

**Colebrook Select Board**  
**Selectmen Meeting Minutes**  
**April 9, 2024**

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

Staff: Tim Stevens & Heidi Lawton

**Roll Call & Pledge of Allegiance**

**Hearing of the Public:**

**Regular Agenda:**

- A. Review and approval of Minutes of 3/25/2024.

-Sue made a motion to approve the minutes of 3/25/24, Ray seconded the motion.  
Motion passed on voice vote.

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

- C. Town Manager's Report

-Eclipse After-Action Report: Tim reported that everything went very well for the Eclipse. Sue asked who did the brochure for the parking and first aid stations. Tim said that was the information that we supplied to NH Travel & Tourism, and they made those brochures. A lot of people liked those brochures, and a lot of people came to Colebrook because we had those brochures and were organized. Sue wanted to know who was directing traffic as they did a great job. Tim explained that we received 8 CERT & MRC members to help with traffic control and the first aid stations. That gentleman was John Beland, he is a CERT Team member from the Lakes Region, works at Lakes Region Dispatch, and is the retired Fire Chief of Gilford. Tim went on to say what a great job David Brooks did helping with everything. Sue asked if there were any accidents, Tim said they had one call in Columbia. There were no ambulance calls, and the hospital didn't have any business from the Eclipse as well. Ray mentioned that one of the biggest nuisances in Pittsburg was, was people pulling the gate open at the DAM to try to climb up there to watch the Eclipse. It took people anywhere from 3 to 9 hours to get back where they came from. Even though there were long lines of traffic, people were very good about being patient. There was also no trash on the ground in any of the lots that people were parked in. Tim said the only negative was that the porta-potties at the school ran out of toilet paper, but that was resolved quickly. Tim let the board know that the volunteers that came to Colebrook were very happy with everything. The CERT Team stayed at the Colebrook Fire Dept. and the MRC volunteers stayed at the Baptist Church.

Sue asked if Highway or Water & Sewer helped with the Eclipse and Tim said, “yes, they put out all the signs.”

-Deed for across the street is being worked on by Attorney Frizzell.

-The Affinity LED Presentation will be scheduled for April 29<sup>th</sup> in the afternoon, Tim will let the board know the time. Tim is going to try to schedule the GIS presentation for the same day right after if possible. Tim will let the board know.

### **New Business:**

- A. Eversource Meeting: Selectmen met with Eversource on the changes that will be taking place on Main Street. Ray is a little concerned about Hick’s and the box near their property. The Hick’s would like the box to be moved closer to the street if possible. Ray advised Eversource that if they wanted this to move on quickly and smoothly, to work with the property owners on this. Ray was disappointed that the three poles up in front of Dunkin Donuts are going to stay where they are now. Tim wanted the Selectboard to know that he talked to Jason about the sidewalk by the school heading to Bouchard’s building and how the board did not want the sidewalk to go up that far. Jason said the only reason that was done was because of a Public Hearing on December 2, 2019, in which “support was voiced to provide a sidewalk along the western side of Main Street to at least Colebrook Elementary School, but preferably to the Northern Outlet of New England.” Jason has no problem removing that, because those properties are not going to be impacted. If you put the sidewalk there, that is going to increase the grade of those houses that are right there. Sue made a motion to alter the Main Street sidewalk plan to end at Colebrook Elementary, rather than at Northern Outlets of New England, Greg seconded the motion. Motion passed. Greg talked to one of the homeowners, Jeremy Crawford, about this issue and he was happy that the slope of his driveway was not going to change. Sue mentioned that in their Eversource Meeting today, Eversource told the board that they submitted the town’s plans to NHDOT and they were approved. Sue would like to know if these were the final plans or the first draft plans. Sue is under the impression that these were the final plans because Eversource said all there is left to do is decide on lighting and who is going to pay for it. Sue said that Jim at NHDOT would be willing to talk to the Selectboard even though he has left NHDOT.
- B. Selectboard Goals for 2025: Ordinances, grants, and financial items.
- C. Financial Items: Sue would like the financial items done better, not only with revenues but with filing claims for reimbursement, and they have to be timely. Sue has been working with Kendra on the Northern Borders Lagoon Clean-out Phase 10, 20, and 30. Melanie needs to pay closer attention to detail to ensure the grants are being

posted properly. The grants are very important because we are about to pull the trigger on some pretty big money. We have a big loan that we are going to take out that was authorized two years ago, part of the whole package for the wastewater treatment plant is a loan. Sue asked Tim “if there needs to be better communication throughout the town?” Tim said, “We have done some things, but yes we can do more.” Sue said, “so yesterday when we did the tour with Eversource, they are going to upgrade Monadnock Street, how do we get the word out about that? Sue suggested they do a press release. Tim said he doesn’t like to get the word out to the Public until he knows for sure that something is going to happen. Discussion ensued about trees that may have to be removed and talking with the landowners of the possible impact. Ray would like to get all the residents that live on Monadnock Street to come to a meeting at the Town Hall and ask their questions to the selectboard or voice any concerns. This project has been going on since 2015 with all the water and sewer being done, and that was a big part of the project. Sue said, “Eversource said they still need to finalize an easement agreement with a property owner on Main Street. Tim and Greg believe that he already signed off on giving Eversource permission to put a box on his property. Ray wants to figure out a plan for Monadnock Street. Eversource will be moving the poles by Coos Auto and the one by Ronald Patterson’s house. Greg said he understands Ray’s point of having a public meeting, but he doesn’t think some folks that live on that street would be able to attend, we may need to go meet with them. Tim has no problem going out to talk to some of the residents, he just needs to know what to say.

- D. Police Phone/Dispatch: Ray asked if the new number for the PD had been published yet, Tim needs to get a hold of First Light and get this resolved. The Selectboard would like to know who is getting billed for the Eclipse calls? The board feels that they should not all get charged to Colebrook. Tim and Ray will follow-up on this.

-Police Special Detail: Ray would like a printout for the next meeting. Sue said at the end of every year Melanie is supposed to transfer the difference between expenses and revenues into the Police Detail Account. Sue would like to know if Melanie is doing this. Heidi will find out and let the board know. Sue said it is Fund 10 in BMSI. Sue would like an updated Revenues report for next meeting.

- E. Northern Borders Dispatch Grant: Ray advised the board that Northern Borders Dispatch did not get the grant that they applied for through Northern Borders Regional Commission. Ray immediately called congressmen, Senators, and Beno. Ray said there was a gentleman that stood up in front of the board and said he changed the rules so that this would happen for dispatch. None of the people that Ray called could understand why dispatch did not get the grant. The man that wrote the changes in grant rules is going to appeal for dispatch. He mentioned to Ray that if he can’t get it into this round, would it be okay if he tried for the next round? Ray said, absolutely.
- F. 45<sup>th</sup> Parallel: Ray asked Greg about the 45<sup>th</sup> Parallel and where that stands. Greg said that Nate Borland has resigned and the 45<sup>th</sup> board will be advertising a replacement.

Greg said they will be talking to some of the current employees to see if they will be interim until they can hire someone. This is all personnel, so it will be handled by the Executive Committee. Ray asked, "is there going to be a hiring committee?" Greg said, "I am not sure how we will be doing that yet." Ray advised the board that dispatch never received a letter of support from the 45<sup>th</sup>, even though Ray asked personally for one.

- G. Back Taxes: Ray was very happy that the Homeowner's Grant helped so many people, but he still believes there are some that are still due to pay. Sue would like to know who was approved for the grant money. Heidi said, "We have not heard anything back yet on who received this round of money yet." Ray would like an updated list of who owes taxes. Sue said, "we haven't taken properties from back taxes for several years, and we used to have a list every year of what we could take, Ray has been asking meeting after meeting after meeting and the board just doesn't get a list." Ray said, "we need a complete list of everyone that owes taxes for more than three years." Greg said, "we need to look at the list and review who is making payments and who is not and see what to do about those." Tim said along those same lines, I have a letter that I have drafted for those people owing water and sewer that are not making payments but signed up to make certain payments. Tim would like to know what the board would like to do when we have someone that owes water and sewer and taxes. What would the board like the priority to be? Sue said, "we made it pretty clear to people that if you don't pay your water & sewer bill, we will shut you off." Ray said that he sees these as two separate situations and the board is going to have to make a decision on these. Tim advised the board that a letter went out to residents of 65 Colby Street giving them the chance to pay for the current water and sewer bill or the water will be shut off. Tim had the police bring each letter over to each of three of the apartments. One of the tenants said please don't shut off the water, we will come in and pay. Greg asked how BMSI training was going to Heidi. Heidi said, "I have done some training, but have not really used it." Tim said, "you will be."
- H. Solar Projects: Ray wanted to know where we stand on the Solar Project for the Town Office. Tim advised that we didn't get it in for this fiscal year, we will be doing it next year. Tim needs to either try to find the plans for when they did work up on the top floor or pay someone \$800.00 and get the work done. Tim will get \$800.00 out of the General Building fund to pay for this and get it done. Sue said that it takes so long to get things approved right now that if we start now the board will have the figures for the 2025 budget.
- I. Landfill Presentation: Ray wanted to know if the board needed to do anything after the Solar Landfill Presentation. Sue said, "the letter of intent had to go to Attorney Jon Frizzell for review because they had said they wanted a three-year letter of intent, but the board would like to cut it back to possibly 18 months." Greg asked if the letter had already gone to Jon Frizzell yet or not? Tim said that he believed it did, but if not, he will make sure it goes today.

## **Old Business:**

- A. Aldrich Road Funding: Tim is waiting to hear back from Trout Unlimited and Nick from North Country Council.
- B. Colebrook Homeowners Cooperative Agreement: The agreement has been signed by all the homeowners and the Head of the Cooperative, Dawn Cameron. The agreement just needs to be signed by the Selectboard. All three Selectmen signed the agreement.
- C. Bids for Products of the Earth: Tim advised the board that these bids will be going out soon. Greg said he wants to make sure that all the bids go through the newspaper.
- D. Status of Closing Northern Borders Dispatch Capital Reserve: Heidi advised the board that this has not been completed yet. Tim will make sure this gets completed. Ray will let dispatch know that this should be completed by the next Dispatch Board Meeting.
- E. Dumping Fees: The board needs to review those fees. Tim advised that he would work with Brian Sullivan on this. Greg said what you have to do is take your total bill, which is 100% of the wastewater and divide it by the number of gallons that are going through (at a 250-gallon tank) times that cost. We will find out if we are making money or not. But we need to be. Tim said when he talked to Brian, Brian said, "we don't have a way of measuring it, they don't record it, Bolens just comes down and dumps it and then brings a check to the office." We don't know if he makes a hundred trips a day or one. There will be more research on this.
- F. Updating Grant Binders: Heidi is working on this.
- G. New Wage Letters: All of the letters are out, and most are already signed.
- H. Mistakes on the Actual & Budgeted Expenses and Encumbrance Report: Ray was asking why PD Border Security Grant was listed under Antenna & Repeater. Sue said there were a bunch of other errors on titles in the report and has asked Melanie to fix them, but she has not.
- I. Assessing: Sue asked if there has been anything new on the assessing. Tim said, "we have received a letter from Sansoucy regarding the utilities (Portland Natural Gas). Tim requested that Sansoucy send us a proposal to do this. Tim advised the board that David Buckley, who wants to do the town's regular assessing reached out to Tim and advised him that the state is looking into certifying him to do assessing in New Hampshire. Mr. Buckley is getting extremely frustrated with the state. Tim talked to Phil at the Department of Revenue Administration, and he assured Tim that the State is going to check on getting Mr. Buckley certified. The licensing board that they just developed has not done the assessing rules yet, so trying to see what is reciprocal or

not is a little harder as they don't have rules for this yet. Phil said not to worry, the DRA knows this is an issue throughout the state. Sue said that rule making in New Hampshire takes forever and the problem is, if DRA makes an exception the town is going to have to go another year with these old values. Greg said, "and someday everybody's taxes are going to get nailed."

**Tabled/Pending Items:**

- A. Working on Ordinances.

**For Approval and Signature:**

- A. Intent to Excavate: Ronny & Michel Rodrique
- B. Intent to Cut: Sarah Cummings
- C. Cemetery Lots: Bruce & Rose Jondro

**Hearing of the Public and Any Other Business:**

-Sue is trying to find money for the Route 145 Project. Sue said if you look at the water and sewer department accounts the sewer department has unrestricted money available of almost \$798,000 at the end of 2022. Sue would want permission to talk to Tim Greene and to make sure that those are funds that are totally available. Sue then went to look at 2023 and the town took in \$427,852.00 and spent \$256,204.00, but Tim Greene does depreciation and adjusting entries too, but it looks like we might have \$900,000.00 available in unrestricted funds at the end of 2023. Greg asked, "so does that mean we would have to borrow that from the sewer account and then pay it back?" Sue said no, this is a sewer project. Sue said, "we need to wait and see what the bid will be." Ray said, "he will be looking at the county and the pots of money there."

-Sue asked for a printout of everything we have spent of our Colebrook ARPA money and it was like "where did it all go", then I saw two big journal entries, one for \$40,000.00 something thousand and one for \$20,000.00 something thousand. Sue talked to Kendra about these amounts (\$24,252.62 and \$43,578.00) and said she does not disagree that the journal entries were needed but she does disagree with the amounts based on a letter that the Town of Colebrook sent to APP on October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Sue attached the letter in an email to Kendra and said costs were supposed to be shared, but everything was taken out and charged to Colebrook ARPA, the EPA permitting that Colebrook had to go through was totally due to APP and the added nitrogen load that they were about to add to our wastewater treatment plant. Sue said the town sent a letter to Rick Tillotson and everything was outlined, what APP's share was and what the town share was. Sue said the town said, "due to the direct cost of the town due to the needs of APP expansion we are requesting additional funding of \$65,000.00 consistent with prior arrangements for the additional costs presented above. Sue said, "the town never received that, but it looks like by taking all those bills and writing them off to our Colebrook ARPA funds, then we forgave a whole bunch of what APP really owed us." It is something that fell through the cracks because Sue doesn't know if Kendra was even aware of this letter or if Tim was ever aware of this letter because it happened in 2021. Sue said that she had sent the letter to Kendra, and she will be here

Friday, however, Sue will not be here. Sue sent Kendra the amendments that were signed by the board. Sue said the EPA was down the town's backs and there is a whole 3-ring binder in Tim's office with the EPA application because the town was going to have to get a different permit to discharge into the Connecticut River and that was going to be very expensive. So, CMA did all the work on the application which was pages and pages and then the town had to pay the \$1,000.00 to file the application, but those are APP costs, not the towns. Ray said he had been told that the town was overcharging APP, but Sue has proven right now that we weren't overcharging them. Some of the money we were going to cost share, but again, it all got charged to APP Engineering. Then when the amount became astronomical, it was time to look at it, but nobody had that agreement/letter, so it was all written back to our ARPA funds. Kendra will investigate this for the town. Tim asked, "the original amount that we had said APP owed, we figured out that, that was not the amount, we said they owed a different amount instead, do we know if that difference is related here, and it was wrongfully charged to us?" Sue said, "yes, but it is not all of it." Tim explained more to the board and discussion ensued. Sue is trying to say that there has got to be an adjustment somewhere. The town charged everything to APP Engineering, well the town was charging too much to APP Engineering, then the town took almost all of it out and credited it all back. Discussion ensued about correcting this. Sue said, "we could possibly have more money for the Route 145 Project."

-Broadband Meeting: Ray attended a Broadband Meeting in Lancaster. Ray said he attended the meeting as a Rep for the County. They have two pots of money going towards high-speed internet, one is Consolidated money, they have 40 million and the other is New Hampshire Electric COOP, who have got 50 million. People that have NHEC or live near the NHEC substation have high speed internet. Consolidated could not get any funding for Colebrook to get high speed internet. The NHEC will be doing quite a bit of internet for Colebrook, but Ray is trying to get more answers out of them about downtown Colebrook. Because their predictions about Netafy is that they are not going to be able to compete with NHEC and Consolidated. The board would like Heidi to attend the next meeting as the rep for the Town of Colebrook. Greg asked, "is the town already high-speed internet because of the hospital?" Sue said, "no we are not." Sue said, "a speed test can be done to see what speed you have."

-Highway Maintenance Agreement: Tim is waiting to hear back from Mike. He will follow-up on this.

-Discussion ensued on the Eclipse.

**Determine Date for Next Meeting:** April 22, 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 2:50pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Heidi Lawton*

Heidi Lawton, Administrative Assistant, Town of Colebrook