

Bakersfield Select Board Road Budget Planning Meeting
Monday, Dec. 9, 2019

Meeting called to order by Lance Lawyer at 6:02pm.

Members in attendance: Lance lawyer (chair), Josh Goss, David Houston, Gary Denton

Members absent: Sam Cribb

Public residents/guests present: Abby Miller (town treasurer), Kathy Westcom, Mac Newitt, Tami Brennan, Mark Allen

Abby presented an updated budget sheet to reflect alterations in the Road budget proposal discussed at the last budget planning meeting on Nov. 25. She also pointed out the foundational problems that result from having an 7-month time gap from the time the budget is voted and the time the actual money is available for expenses, leaving remaining budget from the previous year inadequate to stretch until this time. This puts the town immediately 6 months behind at the time that the money is added to the town accounts, since we are repaying accounts that we have borrowed from. Since the budgets that have been proposed and approved for many years past have been level funded, and costs for repairs, insurance, salaries, equipment and material supplies, continue to rise, the working Road budget is proving inadequate. The amount that the town has spent for Road equipment repairs this year so far is 42,000.00, way over what was budgeted, which has been taken out of the Road general fund, and along with all the road repairs due to flooding and weather, has left this fund, at the present, nearly depleted. Abby explained that the warrant to pay expenses that the Select board will sign at tonight's meeting will leave only 2000.00 dollars in the general fund to provide until funds are collected and released in Oct. 2020. Since this amount is insufficient, the town will need to borrow from the bridge fund which is designated to upkeep bridges, just to keep operating. If that proves insufficient, then borrowing funds from a bank will be needed. Lance remembered that the town has had to do this twice in the twelve years in which he has served on the Select board. Abbey pointed out that technically, this kind of account shuffling is not good practice, ends up draining general funds, and may even be bordering on illegal, so in pursuance of a solution, the need for an temporary road budget adjustment to set up the town to be on a timely operating budget that is not operating in arrears, as well as an adequate road budget that reflects actual expenses to give the town a sound financial footing is what's needed. The 2020 road budget proposal at this point includes a short term line item of 150,000.00 to provide for road expenses during that six-month time gap. If we add this road budget item two years in a row, the town would then have provided the funds to enable the town to have an adequate budget to, in effect, shift the entire budget timeline, so we would have sufficient funds to operate for the entire year, until the funds that are voted for the following year's budget are available. So, at the end of these two years, we would be voting in 2022, on a budget for 2023, with enough money to get us through 2022, without

borrowing from other accounts or a bank, and all the money appropriated for 2023, would be available for 2023, just like it should be. This would entail a temporary, slight rise in property taxes for two years. Abby estimated between one to two hundred dollars for each household, but would get firmer numbers to present at the next budget discussion.

At this point, besides the two year 150,000.00, additional numbers proposed are:

170,000.00 for Winter Work

130,000.00 for Dirt Work

10,000.00 for Bridge Repair Fund

10,000.00 for Paving/grant fund

55,475.00 actual amount needed for two truck payments

25,000.00 for Equipment fund to help provide a down payment to replace Mac's thirteen-year old truck

30,000.00 for Equipment repairs

The town is also waiting to hear if FEMA will decide if Bakersfield will qualify for any financial help for the needed repairs caused by the flooding, hopefully by the end of 2019.

Also, putting an equipment replacement schedule in place would prevent the town from being in the position of having high equipment repairs that stress the budget and decrease the time that aging equipment is down for repairs.

The need to have informational sessions with residents of the town was addressed and two sessions were scheduled:

Tuesday, January 28th, 2020 at 7:00pm.

Tuesday, February 18th, 2020 at 7:00pm.

Budget for Green-Up day was discussed. The State charges 100.00 for the garbage bags and for pick up. And the town is charged 5.00 for each tire, which needs to be scheduled ahead with the NWSWD.

Also discussed the funding for State Police enforcement for speed limits in town.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:59pm.

The next budget planning and discussion will take place as part of the Regular Select Board meeting.

Bakersfield resident Budget informational meetings scheduled for:

Tuesday, January, 28th, 2020 at 7:00pm.

Tuesday, February, 18th, 2020 at 7:00pm.

Meeting minutes by Tami Brennan.

