

**Colebrook Select Board**  
**Selectmen Meeting Minutes**  
**June 10, 2024**

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

Staff: Tim Stevens and Heidi Lawton

**Roll Call & Pledge of Allegiance**

**Hearing of the Public:**

- A. Ron Patterson Canaan School Charitable Exemption: The Selectboard invited someone from the Canaan School to come down and explain why the property they own at 22 Bridge Street should still be a charitable exemption. Greg asked Ron what is going on at this property as the board has not seen any work going on over there for quite some time. Ron explained to the board that the school gets grants every year for that program and if he can do the work he will, the teacher got swamped this year and fell behind. He is a brand-new teacher this year. Ron does not think that he wanted to take that task this year, with everything going on. Ron is trying to get an outline of what he wants to do next year for this. The school is thinking of selling the property, but in order to do that they have to bring it up at the Town Meeting, it has to be voted on by the town, and then they can put it for sale. Tillotson Corporation has first rights of refusal, the town can't just put it on the open market. So, it will probably go back to Tillotson Corporation for them to do what they want with it. Ron's understanding is that Canaan Superintendent, Jen will take it to the School Board so then they can take it in front of the Canaan Board of Selectmen and then on to Town Meeting. Discussion ensued. Sue explained that "for a property to receive a charitable exemption from taxes, it needs to be used for a charitable purpose, if nothing is happening, then it is not being used for that purpose." Ron left the meeting.

**Regular Agenda:**

- A. Review and approval of Minutes of 5/30/24. Sue made a motion to approve the minutes of 5/30/24, 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

-Kearsarge Letter: Tim explained to the board that the letter went back to Kearsarge with Attorney Frizzell's recommendations.

-Harvey Swell Road: has been graded and the rocks picked up. Tim explained there were a couple reasons why this was held up. Tim said, "TJ was on vacation, Danny was on vacation, and the grader was broken down." Ray said, "it took much longer than it should have." Ray said he was told about this on Town Meeting Day and Sue agreed.

-Attorney Boldt: Tim and Attorney Boldt have been in discussion about the service agreement, and they decided to do a 1-year agreement as the town did with Attorney Frizzell, paying as per used and then he would be able to better determine a fair price if we decided to go with an annual contract after that. Tim had an agreement for Greg to sign. Sue made a motion to sign a one-year agreement with Donahue, Tucker, and Ciandella, LLC for legal services for the Town of Colebrook, Ray seconded the motion, motion passed. Discussion ensued.

-Washburn Dam: Tim saw that NH DES is getting ready to tear down this damn. It has no effect on the town, he just wanted the board to know.

-Affinity LED: The Selectmen had a meeting with Affinity, Tim needs to know if the board wants to do networking on both agreements and/or just the Main Street portion of it. These agreements are not for the Main Street portion of the project, they are for outside the Main Street portion. The cost, as he told us the other day, is \$77, 714.00, if we go with the Networking it goes to \$98,032.00. Sue said we have to pay for this, so she has prepared an options sheet for the board. Sue said we can do budget transfers to get the money. Sue went through the budget and found places where we could use funds not used from this year's budget to do a transfer. Option 1: The lines and available transfers are below:

Option 2: Wait until 2025

Option 3: Finance the Project as described by Affinity

Ray asked, "on the street lighting, I have been asking how much?" So how much, with everything being buried. Greg said, "this has nothing to do with being buried." Sue said, "we are talking about outside of Main Street." Ray said, "he appreciates Sue's work in trying to find funding for this." Tim said now that the town office has had an Energy Audit, maybe Eversource would fund or give rebates for the Historical Society space upstairs at Town Hall. Discussion ensued. Selectboard started talking about assessing. Sue made a motion to recommend a budget transfer and authorize the Town Manager, Tim Stevens, to sign the non-Main Street lighting project contract in the amount of \$77,000.00 dollars with an expected rebate from Eversource in the amount of \$13,000.00, Ray seconded the motion, motion passed. Sue will bring the Budget Transfer Form to the next meeting for the Board's signatures.

-Bear Rock Bridge Project: the project will start on July 5<sup>th</sup>, because it is a trout river, they can't start the work until then. They do plan on pre-staging everything as needed.

They have a 7 to 14-day window of July 5<sup>th</sup>. Greg asked, “is there another required pre-construction meeting, or will they be ready to go?” Tim said, “they had the meeting last year, so he thinks they are all set.”

- Pleasant Street Bridge: Sue asked about this, Tim explained that he has put a stop to all work on this. The Town did receive a bill, but Heidi said that there was money that came in from the State for Bridge Aid in an account. Sue asked, “do we need to authorize the Town Manager to use some of that money to pay the bill, also do we need to put this out to bid again?” Sue explained that the board had to go to the Town Meeting to get a warrant article approved, then it had to go out to bid. We went out to bid for the Bear Rock & Harvey Swell Projects. but we have never gone out to bid or get town meeting approval for the Pleasant Street Bridge Project. Greg asked, “or did we do it general, like go out for a bridge engineering firm for Harvey Swell & Bear Rock?” Sue said, “we need to find out how much from scratch do we need to do, and I think HEB will tell us that, I am surprised that they went ahead and did some work if they weren’t assured that we were going to be okay.” Tim asked, “is there any part of that bridge money that falls on us or is it all state bridge money?” Sue said, no, twenty percent falls on the Town and that is why you need to go to town meeting because you are using the Capital Reserve.” Discussion ensued.

- Assessing Update: Tim explained to the board that the assessing lead we had talked about has been denied. Tim said, “there is currently a letter that has gone to BTLA from DRA, with Attorney Frizzell as co-petitioner saying they have done everything in their power to try to find assessors, now they would like direction from BTLA as to what they should do.” Are they going to order DRA to come and do the re-valuation, are you going to delay it until 2025, or are you going to delay it until 2025 and tell the towns to go do it? DRA understands that we are just the tip of the spear up here. Discussion ensued. Greg said we need pickups from April 1, 2024, on to set our tax rate, we need to say to DRA, send us our tax rate.” Sue said, “Our tax rate for May is just half of what the December tax bills were.” Sue said, “The tax bills should have been ready a long time ago, but I don’t think anything new has been loaded into the system, it’s not changing the old stuff, it is uploading the new stuff.” Tim explained that there were some errors but that the bills needed to go out this week.” Tim said, “they have found the errors, and they are working on fixing them.” Sue said, “so Dottie has all the information that needs to be uploaded since Gary left?” Tim said yes, and with the DRA’s help everything was put in. Discussion ensued.

## **New Business:**

A. Opening of Fuel Bids: there were two bids that came in, one from C.N. Brown and one from C. Bean Transport as follows:

C.N. Brown: \$2.929 for 8600 gallons of oil & \$1.809 for propane.

C. Bean Transport: \$3.479 for 8600 gallons of oil & no bid on propane.

Sue wanted to know where the spreadsheet that Dottie usually sends her is and where the 8600 gallons of fuel came from. Sue explained we have the library, town hall, and town garage. Tim said they just sent out the same gallons as what they did last year. Ray said, “8600 gallons sound low, and Sue agreed.” Greg said, “so do you want to look at last year’s information and see if that is right?” Sue said she would check it when she got home. Sue said if it is 8600 gallons definitely go with C. N. Brown, if it is more than we will need to contact C.N. Brown and ask them if they can hold that price for more. Ray said not to wait too long because the price per barrel went up today by 4%. Sue made a motion to approve the C.N. Brown fixed price of \$2.929 per gallon for #2 fuel and C.N. Brown for \$1.809 per gallon for LP gas, Ray seconded it, motion passed.

### **Old Business:**

- A. Two Charitable Letters for Review: Helping Hands & American Legion letters were checked and signed by the board. Sue made a motion to grant partial tax-exempt status to Helping Hands North and the American Legion Hall as outlined in the letter of June 10<sup>th</sup> from the Town of Colebrook to the two entities, Ray seconded the motion, motion passed. Tim sent a letter to Shallow River Properties regarding their property at 39 Edwards Street, the board needs more information.

### **Tabled/Pending Items:**

- A. Working on Ordinances.

### **For Approval and Signature:**

- A. Veteran’s Tax Credit: William Aronson
- B. ATV Permit: Jamey Balint
- C. Cemetery Lots: Terrina & Kenneth Soares
- D. Intent to Cut: Linda Shaw

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

-Chamber Dinner: Tim got Ray and Sue signed up.

Greg: Is there money in the budget to replace hydrants? They should be flushed as well. Tim explained that the one at IGA has been replaced, Brian has another one that he is fixing right now and is ready to put in, he has another one that he is fixing, and two that he has to figure out what is up and what is down. Tim advised Brian to strategically find which ones are up and which ones are down. Greg said most towns have a bag over the hydrant if it is down and cannot be used. Ray asked if they have worked out the flushing of the hydrants? Tim advised that he has talked to Brian about this. There is a training being set up by the town with the Colebrook Fire Department so that they can all go and learn together, Brian still does not want the Fire

Department to flush the hydrants, but he does want them to be able to be trained, so when they use the hydrants, they do it right.

Sue: Noticed at the bottom of James McDonald's driveway they dug the whole thing up on Friday. Tim advised the board that his water is shut off, they had no way of shutting it off inside. He had a bad leak downstairs. They shut the water off and they have to wait until they can go inside to see what is going on. There is another leak at the new gray house, but that one is our issue.

Ray: The Transfer Station needs to be cleaned up again. Would like to know where we are at with property taxes? Sue said the bills will be out by the end of the week. Sue would like a cash report for the next meeting. Ray read in the paper that the police responded to three alarms this week, where are we with the ordinance on this? Tim asked the board, which ordinances does the board have the right to approve and which ones need to go before town meeting? Tim said he believes it goes by statute on who has authority to act on it. Greg said the board usually has a public hearing on the town ordinances, Sue agreed, and said it is not a town meeting. How many false alarms are there before the town starts charging, who will keep track, and what will the amount be to charge? Greg said the property owners are probably giving the alarm companies the dispatch number to call. Sue said in the ordinance it should state an annual fee if you want to include dispatch's number to be called. Ray asked if we are going to charge up front or not. Discussion ensued. Ray asked if there were any signs of drilling rigs in the area yet? Tim has not heard anything yet, he was told that if the next two weeks. Tim will follow up.

Sue: Sue sent a list of comments today, Tim got her answers from Melanie. Tim gave her the backup and answers from Melanie. Sue didn't understand why the amount the police charge for border security, why is it not billed to border security? Where is it getting posted to? Tim explained that Melanie has added a line item and the board won't see it until June, but she will be putting money back into the police budget. Sue does not know what has happened with the two dental accounts, the Town Clerk is being charged too much and the Tax Collector is not being charged enough. Melanie answered that she needs to get with Maggie and balance. Sue said that is not an answer, it has nothing to do with balancing, it is a code. Back to Border Security, Melanie needs to create an insurance line item, retirement, social security, etc. Nothing has been posted for Yield Tax yet, why not? Sue said it needs to be in by the next meeting, it shouldn't be this late. How many funds have been reimbursed for Stone Garden details? Gaudette/Thatcher was it a sale of property or a change in current use? Has the total amount been billed for dispatch? The board did not like the answer, they just want to know if the \$234,212.00 has been billed yet. Heidi to follow up on.

The board would like to know what properties we can take by tax deed. Would like a spreadsheet from Melanie updating where everyone stands. The board says this has not happened for two years.

The board would like to know what the Health Officer has found at Kennett's place on Pleasant Street beside Carl Brucker's and out at Richard Clark's place. The board also wanted to know if we have heard anything on the property on Colby Street. We are waiting for it to go through Probate.

Ray heard that people are squatting at the property on Hill Ave. beside the Food Pantry, could the police go there and patrol again. Tim will talk to the Chief about this.

**Determine Date for Next Meeting:** June 24, 2024, at 1:00pm

**Adjourned:** Sue made a motion to adjourn, Ray seconded the motion, motion passed to adjourn meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 6:50pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Heidi Lawton*

Heidi Lawton, Administrative Assistant, Town of Colebrook