

Bakersfield Regular Select Board Meeting  
Monday, Sept 28, 2020 at 7:00

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

Members present: Gary Denton, Sam Cribb, Terri Gates, Josh Goss

Members absent: Lance Lawyer

Residents/Guests present: Mac Newitt, Abbey Miller, Ed Page, Maura Horne, Pat Evans, Paul Luneau, Steve Maynard, Alicia Panko

Motion to accept the Sept 14, 2020 Select Board minutes with the following amendment, was made by Terri, seconded by Sam and passed with a vote of 4-0.

Amendment to the Sept 14 minutes: Removing "Terri requested the consideration of a revote on the boards decision to accept the landowner's petition for such action, since she was not on the board when said vote to accept was cast." Replacing with "Terri asked for clarification of the sequence of events in the legal process of proceeding with the Skinner Hill petition."

Warrants signed:

Road Commissioner's Order #18&19-2020	\$26,641.73
Selectmen's Order #25-2020	\$5, 934.03
Selectmen's Order #03-2020	\$360.00

Alicia Panko attended the meeting to check in on the plan for the Class III section of King's Hill Rd., reiterating that it was the Town's responsibility to maintain the road 1.3 miles from the intersection of East Bakersfield Rd., stating that 1.3 miles was up to where the landing was, on the bend just around the corner from the trailer.

Ed Page said that there was already a cleared area for a turn around there. Mac said that that point was past the 1.3 miles, and to establish the turn around there would take 2 weeks work with some blasting and moving a telephone pole and that the Town would need to get permission from Don Clowes to make and maintain a turn around right there. Josh responded by saying that the Board would be unable to decide without seeing the site in person, so the Board made an appt to meet at the intersection of East Bakersfield Rd and Kings Hill road, with Mac and any interested parties, at 4:30pm on Tuesday, Oct. 6. Mac has a measuring wheel to run up the road and measure feet. Josh will also do some research on the Agency of Natural Resources website because it has property layouts and measuring features to determine the 1.3 mile point.

Pat Evans attended as the chairman of the Conservation Commission, to explain that there are many opening on the Conservation Commission and his neighbor, Maura Horne, was interested in filling one of the openings. Pat shared that he thought Maura would make a great addition to the commission and was appearing before the board to ask permission to appoint her to the position. Gary made the motion to appoint Maura to the commission, the motion was seconded by Sam, and passed with a vote of 4-0.

Pat also made the board aware of a petition that the Conservation Commission had circulating in regards to naming an unnamed stream that runs behind the school. The State had confused this stream, named Page Brook at the time, with the Hyde Hill Stream and subsequently named the Hyde Hill Stream, Page Brook, leaving the previous Page Brook without a name. The petition is to name this stream with no name, School Brook and a tributary that runs from it by the Heron rookery, Heron Brook.

Paul Luneau attended looking for help for a temporary fix to get him and his family over the brook on King's Hill Rd, to their hunting camp through the fall months. The Board said that the FEMA money was not expected until spring and the board was limited as to what they could do. The State ordinance states that the Town needs to upkeep a Class IV road to be passable for one season of the year and the road was passable for the summer. Paul asked about possibly putting some wooden boards across, but Josh was concerned that if there were heavy rains, they could wash down the stream, adding to the existing debris creating another dam that would cause more flooding. Paul has been watching on Craig's list for used 4 ft. culverts. Paul said that his family usually has Thanksgiving up there and last year, it rained and they nearly were unable to get out. Alicia said that she thought that she had read somewhere that the town was responsible to supply a landowner with material to use to maintain a Class IV road. She was unable to find it at the meeting but said she would keep looking. It was agreed to give them a couple loads of 3-5 stone and Paul said that he would figure out a way to get it up there. Gary advised that Paul check out Tatro's for some scrap 24" plastic tube that they could use temporarily and fill around it. Paul agreed that sounded like something to check out and see what's available.

Terri later pointed out that according to "Guidance for Class IV Highway policy", that for a private citizen to work on a Class IV road, the citizen must apply for and be granted a permit. Mac reminded the board that the Town currently does not have a Class IV road policy.

Abbey addressed the board regarding the establishment of a Flag Keeper for the Flag in the Cemetery park. Linda McCall contacted the Boy Scouts about taking care of the flag and gave the key to Xander Paquette.

Also, the flag, itself, has worn and shredded and Kathy ordered a new one. Discussion continued about who was responsible to pay the electricity for the lights in the Cemetery park and about the need to research which expenses were the responsibility of the town or the Cemetery commission.

Sam said he would contact David Houston about where the plug-in LED flood light to illuminate the flag was. Kathy order 4 solar lights to illuminate the side entrance of the Town hall that cost \$20.00.

Abbey brought forth data on the salaries with the road budget and the town budget. The town had asked for no increase for the town budget, and the expenses for the Fire Dept and other departments increase each year.

Problems arise from the timeline of determining the budget, voting on the budget and collecting money for the budget. The town sets the budget for the present year in Jan, votes on its acceptance in March and then collects the approved monies in October, ten months into the year that those monies are meant to fund, causing the need for the town to borrow money to keep running until they receive the money in October. This year, in light of possible hardship brought about by COVID, the board voted to waive penalties and fees on taxes paid after the due date of Oct. 5, until noon on December 1, 2020. If enough residents delay paying their taxes, the town will be unable to pay the school their portion of the taxes, that will remain due 20 days after Oct. 5. Abbey wanted to have some borrowing plan in place, since it takes some time to get that arranged, should that happen. Abbey wanted to give the Board a heads up to be prepared, after Oct. 5<sup>th</sup>, if she needs to call a special meeting of the Board to decide how to proceed. The Board thought that the first course of action would be to contact the school to see if they would work with us.

The Board discussed the Road employee's insurance plan. Currently, the town has only 3 full time workers and the Road employees have always had the option of insuring husband and wife. Mac originally had a policy that covered him and his wife, and opted to relieve the town of paying for his insurance and become insured under his wife's employer, under the agreement that if the time came to come back under the Town's insurance plan that it would be the same coverage he had when he left and the board agreed. There are currently 4 people covered under health policies provided under the town, Mac and Cyndi, Dan and Mark. There is no provision for vision or dental. There was discussion as to the level of coverage that the town subscribes to and Abbey said that she would get clarification on that.

The new Personnel policy that the Board is working on, is worded in such a way, that new employees would be covered differently.

On the town budget, we are about 55% through the budget and about 50% through the year. Terri said that we have to make it fit.

Abbey had presented the Board with a line item list of expenses paid so far this year. Terri asked if the office really needed someone to clean the office for 60.00 for a two week pay period. Abbey said that the cleaning lady worked for an hour and half each week and does a great job cleaning and wiping everything down for COVID which is very helpful to the office staff. The cumulative office expense of 2055.00 was questioned as to what was covered in that amount. Abbey said paper and ink for printing town reports, for providing requested documents to residents and researchers, any select board papers, and treasurer reports, various office supplies, books for the vault, special paper for marriage, death and birth certificates, stamped and plain envelopes. The office also pays for the flags that we purchase through the legion. The book fund is for maintaining all the Record books in the vault, including refurbishing, and also the move toward digitalizing. The State stepped in and increased all the clerk fees to ensure that a portion of the fees goes toward upkeep of the books.

The Town Clerk receives a salary and a portion of the clerk fees as payment. Terri said that she had heard that the town clerk could collect a salary or the clerk fees, not both. The rest of the board said that the fees were part of her pay, and her salary not high. The collector of delinquent taxes receives a percentage of what's collected.

According to the VLCT, State statutes govern the Town Clerk, not the Select Board.

The line item for insurance is the cost of the liability and auto insurance for the trucks. The telephone cost line item was discussed and Terri was going to do some research into what it would cost to get our telephone service through Comcast instead of Consolidated Communications. Abbey said the Telephone is now through Consolidated Comm., the Fax is through MCI and the internet is through Comcast.

There was a water tax line item that was explained that we pay that to another municipality.

For workers comp, the Town pays for the Road and the Town also pays for the library, which falls under the town policy through VLCT. The board would notify the library to build into their budget monies to pay their workman's comp. Abbey said she would look into how much is the libraries portion of the workman's comp insurance.

Some discussion took place as to how many other towns present their budget to the vote as a lump sum instead of a line item vote.

The Select Board decided to add further discussion toward establishing the 2021 budget for the next Select Board meeting and Abbey said that she would e-mail the board an updated expenses-paid line item list to the end of September for the next Select board meeting on Oct. 12, and would attend to discuss the budget more then. She also notified the board that the Gravel pit loan was due tomorrow and that they had not sent us a bill. She would transfer the money to make the payment so it's not late.

No Delinquent taxes had come in as of today, the 28<sup>th</sup>, and tax sales have been on hold because of COVID. The ban on tax sales will be lifted and the procedure for tax sales will go forward in January.

Road Report- Mac said that things were going good. Waterville Mtn Road should be complete today. They replaced two culverts on Egypt Road and two culverts on County Road. They will replace the culvert on Belvidere Mtn Road. After it rains, they can run the grader over the roads. There is some FEMA work on Hennessy Rd. and after the excavator leaves, they will finish the sand pile and grading.

The only road complaint that came in was a call to Terri about inadequate signage on our construction sites. She said we need to get the Road crew the sign equipment that they need to alert drivers of obstacles in the road. The complaint was of the bucket being left in the road with no signage. Mac said

that the practice was to leave the bucket off the road, in the ditch. The board thought maybe an update in a safety course would be good.

Other business- Josh received a complaint from Lisa Macey regarding a black horse at 1350 Joyal Rd, that looked malnourished and she said that she could see it's ribs. Josh went to take a look and said that the horse was a beautiful horse and looked fine. It had half of a large blue drum with water, and pasture for grass and a barn there for shelter. He said that the need of a food source, a water source, and shelter appeared to be met.

Personnel Policy was tabled to be put the agenda for the Oct 12, meeting.

Terri called the board's attention to an email that Kathy had forwarded to them all from the organization called RISE Vermont, offering a sum of \$700.00 to be put toward free program opportunities.

Gary made the motion to adjourn at 9:05pm, seconded by Sam and approved by a vote of 4-0.

Meeting minutes submitted by Tami Brennan.