

Bakersfield Regular Select Board Meeting
Monday, December 14, 2020
7:00pm

6pm-7pm Executive Session

Public Forum called to order at 7:01pm by Lance.

Members present: Lance Lawyer (chair), Gary Denton, Josh Goss, Terri Gates, Sam Cribb

Members absent: none

Residents/Guests present: Abbey Miller, Mac Newitt, Mark Allen, Dan Forand, Tami Brennan

Lance made the motion to accept the November 23, 2020 meeting minutes, Sam seconded it and the motion passed by a vote of 5-0.

Warrants signed:

Selectmen's order #33-2020	\$262,762.06
Direct tax, Pacif ins., streetlights, etc.	
Road Commissioner's order #FEMA	\$100,765.92
Goat Path Demoliton/Engineer	
Road Commissioner's order #26&27-2020	\$171,979.96
TAN Loan, etc.	
Road Commissioner's order #11-2020	\$14,144.79
Loader, trucks, TAN	

ATV TRAILS ARE CLOSED FROM NOW UNTIL MID MAY.

Active permits for riding on the Bakersfield road and trails will not be available until Spring for the 2021 season.

Finance-

Monies are due for Goat Path Bridge. The work is done there until spring and the barricades are up for the winter.

Trobridge Rd. is pretty close to completion today. The bid came in under what FEMA allowed. Tatro bid \$5123.00 and FEMA allowed \$6000.00, FEMA wouldn't allow more money to do the repair the way that the town would have liked it to be done.

Abbey said that the Line of Credit Loan is set up and ready for the Town to draw from as needed for Goat Path and then the town will be able to pay most of the LOC off when they receive the reimbursement from FEMA.

Things are progressing with FEMA and the Select Board needs to decide if they want to replace the bridge or change the intersection. And if they put in a new bridge, choosing between a 16 ft. one-lane bridge, or a 24 ft two lane-bridge. The Board asked the Road crew, which width would be sufficient, and they said that they would like to see it wide enough to put the wing down on the plow to go around the corner.

Abbey also told the board that it should be ok to pay the Fire Dept before the end of the year as, ideally, it should come off the books in 2020. The property taxes that came in by Dec. 1 was the normal amount that usually comes in. The delinquent amount still owed the town is around \$115,000.00 and the Town expects to begin the process of Tax Sales at the beginning of 2021. During 2020, tax sales were deferred due to COVID. People attempting to pay their delinquent taxes, and have a payment plan set up with Kathy, will not go to tax sale. The Board noted that Kathy works hard to help people set up a plan to avoid having a tax sale.

Abbey said that the town needs to speak with the bank about renewing the TAN loan. The town needs another one and our present TAN loan is due in full by Dec. 31st.

Abbey also told the board that usually going into the new year, there was around \$300,000.00 for Road operations, and this year she said that there is around \$150,000.00.

Abbey also notified the board that she will not be running for treasurer in March, so if they know anybody that would be interested in running for the position, to please let them know that they need to have their paperwork in by the end of January.

Mac said the new truck has arrived and the Town took possession of it last week.

Personnel Policy/Employee Insurance-

In beginning the discussion with town employees regarding the Personnel Policy, the Road crew pointed out that it contained no job description. Lance noted that the new Personnel Policy was lacking a Job description and that it needed to be finished and added.

The question of who is responsible to sand and salt the school parking lot was discussed. Ross Allen is the one who plows the school lot and then tells the Road crew to sand and salt. Is this to be a school expense or the town?

Josh asked Tami to invite Rhoda McLure to come to the Jan 11, 2021 meeting to discuss the parking lot and driveway, the upkeep and maintenance of the School generator and the liability of school children playing on the Brigham Green. In the meantime, the Board instructed Mac and the crew to sand and salt the driveway to the avenue and the trail that the bus uses.

The Town employees asked why the Board changed the accumulation of sick days to be carried from unlimited to 12 days. Mac has accumulated 22 days to date, and he would lose 10 days. The concern of having only 12 days to be accumulated and used in time of need, was worrisome to the road crew because of longer recovery times needed for surgeries, etc., especially in the time of COVID and not having enough time saved up to cover the time not eligible for short term disability. Mac used the example of when he had back surgery, he was supposed to be out for recovery for 8 weeks and disability would not cover the first three weeks, which, Mac said, worked out ok because he was able to use his accumulated, earned sick days and vacation time so he

could still have income while he recovered. Mac told the Select Board that the employees do not abuse the use of sick time. The Road crew requested that the Select Board change the limit of accumulated sick time to 20 days. The Select Board voted to approve, by a vote of 5-0, the change to allow up to 20 days of sick time to be accumulated.

Vacation time was also discussed. Birthdays off were replaced and included in the 4 personal days allowed each year as floating days. Vacation allowed after one year of employment is 40 hrs./year. From year two to six, 80 hours/year are allowed; from year six to twenty, 120 hours/year allowed, and over twenty years employment, 160 hours/year allowed. The Select Board voted and approved, by a vote of 5-0, the vacation plan.

The Road crew asked why an HRA instead of an HSA in the Health Insurance Plan. The Board said the Town would be able to keep any unused amount of the HRA that the employee didn't use, whereas an HSA is given to the employee and any unused funds, the employee can carry over in their account. The Board said that the HRA could save the Town money. With the new insurance plan offered by the Town with the HRA, the town would provide \$4000.00/per employee to cover \$4000.00, of the \$4500.00 deductible that needed to be paid by the employee before the plan would offer coverage. Mark also questioned the board about offering a family plan, especially considering new hires in the future.

The Board said that during executive session, the quorum that met discussed and had reached the decision to keep the insurance plan that the town had been providing the road crew previously, because after calculating the amount of money the town would save by requiring the employees to pay 20% of their insurance premiums and comparing that to the amount the town would be paying for on-call pay for 24/7 Road coverage, even if the guys rotated every 3 days, the town would be paying the guys more for the on-call pay than they would save by requiring the guys to pay 20% of their premiums. The town has not previously paid on-call pay like the surrounding towns do for requiring continuous readiness to ensure road safety. Enosburg's on-call pay is one hour's pay for each day an employee is on call.

Terri disagreed with that decision and requested more discussion during an executive session immediately after all public issues had been dealt with. The Select Board had also downgraded the employee insurance from the Platinum plan with a \$1400.00 dollar deductible, to the Silver Plan with a higher deductible and offering to pay up to \$4000.00 of the \$4500.00 deductible. After discussing the premium amounts of the two different plans, paying the premium for the platinum plan with the \$1400.00 deductible and no HRA, would cost the same as paying the premium for the silver plan with the \$4500.00 deductible and an HRA covering \$4000.00 of the deductible, so the Road crew requested that the Town go with the Platinum plan. Mark reminded the board that the town has never paid for dental or vision coverage and that it's not asking too much to keep the health insurance as it is. Lance said that he thought that that sounded like a reasonable request.

Mac asked about the clothing allotment, as it had not been included in the new policy and the Select Board said that that should be in there and would remain at \$500.00/year. Mac also asked if they also still had to appeal to the board each March for a cost-of-living raise, which is usually around 2%. There was no cost-of-living raise in 2020, and Mac asked if the board would remember to consider that each year without having to be petitioned by the employees.

Terri reported that she had had a complaint from a resident that Marc had been driving too fast on the Avenue.

Josh spoke of the problem of holding Select Board meetings that the public could safely access during the new restrictions imposed by the State due to COVID. He said that Roger Lindala, who worked for Northwest Access TV, said that he has all the equipment that the town would need and he would bring it and set it up and show the Select Board how to use it. But the Select Board would have to sit at a common table in order to be seen by the camera which would be a violation of social distancing. The Board had tried holding the Select Board meeting via Zoom earlier in the year but the unreliability of internet in Bakersfield made that an unsatisfactory option. Lance said that he felt they were conducting the meetings the best way that they could by spacing out to the far corners of the room and allowing one party at a time present their cases to the Board.

At 8:45pm, the Select Board re-entered executive session.

Meeting minutes recorded by Tami Brennan.

The next regular Select Board meeting is to be held on Monday, December 28, 2020, at 7:00pm.

12/14/20

9:27 PM

Terri Gates made the motion
to offer the road crew the
insurance policy of the
platinum plan with the
employee paying ~~20%~~ 20% ^{of} ~~paid~~
the premium. Town shall pay any
employee \$1200 ~~if~~ stipen if they don't
take the town insurance policy
after they show prove of ~~other~~ insurance
~~and they~~ ~~some~~ stipen will be paid
in 2 installment. \$600.00 on
Jan 1st and June 30th.

Motion made by Terri Gates
Employer Employee

Platinum - 80%/20% split of Premium

W/ stipen of \$1200 Paid in two

- upon proof of other health insurance
- installments Jan 1st and June 30

- IF insurance is not taken

- From this point on its on a "Single" Plan

- and 2nd by Sam Cribb

passed 5-0

9:34 closed