

Colebrook Selectboard Meeting

Monday January 9, 2023, at 5:00 PM

Colebrook Town Hall Courtroom

BOARD PRESENT: Sue Collins, Greg Placy, Chairperson, Ray Gorman.

STAFF PRESENT: James O’Gorman, Town Manager; Melanie Fogg, Tax Collector; Christine Charman, Transcriptionist; Paul Rella, Chief of Police.

PUBLIC PRESENT: Jake Mardin, News & Sentinel; Don Campbell, Ericka Canales, Deb Thompson, Hannah Campbell

HEARING OF THE PUBLIC

The Public Hearing was held for the acceptance unanticipated funds in excess of \$10,000 in accordance with RSA 31:95-b. III(a). The source of the funds is the Colebrook Special One-Time Bridge Payment in accordance with Senate Bill 401, payment for maintenance, construction, and reconstruction of municipality owned bridges. The funding award amount is \$67,324 in grant funds. Greg stated that the Bear Rock Road Bridge over the West Branch of the Mohawk will be under construction this coming summer so as not to disrupt bus routes. The road will be closed during the work.

The next bridge to be worked on is the Harvey Swell Road bridge which is red listed. This work will probably happen in 2024. This is a culvert and does not need a road closure during the repair work. In addition, the Pleasant Street Bridge over the Mohawk River needs rehab. The Town will need additional funds. The selectboard intends, at this hearing, to place the funds in the capital reserve fund for bridges.

That reserve is for the 20% match that the Town of Colebrook has to pay.

Public hearing is closed.

Sue Collins made the motion to accept \$67,324 in grant funds from the State of New Hampshire and place the funds into bridge capital reserve funds. Ray seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Hannah Campbell – TAX ABATEMENT. Donald Campbell came to see the selectboard earlier about the property in question. On May 15th the house was torn down. April 1st is when the tax bills went out. The house was only there for one month as of the bill, but the tax bill is based on whatever was there as of April 1st. Donald points out that on April 1st tear down was the only option.

Hannah Campbell filed the appropriate form several months ago and spoke to the tax assessor last week. The assessor asked for pictures to re-assess. The re-assess is not retroactive. The potential for abatement is on the second issue bill.

Ericka Canelas – CEDC-PILOT TAX PROPOSAL. CEDC is asking the Town of Colebrook to consider accepting the Town’s original offer on the Bill Bromage building of earlier 2022. CEDC will find a way to make that work to the best of their ability.

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Sue noted that property taxes have nothing to do with valuing the work of the entity/owner – it is about property tax exemptions and the law. She mentioned that the case: Town of Ossipee versus Tax and Land Appeals. The townspeople sued the town because too many exemptions were being given.

Because the Town had made an offer to CEDC in May (before that court case), the Town will stand by the offer which will expire June 30, 2024. Note that the offer was based on percentage not dollars.

The Town has +/- \$9,000. towards the 2021 property tax payment and will apply this amount towards the agreed upon amount for 2021 (\$1,353), the 2022 taxes after abatement, and refund the balance to CEDC.

The parties agreed to 2021 amount already figured out, with an escalation over the next three years: 2022, 2023, and 2024.

This discussion is about PILOT and property tax exemptions only.

Deb Thompson, Town Clerk. SCHOOL EXPANSION. Discussion of warrant articles in order to prepare for 2023 Town Meeting. Before town meeting, Jake will put information in the News & Sentinel about the warrant articles related to the zoning ordinance changes to help voters prepare and understand.

At the school board meeting, Deb asked the chairperson a question about water and sewer infrastructure relative to the school plans. She asked if he had been in to talk with the select board. The people in attendance assumed that there had been a discussion. It had just been a presentation of brochures to the selectboard – but not discussion had occurred with the selectboard of the Town of Colebrook.

Deb was concerned about the appearance of a collaborative conversation. “They never said anything to us”. This seems like a huge disconnect between the schoolboard and the selectboard.

Greg noted that there are no needed changes to water and sewer because the school does not impact that at all.

Deb: They are not planning on the same number of kids. She is concerned about the lack of information. “Build it and they will come” does not sit well with her.

Greg: Increased toilet flushes can easily be taken care of now that the water mains have been replaced.

The selectboard is on the schoolboard agenda for their meeting next week. Sue’s concern is Colebrook’s bonding capacity. She doesn’t think that Colebrook can handle the \$16 million.

There are many unanswered questions about this proposed school expansion.

Police Chief Rella on FINGER PRINTING FEES. Greg wondered what the Town should charge for this service. Chief suggests \$25 versus the current \$5 charge per card. They do between 50 and 100 fingerprints per year. This amount, \$25 would cover the cost. Most times the employers pay the cost. Ninety-nine percent are for employment. Employers have to pay.

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Sue makes a motion that the Colebrook Police Department begin to charge \$35 for fingerprint services. Ray Gorman seconds the motion. Motion passes unanimously.

DISPATCH CALLS. Relative to the budget, Greg asked if there is a way to take the phone calls in the police department during the hours of 8am to 4pm. For every phone call through dispatch, Colebrook gets charged which is \$42 per call.

Chief Rella and Tim Stevens have private landline numbers so calls do not go through dispatch and go directly to their phones. Nobody seems to use these numbers. Chief Rella can ask people who call him frequently to use his private line: County attorney, for example.

Ray said Pittsburg has done a good job of triaging the calls away from dispatch. This year Colebrook's share of Dispatch expense went up quite a bit.

Alarm calls/False alarm calls: Sue asked about the home alarm/false alarm calls. That alarm comes to dispatch, and the police department does not charge people for checking on their alarm/false alarms.

There are repeat offenders, for example: Northern Tire, #309 Bear Rock Road, Dunk'in Donuts, Big Apple. Chief Rella stated that there is no incentive for repeat offenders to fix their equipment.

Other towns make the alarm system company register to ensure it is installed properly. Once three false alarm calls happen, there is a charge. Some municipalities do not go to all the calls because 99% are false.

None of the calls so far are for someone actively breaking in. There is an increase because of people installing RING doorbells for example. There is no monitoring company – these alarms signal the person's cell phone.

It makes sense that after three calls, there is a fee. Otherwise, nobody will fix their alarms. James will do some research among other towns about how they handle this.

Within an ordinance, the Town could include any alarm systems and after the third call, there would be a charge – an amount to cover the cost of the call and response.

The Dodge police cruiser has been sold for \$10,000. The Town has received the check. These funds will go into the police capital reserve.

SNS Electronic UPDATES FOR TOWN. Alex and Josh from SNS join the meeting via Zoom.

Sue noted that for the last couple of years the selectboard has asked for a schedule of equipment to budget for replacements. Then, this quote for \$18,000 came in, so the selectboard wants to talk about it.

Josh reported that the quote is for updated networking throughout the town buildings. The hardware is approaching end of life and end of service so there would be no warranty. The \$18,000 quote is networking equipment, wireless access point, firewall and switching.

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With supply chain ordering problems, SNS will be challenged to get new hardware. With hardware that is 6+ years old, the Town is nearing the seven-year mark of no longer being under warranty or under service.

Internet and phones are through First Light, not SNS. The quote includes a big bump in speed and the replacing of aging phones. Phone and internet are bundled, Josh is not sure about how to unbundle them in this quote. The quote includes a three-year contract to replace the Cisco phones which are not sold anymore. Overall, its less money, but this quote includes a one-time fee for phone upgrades and a three-year commitment to the phones.

Sue asked if SNS could provide a schedule of all our equipment and a replacement schedule by item.

Josh noted that the Town's networking and servers due for replacement. The Town may want to move to The Cloud for file server, etc. and not have the infrastructure. He can provide a quote for going to The Cloud. If not interested, he will reach out to the systems people to find out about a server. They are not seeing much of this anymore. The benefits of the Microsoft Office 365 system make it compelling not to reinvest in a physical server.

The Cloud quote will be more than the networking quote. Migrating is very labor intensive. Sue noted that the Town cannot afford to do both upgrades this year. With Office 365 each computer has to be programmed to go out to the internet to look for the server. It is disruptive and takes about two hours per computer.

There is a lot of initial labor, then a reoccurring Microsoft License versus the server maintenance charge. SNS is recommending The Cloud. These Cloud ecosystems have a lot more protection than any firewall the Town could use. This is a Microsoft level of security fending off cyber security threats.

Sue agreed that purchasing the physical server does not make sense.

Josh will provide the requested documentation to help with the budgeting and planning process.

Alex noted that there are police Apps that do not support the Cloud software. This is something to think about. SNS could create a hybrid environment where the few police Apps sit on a local server and then a small monthly fee to back-up to the Cloud.

SNS should be sending a regular replacement schedule to us as a regular course of business. They need to provide the Town with this information earlier and regularly.

Sue thinks that the \$18,000 amount will be added to the current budget under data processing/hardware.

First Light is for internet service for the phone. Netafy will be the back up if First Light ever goes down. Netafy may have some reliability issues.

REGULAR AGENDA

Review and approval of Minutes of .09.26.22, 12.05.22, and 12.21.22. Sue made a motion to approve the three sets of minutes. Ray Gorman seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Manager's Report Reviewed. The Report is Attached to these Minutes.

Review and sign Payroll and Disbursement Manifests.

NEW BUSINESS

45th Parallel. Tabled.

Blind Exemption for Anneliese Niklas 123 Corliss Lane. Sue made motion to approve the tax assessor's recommendation for this exemption. Ray seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Veteran's Credit for Jose Hernandez 3 Coleburn Road. Sue made a motion to approve the tax assessor's recommendation for this exemption for All Veterans' Credit. Ray seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Property Tax Abatement for Donald Gilbert 3 Cedar Street. TABLED. Investigate whether or not listing a Veteran's Credit can be done on a trust.

Waiting on a property tax abatement for the Kim Lambert property.

OLD BUSINESS

Tax Bills. Taxes are due this Wednesday. James provided the select board with a report listing the status of paid versus unpaid.

Water Bills. Reports provided to the select board on the status of paid versus unpaid/delinquent.

Black Bear – Rick Nadig sewer problem. There is water and sewer coming up from a floor drain in the property. It is still unclear on where the problem originates. James asked Tallmadge to look at this.

Greg said that the Town agreed to make the connection and the Town did that. This is not the Town's problem. Greg saw the grease in that pipe, and it was "solid full." The grease is a problem.

Bear Rock Bridge. The project has been passed on to two different engineers at NHDOT.

Netafy – Payment of rent for 2022. A check for \$1050 was received.

Rental Contract with Rodney Smith. Updated and completed.

Other Contracts 2023. Dottie has a complete list in alphabetical order and when they expire. That list was reformatted and provided to the select board.

Fire Department Water Meter. The water department is waiting on a part.

Pump Station Colby Street. This is tied in with the jetter problem. Greg said that the Town needs to rent a jetter and fix Colby Street before the new pump freezes solid and cracks.

FOR SIGNATURE

Intent to Cut – Wayne Richards 78 Wilbur Hicks Road. Approved.

Intent to Cut – Allen Dickinson Diamond Pond Road. Approved.

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Intent to Cut – Ryan Lyons – Harry’s Way Map 253-Lot 25. Approved.

Current Use Application – Michael & Elizabeth Knight. Approved.

OTHER BUSINESS

Review of sample letter/response from Attorney Frizzell regarding Richard Clarke property. Sending this letter starts a process. James will provide a copy of the letter to NHDOT. Sue made a motion to authorize the Town Manager in conjunction with the Town Attorney to produce a letter to Richard Clarke. Seconded by Ray. The motion passed unanimously.

With regard to the Richard Clarke property: The Town needs help from the Town Health Officer who is unresponsive.

Sue asked about a recent letter that went out to everyone on town water. It was a confusing letter and she asked if there was there a possible contamination or was it just a test timing problem? It was a matter of timely testing, there was no positive test involved. When there is not a timely test, then a re-test must be done.

The Public Hearing on the Budget date will be Monday, February 13th, 2023, at the Town Hall at 6:00 pm. The selectboard meeting will be at 3:00 pm.

The Town received a letter of resignation from Andrew Nolette from Trustee of the Trust Funds.

The Town received an award letter for the Drinking Water, Ground Water Trust Fund approved by Governor and Council. The State needs the first request within six months of December 7th, or the Town will lose the money.

NON-PUBLIC.

Sue motion made to go into Non-Public Session under:

RSA 91-A:3, II(c) Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, **other than a member of this board**, unless such person requests an open meeting. This exemption shall extend to include any application for assistance or tax abatement or waiver of a fee, fine or other levy, if based on inability to pay or poverty of the applicant.

Ray seconded the motion. Roll call vote to go into non-public session:

Greg Placy YES.

Sue Collins YES.

Ray Gorman YES.

Non-Public Session entered into 7:20 pm

Sue made a motion exit non-pubic session at 7 :22 pm. Seconded by Ray Gorman. Roll call vote to come out of non-public session.

Greg Placy YES.

Sue Collins YES.

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Ray Gorman YES.

The selectboard re-entered public session at 7:22 pm. No motion was made to seal these minutes.

The selectboard meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:45pm on a motion by Sue Collins, seconded by Ray Gorman.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine E. Charman

Christine E. Charman, Transcriptionist