

Bakersfield Regular Select Meeting
December 13, 2021
7:00pm

Meeting was called to order at 7:01pm by Josh.

Members present: Josh Goss, Brenda Churchill, Gary Denton, Terri Gates

Members absent: Lance Lawyer

Residents/Guests present: Sue Ann Coffin, John West, Vera Lawyer, Maria DeRosia, Kathy Westcom, Marc Doremus, Andrew Dunsmore, Sue Sonski, Larry Gervais, via zoom: Kate and Dan Forand, Mary Lumbra, Todd Cosgrove, Linda McCall, Josh Pryor

A motion to accept the November 29 minutes was made by Gary, seconded by Brenda and the motion carried by a vote of 3-0 (Terri having not arrived)

Warrants signed:

Road Commissioner's Order #28&29-2021	\$14,426.34
Selectman's Order #28-2021	\$16,061.97
Road Commissioner's Order #16-2021	\$883.51
Selectman's Order #ARPA 1-2021	\$275.86
Selectman's Order #27-21	\$110,834.84
Direct Tax	

Finance-Vera told the Select Board that she thought that she had balanced her calculations to the taxes to a difference of \$650.00, but she said that today a resident came into the office and said that her bank had notified her that her taxes were paid twice, and Vera searched, and found that nothing was done about it, so we owe \$7200.00 on that one. Vera said that she had also found another resident that had prepaid his taxes, but they were not credited to his account and so we also owe that amount which is \$1800.00. So now we are over \$8000.00 off. Vera said that she had decided that we had to find the \$650.00 and then found the \$1800.00. Vera said that she had gone through everything, short of saying to the bank that we need copies of all the deposits that were made and all the payments that were paid. Around tax time, there are a lot of large deposits. One of them was \$194,000.00 and would have had many checks. If the bank can give a copy of all the checks deposited, then we could check to see if the numbers match the paperwork. Vera said that she didn't know how much that would cost and then someone would have to go through check by check. Josh recommended getting the checks back from the bank. Terri said that we have to find it and will have to do what it takes. Josh asked Vera to look into what the bank can do and how much they will charge us. Vera asked if she should let the board know what it will cost before ordering it done. Josh said that if it cost \$1000.00 to find \$8000.00, it would make sense. Vera said that she has taken into consideration changes in homestead and non-homestead and overpayments already returned. Vera said that she can only do so much. Josh said that the board knows that she is doing everything she can, and they understand the situation that they are in. Terri asked if the books got audited yet. Vera said that the taxes are not

audited yet but everything else is audited and Joy said that they basically did the same procedure as Vera, but that you can have her audit the taxes in January. Vera said that 6 receipts were not even receipted in. Terri asked if we find that a tax bill was not paid, then should we waive the penalties. Kathy and Vera said no because the property owner would have known if they didn't pay their taxes. The board asked Maria how things were going. Maria said things are going good and that she is starting to do normal stuff now and so far everything was going smooth.

Listers- Sue Sonski met with the board and said that unfortunately Diana Robitelle did not come to the meeting even though we agreed upon this date. Sue said that the common level of appraisal is getting closer to the lower level of 85%, at which the state allows before it requires reappraisal. Sue said that Bakersfield's appraisals are currently at 93.03% and this month they expect to be lower than that. Sue said that the state hasn't made up its mind about how to handle that people are paying so much for properties. She said that the common level of appraisal directly impacts your school taxes. The lower your appraisal values, the higher your tax rate. Sue said that at some point we're going to have to present this to the town. She said that usually if your assessments go up, your tax rate goes down. Josh asked how much of a drop she was expecting. She said that the problem with getting a reappraisal company to do it because they are booked out 2-3 years. It's been a long time since we've had a reappraisal and the values have stood up pretty well. Josh said that he felt that this is the wrong time to do a reappraisal because of the inflated prices. It would not be good if they came in and doubled everybody's assessments. Then we would be paying more in school taxes. Sue said that she asked that question of Dianna and her response was that the state doesn't know if this is a bubble. She said she heard about what happened in Burlington. Josh asked Sue if she would be reaching back out to Dianna. Sue said yes. Sue said that it was something for the board to think about and when she has more information, she would definitely bring it to their attention.

Enosburg Ambulance Service- Andrew Dunsmore and Larry Gervais met with the board and asked to go into Executive Session because of the confidentiality of the bid they were about to present. Terri made a motion to enter executive session, Gary seconded it and the motion passed with a vote of 3-0, with Brenda abstaining. The board entered executive session at 7:20pm. The Board ended Executive session and returned to a public meeting at 8:04pm. Josh said that no decisions were made during the Executive session and that it was purely informational. The entity did not want their bid made public at this time. If another competitor comes in, we have been asked not to disclose their bid amount. The bid is to be held confidentially sealed in an envelope until all bids are in.

NWSWD- Marc Doremus met with the board to let them know that around 150-160 people a week use the recycling depot and usually it's not the same people

each week so there are probably 300-400 people using the facility. They usually have 2 totes for compost and 1 or 2 were filled by 9:30am after Thanksgiving. The NWSWD fee of \$1.00 per capita has not been raised since 1980 and they are now raising it to \$1.10 per capita. Marc said that composting is fluctuating all the time and that sometimes you can sell things and sometimes you can't. He said that they try to keep as much as they can out of the landfill in Newport because if that gets full, he doesn't know where they would take it. Right now, they pay \$5.00/bag, but if they have to transport it a lot further, it could be \$20.00/bag.

Road Report- Mac was unable to make the meeting tonight. There were a couple of access permits for the board to look at this evening. Brenda said that she spoke with Scott Maple today and explained that the road commissioner needed to have clear flagging and Scott said that he would flag it. She also told him that the access permit application is \$140.00 and needs to be paid in order to receive an approved permit. She said that the permit application has been tabled until there is clear flagging, and the road commissioner approves it, and that the permit fee has been paid. Brenda said that Scott wants the town to fix a culvert that is about 20 years old. Once a culvert has failed, it is the responsibility of the town to maintain and replace it. Josh said to check with Mac and see if the culvert was put in for a road access or as a temporary agricultural access. The culvert issue was tabled until they have checked with Mac.

Another access permit was put before the board for Croft's to change an existing access. Brenda said that Mac has checked, and the existing access is actually his driveway. Brenda said that the new access was for a new dwelling. It's residential and he has paid the fee so we can sign off and get that approved. She said that the location of the egress is nearly at grade, with water running consistently away from the road, and that there is a swale and a slight ditch about 15-feet into the property. Josh said that it was ok, as long as the water goes away from the road. Josh said that they would sign so that they could start the construction of the driveway.

Brenda said that she received an informational letter from Leon Walls advising that he had talked to the Agency of Natural Resources and that the private road is nothing that the town is to be concerned with. Leon said that he had a survey completed and instead of 20 acres, his parcel is a little over 10 acres and that there are changes in the road, water and wetland.

The board asked if we had set an end date for the request for bids on the side mower that the town has placed for sale. Tami said that there had been no end date and that the ad was placed in the County Courier for 2 weeks. Terry asked why we requested bids instead of putting it up for sale and requesting a price. The board said that they were unsure as to what it was worth to someone since they would have to already have the heavy equipment that it would take to use it. Terry said that everyone who has looked at it said that it was in great shape.

Josh said that is in great shape, we just don't have the equipment that it takes to use it.

Josh made the motion that we set the closing date for bids on the side mower to Dec. 31, 2021. The motion was seconded by Brenda and passed with a vote of 4-0.

Pigeon issue at Brigham Academy building- Linda McCall said that a year ago, Kathy Levoie had a tour of the academy, and the pigeons were living in there and now the pigeon population has tripled. She spoke with someone in Enosburg who had similar circumstances and they needed to get HazMat to go in there and fix it. Brenda said that Dan Forand had just been in the office today and said that he had been over there and that 4x8 sheets of plywood would cover the windows. He said that they would need a lift to get to the second story windows but if they put the plywood on the outside, it would protect the remaining glass. Josh said that it doesn't seem to matter what we do because it keeps getting vandalized. He said that Lance was talking about a new lock but that seems to only keep the honest people out. Linda said that keeping up with the locks, etc, should help in keeping insurance on the building. She asked how much the town put into the budget to maintain the building. Josh said zero dollars this year. Linda said that Kathy Lavoie is asking for a maintenance report. Josh said that he doesn't remember being asked for a maintenance report. Josh said that the town is looking into covering the windows and Dan was over there today so it's definitely on our radar. Linda said that she knew somebody locally that has a lift and that she would send Josh an email. Josh said that if she knew somebody locally that that was definitely something to look into.

Budget-Josh asked if the board felt like we should reach out to AmCare for a quote. Our current contract is with Enosburg. The Board asked Tami to reach out to AmCare Rescue, Missisquoi Valley Rescue, and Cambridge Rescue to see if they were willing to provide Bakersfield with a quote to provide Ambulance Service to the town.

The board said that anything that anyone wants placed on the ballot for Town Meeting, needs to be in by the January 24 deadline. If anyone are interested in running for a position, the open positions have been posted on the Town Website under Open Positions, as well as a form for local candidate petition and the Bakersfield consent for ballot form. There is also a Town Officers Handbook, containing summary descriptions of the roles of the open offices. All petitions and ballot consent forms needed to run for an office need to be given to the Town Clerk by the deadline of January 24, 2022.

All money requests need to be in by January 24, 2022.

Josh said that he would not be able to attend the Dec 27 Regular Select Board meeting. The board does still need to meet in order to sign warrants on the 27th

and Terri said that the meeting could be for gathering information to help with planning the budget. Lance has a 3-year breakdown of past budgets, and we can get the spreadsheets from Vera. The board is planning on having special meetings to plan the budget anyway. The board will need Maria on the 27th to begin to explain the information and then we can let her know what the board will need for their meeting on the 4th.

The board decided that if they end up not being able to form a quorum on Dec 27, then they will warn for Dec 30 at 6:00pm.

Tami is to warn for Dec. 27th and if not a quorum, cancel and then warn for Dec. 30th.

Regular Select Board meetings planned for January are on January 10th and the 24th. The board is planning on having Special Budget planning meetings on the 4th and the 18th.

Lance is to reach out to the school to see if we can hold Town Meeting in the gym.

ARPA- Brenda said that nothing has changed. The money in the bank is gaining interest so we have a little more money in the bank.

Outside audit- The board asked if anyone had received any quotes for an outside audit. That will be a budget item on the ballot. The board gave names of prospective accounting firms to Tami and asked her to submit a request for a quote to do a town audit. Tami asked how far back is the town requesting that the audit to be for. The board said it should go back to the previous audit. The names of the accounting firms to request quotes were: Kittell, Branagan and Sargeant in St. Albans, Young's accounting in Enosburg, Parent, Khowassah and Gagnon LLC in Enosburg and also Angeloni's accounting services in Shelburne. Tami is to call Jason Bapp and ask about expected information needed and how far back in time we are to go.

Terri said that there is a road issue, and she has received 4 phone calls regarding Kings Hill Rd and also a few videos. A resident on King's Hill Rd is filing complaints and when they brought them to the town crew, the crew feels that it is something that they can't do with the big trucks. Josh said that when he spoke to Mark about it, Mark said that it wasn't his route, but he would gladly to up and take care of it. Dan said that he does King's Hill the first thing in the morning, and it is too tight to turn around there and he can't keep ahead of when the buses come out, and if he goes off down into the hole and gets stuck, then he's done. Dan said that it takes 3 hours to make his round and then after the regular route, he goes back up to get that stretch. He said it depends on the day but on a normal day, it should be cleaned up by 8am. He said he could not guarantee that because you can run into problems, it could be 9:00am. He said that he doesn't want to get hung up there first thing in the morning. He said that you have to jig around about 5 times to get the truck

turned around. He said he tried backing up to the pole several times and he couldn't back up the hill. He said that he backs up as far as he can and then comes down. He said it's only about 30-40 feet that he is not getting.

Terri said that there is supposed to be a logger going up there this year. It was logged last year. Landvest owns the property. Terri said we need to revisit the issue if we can't take care of it. We went up there and told those people that we would take care of it and each week we get complaints that we are not taking care of it. Terri said that she would reach out to the residents and inform them. The board said the residents have to realize that they are on a really narrow road. We are going to plow as much as we can.

Brenda made the motion to adjourn, the motion was seconded by Gary and them motion passed with a vote of 4-0. The meeting adjourned at 9:02pm.

The next regular Select Board meeting is scheduled for Monday, Dec. 27, at 7:00pm.

Minutes recorded by Tami Brennan.