

**Colebrook Select Board**  
**Selectmen Meeting Minutes**  
**January 30, 2024**

Selectboard Members: Sue Collins, Greg Placy, and Ray Gorman

Staff: Tim Stevens & Heidi Lawton

**Roll Call & Pledge of Allegiance**

**Hearing of the Public:** None

**Regular Agenda:** None

**New Business:**

- A. Dispatch Billing: Sue advised the board that she had a lot of questions about the dispatch billing because it shows all the towns owe us money. Sue said that she had a lot of other items on her list that are affecting the town's financial statements, and they need to be corrected. It looks like Pittsburg owes us \$43,000.00 dollars, Stewartstown owes us \$19,000.00, Lemington owes us. It happened last year, and we said, "don't let it happen again this year, and it did." We will send out the bills for dispatch as soon as the Town Meeting is over. They go out and they get booked as an account receivable and booked as revenue on the other side. So, it shows that we got all the money, we may not have it, but it is in accounts receivable. The towns pay half after the town meeting, and we bill them for the other half in July. Dottie then books it again when she sends out the bills in July and she should not. It looks like Dispatch has a lot more revenue coming in then it does. It was done again this year, and it is still not fixed. Dottie and Melanie need to get together and fix this. Greg asked, "do we know if the towns have paid us." Sue said, "I don't know, let's ask Dottie." Heidi went to go get Dottie. Dottie entered the meeting. Dottie said, "I already sent out the bills for 2024." Sue said, "you don't even know how much they are going to be." Dottie said, "Becky gave her a spreadsheet." Sue asked her why she did this because they are not supposed to go out until after the town meeting, the amounts have not been approved yet. Dottie said, "I only sent out the bills for half a year." Sue said, "the spreadsheet Becky gave you are full amounts for 2024." Dottie said, "yes, I split them in half and only billed half, but all the dispatch bills have been paid for 2023. Sue said, "then why are these towns still on the report?" Dottie said she will re-print the report and see what is going on.
- B. Northern Borders Grant Funding: Ray told the board that Tim, Heidi, and himself attended the informational meeting for grant funding. Ray explained there is going to be two rounds of funding that they will allow. The first round of money, you need to have the pre-application in by March 17<sup>th</sup> and there will be thirty million in that pot of money. The second round of money will be in late summer, that pot will have twenty million

dollars. Ray explained the different groups that attended including the bike group, rail trail group, and food pantry group. It was interesting what the food pantry group is thinking. There is a meeting this Friday to talk about what they want to do, anyone can join him, but I want to be sure to be there because I think it is going to affect the town significantly. They are looking at possibly buying a piece of property on Main Street that is right beside another food pantry. Ray said, “do we need two food pantries on a Main Street that looks like it is starting to come alive?” The Town is going to do all that work in the next two years and Main Street might have some value to it. Greg asked, “so how detailed is the Northern Borders process?” Tim said they have coaches to help with the grant application, they will look at it and let you know what needs to be changed or advise as to what needs to be done. Tim said, “they do fund infrastructure, up to one million dollars.” Greg said, “can we apply for another grant before we have started using the other grant.” Northern Borders said, “yes you can apply for more than one grant at a time.” Ray said, the third group I was thinking of was Northern Borders Dispatch.” Sue asked if the hospital was there. Heidi explained to Sue that she had talked to Jenny Mitchell, the grant writer for the hospital and they already have a grant in at Northern Borders and Jenny was going to talk with Erica about another one. Ray said the Northern Borders Dispatch grant could possibly get three million for their grant because each state could apply (NH, VT & ME). Ray said it is looking much better for dispatch this year. Tim said the project isn’t a million dollars anyway and sometimes they only fund a project partially. Sue asked who would put in the application for Northern Borders Dispatch. Ray said it would be Columbia and Canaan, VT.

### **Old Business:**

- A. Aldrich Rd: Ray discussed with the board about the Aldrich Rd. petition. Ray said he went to see Linda Shaw and although she did not sign the petition, they had a very nice conversation. A couple of days later John Zavala spoke with Ray and he was not happy at all. Mr. Zavala does not like the way the town is approaching this issue; he feels that the Selectboard should be coming to each resident of Aldrich Rd. individually, speaking with them about if we are going to encroach on their land, we need to pay for it. They also talked about eminent domain, and Mr. Zavala said he will be moving back up here and does not want any trees cut, Mrs. Shaw agreed as well. He also told Ray that if this is on the Town Warrant, he will be attending the Town Meeting with an attorney. Ray would like to pull his and his wife’s signatures off the petition, his neighbors do as well and so does Keith Smith. They would all like to work with their neighbors if they can. Greg said, “go ahead and pull it.” Sue has a follow-up question, “do we need money in the 2024 budget to fix Aldrich Road? We have not fixed this damage, and this is our last chance before the Public Hearing next week. We have a person who provided an estimate of \$55,000.00 to fix it, but Heidi had not heard back from FEMA. Tim said, “first you’re not going to get any answers anytime soon from FEMA, it takes forever. Second, is it going to cost more because we will have to go through their process?” Tim said, “if it is going to cost us more, even with the 20%, do we want to go it alone and just prepare for it, or do we have money in the Highway Fund? Sue explained to Tim that we do not have a Highway Fund for this, the town has a Disaster Management Capital Reserve Fund and Sue had wondered if this came about because of the disasters on Roaring Brook Rd. Sue

said, “we do have \$42,000.00 in that fund. Sue said it is not too late to add a line item to the budget. Discussion ensued. The Selectmen decided to put \$65,000.00 into a Warrant Article for repairs to Aldrich Rd. They will add a new line item just for Aldrich Rd. repairs. Discussion ensued on ditching of Aldrich Rd.

The Selectmen also decided to include in the warrant article withdrawing \$15,000 from the Disaster Management Capital Reserve. Ray asked, “If we don’t use that \$50,000, can we put it in the Capital Reserve for the following year?” Sue said, “we cannot put anything in the Capital Reserve unless it is authorized at Town Meeting.” Greg asked, “can it be written so that if we don’t spend it, the funds go into a savings account?” Sue said, “we can write it and let Jamie Dow or Attorney Frizzell review it, but they need to review it before the Public Hearing next Wednesday.”

- B. Water Wells Project: Ray asked the board where we were with the wells. Greg said, we are going to get volumes out of those wells by say May 1<sup>st</sup>, then we are going to figure out based on volumes where we go. We don’t know if we are spending two million or three million. Greg also asked is the Northern Borders Regional Commission grant 100%. Ray said no, it is 80/20. Greg said, “do we have the other 20%?” Discussion ensued. Heidi explained that you complete the pre-application and then they look it over and will invite you to apply for the grant. Sue said, you can put in a pre-application, CMA has already told the town that if we pick Site 1, it will be at least three million to bring the water to the main from there. Ray said, “it sounds like we need to ask our Engineers how much each site is going to cost.” Greg said, “we don’t know when we will be able to move forward.” Discussion ensued. Tim said we are going to need another well. Sue said the State sent the town a letter saying we need another well already. Greg said we wanted to write a letter to Senator Jeanne Shaheen and say, “can you help us get rid of this ARRA loan from the failed north end wells?” Sue said she sent a letter to the Commissioner of Environmental Services to see if they would forgive the loan and he said “no”. The board believes there should be a next step in this process. Tim will write a letter to Senator Jeanne Shaheen, Senator Maggie Hassan, and Congresswoman Annie Kuster. Discussion ensued. Tim and Heidi will work on the Northern Borders Grant for this project.
- C. Paul Gleason Road: as required, Tim notified all the abutters of Paul Gleason Rd about the Warrant Article to totally abolish the road. They were sent to the property owner Heather Baillargeon, the new property owner, and Mrs. Poore, who bought the Boire Property.
- D. Tim also sent out letters to the abutters of the wells, Robert Allin and George Hodge.
- E. Alan Blake brought in the new, amended, signed CO-OP Agreement between the Town of Colebrook and Homeowners. We also sent out the three letters to the private homeowners and asked them to sign and get it back to us. Tim will bring it back to the Board for signatures once the private homeowners have signed.

F. Tim had an Eclipse Meeting today with First Responders, UCVH, Weeks, the 45<sup>th</sup> Parallel, Colebrook Police, a Pittsburg Selectmen, and State Police. Tim brought up the fact that we need someone here to help with bottleneaking traffic. They discussed parking, what can and can't be done.

**Tabled/Pending Items:**

A. Working on Ordinances.

**For Approval and Signature:**

Tim let the board know that the police department is submitting a grant through the Northern Alliance Grant program, and he needs a motion for the grant to be accepted and for the board to give Tim permission to sign the grant agreement. Sue made a motion to accept the Northern Border Alliance Grant in the amount of \$27,991.00. Ray seconded the motion, Greg agreed, motion approved. Sue made a motion to allow Town Manager, Tim Stevens to sign any and all documents for the Northern Border Alliance Grant on behalf of the town, Ray seconded, Greg agreed, motion passed.

**Non-Public Session Under RSA: 91-A:3, II (a) (b) & (c):**

**Hearing of the Public and Any Other Business:** Sue would like to know if the rest of the board thinks Tim should do a small presentation on the Solar Eclipse at the Town Meeting? Ray and Greg both said yes. Ray thinks he should do it at the beginning of the meeting.

Tim wanted to know if it was Greg's intent to respond to Jason Beaudet's email. Discussion ensued. Sue said CMA also wanted to know when they are going to get the IGE number as well. Tim said, "they wanted us to fill in some numbers on the spreadsheet they sent in the email." Tim said to Greg if you want to come in and fill it in together, that would be great.

Sue's Questions: The Town authorized Tim Stevens on two occasions to sign Highway Safety Grant Applications for Chief Rella. On May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023, we approved him signing a grant of \$7,000.00 and 7/24 a grant of \$24,737.50. Was the PD awarded either of these grants? If so, where is the revenue posted. Heidi said, "yes, the town was awarded both grants and the revenue was posted to the Police Special Detail line.

Greg said to Tim, for the question on Signals, call Greg Crouch.

Sue said we have been waiting for three years to get some kind of reimbursement from APP for all the engineering we have put into the oversight for their design, are we just going to keep putting it off or are we going to get paid? Greg said, "I think we should try to get paid." Tim said, "My perspective would be, if we write it off and they end up crashing and burning, the town gets nothing, at least if we keep it on the books, if they end up selling, we will get our amount out of it." Ray said, "we have a lien put on them for that amount, correct?" Sue said we talked about a lien, but I don't think a lien was ever done. Sue said, "what is important to know about this BMSI system is you can only go back five years to print reports. So, we need reports going back to the first day of engineering and they need to be preserved, because if we ever need to

prove how much they really owe us, we were found once to be overcharging them. Sue said we agreed to an adjustment at that point. Sue said, “so what are we down to?” Ray said, “those reports have been done.” Sue said, “where are they?”

Sue asked, “has the town gotten reimbursement from Eversource yet for the Boiler? Tim said no, he will get with Randy Tallmage to find out if he does the reimbursement or if Tim needs to.

The rest of Sue’s questions are for Melanie. Heidi went to get Melanie.

Jack Mardin from the Sentinel asked if the board narrowed it down to two potential sites on the Water Well Project? Greg said yes, but they aren’t supposed to be published yet. Jake said you were looking at five before, Greg said yes. Ray said they will be drilling soon, possibly in March. Jake asked for the test wells and Greg said for the 8-inch test wells. Greg explained they are being drilled to get the draw capacity. Jake asked without being specific, what properties are the town looking at, can you say like what part of town? Greg said the southern part of town and Tim said one is central. Jake Mardin left the meeting.

Tim and Ray discussed the Solar Panels on Magalloway and how they were destroyed by the last windstorm. Greg said, this has happened before, is there a way to secure them better so that this does not happen again? Greg knows from working at NH DOT that the weather patterns here have changed. Things are getting more and more difficult to weatherize. Ray said that in the email he has the man said they could have it like they do on Cree Notch, where there is a building that everything goes into, and it is time to do this now. Greg asked, does insurance cover the building or just cover what is there now. Ray is not sure.

Sue got an email from Julie Brunault, and she is going to bring Melanie approximately \$21,053.00 from the Cemetery Funds she is getting from the Trustees of Trust Funds, will you post that to 2023? Melanie doesn’t know if she can, she will ask the Auditors.

The two Warrants that the Selectmen signed for Land Use Change Tax, Melanie told Sue those are 2023 Warrants, but Melanie said that she got them in 2024, so she thinks she needs to put them in 2024 work. Melanie said she believes it has to go into 2024’s work because she has to go by the date of the warrant in order to give them 30 days to pay it. Sue said, you can post the revenue to 2023 because you asked the Auditors that. Sue said these are not questions that can wait another day or two.

Sue asked when the double billing and adjusting entries for Dispatch were going to be taken care of. Melanie said she took out all the small amounts, but they kept showing up. The revenue line item to the Town of Colebrook for dispatch needs to be corrected. It is showing way too much revenue. Sue said we told Dottie not to do it again and she did it again this year. Sue said is there a way this can be caught early. Sue said all the double payments, can they be backed out of there somehow, Melanie said yes.

CDEC Billing: Melanie said they were never billed a second issue bill, so Dottie needs to create a warrant for the second issue bill in order for the board to do a full abatement. Sue said if they didn’t get a bill, then we didn’t collect any taxes. Melanie said we did for the first issue, and we billed more for first issue than what they should have. Sue said then that is where the abatement comes into it.

Land Use Change Tax: the last ones we signed at the Selectmen's Meeting, are they going to be posted to 2023. Melanie said that is what she is waiting to ask Tim at BMSI.

Sue asked Melanie about the two Highway Safety Grants, and that they went to the Police Special Details, were the expenses for the grant charged to Police Special Details line item as well? Melanie said yes. Melanie printed Sue the bank statement from the Police Special Details account.

Sue let Melanie know that there will be a new line item in the Highway Budget for a warrant article on repairs to Aldrich Road.

Sue wanted to know what properties can be taken by deed now. Melanie does not know without printing a report. Sue asked about James MacDonald and if Melanie had heard from him. Melanie said she emailed him but has not heard anything. Heidi said she saw him two weeks ago and he still had not received his social security card.

Sue is going to need a direct cost on how much it is going to cost to record the Selectmen's Meetings. Sue said that Tim got the monthly cost for them, but they were wondering about installation fees. Tim said if there is, it will be minimum. They just need to run the line from the Court Room to the room downstairs. Tim thought about two to three thousand for installation. It is \$250.00 for one recorder for a month, it would be \$300.00 a month if they wanted to put a recorder in the conference room as well.

Sue asked about the pre-paid fuel oil. Melanie said she asked Maggie about it and she will get back to Mel. She was working at another client's the other day. Sue said Cohos Advisor's is supposed to be getting the town a lot more information monthly according to their contract then what they are really doing.

Sue reminded Melanie about all the reports she needed to print out and give to her.

Tim asked Melanie to print him out a report for all the APP Engineering Costs going back to when it first started to now. Discussion ensued. Sue needs all this fixed by tomorrow afternoon.

Sue discussed a property in Colebrook, 254 Main Street that was valued at \$988,800.00 and was sold for 6.1 million dollars. Is that going to skew our equalization ratio? Discussion ensued.

Tim had an agreement for the board to sign from DRA. The board would like Tim to ask DRA about this particular sale before they sign the agreement.

Greg left the meeting.

**Determine Date for Next Meeting:** February 12, 2024, at 5:00pm

**Adjourned:** Sue made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Ray seconded the motion, motion passed to adjourn meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 2:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Heidi Lawton*

Heidi Lawton, Administrative Assistant, Town of Colebrook