

Colebrook Select Board Meeting

August 31, 2021

Colebrook Town Hall Courtroom

Select Board Members: Greg Placy, Chairperson, Suzanne Collins, Ray Gorman

Town of Colebrook Staff Members: Melanie Mathieu, Tax Collector

Guests: Josh Bouchard, Paul Schmidt from CMA via TEAMS; Wayne Frizzell, Ray Davis Real Estate; Chief of Police Paul Rella.

Meeting was called to order at 1:10 pm.

At 1:12 PM, Sue Collins made a motion to enter non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3 II(d) *Consideration of the acquisition, sale or lease of real or personal property...* Ray Gorman seconded the motion. Roll call – Sue, yes; Ray, yes; Greg, yes.

Wayne Frizzell joined the meeting.

At 1:40 PM, Ray Gorman made a motion to exit non-public session. Sue Collins seconded the motion. Roll call – Sue, yes; Ray, yes; Greg, yes.

No action was required as a result of non-public session.

Chief Rella entered the meeting and requested to meet with the Board to discuss personnel in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II(a).

At 1:43 PM, Sue Collins made a motion to enter non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3, II(a). Ray Gorman seconded the motion. Roll call – Sue, yes; Ray, yes; Greg, yes.

At 2:08 PM, Sue Collins made a motion to exit non-public session. Ray Gorman seconded the motion. Roll call – Sue, yes; Ray, yes; Greg, yes.

The Board began its regular meeting at 2:09 PM beginning with a TEAMS meeting:

Well Project Funding Discussion with CMA - Greg noted that the selectboard had spoken with Jamie Emery to discuss potential well locations and the selectboard told Jamie if he needs to reach out to landowners, please let the selectboard reach out to those people first.

No geo-study yet. Jamie has 6 or 7 locations to look at. Sue is going to send Jamie the list of 3 identified well sites she had researched dating back to 1993. One was an

Army Corp of Engineer/USGS well located on Peter Nugent's land on the southern boundary of town near the Northern Comfort Motel property.

Sue: Amendment #1 to the APP Scope of Service: Included in that was \$5,000 for the north-end wells and she requested that this \$5,000 be taken out of the amendment.

Paul Schmidt responded that the \$5,000 was basically a place holder. At this point the placeholder will keep them going.

Sue asked them to assign a project number to any work they do related to new wells so that the Town can track it separately. The Town needs to keep the water and sewer projects separate for billing.

Grant discussion regarding Jamie Emery's bills. Paul noted that pursuing grant funding is challenging because we need to know where the well sites are. Not knowing, at this point, complicates the grant/loan grant application process.

Not all the sites are within the existing precinct, but most are within the precinct.

The selectboard described the various properties, owners, locations that Jamie has identified as potential well sites.

With the available sites now being considered, all close to the existing water system, Jamie had noted that it was "criminal" to have attempted wells north of town. The CMA engineers agreed that it made absolutely no sense.

Paul mentioned the NH State Revolving Fund (SRF) – a federal loan program. He noted that this is what the Town has now for the North well site.

Colebrook got ranked #55.

Sue: What about the "ton of money" coming into New Hampshire that Jamie mentioned.

Josh is not sure about Jamie's assessment. He spoke to staff of the NH State Revolving Loan program and because Colebrook is ranked #55, when the funds are obligated, they are not going to get down to Colebrook.

When the ARPA money comes in, they will continue down the SRF list and, still, they will not get down to Colebrook.

Ground Water Trust Fund (GWTF) is the Town's next best option. It allows for expansion of use. This program has now gone to a loan/grant program, and they offer very little guidance on what to submit in a request. They don't describe what

percentage to apply for as a loan request and what percentage to apply for as a grant request.

At minimum the Town should apply for 15% through the GWTF program because at a minimum that is what the Town would get through the SRF program. If we ask for more, we need to justify it.

Josh did bring up the Town's existing debt load. He did not bring up the DES role in the failed north wells project.

Greg noted that DES was included in the decisions to drill the north wells, which resulted in a significant financial distress to the Town, including failed wells leading to litigation.

Obviously, the more grant the Town asks for, the lower the chance of getting funding approved.

Sue reviewed Jamie's email in which he mentioned his conversation with the NH – DES Commissioner who reported to Jamie that funds will be coming into New Hampshire for water infrastructure work and that much of the funding will be grant based.

Jamie's email went on to say that Colebrook will be a solid candidate for receiving these funds because of the economic growth that is pressing the town and the fact that New Hampshire DES wants a new water source to supply the town. Jamie noted that he will work very hard to make sure that Colebrook can access these funds as needed.

Sue is questioning the difference between Jamie's assessment and CMA's. Paul went on to say that the bulk of the ARPA money is going through the SRF program where Colebrook is #55. And the GWTF is a separate pot of money.

Greg asked why did Colebrook ranked #55? CMA has not pressed DES on this.

On the wastewater side things look more hopeful, but DES still does not know what this will look like in terms of loan versus grant. It will not be 100% grant.

DES is still figuring out the ARPA funds. They are planning on increasing the loan forgiveness from their standard to something else.

We hear APP has a lot of attention, but nobody is actually identifying the program that has money for Colebrook's projects.

Greg noted that Maggie Hassan was in Colebrook for the APP tour. Ben Belanger, one of her aides, said that she wants him to sit down with the selectboard and some knowledgeable folks to talk about all the funding sources that the Town has applications in for and she wants Colebrook to be funded.

Greg noted that funding Colebrook with loans does not help. The Town needs to be funded by grants because the Town cannot afford more loans.

Josh thought Maggie may be able to help. He noted that CMA will talk with Jamie Emery to see about Jamie's conversation with the NH DES Commissioner. The Commissioner may have some influence.

This is different than talking to the people who are managing the grants programs.

Paul noted that the GWTF has its own politics and it's a commission set by the governor. He noted that previous experience yielded no funding for that previous client.

The caginess of the DES about the percentage of loan versus grant in the GWTF program has been a source of frustration for a lot of folks.

Sue noted that the Town has some money from the north wells settlement which is getting spent towards the overall project cost.

Josh noted that this means the Town has already started to spend the potential "match" that will help with a grant application.

Paul reviewed the various amounts spent and the total project cost and potential grant requests or grant/loan combination requests.

He noted that politicians keep saying that they want to help Colebrook, but as of yet nobody has pointed to a specific pot of money to provide actual help.

Very few available government programs are full grant. The ARPA money has the potential to be full grant, but so far, DES staff say that they do not know. DES is trying to leverage the ARPA money with loan forgiveness or loans so they can fund more projects. The need statewide is much more than the available ARPA money.

Paul mentioned that DES keeps mentioning that APP should be contributing based on the APP needs and demands. If they go to their build-out phase, Paul said the Town has to get money from APP unless one of these State funding sources can get the Town to 100% grant.

On the wastewater, EDA has been thrown out a few times as a source, but nothing concrete has come from EDA.

So, EDA is more about economic development, as is Northern Borders.

Greg noted that Northern Borders grant application got funded at \$250,000 and that EDA is going to decide somewhere towards the middle of September. Supposedly the EDA is 100% grant and would total \$750,000.

Ray said that Kuster's office was very confident about the \$750,000 coming to Colebrook.

September 9 is the deadline for the SRF drinking water grant application. The drinking water Ground Water Trust Fund applications are a little more involved. If the Town can get funds from other sources, those funds can be used as a match.

Sue asked if the Town's ARPA allocation of \$111,000 could be used as a match. And, she noted, there will be another \$111,000 next year.

When CMA submits the application, it will need to include a funding strategy of percentages for grant, match, loan. Sue noted that the loan amount needs to be kept at a minimum.

Water use in Colebrook is down, so the income to the Town is down – even with APP using what they are using now.

The Colebrook Mobile Home Park Cooperative project is still in the works with CMA – they had a funding meeting yesterday.

Paul noted that USDA needs to step in to fund most of that project and CDBG will step in to finish it off. This is his hope. The USDA piece is not funneled through the Town, as with the CDBG.

Sue asked about whether or not the Town can bill APP for costs beyond the original \$45,000 which APP has paid in full.

Melanie paid CMA invoices totaling APP \$45,000 last week.

Paul reviewed the two versions of Amendment #1 and the timing of his drafts of Amendment #1 relative to APP operations and changes. This entire amendment is attributed to APP. Plain and simple.

Amendment #2 was specific to the EPA permit. This amendment is a little trickier. It's clear that the individual EPA permit was accelerated because of APP because of industrial discharge of Nitrates into the system.

He suggested that the Town request to split this Amendment #2 cost with APP. Given the timing of the EPA permit requirement, it is clearly connected to APP.

He noted that APP has increased its industrial discharges, but not as much as what APP had planned. But APP is behind in its build out plans.

Greg noted that the Malaysian machine has not been started yet. He said the other 6 index machines are looking pretty good. APP is certainly looking at specialty gloves in the research lab. These are heavy, thick, gloves. The indexing lines allow them to make specialty gloves. The Malaysian machines will crank out medical grade gloves.

The letter requesting APP's help should include 100% of CMA Amendment #1 cost, and 50% of CMA Amendment #2 cost. Sue is going to send a draft to Paul, and he will review and add to it as needed.

Sue asked Paul to talk with Jamie Emery about Jamie's connection to the DES Commissioner.

Paul said that Town should go ahead and submit a grant request to the Ground Water Trust Fund which has a water quality component and an economic development component. Somebody needs to pull a political string on behalf of the Town of Colebrook.

Paul reviewed the folks who sit on this Commission. He agreed with Sue that it would make sense to engage Councilor Joe Kenney. Last round there were four times as many requests as available funding. Paul thinks DES will be in the Town's court on this application.

Single audit information: Josh noted that the USDA grant/loan got closed out last October and, in that CMA, included some auditing invoices.

Sue was talking about the 2019 audit, but the Town did not pay it until 2020. Josh noted that audit invoices were included.

Ground Water Trust closed out including Tammy Letson's fees. This is closed out as well. He noted that the Town spent \$1.25 million. Sue is requesting an accounting of this because the Town's accounting does not add to \$1.25 million.

The existing NBRC grant: Michele Morin Gray just needs to do something to close this out. We've been hearing this for 90 days. What does she need? The Town cannot get further funding until this is closed out. Josh will check in with Michele about this. The Town will be receiving another \$46,000 +/- . Josh will keep talking to Michele about this.

The Town has the ARPA funds in hand. The County ARPA funds are not in hand yet. It's been approved at \$229,000 but the Town does not have the money and nothing in writing yet other than minutes of meetings.

Josh said that CMA is hoping to get the project completed by the end of this year. Ray asked if the County has talked to Josh about this project. Ray believes that the County is going to be administering the grant project directly versus the Town as sub-administrating. He will check on this, but he's pretty sure. Ray has reported to the County that this project is "shovel-ready."

CMA will provide an amendment with \$5,000 for the grant application on the water side and \$5,000 for working with Jamie Emery. Same amendment? Yes. They are both related to water. This will be under a new project number.

End CMA TEAMS meeting at 3:13pm.

Discussion of Updated Draft of OHRS/ATV Ordinance – TABLED.

Status of SEARCH Grant – No Update.

Report of Emery & Garrett – completed in the TEAMS meeting.

Northern Borders Dispatch Grant Application – need to advertise for next meeting in September.

Discussion: The regularly scheduled September 27th meeting will be September 20th. Sue will do an ad for the newspaper. This September 20th meeting will be at 1:00pm.

The \$35,000 Dispatch application needs to be advertised in advance because this is not in the Town's budget for this year. The grant is requiring a public hearing, and this was a surprise this morning.

The selectboard will have their September 8th select board meeting at 1:00pm.

Grants & Project Funding & Expenditures Report 2015 to 2021

Sue reported that she, Greg and Tammy met last week to go over all the grants and projects that the Town has going on.

She gave the other two selectboard members a status report on all of the grants and projects:

The Stone Garden grant needs to be billed quarterly. It is difficult because of the difference between the federal fiscal year versus the timing of the Town's calendar year fiscal period.

The Pre-Disaster Planning grant is finished.

The Used Oil Grant accounting needs some fixing: The timing of money coming in versus money spent in previous years is tricky.

All the Dispatch grant numbers line up pretty well.

Main Street is very interesting: Josh said this is all closed out, but it looks like everything the Town spent versus everything the Town received there is approximately \$57,000 +/- left. She will review Josh's accounting on this as well.

The "beyond the right of way" grant: Sue needs to work with Tammy on this one. It is the work that Jim Wells did. \$206,000 taken out of the Main Street Fund when there appears to be only \$168,000 in expenditures. She will work with Tammy.

TAP = Transportation Alternatives Program. This is an 80/20 grant. This does not work out between what the Town has spent and the amount of the grant.

CDBG – waiting for funds

Bear Rock Bridge – The Town is going to need a 2022 warrant article to spend more money.

Harvey Swell Bridge – same as with the Bear Rock Bridge.

Then Sue noted that Josh had mentioned a total spending of \$1.25 million, but the Town only has \$1.1 million in costs.

Northern Borders – The Town does not have expenses for this whole thing.

The CDBG Planning Grant – the Town still has some money in this.

Discussion of various grants, accounting, and spending.

Tilly Café Tillotson Grant – looks fine. Melissa Shaw is good at accounting for her grants.

Still to come: Northern Borders Regional Commission \$250,000

EDA \$750,000

Northern Border Dispatch \$35,000

County Funding (ARPA) \$229,000

Hazardous Waste Day in October – usually get North Country Council money for this.

Sue will keep working on this with Tammy.

Sale of the Old Compactor at the Transfer Station – Barry Normandeau told Sharon Penney that he had a buyer willing to pay the Town \$1,000 for this old compactor. Sharon had approval from the select board to sell it but did not get back to Barry. Now the buyer is no longer interested.

TJ told Sue that they could use it for storage to keep stuff dry. Is this okay or should Barry continue to try to sell it.

Greg has believed that if you need to add a file cabinet – you need to throw stuff out.

The board decided to continue to work with Barry to sell it. Sue will tell Barry to keep looking. The Town responded to the initial request, but Sharon was the one who did not get back to Barry.

Ray asked about the **emergency Northern Borders Dispatch meeting tomorrow.**

Sue asked what the emergency meeting was about? Ray noted that it is about a personnel issue. Ray outlined the issues for Sue and Greg. The selectboard noted that these types of meetings need to be conducted in non-public session.

Ray, Greg & Sue will be attending the meeting.

Greg reported that two more trees have fallen against Lynch Road next to the Mohawk. Kenny Knapper reported this to Greg. The trees are in the Mohawk River, beyond where you turn to the Rec Center. On the Town's easement and Lynch's easement.

Phil Beaulieu and Marlin are going to be in Town on Tuesday to look at the Main Street project and have asked Greg to be there with them. This meeting will be about the fine details of engineering.

Sue noted that the concrete work in front of Howard's Restaurant looks very nice. She asked when Greg thinks Eversource will start working on moving poles.

Greg will ask Josh.

Sue made a motion at 3:41pm to go into non-public under RSA 91-A:3, ii(a) The dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee. Ray seconded the motion.

Sue YES

Ray YES

Greg YES

The selectboard came out of non-public session at 3:57pm as moved by Ray Gorman and seconded by Sue Collins. Roll call – Sue, yes; Ray, yes; Greg, yes.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine F. Charman

Christine Charman, Transcriptionist