

**BERKLEY S.A.V.E. MEETING OF 2-4-26**

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE: Nancy Thompson(NT), Member, Kate Simons(KS), Clerk, Chris Sullivan(CS), Chair, Roseanne Kulibaba [RK], Member

TOPIC		ACTION
Call to Order & Objectives	Meeting called to order at 5:33pm.	
Approval of Prior Minutes	Table – prior meeting not distributed for review. KS will re-distribute prior minutes for approval.	NT Motion to Table RK Second All In Favor
Communication Updates	<p><b>Department Outreach</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CS met with the Fire Chief; while no new information emerged, the operational impact of potential cuts was clearly illustrated.</li> <li>Key concern: staffing reductions would slow response times and increase reliance on on-call EMS, many of whom live outside Berkley, limiting rapid response.</li> </ul> <p><b>Public Forums</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A series of department forums will be held over the coming months.</li> <li>Initial focus: Fire &amp; EMS (service overview, impacts of 6% cuts; SAVE acts as facilitator).</li> <li>Additional forums planned/confirmed: Police (2/19, 2/26), Highway (4/2), Town Hall (4/11), Library (completed), COA (tentative 3/21).</li> <li>Schools are conducting parallel outreach; SAVE will support as needed.</li> </ul> <p><b>Information Sharing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Forums may be recorded via Zoom and shared with agendas.</li> <li>Distribution channels include Public Access TV, Facebook Live, and Cable Advisory links.</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Messaging Themes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Police:</b> Chronic understaffing drives excessive overtime and burnout; hiring a new officer takes nearly a year.</li> <li><b>Library:</b> A 6% cut (~\$10k of a ~\$165k budget) would likely reduce hours to the minimum and risks permanent closure if services fall below ADA requirements. Library services extend beyond books.</li> <li><b>Town-wide:</b> Berkley employees are among the lowest paid regionally, making retention difficult. Collective bargaining agreements make pay cuts unlikely; impacts would be through staffing reductions.</li> <li>Public safety outcomes and local health statistics remain poorly understood by the public.</li> </ul> <p><b>Outreach Methods</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>COA newsletter and social media outreach underway.</li> <li>Proposed tools include flyers/posters with QR codes (businesses, churches, Town Hall), tables at Community School and Transfer Station, banners, and volunteer-led outreach.</li> <li>Explore creation of an independent (non-town) advocacy website.</li> </ul> <p><b>FAQs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarify audit misconceptions: departments are audited annually, and audits themselves incur costs.</li> <li>FAQs will be compiled from prior meetings and social media discussions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Next Steps</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chris to coordinate school outreach, flyers/QR codes, and explore website options.</li> <li>RK to compile common questions and FAQs.</li> </ul>	
Messaging: Framing the Options	<p><b>Core Framing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contrast the <i>status quo</i> (bare-bones staffing, service erosion, minimal tax increases) with proactive investment.</li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasize the hidden costs of understaffing and inefficiencies (e.g., delayed services, lost revenue opportunities).</li> <li>• Reinforce that investing locally builds long-term sustainability.</li> </ul> <p><b>Explaining How We Got Here</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearly outline fiscal constraints, including Prop 2½, and how inflation outpaces allowable revenue growth.</li> <li>• Frame the discussion around identifying the most sustainable path forward for the town.</li> </ul> <p><b>Short-, Mid-, and Long-Term Options</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Short Term:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Option A: Pass an override to restore and stabilize services and fund core Town Hall capacity. Of note – Berkley’s last general override was in 2011. Important to help Berkley understand that Prop 2 ½ is designed to force local communities to engage – it’s not necessarily a failure to balance a budget.</li> <li>○ Option B: Continued departmental cuts and service reductions; note risks and unintended consequences of privatization.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Mid Term:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Continue cost-containment efforts, pursue grants, and identify operational efficiencies.</li> <li>○ Continued advocacy by select board &amp; others for increased State Aid</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Long Term:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Balanced residential and commercial growth; no single sector will solve the problem.</li> <li>○ Focus on modest, denser development and diversified tax base rather than large-scale projects.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Growth &amp; Economic Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make “growth” tangible and understandable to residents.</li> <li>• Explore zoning tools such as cluster development and village districts (requires Planning Board action and 2/3 Town Meeting approval).</li> <li>• Strengthen Town Hall and economic development capacity; much of this work is relationship-driven.</li> <li>• Leverage the Economic Development Commission to connect properties with viable uses.</li> </ul> <p><b>Sustainability &amp; Engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define sustainability clearly (e.g., reduced reliance on repeated overrides, stable services).</li> <li>• Acknowledge that growth impact varies and is not immediate.</li> <li>• Long-term sustainability depends on resident engagement and participation.</li> <li>• Volunteer-driven models require a strong foundational staff and active civic involvement.</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Message Takeaway</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The most sustainable strategy is informed, engaged residents choosing between clear options—not defaulting to service erosion.</li> </ul>	
Community Education & Outreach Planning	See Discussion Above under ‘Communication Updates’	
Parking Lot / Future Topics		
Public Input		

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Next Steps & Action Assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All Members - Define 'Sustainability' As is relates to our work</li><li>• CS to Draft New Website &amp; Coordinate QR Code Flyers that direct to website</li><li>• RK &amp; KS to Develop FAQ's for Website</li></ul>	
Adjourn		NT Motion to Adjourn RK Second All in Favor – Aye Adjourned