town of Bakersfield who may have forgotten to get that zoning permit or change of use permit, to be in compliance with our current zoning bylaws and regulations.

So, with that said, anyone who should have applied for a permit and didn't, whether you forgot, let it slip, thought you didn't need one, just kept putting it off, please see me on Tuesdays from 3pm to 5pm or email me at [bakersfieldzoning@gmail.com](mailto:bakersfieldzoning@gmail.com), or call me at my home office (802) 933-7433. I will be happy to talk to you.

Again, zoning amnesty is a “grace period” to get properly permitted in the Town of Bakersfield. It will be from November 1 to December 31, 2021. We will not impose penalties (by law that would be 2x the regular fee) or fines that we might otherwise collect. We really do know who you are, so do the right thing. Please.”

Brenda said that after the amnesty period is through, she would start pursuing those people for incompliance in January. She said that neighbors have been turning in neighbors.

Outside audit- the board wants to put whether or not to have an outside audit, before the voters in March. Lance said that he spoke to Wanda Cochran about the doing the audit and she said that she couldn't do it, but gave another name to pursue, which he has on a sheet of paper at home. The board wants to get three quotes from willing parties.

Future Agenda-

The listers with Deanna Robitaille, the Dept of Taxes District Advisor regarding reappraisal.

Make a decision and appoint an interim treasurer. The board said that Maria's resume will be in the new mail folder for the SB members to reference.

As soon as someone is appointed, Vera said that she would do a simple explanation and would be available to answer questions. Vera said she was concerned to get an experienced person in there because she doesn't want to do this again.

There is to be a Grievance Hearing before the BCA for tax abatement applications which has to be warned.

Terri made the motion to adjourn, Brenda seconded the motion and the motion passed with a vote of 4-0, at 8:36pm.

A Special Select Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 2, 2021, at 6:00pm, to interview the other candidate for the treasurer position and for discussion regarding appointment.

The next Regular Select Board meeting will be held on Monday, November 8, 2021, at 7:00pm.

Meeting minutes recorded by Tami Brennan.