

Colebrook Select Board
Selectmen Meeting Minutes
May 13, 2024

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

Staff: Tim Stevens, Heidi Lawton, and TJ Rossitto

Roll Call & Pledge of Allegiance

Hearing of the Public:

- A. Carol Miller from the National Collaborative for Digital Equity came to speak to the board about Broadband for the Town of Colebrook. Carol gave the board some handouts with information about what has been going on with broadband in the Colebrook area. Carol explained that in the building out of broadband, there are some gap areas and downtown Colebrook happens to be one of them. Right now, in the town of Colebrook there are 7.8% unserved, 62.8% are underserved, and 29.4% are served. Most of the broadband in Colebrook is through the NH Electric CO-OP. Carol explained that even though NH Electric CO-OP does not serve the downtown area of Colebrook, they have come up with some strategies for getting broadband close to there. NH Electric CO-OP will be coming up Route 3, north and south and taking Route 26 east and any customers along that way will be able to get served by NH Electric CO-OP for broadband. Carol said that doesn't help anyone on Bridge Street, but they are trying to come up with ways to get that covered. Carol mentioned that Colebrook does have Fibercast up here and they are working with the town on the Main Street project and getting the lines buried. Fibercast does serve downtown Colebrook and other parts of Coos like Stratford and Stewartstown. Carol said that Fibercast is a little more expensive than CO-OP. Carol did reach out to Consolidated to see if they are interested in serving downtown Colebrook, and they are not because there is just not the infrastructure. Carol reminded the town to send a letter to Mark Doyle at E911, for the town to give E-911 permission to give out our E-911 data. Discussion ensued on the process and timeframes. Discussion ensued on pricing. Carol advised the board that another pot of money is coming to the state in the amount of \$197,000.00, she is not sure if Colebrook would qualify for this money or not. Carol will keep an eye on things and let us know if anything comes up for Colebrook. Heidi will be attending the broadband meetings in Lancaster.

Regular Agenda:

- A. Review and approval of Minutes of 4/9/2024 and 4/22/24. Sue made a motion to approve the minutes of 4/9/24 and 4/22/24, Ray seconded. Motion passed.
- B. Review and Sign Payroll and Disbursement Manifests: The Selectmen reviewed completed payrolls and disbursement manifests and signed them.

C. Town Manager's Report

-Harvey Swell Rd Project: Tim said the original price quoted for this project in 2018 was \$419,000.00, and now in 2024, the price has gone up to \$676,000.00. Originally, the Town of Colebrook's share would have been \$83,000.00 and now it is \$135,200.00. Sue said that the town doesn't even know how much the Bear Rock Project will go up. Tim said that the engineers said the price of the Bear Rock Project will not go up because they are the ones that had to delay the project. Sue said, "we received bridge aid from Governor Sununu in the amount of \$67,000.00 and the town's bridge fund has \$377,000.00 in it."

-Tim advised the board that the Town Clerk has gotten a credit card machine for the state's portion of registrations. Ray asked if there were any special charges, and Heidi said there is a convenience fee charged.

-Tim talked to Dave Belanger about the attic in the town hall and told him to just go get an engineer to check out upstairs. Sue asked, "so this is to make sure it is sturdy enough for solar panels, correct?" Tim said yes. Tim talked to Melissa Elander after about the Kearsarge agreement and how the money we are getting is kind of minimal and it is a long-term agreement and Melissa stated that there are pros and cons for this. The pros are that there is no upfront cost, the town doesn't have to get a bond, no maintenance costs because we don't own it, and we do receive money for the lease and the kilowatt hours. Some of the cons are the town doesn't own it and there is work that goes with it. Melissa said if the town does the work itself, then we do own the kilowatt hours and that means there is a bigger payback for the town. Tim also asked Melissa about how the garage is now reading at zero and not getting bills, where is the extra money. Melissa said, "if there was nothing set up originally for anything to happen with that extra energy, it goes into a bank, the bank accumulates hours and once a year the town will get a check for it." The other possibility is the town can go in and set it up so that it will go towards one of the towns other electric bills, and there is a small fee for that. The fee is the same as the bank fee and that is 25% of the distribution only. Discussion ensued. Sue believes whatever money is generated from the solar panels at the Highway Garage, that it should go back into the Highway Budget for equipment. Melissa also said that there is a possibility if the town wanted to, to sign up for renewable energy credits. You can go to a broker with the credits and sell them to other places that are being fined extra for using too much energy credits. Tim will check into this if the board would like him to.

-Chase Property: Tim talked to Jamie Emery and the new well property is owned by Chase. Chase had something he wanted to do with the property, but he is not totally against selling that 1.75 acres back to the town. Tim said it would be much cheaper than using the other well.

-Aldrich Road: Tim talked to Trout Unlimited about Aldrich Road, and they looked at the project and said this would be a possible way to do it is, plant trees there that would grow roots and the roots intermingle with rocks that are put there. Once you put the roots and rocks in there, the trees are going to eventually rot by the water, but that is not a problem, because by the time that happens, it is already established. Tim talked to Nick from North Country Council, and they do work with Trout Unlimited, and he is going to forward the town's application on to others at North County Council for review. Nick thinks it will not impact the FEMA portion of the project. Discussion ensued.

-Greg Placy entered the meeting at 1:35pm.

-Kearsarge Proposal: Sue said that Atty Frizzell was supposed to review the proposal and get it from 36 months to 18 months. Tim wanted to get the new information from Melissa and Dave to the board. Ray said there could be a big pot of money coming for communities for solar. Discussion ensued.

-New Town Attorney: Tim received a letter from Atty Frizzell recommending a new Town Attorney. The Attorney's name is Chris Boyd, and he is with the law firm Donahue, Tucker, and Ciandella out of Meredith. The new lawyer has talked with Tim and explained billing and prices. If the board is interested, he will send a proposal. A partner's hourly wage is \$220.00 an hour, an associate's is \$200.00 an hour, and a legal assistant's is \$150.00 an hour. The prices do not include any litigation, that would be separate. Sue made a motion to support Attorney Frizzell's recommendation of the new attorney Chris Boyd from the law firm Donahue, Tucker, and Ciandella, Ray seconded the motion, motion passed. Sue said the next step is to get a proposal from them. Discussion ensued.

Maggie's Report: Tim advised the board that Melanie has been making progress. Maggie is making sure that Heidi gets an updated report daily. Heidi explained to the board that on that list is also items that Dottie and Jolene need to do as well. Sue advised the board that they do not have any current financial statements done up to March 31, 2024, yet. Sue said that last time we went through this there were 130 entries that weren't posted. They addressed 32 of the 130 items. Tim said now Heidi is getting the report from Maggie and now we will know what specifically needs to get done. Sue would like to keep this on the agenda for every week. Sue doesn't understand why there is no progress, it feels like the hole is getting deeper.

-Sue came into the office on Friday to look over the bills and payroll and there is a bill for \$558.00 from the Coos County Registry of Deeds. Sue asked Dottie about the bill, and she said she did not know. Dottie called Wanda and Wanda said someone went in and printed all kinds of tax cards. Dottie did in fact print the tax cards. Sue talked to Wanda and found out there is another program called Monarch, where you can go in and print the tax cards for free. Tim will make sure that Dottie uses Monarch in the future. Sue also

said that the bill should not be charged to office supplies it should be charged to assessing.

New Business:

A. Sand & Gravel Bids: Rodrique Sand & Gravel put in a bid as follows:

1. $\frac{3}{4}$ Winter Sand 5,100 at \$6.00 for a total of \$30,600.00.
2. $\frac{3}{4}$ Crushed Gravel 6,500 at \$7.50 for a total of \$48,750.00

****Tim later confirmed that the $\frac{3}{4}$ winter sand should have read $\frac{1}{2}$ winter sand and that it was a typo.**

Clark Jeffers put in a bid as follows:

1. $\frac{1}{2}$ Winter Sand 5100 at \$5.95 for a total of \$30,345.00
2. $\frac{3}{4}$ Crushed Gravel 6,500 at \$5.95 for a total of \$38,675.00

TJ advised the Selectmen that he talked to the State of NH today and that Rodrique's pit is not state approved. It is approved for shoulders, but not for roads. Greg said that he thinks the $\frac{3}{4}$ winter sand on Rodrique's bid is a typo and it should say $\frac{1}{2}$, but that needs to be confirmed. TJ said, "the only problem with going with Rodrique is that the town is going to spend more money on fuel by going to Rodrique's pit. Greg wants to try to award bids to local businesses that pay Colebrook taxes when it is feasible. The Selectmen would like Tim to call and get confirmation on if there is a typo in the Rodrique bid or not and to call the state to see if the product meets state specs. TJ asked the board what they wanted him to do as he needs gravel to fix the roads now. Sue made a recommendation that as soon as Tim finds out all the information that the board would like to know, TJ can go ahead and get the winter sand from Rodrique's pit and the crushed gravel from Clark Jeffers pit.

Greg wants the highway department to check the width of the roads and ensure they are the appropriate width, so the town is not maintaining wider roads than we are required to. We need to get our roads back to 21ft wide. Greg said that Route 26 is 22ft wide, so we don't need roads wider than that. TJ said he would talk to Danny about it.

B. Fuel & Oil Bids: Ray brought this up because the County just did theirs for fuel and propane, and fuel was less than last year. The Selectmen advised sending out the bids now for the town. Tim said he would do that.

C. Electric Vehicle Stations: Ray said that the North Country Council has money available to put in more electric vehicle stations in towns. Ray thought the Rest Area might be a good place to put one, Greg advised that the Rest Area is owned by the State so the town cannot decide that. Tim said he talked to Lance at IGA and there are 30 kilowatts per charging and the most he has used is 509 kilowatts in a one-month period. Tim asked Lance if he would make any money off the charging stations and Lance said with the new charging station at IGA he does not make any money off it, the driver pays for it at the station and nothing goes back to him at all. The new ones charge in 20 minutes. Sue said at one time someone talked about installing some

behind Ducret's Sporting Goods, but she doesn't know what happened with that. Ray will get more information and bring it to the board. Sue asked how would an electric vehicle owner know where the charging stations are even located. Tim said that there are listings for where they all are throughout the state so that someone would know if they were planning a trip. Greg said that AVH has eight of them for the public and Sue said they had three for employees.

D. Charitable Exemptions:

1. Colebrook Community Childcare: incomplete needs financials
2. **Ahead**: payment in lieu of taxes, should not be on the list
3. 45th Parallel Ambulance: signed.
4. **American Legion Post 62**: should be a percentage, the same as last year, will be signed once percentage is on there.
5. **Canaan School District**: Denied due to no programs there.
6. Coos Animal Sanctuary: signed.
7. CEDC: signed Lot 105-14
8. Food Pantry: signed.
9. **Helping Hands North**: should be a percentage, the same as last year.
10. Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witness: signed.
11. Methodist Church: signed.
12. Mohawk Grange: signed.
13. Monadnock Congregational Church: signed.
14. Monadnock Congregational Parsonage: signed.
15. North Country Rec Center: signed.
16. St. Brendan's Church: signed.
17. St. Brendan's Cemetery: signed.
18. **Shallow River Property**: 11 Edwards St. Denied, need more info.
19. Shallow River Property: 55 Colby St. signed.
20. Shallow River Property: 24 Depot St. signed.
21. St. Stephens Episcopal Church: signed.
22. Tillotson Center: signed.
23. Tri-County Community Action: (HeadStart) signed.
24. **UCVH**: signed.
25. Community Baptist Church: signed.

*All the Charitable Exemptions in red need more information from Dottie.

Old Business:

- A. Boston Post Cane: The board will present the cane to the recipient at her house on Tuesday, May 28th at 4:00pm.

Tabled/Pending Items:

- A. Working on Ordinances.

For Approval and Signature:

- A. Sewer Warrant: \$84,423.40

- B. Water Warrant: \$75,588.83

Sue made a motion to accept signing the warrants for the amounts on the agenda, Ray seconded the motion, motion passed.

- C. Excavation Warrant: \$458.72
- D. Cemetery Plot: Lee Jeffers
- E. ATV Permit: David Naugler: Need more information on where the trailhead starts.
- F. Property Abatement: Nathan Linden
- G. Intent to Excavate: Sheldon Gray
- H. Intent to Cut:
 - 1. Duane Call
 - 2. Dwight Cormier
 - 3. Daniel Lynch
 - 4. Wayne Richards
 - 5. Raoul Riendeau

Discussion ensued regarding an assessor and making sure we are able to find one. There are six other towns looking for an Assessor as well.

- I. Hazardous Waste Grant: Sue made a motion to allow the Town Manager, Tim Stevens to sign all paperwork for the Hazardous Waste Grant, Ray seconded, motion passed.

Hearing of the Public and Any Other Business: Sue came into the office to look at bills and enquired about CMA bills for Project 1301. Invoices 5 & 6 have not been processed, how come? Heidi went to Melanie to ask about why those invoices hadn't been paid and Melanie said. "she talked to Sue on Friday about this and it is all set." Sue said what was talked about on Friday was reimbursement from NH DES. The invoices will be paid. Sue is not happy with CMA; we were supposed to get reports on projects and have not been. Sue wants to make sure that bills are getting paid. Sue recommended to Melanie that she print any invoices she gets and gives them to Heidi, even if there are duplicates. Sue wants the tax warrant in by May 15th, as required by statute and that means Dottie needs to get Melanie the Charitable Exemption information sooner than May.

Sue wanted an explanation for the Coos Registry Bill for \$558.00 dollars. Dottie printed deeds to put into tax files. Dottie did not know she could print to Monarch; she will get information on this from Wanda at the Registry of Deeds. Heidi asked when the Charitable Exemptions should have gone out, so that they would be back in time for Dottie to do corrections and get the information to Melanie before the May 15th deadline. Charitable Exemptions should be back in hand by April 1st.

Melanie brought up the changes that need to be made to one of Sheldon Gray's tax bill and Nathan Linden's tax bill before she can do the property tax warrant.

Melanie talked to Sue about the PDIP money for Dispatch. Melanie asked what she should name the new PDIP account. Sue said she could put it under Equipment Fund. Melanie also talked to the board about the NH Homeowner Grant that she helped several people with. She was notified that the grant cannot help two recipients on the list, because they ran out of money. Melanie also mentioned that another tax payer came in to set up a payment plan with Dottie.

Discussion ensued about the property owned by the town across the street from the Town Office.

Greg asked about the potholes at the end of Monadnock Street & Lombard Street. Tim explained that they are going to be working on them Thursday. Greg wanted to know exactly what was being done. Tim explained that they have a roller and hot concrete. Greg said the only way that will ever stay in there is if the roads are barricaded so that no one drives in there. Sue explained that they are going to close the three streets to work on this. Greg explained how they should do it, and discussion ensued.

Heidi brought up the fact that no one knows how to use the Code Red system except Dean Woodard-Neary. Someone needs to know about this in case we need to close roads or if there is an emergency.

Sue would like Melanie to talk to a new highway department employee about reporting his time correctly on his time sheet.

Ray mentioned that he will be doing his annual fertilizing at the Colebrook Monument Lot.

Ray wanted to know if the board knew anything about an Energy Summit. No one knew about it. Ray will get more information.

Sue read an email from Beno about USDA regarding wastewater and three million being set aside for the Town of Colebrook. Beno said in the email, dated April 24th, that he finally heard back from USDA. The USDA had asked if there was a Preliminary Engineering Report.

Ray brought up last week's walk-through on Rt. 145 and asked Tim what he thought. Ray said he believes that this project will be delayed. Sue said the bidding was supposed to open on May 4th. They are going to have to move six to eight poles, Tim said maybe five. Ray said Tim and himself were there for an hour and a half for discussion on six to eight poles. Greg would like Tim to send an email, asking about the dates given and where they are in the process. Tim will find out the status of the project and if they need the board to do anything.

Sue had a question on a Waystack & Frizzell bill in the amount of \$2,000.00, she wanted to know what it was for. Tim explained that it was for litigation with a taxpayer that is suing the Police Dept on Colby Street.

Ray wanted the board to know that the Chamber of Commerce would be having their annual dinner in June.

Ray said, and the board agreed that Jolene should have a Deputy Town Clerk, Tim will talk to her. It was also brought up that we need Moderators. The Moderators are appointed by the Supervisors of the Checklist.

Legion Lot: Ray said that Phil Freudenberger has been working on the lot. Ray would like to suggest having the paved paths changed to concrete now. He has talked to the American Legion and V. R. Concrete. Ray would also like a sidewalk by the monument lot into the Town Parking Lot. The board is not sure if the deed gives the town enough room to do this.

Determine Date for Next Meeting: May 30, 2024, at 4:00pm

Adjourned: Sue made a motion to adjourn, Ray seconded the motion, motion passed to adjourn meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 4:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Lawton

Heidi Lawton, Administrative Assistant, Town of Colebrook