

**TOWN OF COLEBROOK**  
**SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES**  
**APRIL 25, 2022, AT 1:00 PM**

Select Board present: Chairman Placy, Sue Collins, Ray Gorman

Staff present: James O’Gorman; Melanie Mathieu, Tax Collector for part of the meeting.

Guests present: Donald Dawson, Netafy Inc; Hannah Campbell, Coos Economic Development; Ericka Canalis, Coos Economic Development; Jake Mardin, News & Sentinel

**HEARING OF THE PUBLIC**

Coos Economic Development Corporation – Hannah Campbell gave an introduction of the organization. She noted that in the past year CEDC merged with Northern Borders and created an advisory council to distribute the assets obtained within the region based on the needs. One idea is to create a business resource guide – an advisory guide on-line. The other asset is Lot #4 on the river off of Bridge Street. There is an idea about cleaning this up, fix the bridge with Northern Forest Canoe Trail with kiosk.

Members of the Advisory Council: Kelly LaPerle, Colebrook. Hannah Campbell, Colebrook. Sean Cote, Errol. Linda White and Colin Finn, both of Colebrook. The advisory council is capped at nine members. The overall idea is to make sure that the assets from Northern Borders stay in this region – not just Colebrook.

Regarding the CEDC property on Bill Bromage Drive.

Sue had a question about the select board meeting with the previous CEDC Executive Director. After the last meeting, the agreement was that CEDC would pay the taxes and apply for an abatement because Coos Brewery is not using 100% of the building. The Town was supposed to receive measurements to determine how much of the building is tax exempt. Now, the new tax bills are coming out and nothing has been done as agreed upon in the last select board meeting.

Ericka responded that she has reviewed the email chain from her predecessor. The tax assessor had talked to her predecessor. Both, James, and Ray have spoken to Ericka. She described the history of the lease agreement with Coos Brewery. Colin cannot afford the rent and CEDC does not want to stunt the growth of an economically promising business within the Colebrook community. She would like today to be a conversation about what a partial payment option would look like.

CEDC has a three-year lease with Colin and a future sale of the property to Colin. The building is still owned by a non-profit.

Responding to Sue’s question about what CEDC could afford to pay. Ericka responded that they could afford to pay the Town of Colebrook. Based on their homework on PILOTS and other benefits to the Town of Colebrook. Looking at: \$5,414.70 which is the tax bill without the school tax and \$2707.35 is 50%. This would result in a payment of \$225.61 per month. The balance is

offset by the benefits provided to Colebrook by CEDC. They anticipate that the taxes will be able to be paid at full cost by 2024. They took out school tax because they are a non-profit.

Ericka listed the CEDC benefits to Colebrook:

They have never charged Colebrook for use of Lot #4. CEDC will help with the beautification grants for downtown Colebrook – paying 85% while the business only pays 15%. Ericka is collaborating with partners on workforce housing and increasing the inventory.

The Brewery is a model that CEDC wants to replicate. The amount is short term. And she pointed out that prior to CEDC there was no income.

She noted that CEDC is working with the Chamber of Commerce. They are the “new guard” with a new vision. They are excited to implement the new vision.

Sue requested that CEDC please provide a request in writing with the figures. CEDC wants the abatement, so the Town is expecting their proposal. Ericka will put something in writing.

Sue had a question about an article about housing in the Union Leader referencing a \$100,000,000 invest housing fund in Concord.

Ericka said it did not do well with the Executive Council last Friday – it is going back to the drawing board. Ericka is trying to put together a listserv so that she can give updates and share opportunities. She is happy to be a conduit.

Representative Thompson and Ericka are looking at housing inventory between EDA funds versus housing funds can we separate out properties for housing and combining businesses and private housing buildings like Howard’s or Le Rendez Vous. Ben Frost from New Hampshire housing was supposed to launch another program for ten units or less which is friendlier for the CEDC region, less attractive for folks in Concord, Manchester.

Ray noted that the energy that is coming from CEDC is so welcomed and surprising. He wondered about the merger, and now with the energy that is being put forward, he is thankful for their work.

Hannah noted that she is purchasing the house next to her house – and the property is a mess right now.

**Netafy Cell Towers** – Mr. Dawson introduces that he is in the meeting regarding tower on Skyline Drive, owned by CEDC. Netafy would like to acquire this tower to do better with their services and to enhance the use of the tower and increase their services. They are offering space on the tower for police, fire, other connectivity that the Town of Colebrook may need. He noted that there is no lease with the tower at this time.

White Mountain Communications uses the tower for a small monthly lease with the Town of Colebrook. Sue noted that the Town receives \$1880 from White Mountain Communications which is 97.1.

Netafy needs to understand more about the tower and who is using it right now. He understood that NHPR is on the tower and Netafy used to provide them connectivity. Netafy has been on the site for a while. They would like to take stewardship of the site and make improvements to help

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things operate correctly. They would provide compensation for the Town and allow for continued availability for the Town for EMS, fire, and police.

Netafy would deliver their best available plans to any of these five sites and pay the Town of Colebrook \$150 per month.

Sue noted that the Town of Colebrook Water Department now has smart meters, and the Town is struggling with the signals off that Verizon tower which does not reach all parts of Town (to allow for reading the meters).

Netafy can help with this – this is exactly how they could assist the Town of Colebrook. Mr. Dawson described the work that Netafy has done in this region as well as the Netafy work and collaboration with Consolidated Communications.

He noted the challenges of working in this area – particularly in the more rural regions due to weather as well as geography and access.

He is not involved in the Broad band project which is holding a public hearing in Colebrook. He has questions about the insistence on laying fiber. Netafy does not have access to these funded projects – they do not have the staffing to go after these funding opportunities.

Ericka noted that this public hearing is for information gathering and mapping out actual access issues.

Netafy covers a substantial portion of Coos County. They are able to deliver right now and are providing services to over 3,000 people successfully without any additional funding.

There was general discussion about the importance of the local radio station, 97.1.

**Review and approval of Minutes from 4/11/2022** – Sue noted that there was a typographical error in the minutes as presented. Need to add this “no cost to the town for installation”

Ray makes the motion to accept the minutes of 4/11/2022 as edited which is that under **New Business, Zoom Meeting with Don Dawson from** Netafy the last sentence needs the word “cost” added to it: *“at no COST to the town for installation.”*

Sue seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

**The Town Manager’s Report** was reviewed and is attached to these minutes.

The select board signed the appointment of Tim Stevens to the Colebrook Police Department.

Discussion on the quote received for the new police cruiser relative to the added equipment and installation of same. \$55,556 authorized for Town of Colebrook. The cruiser costs \$51,578. Is there anything else the Town can apply for in order to get all the money?

Stone Garden has extra money, and the Town of Colebrook could get the eventual ownership and use of an ATV as with the SUV/vehicle. Sue noted that it is great to get a piece of equipment, but what will the costs be to the town relative to this ATV. Has the letter already been sent and is the selectboard just being notified?

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Ray noted that an ATV would increase the town's ability to manage complaints and patrol the trail systems. The letter from Chief Rella is appears to be just a letter of interest.

There are fewer problems with the meters during this water billing cycle than in past cycles. There is an actual water usage reading from the hospital meter: 137,000 gallons of water since the meter was operational. The hospital needs to have access to the software because this usage may indicate leaks. James will follow up with them.

Regarding Edwards Street pumping station – Brian said that we already had the new pumps for this station. Now, there is an email about these pumps being ready to die. Ray noted that the select board has been asking about this for years and have been told not to worry.

Sue asked about when Josh Bouchard (from CMA Engineers) will be ready to move forward with the pipe bursting business?

Ray noted that the select board needs updates with the CMA Engineers once a month at the select board meetings. The board and James have to keep up with CMA – they need to be talking with the select board regularly.

Greg – as an example, there is nothing scheduled for a Main Street utilities meeting to decide on the timing of the utility moves.

In March, Josh Bouchard said he was going to have a meeting in early May.

Sue suggested that the replacement of the failed incubator for the Water & Sewer Department should be added to the grant application due in June for Locality Equipment Funding.

The letter from the DES. James was on the phone with Mr. Wolf (from APP) just before this meeting.

Mr. Wolf seems to think that two items of the test showed diesel and grease and that must be coming from a different source (not APP).

Brian is sending out more tests. He has been pulling samples throughout the week. There is a substantial debris that does not get filtered out.

APP is not seeing anything on their equipment. Tracy Wood from the State of New Hampshire said the Town of Colebrook has the authority to do whatever they need to do to get this settled.

Discussion about where these chemicals could be coming from and where various drains go – particularly from the repair garages.

DES tested and took photos. The photos were definitely showing white milky stuff. This reminds Ray of Dixville – of the rubber process.

Tracy Wood said that the Town needs to talk with APP because it is the Town's license. James noted that APP is aware, but that Mr. Wolf is pushing back on the thought that this contamination is coming from their facility. The test results are being shared with APP.

The presence of diesel and grease is not from APP, but the white stuff in the water is something else.

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Ray noted that APP production has increased. Six months ago, they were at minimum production. In Dixville they used to use significant talcum powder.

Kym Lambert – Melanie noted that Kym's letter came back. Jonathan requested that Melanie send him the letter and Jonathan will send her a letter. Melanie is waiting to hear from Jonathan regarding whether an officer can serve the letter to Kym.

Melanie reported on the status of the Margaret Crawford property.

Melanie sent out eight letters.

Sue asked about Mr. Klebe at Boudle's trailer park. He did not respond to Melanie's phone call. Ray noted that the Town needs to be more aggressive about this.

Greg said that the Town needs to notify Buddy and Sam to see what they want the Town to do. Melanie will call Buddy.

Sue noted that the Town will begin proceedings unless progress is made.

Melanie reported that she has filed for another round of FEMA reimbursement of costs related to COVID and is working with Courtney at FEMA on finalizing the claim.

Melanie stated that there is \$1,200 still available in FEMA funds from the 2018 storm. The \$1,200 would be to reimburse the time Melanie and office staff worked on this project but Melanie did not make notations on her time sheets for the exact times she worked on FEMA related issues so she would not be able to certify her time spent on the project.

Greg noted that \$1200 is not worth going for. He said that it is difficult to work with FEMA in general.

Greg commented relative to Bear Rock Road and the John Petrofsky issue.

Greg made a motion that the portion of Bear Rock Road designated by the ATV club for closure is approved as long as the trail allowing the closure remains viable.

Sue seconded the motion.

Chief Paul Rella understands what Greg said and restates the intent of the motion.

Ray said as long as that trail is open, then the Town is willing to close that section of road. If the trail closes, unless another route is found, the Town will re-open the road. Ray is voting for the motion under this understanding. John Petrofsky should be thanked for this – it is a huge help. This is a major connecting trail.

Motion passes unanimously.

Ray talked to the people at Northern Bites. These folks are willing to let their issue with opening a section of Route 26 for ATV use die. Their business is doing fine.

Chief Rella asked about the cruiser. Melanie has to submit the cost of the cruiser for grant reimbursement by June 30, 2022, at the latest. With that request, she will include the incubator for the Water & Sewer department. This will use up the granted amount for Colebrook.

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Sue noted that company is out of Plymouth, MA and confirmed with Chief Rella that the equipment installation will happen in Lancaster, NH.

Sue asked why has the exploratory drilling for the wells been halted? This was stated in Jamie Emery's letter to the Town. The select board needs a CMA update and a meeting needs to be set up to cover all matters relative to CMA's work for Colebrook.

**Calex Contract Renewal** – Sue makes a motion to authorize the Town of Colebrook manager to sign the contract for Calex Landfill Services for 2022. Seconded by Ray. Motion passes.

**Water Rates** – APP has used 100,000 gallons and they have paid for that (per Melanie). Colebrook's bills will be paid out of the Colebrook APP office, and they have been paying for Water & Sewer, but nothing for engineering. They need to.

Option #2: Sue recommends \$75.00 per quarter with .011 per gallon over 7,480 gallons. She noted that the Hospital used 100,000 in six weeks: With 13 weeks in a quarter, it would be 209,178 gallons at .008 per gallon (not the .11) that would result in \$16,800 per quarter (and that would be four in a year) which alone pays for the Town's bond payment. Sue would like to raise rates because there is a \$146,000 deficit and there are expenses coming up.

The last increase in rates was 2013.

When APP starts using their own well, they will take less of the Town's water.

Review of the reports that the select board is using to determine their decision. Melanie noted that the numbers were fake numbers in a test data account. The numbers are not true numbers. It is only demonstrating the difference between .011 and .008.

Greg noted that the select board needs real numbers. Melanie will ask for help from the vendor on this.

Sue suggested that if there is a test file or data base, then use obviously fake numbers. Melanie will run the information again, all four options.

Sue made a motion to approve the water collector's warrant for \$60,371.88 for the first quarter of 2022. Seconded by Ray. Motion passed unanimously.

Sue made a motion to approve the sewer collector's warrant for \$86,966.90 for the first quarter of 2022. Ray seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

**Authorization to Borrow and Resolution needed for final application for the Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund** – Sue made a motion that the Town of Colebrook, after thorough consideration of the nature of its drinking water system needs, hereby determines that the construction of certain works generally described as improvements to upgrade current water systems including finding new water sources for the Town is desirable and in the public interest and to that end it is necessary to apply for assistance from the drinking water trust fund.

Seconded by Ray. Motion passed unanimously.

Sue made a motion that the person serving as town manager, currently held by James O’Gorman is hereby designated as the authorized representative of the town of Colebrook for the purpose of filing an application for a loan in accordance with the NH code administrative rules noted above.

That the Town of Colebrook agrees to repay the loan as stipulated in the loan agreement and that a certified copy of this resolution be included as part of the application to be submitted for a loan and that the person holding the following positions at the time of the loan execution are authorized to sign the loan agreement binding the applicant to the terms of the loan. Said people being Greg Placy, chairperson of the board, and Sue Collins, select board member and Ray Gorman select board member and that said persons agree to making provisions for the proper maintenance of the facilities after construction thereof.

Ray seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

**Designation of Authorities for Clean Water SRF Loan – Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund – Authorization to Borrow and Resolution needed for final application for the Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund –** Sue made a motion that the Town of Colebrook, after thorough consideration of the nature of its drinking water system needs, hereby determines that the construction of certain works generally described as improvements to upgrade current water systems including finding new water sources for the Town is desirable and in the public interest and to that end it is necessary to apply for assistance from the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund.

Seconded by Ray. Motion passed unanimously.

Sue made a motion that the person serving as town manager, currently held by James O’Gorman is hereby designated as the authorized representative of the town of Colebrook for the purpose of filing an application for a loan in accordance with the NH code administrative rules noted above.

That the Town of Colebrook agrees to repay the loan as stipulated in the loan agreement and that a certified copy of this resolution be included as part of the application to be submitted for a loan and that the person holding the following positions at the time of the loan execution are authorized to sign the loan agreement binding the applicant to the terms of the loan. Said people being Greg Placy, chairperson of the board, and Sue Collins, select board member and Ray Gorman select board member and that said persons agree to making provisions for the proper maintenance of the facilities after construction thereof.

Ray seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Signatures**

**Land Use Change Tax – Kheops International.**

**Letter to approve one-day NH Liquor License for Upper Connecticut Valley Hospital, September 10, 2022. Signed by the select board.**

**Cemetery Permit for Daniel and Jodi Smith.**

James noted that the tearing down of buildings and then property owners having questions about water and sewer. Sue noted it is up to the person who is tearing down to notify the Town of

Colebrook for reassessment and for the Town to understand the status of the property. There is no permitting process for demolition. James is wondering if the Town of Colebrook should consider this permitting process. Adopting an ordinance would require going to town meeting.

Greg noted that there are structures in this Town that Gary does not even know are there. He is supposed to get a permit from the Planning Board. But these are the instances when structures are made, but no permit is requested or given.

**Colebrook Forest Fire Warden appointment – David Woodard.** Phil Ducret is retiring.  
Signature required.

**Listing of questions/items for APP meeting next week.**

**Black Bear Sewer** – James got a call from Mr. Nadik Nadig and the process is underway with Mr. Wells. James has no information on the costs.

**Junk Yards** – James has to go back and check with Chester and Mr. Nugent and take photos again. He may have to report Chester to the State of New Hampshire – unlicensed hauler and potentially having hazardous waste on his property.

**Streetlights** – Mr. Neary has not checked the streetlights. Ray will help with this in next 8 to 10 days.

**North Country Council Meeting** – Big problems at the State level with personnel and all kinds of issues – including paving. The Town of Colebrook has not seen any paving map.

Ray spoke with Chuck Henderson, Senator Shaheen's Representative about a solar farm on the town property where the failed wells are located. There is a consultant who can help out with this. She can be invited to the next select board meeting.

Sue walked through town - Margaret Young is sweeping the sidewalks. She has completed most of the town Main Street and she needs a new broom. The Town will buy her a new broom – she can choose one at Hicks and charge it to the Town. She does this every year.

Ray noted that he spoke with Bernie Carrier and why had the Town not water-proofed the front steps? Cracks have started. This is a valid point. James will talk with someone at the town garage to do this.

Sue – motion to adjourn. Seconded by Ray.

**Bangor Savings Bank May 12<sup>th</sup> After Hours** – invitation to the select board from North Country Chamber of Commerce.