

Bakersfield Special Budget Meeting Minutes  
Monday, January 3, 2022  
4:00pm-6:00pm

Meeting was called to order at 4:08pm by Josh Goss.

Members present: Josh Goss (chair), Lance Lawyer, Brenda Churchill, Terri Gates, and Gary Denton via zoom

Members absent: none

Residents/Guests present: John West, Maria DeRosia, Tami Brennan

Josh explained that this is a scheduled budget meeting and nothing that is not budget related will not be discussed.

Maria gave the board a report containing the town expenditures in each category for the previous 5 years. She said she will have the report for the Road expenditures for the previous 5 years to the board for the next Budget meeting scheduled for Jan 10, 2022.

Josh asked the board if there were any other items that they wanted placed on this year's ballot. He said that the absolute last day to turn in to Kathy any item to be placed on the budget is Jan 28<sup>th</sup>.

Brenda to check with VLCT regarding the language to put before the town on the ballot regarding a vote to change the town treasurer position from an elected position to an appointed position. Terry said that last year when they put the town clerk position up for the same vote, she got the language from Montgomery.

The board went over the budget line by line and evaluated previous budgeted amount and actual expenditures for the last five years to reach a reasonable expectation of what was needed for the budget for the year 2022 to keep the town running.

Advertising- The town spent \$142.00 in advertising costs. The actual amount budgeted was \$250.00. Terry recommended keeping the budgeted amount at \$250.00. All board members agreed.

Ambulance Service- the board requested and received 4 bids from area Ambulance Services. Amcare from St. Albans sent a quote. The concern with Amcare Service is the distance. It would take around 25 minutes to arrive at the Main St. in Bakersfield and when Tami spoke to Clem Rogers at AmCare, he expressed concern about how long it would take to reach the outlying areas. He said that they have one truck in Sheldon, but if that was unavailable, they would have to rely on a truck from St. Albans. Josh said that he had heard that the truck in Sheldon was only staffed part of the time due to staff shortages. Missiquoi Valley Rescue had the same issue. The two closest Ambulance Services are Cambridge/Jeffersonville and Enosburg. Tami told the

board that Cambridge expected that their bid would most likely come in higher than others due to the level of training that their paramedics have and the need to add additional staff to cover Bakersfield. Their quote came in at \$57,000. And Enosburg came in at \$38,800., which the board said would be our max. Amcare came in the lowest. Lance said that the board's task is to have effective service for the town of Bakersfield. The board asked Tami to invite Enosburg Ambulance Service to the Jan 11 Regular Select Board meeting to further negotiate their proposed contract. Enosburg also requests household membership directly from residents for \$75.00/year. Josh said that he thought that if someone in his family had need of the ambulance service that it would be a calm, assuring presence in an emergency to have a local and familiar face come to help as opposed to someone unknown, and that is worth something. Lance said that when they had to call the ambulance for his dad, Enosburg was very good and right there and it was a great comfort to his mom and the family to know the responders, and they did a great job.

Bakersfield Fire Dept- The contracted fee is \$73,814.00. It went up and the board has already accepted it. This is a fixed budgeted item at this time.

Ballot Clerks- We spent 0.0 in 2021, as it was not a voting year, and we spent \$465.00 in 2020. The board decided to keep the previously budgeted amount of \$500.00 as the current budgeted amount.

BCA expenses- \$500.00 was the amount budgeted for last year and the board decided to keep the budget amount as \$500.00 for 2022.

Brigham expenses- The previously budgeted amount was \$250.00. This year the board is planning on putting plywood on the exterior of the windows to keep the weather and pigeons out of the building and prevent more glass being broken. The board proposed a one-time budget amount of \$5000.00, to purchase the plywood and to rent a lift to place the plywood on the windows. Mac said that currently a sheet of ½ inch plywood is going for around \$30.00. Lance agreed and said we could spend \$4500.00 just for plywood. The board all agreed on \$5000.00 on the 2022 budgeted amount for Brigham expense. They said if we don't spend it, we don't spend it.

Brigham Residence- Budgeted amount was \$250.00. The town spent \$5000.00 toward the Brigham Residence for Paul Dryer, which was all reimbursed via grants.

Building expenses- Currently \$250.00 budgeted and agreed to keep it the same.

Cemetery Expenses- To keep up Cook Brook Cemetery. Ross Allen- mowing- contracted to take care of Cook Brook. The budgeted amount is \$500.00/year. He currently mows about 3 times a year. The Cemetery Trust Fund is strictly to

maintain Maple Grove Cemetery because the trust was left specifically to upkeep Maple Grove.

Conservation Committee- Currently budgeted at \$500.00/year. The town spent \$964.14, some of which came from a matching grant. All agreed to keep the budgeted amount at \$500.00.

Franklin County Court tax- we have no say in the amount of the tax.

Copier lease- Kathy told the board it was \$1750.00/year. So, the budgeted amount will be \$1750.00 for 2022.

Heating Oil- The board said that right now heating fuel is just under \$2.00/gallon, but it is projected to rise. Terri asked if we negotiate with our fuel supplier. Josh said that he thought that we are classified as high usage and therefore get a lower rate. He said we could check with Bluin and see how they compare to Clarence Brown. We have received fuel from Clarence Brown for many years. We'll have to call Clarence Brown to check our consumption rate. Browns has a pre-buy program. We spent \$1942.00 for the Town Hall building.

Direct Tax- We spent \$1,871,988.63, which went to the school. The question was asked if we had a choice whether or not to continue to belong to the union. The board mentioned one town that withdrew from the Union and continued to receive state funds. The board said that if we want to put whether to continue the town's membership in the union on the ballot, someone would have to start a petition to get the item on the ballot.

Dog Expenses- The board continued with the budgeted amount of \$250.00 to pay for dog licenses, tags, etc.

Donations- we spent \$250.00 for donations last year, when the town agreed to donate \$250.00 to Cat Crusaders because of the many resident requests to do so, claiming that Bakersfield benefits greatly from this organization and had eliminated new requests for funds because of the COVID year and the confusion that it brought to Town Meeting. The board agreed to keep the Donation budgeted amount at 0.

Dues- Previously budgeted at \$2800.00, and we spent \$2713.00 on dues to VLCT, which are expected to rise. The board agreed to budget \$3000.00 for dues in 2022.

Education- for Town positions- i.e. Classes for Moderator, Zoning, Treasurer, etc. Previously budgeted \$1000.00 and the board agreed to keep the budget at \$1000.00.

Electricity- Terri said that the price will be rising again. Employee contracts are being renegotiated and they expect an increase to be 3.5-4%, which will trickle

down to a rate increase. We budgeted last \$1250.00 last year and spent \$1236.00. The board discussed raising the budgeted amount to \$1500.00. Lance said \$1300.00 should be enough.

Generator- At the School- the agreement between the town and school was that the Town pays for the service contract and the school pays for the fuel. The budget amount for last year was \$100.00. Mac will check with Milton CAT in Richmond as to a service contract on the generator, which would probably service the generator quarterly.

Health Officer- \$250.00 was last years budgeted amount and the board agreed to keep it at \$250.00.

Insurance- Homeowners insurance on all the Town buildings. Maria could find nothing spent last year for insurance. It may not be billed yet. Maria is going to check into that and make sure that we still have insurance, and that something wasn't missed during the last treasurer's partial term. Brenda thought that our insurance might cover some of the cost of some of the broken windows in the Brigham Academy that they could apply toward plywood costs. She said that the insurance may require a police report. Terri said to put the claim in and if they need a police report that we'll call to get one then. Brenda thought that anyone on the Select Board could submit the claim. Maria will look into the Insurance Company procedure. The board believed the buildings were insured by a company through VLCT.

Internet fees- We had budgeted \$200.00 and spent almost \$200.00. The board agreed to up the budget amount to \$250.00.

Late fees/Interest/Penalties- We budgeted 0.0 last year in this category since we don't usually have these fees. In 2021, we were billed for and paid \$627.00 for fees in this category, and we may have more fees coming. The board agreed to budget \$500.00 for the year 2022 only. After that, all these fees should already be paid.

Library- We budget 0.0 for the library because the library has its own budget. We paid around \$1100.00 for the library and were reimbursed. The library used the Town credit care to order some things, while they are in the process of applying for their own. Many of the services via internet that the library needs require a credit card.

Lister education- Previously budgeted \$300.00. The listers may need classes if the town needs to have a Town-wide reappraisal. The board discussed and intends to hold off on a town reappraisal for as long as possible, until we don't have a choice. The Real Estate market has ballooned home appraisals and the board feels it's a bad time to have to reappraisal. If the town appraisals drop low enough, to 80%, then the town has no choice but to reappraise, which has

something to do with the state funding that gets sent to the school. We are at 88% now. The board doesn't want to see something like what happened to Burlington when they reappraised and all the properties doubled in taxable value, happen to Bakersfield.

Lister expenses- We budgeted \$500.00 last year and spent \$681.00. The board agreed to raise the budgeted amount for 2022 to \$700.00.

Lister mileage- We budgeted \$100.00 last year and spent \$38.55. The board agreed to leave the budgeted amount at \$100.00/year.

Memorial Day- We budgeted \$600.00 and spend \$235.87. We bought 30 flags and 2 for on the monument. And the big one on the pole and the light for the pole. The big one that is currently on the pole is ripped and needs to be replaced again. The board asked Mac to check with the American Legion, Amy Bolio, to see if we could get a flag at a good price. The board agreed to leave the budgeted amount at \$600.00.

Mileage- We had budgeted \$400.00 and spent 0.0. The board agreed to leave the budgeted amount at \$400.00. Lance said he had to use a small amount in 2020 for travel due to FEMA.

Misc.- Previously budgeted \$1000.00. The town has spent between \$75.00 and \$5000.00 in this category over the last 5 years. The board kept the budget amount at \$1000.00.

Office Expenses- Budgeted amount was \$2500.00 which covers office supplies. Maria said there was only one year in the last 5 that we didn't go over budget here. The board agreed to budget \$3000.00 for 2022.

Overpayment of Taxes- We budget 0.0 for this category. The town reimburses taxpayers for over payment of taxes if they file late for the Homestead Rebate or an escrow company pays twice, etc. But while the town reimburses the overpayment, it is itself reimbursed by another entity such as the state.

Port-o-let – Previous budget amount is \$100.00. We split the Port-o-let charge with the BCC, so the board agreed to keep it at \$100.00.

Postage- Previous budget amount was \$110.00, we spent \$215.00. The board adjusted the budgeted amount to \$200.00.

Purchasing Property- budget amount to stay at 0.0.

Terri said that she was approached about the camp that was removed on the property of the Gravel pit. The person who removed the camp at no charge has posted it online for sale. The board said they heard that the person was going to give the proceeds to the Fire Dept. Terri wanted to know why they didn't put

it up for bid. The board said there was no bid because they have been trying to get rid of it for a long time, at least 10 years. Three people have offered and been given permission and then never took it off. The town's Act 250 permit stated that we had to get rid of the building. The board said that now that it's up for sale doesn't matter because we would have had to pay someone to get rid of it.

Selectmen Expenses- The Select board spent \$3300.00 in 2021. Some went for the expense of Mike Gawne the town attorney. Tax Sale, etc. And for the updated computer set up for broadcasting for remote attendance and participation of Town meetings.

Select Board legal- budgeted at \$5000.00 and the board agreed to keep the amount at \$5000.00.

Streetlights- Previous budget amount was \$2000.00, and expenditures came in just under this amount. The board agreed to budget \$2200.00 for 2022.

Tax Prep- The budgeted amount was 0.0. We spent \$120.00 for help for the treasurer with tax bills. Will budget 0.0 for 2022.

Telephone- Previously budgeted \$1500.00 and agreed to budget \$1750.00 for 2022 as the rates are going up.

Town Hall repairs- Budgeted 0.0 and will keep it at 0.0.

Town Park Expenses- Budgeted \$180.00 and spent 0.0. Will budget \$100.00 for 2022.

Park Loan Principle- Budgeted for 2021, \$2650.00. The board believed that there was only one payment left. Maria to look at what the payoff amount would be.

Town Water Bill- Set rate of \$180.00. So, the budget amount remains at \$180.00.

Unemployment- Previous budget amount was \$650.00. It went up \$50.00 from 2019-2020 and \$43.00 from 2020-2021, so the board agreed to budget \$725.00 for 2022.

VCLT WC Audit- We budgeted 0.0. and spent \$632.00. The board agreed to keep the budgeted amount at 0.0.

Vermont Tax- budgeted amount was 0.0. We spent \$64.92 on a penalty in 2021.

Park water- Fixed amount of \$180.00.

Website fees- Previous budget was \$200.00 to keep up the town website and the board kept the budget amount at \$200.00.

Workman's comp- Budget amount is \$1000.00. We spent 0.0 in 2021.

Zoning legal- budgeted \$1000.00 and will keep at \$1000.00 for 2022.

Zoning Expense- Budget amount was \$500.00, and we spent \$725.69 for a new computer needed for the zoning administrator with programs that align zoning with the planning commission.

Zoom- Annual membership is \$150.00/year so the budget amount is \$150.00.

Employer FICA- is a % of actual wages

Retirement-

Wages- We had budgeted \$80,000.00 for total salaries. Maria thought it came closer to \$90,000.00. Terri said the board couldn't really do this category right now.

IRA-

The board decided to do the previous 4 categories at another time.

The next Special Budget meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 10<sup>th</sup> from 6:00pm to 8:00pm and will focus on the Road budget. Maria to have the expenses of the previous 5 years available for the Select Board at the meeting.

The Board confirmed that **TOWN MEETING AND ALL POLLING WILL TAKE PLACE AT THE BAKERSFIELD SCHOOL GYM. THE TOWNHALL WILL BE CLOSED ON TOWN MEETING DAY.**

Terri made the motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Gary and the motion passed with a voice vote- Josh Goss- yes, Gary Denton-yes, Brenda Churchill-yes, Terri Gates-yes, Lance Lawyer-yes.  
The meeting adjourned at 5:54pm.

Meeting minutes recorded by Tami Brennan.