

Colebrook Select Board
Selectmen Meeting Minutes
March 25, 2024

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

Staff: Tim Stevens & Heidi Lawton, and Paul Rella

Others: Fred Bessette

Roll Call & Pledge of Allegiance

Hearing of the Public:

Regular Agenda:

- A. ZOOM with Jamie Emery of GZA & Everett Tatelbaum of Kearsarge: The Selectboard was on a ZOOM with Jamie Emery and Kearsarge regarding the North well site and landfill property being used for a possible solar site. Everett talked about the different projects that his company Kearsarge does in New Hampshire. Everett talked about the interconnection with NHEC & Eversource and how there is a bill currently at the state for solar interconnection and a proceeding at the Public Utilities Commission. No matter how they try to find shortcuts, it can be a multi-year process for them to study any given property in terms of connecting to the grid. The industry doesn't really provide information on the cost to connect any solar facility to the powerline, until the project sponsor spends fifty thousand dollars on a study. The Letter of Intent will get Kearsarge exclusivity and allows Kearsarge to fund studies. Sue, "so the letter of intent does not need to be brought before the town at Town Meeting, it is the Lease Agreement that does?" Everett said correct. Sue said, "on the first page of your letter, dated February 15th, you say a lease agreement would be on a town meeting warrant article in 2025, but on the last page under LOI to be superseded, it talks about 2024 town meeting. Everett said it is a typo on the 2024 date. Everett said on the north well site there is about 2 acres that can be used for solar panels, that results in about a megawatt or a little less than a megawatt. At the landfill property, it is a much larger parcel, Kearsarge could use seventeen to twenty acres. They would need to discuss how the town would like to move dollars around either with a lease or personal property tax agreement. Between the two sites it would be eight megawatts and twenty acres, it is something along the lines of twenty thousand dollars a year to lease with an escalator and then something like eight megawatts times two thousand for taxes. The third piece of the economics would be if Colebrook wanted to purchase net metering credits. That depends on the Town's electric load annually. Jamie asked, "how much negotiations does the town have for the discount on their power?" Everett said, "there is a market there where we recently awarded contracts for fee type of arrangements for 5 to 15% off." Jamie asked, "do you know how much power you use each year?" Tim said we would have to look back at the electric

bills to get that answer. Jamie said the town would get a 10% discount on our electric rates, plus the thirty-five thousand a year in up-front fees. Sue asked, “so there is no payment in that three-year window?” Everett said, “correct”. Jamie said that a three-year time frame seems too long for exclusivity. Everett said Kearsarge could put a provision about paying one year at a time, due to Eversource taking so long. Sue said that the language is already in there under Exclusive Development, that if it is a Eversource or NH Electric CO-OP problem that it does extend. Sue doesn’t know why the town needs to start at thirty-six months. Jamie said that GZA could come up with some language that might be a benefit to both parties. Sue said there is another section called Insulation, that prevents the town from building anything up on the landfill. What if NHDES requires the town to build another building up there that captures some of the leachate or something other than what we already have? We probably need some language in there that says, “unless state authorities require us to do something there.” Sue asked, “what is the difference between a guaranteed savings and guaranteed income?” Everett said that is related to the energy cost where the program works in New Hampshire, the metering credit is generated by Eversource. Eversource is regulated by the Public Utilities Commission. Every six months that supply price changes. Kearsarge can offer the town 10% off that number. Discussion ensued. Jamie said is the discount on just the power the town uses or the power the entire community uses. Everett said, “it is the power the town uses.” Discussion ensued on what accounts the town has. Ray stated that there are a lot of communities that are developing their own community power or CO-OP’s, would a project like this be available to them at a discount? Everett said that they are currently in communication with community power, and yes, this project could be sold to the communities. Sue asked Everett if there was a deadline on when he wanted to hear back from the board. Everett said as soon as you can, but really getting in line with the utilities is best. There is no deadline. Jamie is going to send Sue an email with some questions in it, based on what was discussed today.

Everett left the meeting at 1:32pm.

Jamie stayed on the ZOOM to talk to the board. He explained that he didn’t agree with the three-year agreement, he thinks 18 to 19 months. Jamie asked if we could come up with how much power was used in a year by the town. Jamie asked about the property owner on the north side of the wells. Tim said he sent the property owner a letter and map of the property, he is waiting to hear back.

Jamie asked the board if they are interested in solar. Ray and Sue are both in agreement.

The ZOOM ended at 1:33pm.

B. Review and approval of Minutes of 3/11/2024.

-Sue made a motion to approve the minutes of 3/11/24, Ray seconded the motion. Motion passed on voice vote.

C. Review and Sign Payroll and Disbursement Manifests: The Selectmen reviewed completed payrolls and disbursement manifests and signed them.

D. Town Manager's Report

-SNS Contract: Tim explained that the contract is up for renewal. We are currently paying \$1,400.00 a month and it is going up to \$1,700.00 a month. Tim wanted an explanation from SNS about why the contract is going up. SNS told Tim that they could offer a discount if we signed up for more than a year at a time. For one year it would be \$1,700.00 a month, for two years it would be \$1,650.00 a month, and for three years it would be \$1,600.00 a month. Tim asked SNS to go back through our contract with them and to take out all the unnecessary items that we do not need or use. Tim will stay on it.

-Rt. 145 Schedule: Sue explained that the town will not know if they can do this yet or not until they know how much it will be. Greg mentioned that it is a very tight schedule. Tim talked to Mike at DOT about the questions on the MOA. Mike did agree to the date change. Sue mentioned that according to a detailed account statement, the Town ARPA funds have somewhat evaporated. Sue brought in minutes and contracts to look at. Sue said on October 25, 2021, the town obligated \$75,000.00 of the first ARPA Tranche (\$111,913.00) to CMA for an Engineering Study of the Wastewater Treatment Facility. For a Nutrient Study, the Selectmen obligated \$11,412.00 to Eastern Analytical, \$5,796.00 to Eastern Analytical, and \$1,200.00 for purchasing the Owl. Sue asked for a report on this account because the Board has not obligated any of the 2022 Tranche money, which is another \$111,913.00. So, we had \$19,000.00 left over from the first year and \$111,913.00 from the second year. In total we received \$223,826.00, but when you look at the report and all the expenses, it looks like we spent \$172,000.00. Sue said we did not authorize spending any more than \$99,000.00. What happened? Tim explained that all of the Eastern Analytical charges on that account were originally charged to the Sewer Department operating budget and should have been charged to this grant. Those were some of the adjusting entries that were on the report on account number 09-6332.10-774. Sue wants to know what the Phase 20 corrections are and why we are almost out of money. Discussion ensued. Heidi went to go get Melanie, to see if she could explain. Sue asked Tim if Kendra from Cohos Advisors agrees with all of these charges on this account? Heidi said that Kendra will be here on Wednesday. Sue wants to know if all the bills in 2022 should have all been charged to ARPA or not. Tim said we will pull all these bills and figure out if they have been charged to the right place. Tim and Heidi will follow up with this. Sue said that if we had a few years ago when the Town collected more in revenue for water and sewer than was expended by the end of the year, the funds were transferred to a PDIP Account. This is no longer the practice, but the Town still has 2 PDIP accounts with funds on deposit. The Sewer PDIP account would be available for the Route 145 project – approximately \$41,000. 2:16pm: Melanie came in to talk to Sue about the ARPA money. She is going to run a detailed report for Sue.

-Lynch Road: The gate will be closed to this road Wednesday thru Saturday of the eclipse.

Sue asked how we could close the cemetery. Tim said that we could rope it off. Sue asked if the main entrance would be closed, Tim said yes.

-Steve Chase: Tim sent a letter to the property owner letting him know that the tip of his property is within the 400ft protective zone of one of the proposed wells. Tim is waiting to see how he responds. Tim mentioned that just today, Attorney Frizzell brought over two easements, one for 17 Edwards Street and the second is the easement between the town and NH CO-OP for all the pipes and lines. Tim talked to Joia Hughes, CDBG Administrator about chasing these people down in Wolfeboro to get their signatures and a notary to notarize. Tim got the signatures for the selectboard.

-Agreement going out to mortgage holder Alan Blake, to be signed for the Homeowner's CO-OP.

-Tim said he is also waiting to see what is going to happen with David Buckley, a Vermont assessor. Tim is still checking with DRA's decision on reciprocity for David Buckley being able to do assessing in NH.

-Sue asked Tim about how our deed is coming for the property across the street. Tim said that Attorney Frizell is working on it.

New Business:

- A. Nomination of Officers: The board talked about nomination of officers. Sue made a motion to nominate Greg Placy as the Chairman of the Selectboard, Ray seconded the motion, motion passed. Greg asked if there was a nomination for a Vice-Chairman for the Board of Selectmen. Sue made a motion to nominate Ray Gorman, Greg seconded the motion, motion passed. Greg asked if the board wanted to keep all of their current committee spots. All board members agreed to keep their committee spots. Greg discussed making some goals for the board to look at before the next budget meeting. Some goals would be wastewater treatment plant, ordinances, and grants.
- B. Grant Opportunity from Beno Lamontagne: Ray said Beno is checking to see if the several million from USDA is available for Colebrook or not. Ray will be seeing him soon and will ask him. Sue said she emailed him and has not heard back from him yet. Tim said the grant that was due on March 22nd he was advised not to apply for it now. Tim contacted someone from the Legislature, and he was advised to look at a different funding source than this one.
- C. Personnel Policy for Part-Time Employees Holiday pay: Sue asked for this to be on the agenda because a few weeks ago she was going through the Payroll Manifest and there was a holiday being paid to a recently hired Police Department part-time employee. Discussion ensued. Sue asked if we needed to revisit our personnel policy. Tim read an excerpt from our Personnel Policy to the board on this matter. Tim did say this was done

due to the fact that this employee used to be employed with the Town, so she did not have a probationary period. Sue said no, it doesn't work that way once you get terminated, you are terminated, and you start again as a new employee. Sue said what is frustrating is that the board re-did the policy in 2022, which is not that long ago and had asked Melanie at least five times to review the Personnel Policy and Sue never received feedback. This matter needs to be clarified to the Department Heads and Melanie.

D. Closing of Two Trust Accounts for Northern Borders Dispatch: There are two steps to closing these accounts. Sue brought the MS-9 that shows both accounts, Sue does not know why the Trustees put the Northern Borders Dispatch capital money into two different trust accounts. At the end of 2023 one of them had \$52,022.06 and the other one had \$23,483.98.

1. Sue made a motion to close Trustee of Trust Funds Northern Borders Dispatch Center Capital Reserve Account #6960646341 in the amount of \$52,022.26 plus interest to date and Account #2823028633 for \$23,483.98 plus interest to date and draw a check to the Town of Colebrook. Ray seconded the motion, all in favor, motion passed.

2. Sue made a motion that once the total funds that we are holding for the Northern Borders Dispatch Center Trustees of Trust Funds is received by the town, the Town Treasurer will open a Savings Account in the NH Public Deposit Investment Pool (PDIP) with those proceeds under the Northern Borders Dispatch Center, separate from the one that already exists with NH PDIP. Ray seconded the motion, all in favor, motion passed.

E. Non-Profit Status of the Food Pantry: Dean came into the Town Offices today to get paperwork on how to apply for a non-profit tax exemption. Greg said that Palmer Lewis, the property owner, is the one that needs to apply. Dottie will be sending a copy of the property tax bill to the Food Pantry.

-Sue would like a list of all the Non-Profit Applicants. Ray would like to know when the applications are due. Heidi went to get Dottie and she came into the meeting to talk to the board. Dottie brought a list into the board of the Selectmen to review and advised the board that letters had gone out today to the ones she has not received yet. The board would like verification on whether the parsonages are included on some of the churches. Dottie confirmed that the deadline is April 1st.

F. Aldrich Road discussion: The Selectmen discussed the impact of the cutting being done by a property owner and how that will affect Aldrich Road. Ray said there were at least 20 loads of logs that went by this week. He doesn't understand why there is a road ban if it is not being enforced. There was also discussion on the FEMA proposal that was sent for damages that occurred for the July 2023 flooding. Greg asked if there was any progress on the FEMA information. Heidi told Greg that she was waiting for him to look over the FEMA proposal for Aldrich Road and whether he agreed with it or not. Greg said he looked it over but wanted to know if they had to put back gabion baskets or not. Greg

said if the town accepts that proposal, it is three hundred thousand something and the match would be over the \$65,000.00 that they budgeted. What does the town do now? Heidi explained that FEMA would like to have a call with the town before anyone comes up to look at the road. Heidi will set this up. Discussion ensued. TJ was working with the state on a wetlands permit, these are very hard permits to do. Heidi will check on the status of this.

- G. Harvey Swell Road: Ray told the board that Haven Haynes Sr. cornered him at the Town Meeting to let him know that the Highway Department put a load of rock in front of his house, and it is large rocks. These rocks were graded up in front of his front door. It is a mess. Greg said that TJ needs to look at the temperatures and weather forecast each day to do a better job on the roads. A new plow was purchased a couple years ago for the pickup to plow small streets, is it being used? Greg said we need to put out to bid our products of the earth soon. Greg said the Town Manager needs to get with TJ to see what he needs to order. Greg said Haven Haynes Jr. is concerned that he is going to get into a bad accident if the guardrails are not fixed on this road.

- H. Health Officer Visits: Ray would like the Health Officer to make a visit to Richard Clark's house and see about removing those trailers that are there. Greg said Ronnie Lyons is concerned about Richard Clark's life, as he sits out in the cold all the time watching people that go by. Ray would also like the Health Officer to visit Pleasant Street (Kennett's), and 65 Colby Street.

Old Business:

Tabled/Pending Items:

- A. Working on Ordinances.

For Approval and Signature:

- A. Water Abatement: Gary Puleo Selectmen signed the abatement.

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

Sue made a motion 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 the public body itself, unless such person requests an open meeting. This exemption shall extend to any application of 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.

Motion to enter non-public session was approved by a roll call vote:

Sue Collins YES
Greg Placy YES
Ray Gorman YES

The board entered the non-public session at 1:47pm. Tim Stevens was present with the board during the non-public session.

Sue made a motion to seal the non-public minutes of 3/25/24, Ray seconded the motion to seal the non-public minutes of 3/25/24. The motion to seal the minutes of 3/25/24 was approved by a roll call vote.

Sue Collins YES
Greg Placy YES
Ray Gorman YES

Sue made a motion to exit the non-public session at 1:54pm, Ray seconded the motion. The motion to exit non-public session was approved by a roll call vote:

Sue Collins YES
Greg Placy YES
Ray Gorman YES

Hearing of the Public and Any Other Business:

-Tim would like follow-up on the water meters and reads, so that there is not a hassle when the bills go out. Mike needs a new tablet and will be calling Ryan to see what can be done.

-Sue would like a presentation on the new GIS program for water & sewer coordinates. It does not have to be at a Selectmen's Meeting.

Determine Date for Next Meeting: April 9, 2024, at 1:00pm

Adjourned: Ray made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Sue seconded the motion, motion passed to adjourn meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 3:45pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Lawton

Heidi Lawton, Administrative Assistant, Town of Colebrook