

Bakersfield Special Select Board Meeting
Monday, June 7, 2021
7:00pm

The meeting was called to order by Josh at 7:10pm.

Members present: Lance Lawyer, Josh Goss, Terri Gates, Brenda Churchill

Members absent: Gary Denton

Residents/Guests present: Tami Brennan, Audrey Haselton, Susan Wooten

The board had invited Audrey and Susan to attend and join the meeting at 7:30.

Lance began by saying that Tami had spoken to him about being interested in the assistant treasurer position. Tami explained to the board that she had resigned as assistant treasurer when the position of treasurer came open for election because Abbey was finishing her term and not running. Tami said that she had thought that the town would be able to get someone better trained with more experience than she, herself had, since there was to be a new treasurer. She said that now that the board has determined that they would need to train those interested in the position, that if the board was going to train, from the ground up, for this position, then she would like to be considered as a candidate and would be interested in learning the job and co-training with Audrey.

Lance said that Audrey had asked to take the laptop home so she could peruse it and get familiar with the Quick Books program. Brenda asked if the town had a procedure for backing up critical data? Daily or weekly? This was to be checked out.

Terri said that the town couldn't afford to hire someone who is not fully trained. She said that by law, we have to have someone in this position. At this point, we need to advertise for someone who is fully trained and qualified. We're basically hiring for a position that is full. Terri wondered if Jason Bapp would be willing to come in and give Audrey some training. We have to do something to get the treasurer position under control.

Terri said that the assistant treasurer position should be for a person who would come in and cover when Audrey couldn't be there and to give extra help at tax time. Tami said that Abbey and Vera said that you couldn't just have someone that was intermittent, that the assistant treasurer had to know the job so that if this person had to sign checks, if the treasurer was absent for any reason, they needed to know the job and what was going on.

Tami said that there were also times that Abbey came into the office to train Audrey without her children. Terri said that Abbey should not have brought her children in at all and that she had stopped into the office twice when Abbey's children were there, and there was too much going on when you were trying to learn. Tami said that also, Abbey didn't expect training to take as long.

Brenda said that the present treasurer had her learning issues with the previous treasurer, but we don't know what she doesn't know. Whether we give

her a test or quiz doesn't matter, she's elected in the position. What kind of training can we give her? We need to ask Audrey what she needs in order to be trained the treasurer position.

Tami said that when talking to Vera about the position, Vera said that knowing Quick Books was a small part of the job. You still have taxes, trust funds, TAN loan, etc.

The board said that Audrey is not ready for an assistant because she is not ready to train someone in that position.

Lance suggested putting an ad for a qualified assistant treasurer in local papers. Terri suggested checking with another town that has a treasurer who is willing to assist Bakersfield in training Audrey and an assistant. It was brought up that in most town's the Town Clerk and Treasurer were the same person.

Josh looked online and found that in Fairfield, there was no treasurer listed, so it is most likely that the treasurer and town clerk is one person. He found that in Enosburg Village, the assistant treasurer position was vacant. And Enosburg Town also had no assistant treasurer as well.

7:35...Audrey and Susan arrived. Josh explained that the board doesn't think that they are ready to hire an assistant, because we would have to train both of you. We are going to work on getting Audrey the training that she needs.

Susan asked the board, then why was she here. Josh said that the board had just made the decision, that they had been discussing the assistant position and had just decided that the board was not ready to hire about five minutes ago. And that they discovered that they really need a qualified assistant.

Susan said that she was interested in the job. That she ran for the position last Spring and has attended two Select Board meetings to be available for questions. Terri asked her to tell the board about her experience. Susan said that she had taken accounting in High School and College, and she has worked as an admin assistant and worked in the proposal dept. Susan said she and her husband have a tie-dye business, and she keeps the books. She has no children, so no concerns about having a sick child. She works part time at Branon's about 18 hours/week. She is flexible and she brings her age and responsibility and experience to the position, and she is detail oriented.

Terri said that the board apologized, but that they had gotten the cart before the horse. Terri said the assistant would be one day/week to get on board and the majority would be at tax time. Susan said that she is not looking for some grand career. That she had been in town 16 years now, and she would like to get more involved on the politics of the town. Terri said that the town has a tight budget this year. Terri said they may not advertise, they may just bring her back in. Don't give up on us yet.

Terri told Audrey that they really needed her to help the board by telling them where Audrey needed training because the board doesn't know the treasurer position. Terri asked Audrey how she would feel if the board could find an office that she could go and sit and observe for a couple days. Audrey said that to be honest, my training was a pain in the ass, the worst training that I've ever had from anybody. I've had a lot of sleepless nights worrying and I've felt like

throwing up my hands and saying to hell with you all. She said that when Vera originally trained her for this position, it was a piece of cake. If she'd come in and train me, but she said that she doesn't know Quick Books.

Audrey said that Quick Books is not a difficult program, but there is a password for this and a password for that and this. Audrey said that she needs somebody to come in and just sit and go over stuff one by one. Abbey would come in and then she would have a FEMA call. Audrey said she can't get to some of the files and that she doesn't know what password goes with what and that she has no notes. Vera did a step-by-step binder with all kinds of information. Abbey is working on updating it because we have switched to Quicken from Peach Tree. The binder is not in the building because the binder is not complete. Audrey said that it's been three months and I'm dangling out there like fresh meat. It's time to do the Cutting Fund and I have nothing, no old letter that was sent.

Terri said that her family had benefitted by the Cutting fund. And that the award letter should have been out there long ago. The Cutting Fund letters are supposed to be presented at graduation.

Audrey said that that is her project for tomorrow and that she just got the information from Pat Evans. Audrey said that Pat has already given the names to the High School and that she would have Pat take a look at the letter and the letters are going out tomorrow. Audrey said that it would have been nice if she had specific dates. She has no guidelines.

Lance said that that is something the treasurer has always taken care of it. This year 19 people received the Cutting Fund scholarship for \$1450.00 each. For the Cutting Fund, you only have to be a resident of Bakersfield.

The board asked Audrey if she could narrow in on what training that she needs. She said that she needs to be able to go into a file and know what's in that file. The board asked if she had a list of all the passwords and she said, yes, she did. The board asked her if the passwords didn't work, and she said that she thought if the board would just reach out to Abbey to have her come and sit with me one to one. Josh said that Abbey is no longer in the picture, and that he didn't think that we're going to get her back here for this. What we need to know is what we can provide you for training. We have to figure out the passwords and get the binder.

Audrey said she needs someone to show her, whether it be in writing...that she's not sure what Abbey will have in the binder, but it will be a reference to fall back on. She didn't know where the Cutting stuff was. Josh asked her if she had tried typing Cutting into the search engine on the computer. Josh asked if the passwords on the list were designated to certain accounts and he asked Audrey to bring the laptop in from the office so they could take a look together and maybe that would help her explain it better to the board.

Audrey said that there was a lot that she and Abbey had not touched on and Audrey said that she had been patient to a fault, and she should have backed up and said that this wasn't working. Audrey showed Josh the list of passwords and Josh noted that they are passwords that need to be changed on a regular basis. Terri said she didn't understand why Audrey is using Abbey's

passwords. That would mean that Abbey still has access. Audrey said that Abbey told her that she could change them. Josh said that his first recommendation is to go in and change the password, so that you know what it is and then to write it down. Audrey said that one day she had tried and tried to get into a file, and she couldn't get in, so she had called Abbey and Abbey said to change the password, and Audrey did it and she could get in. Josh said to go in and just change them all and then write them all down.

Audrey said that the board was 100% right, that the reason that Audrey did not rush in to hire somebody was because she didn't know how to train them. She has been taking inventory to make sure we've got envelopes, etc. And she's been speaking to the listers about taxes. The listers will provide basic information and then the treasurer puts the information on a tax bill. Then if it's incorrect it needs to be changed because of late homestead declarations.

Josh and Audrey spent some time looking at the program on the laptop.

Audrey is to take the laptop home and play with it to try things out.

Lance said there should be templates and spreadsheets for balances off the checkbooks. Audrey said that it is on the laptop because that is where Abbey had gotten it from. Audrey said that she has been able to figure out the library end of month report.

Terri said that the binder should have the processes in it. Brenda said that the binder will be here on Wednesday.

Josh found the Profit and Loss report on the computer. Terri asked if Josh could write up a step-by-step for Audrey. Josh said that he just clicked on some things.

Audrey told the board that if they are not happy with what she is doing, just let her know. Josh said that they understand that the reason that she is not able to do this is that you weren't trained well enough or in the way that you learn. We want to help you get what you need. We want to be fair to you.

Audrey said that this is the second time that she has been called on the carpet. Josh said that we're not here to say you are doing a bad job, we want to be able to get you what you need to do the job. Quick Books is not difficult. You need to be able to access the files. The book will be here on Wednesday. After you receive the book and work with it, don't be afraid to let us know if the book doesn't help. Then come to the Regular Select Board meeting this next Monday night and give us an update. If it's good, great, if not, then we'll figure out something else. We are trying to help you do the job.

We'd like you to come to each Select Board meeting to give us even a ten minute update.

Audrey said as for an assistant, to have Susan come in every other week during payroll and during taxes. I know you need somebody to be here if I fall off the face of the earth.

Brenda made the motion to adjourn at 8:30, Lance seconded the motion and the motion carried by a vote of 4-0.

Meeting minutes recorded by Tami Brennan.

