

Colebrook Select Board
Selectmen Meeting Minutes
October 28, 2024

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

Staff: Tim Stevens & Heidi Lawton

Public: None

Hearing of the Public:

- A. None

Regular Agenda:

- A. Review and approval of Minutes of 10/8/24. Greg made a motion to approve the minutes of 10/8/24, 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

-Tim attended a meeting in Groveton with other North Country towns about finding a assessor to work in the North Country. They discussed paying an assessor like they do with dispatch and how each town pays a certain portion based on population, but this would be based on how many buildings are in each town. The group discussed getting an assessor and paying them a salary, possible benefits, etc. Towns in attendance were Stewartstown, Colebrook, Clarksville, Stratford, Groveton, Stark, Milan, Dummer, and Shelburne. The next step is all the towns are collecting their numbers, figuring out how much on eval years and non-eval years. The Towns will get that information, then get together and submit one RFP. Sue asked how the Town of Colebrook's pick-ups were going. Tim said, "Tim (Northcott) has been working on those, he was almost done, then we gave him some more." Tim said he should have the last one done by next week.

-Sent out all the Main Street Right-Of-Way letters to all the abutters. We are letting them know that it is either going to be a temporary easement or a permanent one. Greg said that with the utilities it appears Eversource received ROW's and did not include Consolidated, which they didn't have to, but now Consolidated is going to go back to the same owners to get easements.

-Tim advised the board that Carol Couture called and wanted to ask the Selectboard if they would be willing to donate the old cruiser to the Animal Sanctuary. Greg said, "his

quick answer is no.” Greg said, “we are going to get money for it, if we sell it.” The board was unsure if the Animal Sanctuary worked just for Colebrook or all surrounding towns.

Ray asked about the new truck for the police department. Tim said yes, the new truck is in. Tim said Chris Fortin was here today to look at the truck. Sue asked if someone in the office put the truck on insurance. That would be Melanie, but Heidi was not sure if that has been done yet or not. Sue would like the new highway truck and cruiser to be put on insurance, and the old highway truck that just sold to be taken off.

-Tim advised that since the change in retirement laws for our Police Department, Dave Radun is the first one to come upon this problem. They have a formula, it is not just 50% of your annual pay, it is 50% of your base pay. Half of the year their base pay is off of 36 hours, so they only count those 36 hours. The officers are losing 4 hours towards retirement half of the year. The other half: they have 48 hours, but they only count 40 hours as base pay, so the other 8 hours get put into a different computation of compensation above base pay. So not only are they getting shafted by only getting 36 hours, but the other 4 hours are not getting put on there to bring it up to 40 hours, but are at a reduced rate, because it is compensation above retirement. Tim said we are probably one of the only places where it would be an issue, based on the fact that we work 4 days on and 4 days off so that gives us half a year of 36 hours and half a year of 48 hours. Greg said, “when that 36/48 hours schedule was originally set up, was to make schedules work, realizing they were flexing the 40 hours.” Tim said, “the government is not recognizing the 36-hour week, they are not taking the 4 hours off and making it two 40’s with a 4-hour overtime.” Greg said that is what they should be doing because that is what the law did, when it changed to that. Tim has a call into the Executive Director of NH Retirement right now. Tim also has talked to Joe Kenney. Discussion ensued. Tim advised the board that Dave Radun does have his retirement papers in for January 15th, 2025.

-Tim signed off and mailed the Wetland permit and the DES Shoreland permit back to NH DES with a check for the Main Street Project. Sue asked if a \$400.00 check was mailed with it. Tim said there was a much larger check mailed in with the paperwork from CMA. Sue had an email that exactly who the check was made out to, the amount, and where to send it. Tim will check with Jason and get back to the Selectmen.

-Tim asked Sue if she had a letter from the Town to APP with any other correspondence regarding APP paying for a portion of the Engineering Services? Tim has a letter right now dated May 31, 2021, that talks about the \$45,000.00 and it talks about engineering costs associated with the first phase of the project. Sue said that there is a letter that has a grid on it that she remembers. Greg thinks it might have come out before the letter that Tim has. Tim has been in contact with the town attorney, and he said it will be a lot easier to go to foreclosure and say this is the amount that is owed to us. Sue asked if Tim had looked in the files here at the office under APP. Tim said, yes that is where I saw this

letter, but I have not looked any further.” Discussion ensued. Sue asked Tim if he would go to the foreclosure sale for APP on November 12 at 1:00pm.

-The Student Council would like to have a bake sale in the hallway outside of where the public votes on Election Day. Ray would like Tim to ask the Secretary of State if it is okay to do that. Discussion ensued regarding the election.

-Veteran Tax Credits: Tim has been doing research on the different Veteran’s Tax Credits. Something that the town has not been doing is per DRA statute, the town needs to split the \$700.00 credit into two payments, one on the first tax bill and one on the second tax bill. There are two credits that can be combined, \$700.00 and one for \$150.00.

-IRS Letter: Tim advised the board that the town received a letter from the IRS saying we have a proposed fine of \$10,120.00 for late W-2 going out in 2022’s taxes. Tim said we just sent in an appeals letter because we have proof (a W-3) that says it was completed on a certain date. The letter said we had 92 W-2’s that were late. Sue asked if Melanie had proof that they were sent in on time. Tim said yes, a W-3.

New Business:

- A. Certificate of Authorization: Sue made a motion to authorize Tim Stevens, Town Manager, to sign all grants for the NH Department of Safety. Ray seconded the motion, all approved, motion passed. The grant Tim needs to sign is to update our Hazard Mitigation Plan. The Selectboard, in a majority vote, accepted the terms of the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) as presented in the amount of \$7,593.75 for updating the local hazard mitigation plan. Furthermore, the Board acknowledges that the total cost of this project will be \$10,125.00, in which the town will be responsible for a 25% match (\$2,531.25).
- B. Office of Highway Safety Grant: The Selectboard, in a majority vote, accepted the terms of the FFY 25 Office of Highway Safety Grant as presented in the amount of \$15,000.00 for the Colebrook Police Department to participate in different enforcement activities. Furthermore, the Board acknowledges that the total cost of the project will be \$15,000.00, with some of the match being in-kind by the Colebrook Police Department. Sue made a motion for Tim Stevens, Town Manager, to sign the grant agreement, Ray seconded, motion passed.

Old Business:

- A. Insurance Rates: Tim presented the board with numbers for NH Interlocal Trust. The board went through the prices for Healthtrust and NH Interlocal Trust, all of the rates were lower for NH Interlocal Trust. Discussion ensued. Sue made a motion to

go with NH Interlocal Trust effective January 1, 2025. Ray seconded the motion, motion passed. All were in favor. Ray wanted to know how much extra work this is going to put on Melanie. Tim advised that Heidi could enroll people and have the meetings. Mel will only have to enter the information into the computer for deduction purposes. It shouldn't take that long. The board figured out that the difference in the 2 insurance companies quotes is \$4,416.00. Discussion ensued.

B. Tim gave Sue the Primex Property & Liability information for the budget.

Tabled/Pending Items:

A. Working on Ordinances.

For Approval and Signature:

- A. Property Tax Abatement: Gregory Sipple-signed
- B. Sewer Abatement: Jules Kennett-signed
- C. Sewer Abatement: Rick Sampson Jr.-signed
- D. Intent to Cut: Raoul Riendeau-signed. Greg asked that Dottie inform Mr. Riendeau that his cut was small enough that it did not require an Intent to Cut.
- E. Veteran's Tax Credit: Calvin DeGraffenreid-signed
- F. General Election Forms from the Town Clerk-signed
- G. ATV Permit: Bradley Montague-signed
- H. ATV Permit: Paul Butler-denied
- I. MS-535-signed

Hearing of the Public and Any Other Business:

-Greg asked when the budget meetings are going to be. Tim will email a schedule to them to set up the meetings. Greg asked if there were any big changes in the budgets this year, Tim advised that the Colebrook Police Dept is going to be requesting a step increase for their officers, for this coming year. Tim said we will be losing Dave and possibly another officer at the beginning of the year.

-Greg asked if the insulation ever got done upstairs on the 3rd floor? Tim said no, not yet, he has called Dan Fuller every week and he never gets a response back.

-Ray asked about the Rt. 145 project and if it is complete. Tim said everything is done except Eversource did not realize that their electricity ends a pole shy of where they needed to get for the pump station. Everything else is up and running. They need to run electricity to one more pole and then install the meter board for the pump station.

-Sue wanted to know if we have received the bill yet for Sicard. Sue said we need to get those bills soon and then send them to the County for reimbursement. Tim said not yet, but he will

call CMA. Sue wanted to know what the additional cost was for the pump station. Tim never received a final number, but it was in the ballpark of \$3,000.00.

-Sue asked about the cost of last year's bill from Sansoucy for the Reval of the Portland Natural Gas Transmission System. This year it is seventeen million, forty-three thousand, is that a big increase from last year's value?

-Did Melanie ever get the Northern Borders Commission money from North Country Council for the last billing on the sludge removal project she was going to finish. Heidi said, "she does not believe that Melanie has completed that yet." She needs to submit the paperwork and copy of cancelled check and get the money turned around.

-Sue wanted it in the minutes that our Auditors verified that Northern Borders Dispatch owes the Town of Colebrook \$15,703.31 because they overspent their Operating Budget for 2023. Sue said Becky is putting it on the next board meeting agenda. Ray said it has been approved. Sue asked Ray, "has it been taken care of? Ray said it was supposed to be taken care of on their end. Sue said, "Alicia Boire has to be told to transfer the money." Ray will make sure it is done.

-Sue asked about the sludge removal memo that Tim sent the board, is there anything the board needs to do with it? Tim said, no, what it narrows down to is if the town continues down the road of pursuing land application, it just keeps dragging out. Every time CMA submits something The Northern Borders Commission/North Country Council come back with another requirement or request. They want to do an analysis of all six New England states. Discussion ensued.

-Sue brought a diagram to the board that Phil Freudenberger gave her of the proposed changes he wants to make to the Memorial Lot. Phil has been doing most of the maintenance and upkeep of the lot. This would pertain to the budget because it entails some cost to the town. He is proposing mulching across the back of the lot in a strip where the lilac trees are growing instead of having grass there. He is also proposing a sidewalk on the left side of the lot by the parking lot near the old Nugent house. Greg said if there is going to be a sidewalk, it is going to have to be ADA compliant. Discussion ensued.

-Sue said that on August 9th the Town of Colebrook sent an invoice to North Country Council because North Country Council had overbilled us for the Housing Grant and we had paid it. They owed us \$841.32, had this been paid back yet? Heidi will find out and let Sue know.

-Sue wanted to know if Jane Sanders has sent out the lien letters yet or not? Heidi will check with Melanie.

-Sue asked if Martha Laramee has paid her taxes yet or not? Heidi said no, not yet.

-Sue asked if Karen Loux's water has been turned back on? Tim said yes, she complied with everything she was supposed to do and it got turned back on. Discussion ensued.

-Greg wanted to know if the water bills were going out soon. Heidi said, Melanie said they would be going out either Tuesday or Wednesday.

-Sue asked if the PER from CMA had been updated and sent to the USDA? Tim said, “yes it has.” Paul said it had been done. Sue wanted to know if the town received one. Tim said that he did.

-Ray said he was asked today if APP has any possible pollutants that Brownsfield money could be used for? Ray said the only thing that he could think of was when they did a tour down there and there were barrels of chemicals in them. APP said they were going to dispose of them in January. Sue said that it would only be Brownsfield if the chemicals went into the ground and contaminated the soil. Greg said that there should be some tanks over there that have high nitrites in them.

-The board discussed the elections and when they would be at the polling locations.

-Sue mentioned that when she was away she received an email from Dottie asking if she had any questions for Vicky Ayers from DRA to let her know and she would get them answered. Sue wanted to know what that was about. Greg explained that Vicky was at the Town Office one day last week and we didn’t know if Sue had any general questions for her.

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

Determine Date for Next Meeting: November 13, 2024, at 1:00pm

Adjourned: Ray made a motion to adjourn, Sue 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