

Special Bakersfield Select Board Meeting
April 12, 2023
7:00pm

Meeting was called to order at 7:02 by Josh Goss.

Members present: Josh Goss (chair), Lance Lawyer, John West, Todd Cosgrove, Terri Gates

Residents/Guests attending: Sam and Nicky Cribb, Sharon Evans, Alice and Gary Foote, Amber Foote, Linda McCall, Katheryn Rosenburg, Rosalie Williams, Kathy Westcom, Mark Laroche, Matt Hull, Dan and Katie Forand

Josh said that the board held an executive session at the end of the last Select Board meeting on April 10th, to discuss what it is that they're looking for. He said they decided as a board that first, they want to support Bakersfield first. Second, they want to support the taxpayers, and reduce the tax burden, and third, they want to see if there were any grants pursued first, and if not, then possibly ask that the requester come back with another proposal after research. Josh said that this is the first disbursement and when all is paid out for this round, it will not use all the funds. John said they would address the proposals tonight in alphabetical order.

Bakersfield Conservation Commission- Alice Foote and Sharon Evans spoke to the board representing the BCC. The BCC had requested \$25,000.00 to work on restoration of the Carriage Barn on the town park. John asked if any attempt has been made to get any of this done via grants or fundraising. Alice said the town owns it and you are our bosses and we have requested that you repair it many times and no responses. This is our desperate attempt whether you what to do this or not, as our bosses. Sharon said that they have looked into help with barns, but this doesn't qualify for a barn. She said that it's in an in between place where we can't get grants. She said that we're going to try. She said we may need to tear it down. Alice said we made the attempt 10 years ago, and an engineer made an investigation and gave proposals at that time. Sharon said that if there is something, we will pursue it, but we just want to stabilize it. Terri asked if they had an idea as to use for the barn. Sharon said they are hoping for community use. She said there were some ideas on Facebook; summer markets, a place for cyclists to shelter and get water. She said they could have information in there for trail hikes and used by the Historical Society to display certain items, old pics on the wall. Alice said it's an excellent example of a timber barn with the inside unfinished. John asked if the building was on the Historic register. Alice said that they have never pursued it. Sharon said we're not looking to restore the building; we'd like to renovate it. Josh said at many of the meetings that we've had as a Select Board, it's been brought up about the amount of money that's available for grants. He said this request popped up and we would like to see a little more research into what is available. Sharon said that she is the wrong person to answer. She said it has been tried for at least 10 years and if we had money to

begin, we might be able to qualify for some matching grants. She said the carriage barn didn't fit for grants, as it didn't have any animals. Sharon said they were hoping that if they got a start, then we might stand a better chance. John said that's a good point and the wish list for potential uses for the building. He said that VLCT encourages us to try for matching grants. He said it would be easier if there was some form of fundraising and then request a match for the grant, in order to make every dollar count and see if enough people want to see it happen. Alice said she was asking for a vote of confidence from the board in our pursuit. Todd said to use your technical center of Bakersfield and Enosburg. He said they love to have their students get some of the work done and could use it as a possible match. Sharon said that we asked for help in Enosburg to put up a shelter/gazebo and promises were made but it didn't work out. Josh called for a vote. Lance said one caveat, no matter which way the vote goes, the town is willing to match any grants. He said that they are looking for a show that anybody out there is willing to put their money where their mouth is, and we will match that with ARPA funds. Alice said that the board holds the cards for the treasurer to save the money. John said that what I think Lance is saying is that as long as you get a matching grant/funds, and that as long as there is ARPA money available and is before the end of 2024, we will do it. Josh called for a vote for the BCC, for \$25,000 from ARPA. The vote was 0 for approval and 5 opposed, so the proposal was denied. John asked if we could put to a vote that if they get a grant, we will match with ARPA funds. Josh said that they will have to come back and apply at the next round. He said the board is not willing to be the sole funder at this point.

Bakersfield Hearse House- Linda McCall said that Lyle brought you a list of materials and prices to stabilize the Hearse House. She said that we had a commitment from the Select Board for some materials and we haven't received those yet. Lance said that they never received a list from Lyle. Lance said he has had the beams all cut and sitting on concrete through the winter. Josh also said that he didn't get a list. Linda said that they submitted it last year. Josh said then it didn't get to the people who needed to see it. Linda said a lot of the sills are rotted. She said that it's not on the national registry. She said they did contact Preservation Trust, but the application is not complete. It's been recommended that we have a grad student to pursue that. She said that Mike Lamphere looked at it today. He said it's beautiful, historic and in the town center. He said it needs a 4-foot cross wall, to put cribs in and jack it up. We want to stabilize it and put it on a concrete foundation. He said his guestimate was \$25,000.00. She said we have a group of volunteers to work with Mike. She said that right now it's a matter of stabilizing the building. Lance said he's assuming the new floor beams and sill will sit on top of the new foundation. Linda said correct, Mike said to do it right and then place it on a foundation. She said we are asking for \$5,500.00, and it will cost \$25,000.00 more to fix it right. Josh said that to stabilize the building and then to jack it up seems counterproductive. Linda said once the floor is reset on the peers, you can jack it up and set it on a new foundation. She said the center wall has

nothing under it to support it. She said for the excess funds needed, we will try our best for grants and the cemetery money has some money, but we need that to restore stones and the cemetery is supposed to have a fence and we got an estimate for that at \$150,000.00. She said we could have come and asked for the fence. John asked what on the list included with the proposal is to be donated. Linda and Lance said the labor and Lance said 3 boards of hemlock. John said that it looks like the most expensive thing on the list is the white paint. Josh said the last time the hearse house was painted, it was done as a senior project. Linda said you didn't paint the backside. John asked when Linda got the pricing. Linda said when we got the repair estimate in 2022. John said that would have changed by now. After more discussion on the costs and donated items on the list, John said that he thinks the prices need to be updated, and then to fix the paperwork and resubmit. He suggested taking the list to Sticks and Stuff and having them fill in the prices. Josh said if your main goal is to fix it to stabilize the sills and the floor, then between Lance and Mac and myself, we'll get those timbers and get the building straightened up, but I don't think we are ready to approve it as an ARPA project at this time. Josh called for a vote from the board regarding the Hearse House proposal. The vote was 0 for approval and 5 opposed. Linda said to keep us on the radar. Lance told Linda to revisit the porch and the materials you may want to use for that. He said get some accurate numbers, and for those donating time, give us a time frame. Mac has volunteered his mill as well as Lance. Lance said he has most of hemlock done and it is sitting on concrete to be used.

Bakersfield Historical Society- Gary Foote and Linda McCall spoke with the board about the \$32,840.43 proposal. They said that they were hoping to have the money before May 1st, if possible, to pay back the loan. The board asked if they understood correctly that the Historical Society intends to pay the remaining \$5000.00, at the time taxes are collected. John said that if he understood correctly the Historical Society intends to pay the remaining amount due of \$5000.00 in May and then when the taxes are collected in October 2023 and the funding approved by the taxpayers is dispersed to the Historical Society, at that time, they would reimburse those funds from where they got them from. John said that he understood that the Historical Society had already put in over \$40,000.00 of their own money towards repairs. He said that they fronted \$40,000.00 and took the loan out for \$40,000.00, which fits into the whole thing of the matching grant. Linda said that we intended to fund this in different ways, and then things went sideways because of Covid. Josh said that they have had multiple meetings about this, and they want to support the taxpayers. He said when the loan was taken out, we understood it was to be paid back with fund raising, but you decided to ask for an additional amount from the taxpayers to fund the payments. Linda said that we didn't say that we would raise the money to pay it back. Josh said that the bigger issue was that it should have been brought to the taxpayers before the work was done. Lance said they came to the town trustees and included their \$40,000.00 and couldn't come up with the rest of the money needed. He said they were

pursuing grants at the time and would try to fund raise to make the payments. Linda said based on fundraising efforts in the past, it would be beyond ambition to make it to \$5000.00. She said we did the 1772 grant and had that commitment, but we fell short on the Paul Bruhn grant. John said that brings up the issues you'd been having. Linda said that we can't get a grant on work already done, and we can't get a grant on more work needed because we have the loan and the debt loan. Terri said then you had no plan of how to pay the loan. Linda said the because of Covid, we couldn't get the structural engineers to get a proposal for grant money to pay for the structural repair, until vaccination. When the engineers came, we had gotten estimates for repairing the foundation of the addition and the engineers said you need to stabilize the top because it's dangerous to work on. We got the estimates for under \$50,000.00, and then we needed to include the upper gable, so that added \$40,000.00. We were told by other contractors if you can get it done at that price, you'd better jump on it. They said in Chittenden County, you would pay \$250,000.00. We had to decide whether to wait until we get a \$200,000.00 project or do we go ahead and do the best we can. She said we paid the first year's payment last July for July, \$4,917.00 and \$1,661.00, went for interest. After we pay this year's payment, we would own \$32,000.00 and some change. Todd said that we have to consider that they did put in money beforehand. Todd asked what the Historical Society would be looking for next year at town meeting. Linda said that extra \$5000.00, would go away. Josh asked if the reason they are looking for repayment is because there is more work to be done. Linda said yes, but not an emergency like before, as the doors were binding and pulling away from the main building. Josh said that the way to do this was to be approved before any work is done on the building, and to get grants, etc. He said the taxpayers are paying for something they didn't approve beforehand. He said that we put the repayment for the loan before the voters and they approved it. Gary said we would like to get the building air-conditioned to use in summertime and efficient heat to use it in the wintertime for community use. Josh called for a vote from the board for those in favor of paying off the loan for the Historical Society. Vote was 5 in favor and 0 opposed.

Bakersfield Town Clerk- Kathy Westcom met with the board regarding the request of \$20,000.00 to pay for the extra hours to scan documents to digitalize records. Kathy said that that is one of the things that ARPA was meant for. She said that we are not going remote for access for records now but we would be able to provide access if we attached to the portal. She said that a lot of researchers prefer to do it in person. If something gets typed in wrong then it's hard to find a record remotely, and in person you can search physically. If there was another pandemic, then it would be much easier. We got some estimates from a company to do this for around \$40,000.00, and they would have taken all the records offsite. John said that NEMRC voiced their concern about using those kinds of services because of issues that have arisen. Kathy said that there was a grant program in 2020, but we had the general

election with Covid and the extra work that brought, and we didn't have time to pursue it in time. The board asked where the funds will come from to keep up the costs. She said that there is a yearly support fee for the module and that will come from the book fund. She said we assume it will support itself. She said there has been a decline in recordings but that should come back up. She said that the intention is that the book fund will be able to pay for this stuff but if we deplete that fund, we would have to go to the tax payers to support it. John asked how much was in the book fund and looked it up and said \$28,700.28. Kathy said that also goes toward land record book purchases and to restore old books. John asked how much it costs to have a book restored. Kathy said she thought it was around \$1000.00, but that was a few years before Covid and everything has gone up triple. She said we don't want to deplete the fund for the extra hours to have Tami get these records scanned. Kathy said the days that Tami is not my assistant, she will scan records, so our request is for \$20,000.00 to cover this. John suggested they approve the proposal up to \$20,000.00. Josh said we are not going to have an ongoing Line-of-Credit. John said if it's more they can ask for more, but what if it only takes \$12,000.00. The board said then we will have the remaining \$8000.00 in the book fund to go toward operational costs. Josh called for a vote regarding the Book Restoration Fund proposal. The board's vote was 5 supporting, 0 opposing, so the Book Restoration Fund proposal was approved.

Bakersfield Volunteer Fire Dept.- Matt Hull met with the board regarding the requested \$40,000.00 of ARPA funds to match their funds to purchase a replacement for their First Response Vehicle. Todd said that he will abstain from the vote due to his involvement with this organization. Josh said that Todd could be part of the discussion, but he accepts his abstaining from the vote. Matt Hull said their 2012 Expedition is not going to make it much longer. Our request is to match funds to buy a new or used aluminum frame vehicle. Matt said that they are looking at \$80,000.00/\$90,000.00 for a purchase price, to serve the community for fire and first response. He said it would house all our first response equipment. He said our present vehicle, we got free and put a couple thousand dollars into it and it has served us well, but we've been told that in 12-24 months, another inspection will not occur. He said we were told 2 months ago. Matt said that they will need a vehicle loan and the ARPA money will be our deposit. Josh asked if they had a line on a vehicle. Matt said it will need to be a 4-wheel drive. He said that every 18 months or so, we have a bad weather condition in a remote location, and we can't get the ambulance up to it, so we have used our personal vehicles. He said they were looking for something like a F250 or a Tahoe. He said we will carry some air packs in it and for our fire apparatus storage. He said it will roll at every call, so it needs to be user friendly so everybody can drive it. John said that the one that just popped up that has an aluminum carriage would last in Vermont. Matt said that they knew this was on their radar to replace, but not on the short-term notice that came up. Lance said that the lead time for purchasing new is horrendous. Matt said that the large municipal trucks are hard to get but the

smaller equipment is becoming easier to get. Matt said that he dug into the Final Rule a bit about the part about matching funds. John said that the Final Rule really stresses maintaining town roads and emergency vehicles. He said to Matt, that during Covid, you were the one running everybody down to the hospital. Josh called for a vote on awarding \$40,000.00 in ARPA money to assist in the purchase of a new First Response vehicle for the Fire Dept. The vote was 4 votes approving and 0 opposing, Todd abstaining.

Fairfield Community Center- met with the board regarding their request for \$29,742.00 as the maximum amount. They presented their request for two separate fundings, asking for one or the other...\$29,742.00 is the higher request and \$24,000.00 is the other. John asked Katheryn if, during Covid, if the Fairfield Community Center applied for any PPP grants or loans and Katheryn said yes. John asked if they received any. Katheryn said yes. John spoke of the Profit and Loss statements that the FCC had provided with their proposal. He said that the reports show that during 2019, the FCC brought in \$92,000.00. and in 2020, at the beginning of Covid, increased \$41,000.00 more than non-covid. John said that they show that at the tail end of 2021, it shows a balance of \$186,407.91, and a \$33,941.23 profit. He said all total, the FCC brought in \$412,000.00 through Covid. The total remaining shows \$62,000.00+. Katheryn explained we have to set so much money aside for matching grants, and it is not real profit. Lance said as a non-profit, you are not allowed to have profit, so you must reinvest it back into the Community Center. Katheryn said they have a strong grant writing group and were able to pull in more funds to build the pavilion outside, and the town of Fairfield gave us \$59,000.00, which we used to renovate the space. Josh said that their proposal says that they are looking to use part of the money to fix the childcare center. Katheryn said that the after-school program uses that area. We want to complete the kitchen renovation area. We will be able to rent that out. She said that ¼ to 1/3 of the people who access our services, come from Bakersfield. She said a lot of our volunteers are from Bakersfield. John said that during the election, the money that FCC requested from Bakersfield increased from previous years, to \$4,000.00, from \$2,000.00. Katheryn said they were trying to even out the amount from both towns. She said that the FCC would be happy to take less than the \$24,000.00. She said that whatever you will give us we are happy to take toward projects. Josh said that as a board, our top priority is to help Bakersfield and relieve its tax burden. He said that the taxpayers are giving the \$4,000.00, and looking at the Profit and Loss statements, they are having a hard time considering the request. John said that looking at the P&L statements, he was surprised at the profit. Katheryn said that money is already obligated to certain purposes. John said that donations happen for the meals and the after-school program happens for a charge. John said that considering the funds are not going to recoup lost funds, they are going for a kitchen to be rented out. He said he took pause going through it. Lance said he was impressed at the well organized and well managed organization. He said you are doing very well and that's what is going

against you. Todd and Terry agreed. Katheryn said that the Food Shelf doesn't fund itself. Lance said this is the first round and to hang onto the application and maybe submit again.

Josh called for a vote of whether to allocate \$24,502.00 for renovations to the FCC. The vote was 0 approving, 5 opposing. Katheryn thanked the board for their time, and she would go back to the board to see what they come up with.

H.F. Brigham Library- met regarding their request for \$6,300.00 to replace the front door and for \$1,200.00 for a computer, IT equipment and support. Nicky said that when John saw the old computer that we were using, he said to turn this off immediately. The board asked who told the library that it needed to be a fire door. Nicky said that they may not have said a fire door but one that is up to code. Todd said, that as the Fire Marshall, it doesn't need a fire door. Nicky said that they had a quote from a local builder for an up to code door, and it is an historical building and needs a door to fit the historical character. Nicky said that the heat is going out and replacing the door is appropriate. John said what about keeping the door and fixing it so that it doesn't let the heat out. Nicky said it is just a single pane of glass, that is dripping all winter long. Terri asked about running a dehumidifier. Nicky said they are going to do that because of the damp floor. John said that one of the grants that we are putting in for is a state grant program called MERP to update and weatherize municipal buildings. He said they are attending a VLCT class on the grant on April 18th. He said that the board is also calling Efficiency Vermont to come and do an energy audit on our buildings and give us a plan. Josh said they will be applying for the Town Hall, both garages and the library, for updated furnaces and your door. The board asked if the library would like to amend their proposal and adjust their number to \$1,200.00 and give us time to try to fund section 1 through the grant system. The board said they are going to involve their grant writer, and if things don't work out, then the library can reapply for the second round. Nicky said yes. Josh asked for a vote to approve \$1,200.00 to the H. F. Brigham Library for the purchase of an updated computer, since one of us shut down theirs, with intentions on following through on a grant for the furnace and the front door. The vote was 5 approving and 0 opposing.

Lucas James Williams Memorial Fund- regarding their request of \$21,086.00 because of loss of income due to the Covid season. John said he looked through the paperwork and the 990s. He said thanks to Rosalie for having the IRS talk to him, it made it easier. John said according to the Profit and Loss statements, you had a strong 2017, and then 2018 dropped by \$8,000.00; 2019 dropped a further \$7,000.00; and then 2021 came out on the positive side with \$5,340.00 profit, and \$4,796.00 after expenses, mostly because of no expense due to no events. He said 2020 showed a negative \$260.81, due to no events. He had one question on \$2,546.77 for supplies. He said the food supplies were broken out on a different line and was wondering what supplies this was for. Were they non-perishable supplies, which would have kept from

year to year. Josh said it just says supplies, not in as taxes, licenses or utilities. Rosalie said they put the pavilion up in 2018, and they purchase items for the Haunted Forest and spend around \$2,000.00. She said that they have the maintenance which includes 4-5 acres, and our lawn mower broke down and had to have somebody do it. She said we pay for lights, and we have 4 freezers and 5 fridges that run year-round. John said that the loss for 2020 was \$260.81, and for what you are requesting, you didn't have expenditures for that time since no events were held so you didn't have the need for the funds to put on events. Josh asked if there were any more questions, seeing none, he called for a vote of whether they approve the request of \$21,086.00 to the Lucas James Williams Memorial Youth Fund LLC. The vote was 0 approving and 5 opposing. Todd told Rosalie that just as a note, the board does appreciate what you do.

Mark and Janet Laroche- requested \$40,000.00 to help recover funds lost due to the pandemic of Covid in 2020-2021. John said that their proposal was missing documentation that was needed. He said there were no Profit and Loss statements, and on the 1065 that you provided, you do not have the corresponding tax documents. On line 16 it says see Statement 1 and see Statement 2 for 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022. He said that on line 20, there was listed for other deductions \$26,047.00 but there is no breakout of the deductions. Mark said that was building expense when he was getting the kitchen set up. John said it makes it difficult to look at the total because as it's just not here so we don't have enough information to make an accurate decision. Josh said that is the discussion that we had. Mark said that he wished that he had known. Josh called for a vote of whether to allocate \$40,000.00 to Mark and Janet Laroche/Cold Hollow Catering. The vote was 0 approving and 5 opposing. John told Mark to gather some more paperwork and Todd encouraged Mark to reapply for the next round.

Bakersfield Town Road Equipment Fund- John said that Mac had helped put together the ARPA request of \$120,000.00, on behalf of the town, to be used to reimburse the town for the grader that we purchased from Johnson. He said we are we are still looking for a wing for around \$30,000.00. He said we will be selling our old grader if we get a good price. And we are looking to purchase, out of the reimbursed town funds, other equipment, such as a midsize excavator to respond to town needs in a timelier manner. Lance said we have been fortunate in the past, that we had people with equipment available to the town, but we have lost John Guillemette, and Harmon Mayo doesn't have the equipment that he used to. Sharon Evans asked if other towns that received ARPA funds used them for equipment. Josh said that a lot of towns have used their ARPA money in their General Fund for town needs and took no proposals. Sharon said that she had heard about the grader for years and asked why we were holding on for so, so long, and was it the expense. Josh said we continually repaired the grader and spent on parts and labor and our new equipment was almost non-existent. He said that Mark's truck is the next one

to be replaced, and even if we ordered today, the best we could hope for would be to receive it in 2 years. He said they had the grader motor rebuilt twice and it had served its purpose, and it was time for it to retire. They said that when looking for a grader, Mac called 2-3 organizations that wouldn't even call him back. Ordering one was 2-3 years out. John said that the ARPA funds can be used for town and road equipment, repairing the roads and as Josh said can be moved into the General Fund. Sharon said she thought she had heard that it can't be used for something that had already been done. The board said that was the Historical Society that said they couldn't get a grant for work that had been done, but that doesn't apply to the ARPA funds. Lance said that a new grader would be around \$300,000.00. He said we were made aware of this opportunity from the town of Johnson, and it was too good a deal to let go by. Josh said that we bid the minimum bid in a sealed bidding system. We submitted the bid of \$120,000.00 and didn't think we would get it. Josh called for a vote of whether to reimburse the town \$120,000.00 for the purchase of the grader. The vote was 5 votes for approval and 0 votes opposed.

John said that was the 10th and final request. He said we have to have the remainder of the funds committed by the end of 2024, and we can always transfer funds into the general fund. He said we currently have around \$389,000.00 and after these disbursements, we will have around \$175,000.00 in remaining funds. Alice asked if the grant person was available immediately and John said yes, this person lives in Bakersfield, and we are going to give him a shot and see how it goes. His name is Alex. Josh said we can make his information available to anyone to hire him for your own entity, he has a fee. Sharon said that she has been in two buildings today, one where the stairs are pulling away and then the Cemetery Commission has padlocked the hearse house. She asked if someone gets hurt, who is liable. Todd said it's the owner's responsibility to mark that building No Entry and make provisions to rope it off to prevent entry, with signs saying Warning, Do Not Enter Building, Unsafe, otherwise the owner is liable. She asked who owns the Hearse House. The board said that if there is a problem, the town owns it; if there is not a problem, the cemetery owns it. She asked if the bell is in the cemetery. She was told that no, that's on the town common. The cemetery begins at the first line of gravestones. The old Bachman lot is the town park, taken care of by the Bakersfield Conservation Commission. Amber Foote asked if the Brigham Academy is still a contender for consideration of ARPA funds. Lance said that the interested parties still are interested so it is still a viable option. Amber asked if we would know in time for round 2 or 3. Lance said he is hoping to know yes or no soon. John said that the estimated amount needed for Brigham Academy is \$6,000,000.00 so ARPA would not cover much. Todd said that would be a project for the new grant writer. Linda asked if they ever had a structural engineer do a building assessment. Lance said that they did a feasibility study that covered the need and feasibility for an elderly housing unit and found that it would support 22 units. Todd told Linda, that when he was in the attic, the cable hadn't moved an inch.

Josh asked if there were anymore ARPA questions. Katheryn asked if they would be notified when the proposals are due again for the next round and will we know when the next meeting is. The board said it will be in the minutes. John said there is a section in the meeting agenda for ARPA during the Select Board meeting, which will be warned, and also on the town website there is a section for ARPA which be updated to read we are accepting requests.

John made the motion to adjourn. Todd seconded the motion and the motion carried with a vote of 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 9:02pm.

Meeting minutes recorded by Tami Brennan.