

**Colebrook Select Board**  
**Selectmen Meeting Minutes**  
**January 13, 2025**

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

Staff: Tim Stevens, Heidi Lawton, & David Brooks

**Hearing of the Public:**

- A. None

**Regular Agenda:**

- A. Review and approval of Minutes of 12/20/24. Sue made a motion to approve the minutes of 12/20/2024, 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 reached out to the Canaan Superintendent and they are putting a Warrant Article in for Town Meeting to put the property they own on Bridge Street for sale.

-Lagoons & Rt. 145 Projects: Discussed these projects today in the Projects Meeting with CMA. The Rt. 145 project should be done in the next week or so. Ray asked Tim if the board needed to make a call to Eversource. Greg and Tim both said no. Tim said it is already scheduled. Ray said that it has been scheduled for six weeks now, every meeting we are told the project will be done this week. Greg said Eversource had to put the line up, the line has been put up, Sicard needs to come and put the meter box up, they have done that, now Eversource has to put the meter in the box, then they have to connect the powerline to the meter, then Sicard has to come back and connect it up. That is where we are at.

-Affinity Lighting: they put up a streetlight that was not supposed to be put up, it is a private light so they will be crediting us the cost of the light and the cost of putting up the light. Tim is also waiting to hear back from them, on what the steps are of getting a rebate from Eversource. In the past they have received the incentive and sent it to the town.

-39 Edwards Street: Tim reached out to the property owner, due to a question from the Planning Board about their site plan application not being submitted. Tim received a response saying that the owner submitted an application and the information necessary for approval on August 22, 2024 to Mike Ouellet. The owner also asked him to let the her know if any additional information

is required, but she never heard back. The owner stated that the board may want to contact Mike Ouellet and see where that information is. Tim will reach out to Mike to see where things stand.

45<sup>th</sup> Recovery Grant: the group is trying to get a \$100,000.00 grant, they were number 1 in the nation when they evaluated people that submitted and want to try to do a recovery/help for addicts. Tim directed them to the County for help with the grant, the County told them that they did not have the time to help them right now to meet the cut-off date that is required. The original grant had the Town of Colebrook name on it. The group wanted the Selectmen to know that the only requirement needed from the town is to use the banking part to receive the funds. Other than that, everything would be taken care of by the 45<sup>th</sup> Recovery Grant group. They have the people and the resources. Tim advised them that one of the concerns could be that the town is signing up for something and if it doesn't go as planned, is the town on the hook for this. Joy Noelle, who is Tim's contact, is a juvenile parole officer and she works with North Country Health Consortium and the coaches she works with on this project are the same ones that make sure the grant is done and that it meets all the state/federal requirements. Colebrook was #1 in the country for the need for addiction services. Depending on how the \$100,000.00 is implemented, we may be eligible for the one-million-dollar grant services. Greg says it is a good fit for the County to take on, or it is time another town in the North Country to step up. Sue said, she is not in favor of this, as the town cannot keep up with the grants that we already have, a lot of this is going to take a lot of work, we are about to trigger our loans with the State Revolving fund for two big projects, Main Street and the Wastewater Treatment Plant. We simply do not have the level of expertise in this office for all the financial requirements. We haven't even billed Border Security and Stonegarden yet. We haven't billed Border Security at all, correct? Heidi said yes, correct. Sue said we are so far behind in cash flow that we can't afford anymore cash flow going out for other grants that don't benefit the Town of Colebrook directly.

Ray says the grant information came to the County three days ago. The County called Ray and he did not know what they were talking about. Greg said the board had talked about it before. Ray said a little bit, but not a lot. Ray pointed out that this is due on the 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> of January, and they are just coming to the County now. Sue wanted to know who "they" are. Ray said he did not have paperwork with him, but that there were names on there. Ray said if you read through the material given to them, the County would not be responsible for anything, but for them to bring it last minute like this, in my opinion, when they are doing grant work that is brought in, in a timely manner, it was lost on the other end. Ray's comments back to the County were it is too quick and last minute, all the comments Sue has made, I feel the same way. Ray said he is totally against this. Sue said AHEAD brought a grant to the County, and the County agreed to do it because it was done in a timely matter. Ray said even with the staff the County has, you can't just grab something four days in advance and expect it to be okay. Discussion ensued.

Attic Insulation: Tim has found a new installer for doing the insulation installation for upstairs in the Town Hall attic. He came last week to take measurements, and he is working up an estimate

and will get it to Tim shortly. The contractor said he can start work shortly after he receives approval. Ray asked where they were out of, Tim said Jefferson.

Bangor Payroll: Tim and Heidi reached out to Bangor Bank about doing the Town of Colebrook's payroll. Tim explained that Bangor has a two-hundred-person staff that does just payroll, we asked what it would cost, what it would take, if they were to take ours and do it for us. Tim and Heidi explained that they know the Town had a bad experience with Granite Bank doing our payroll, but they were not set up to do payroll, Bangor is. Bangor has over fifty towns that they do payroll for right now. Tim advised the board that we had two out of three of the Trustees of Trust Funds tell us that they have worked with them in the past and they were phenomenal. Tim told the board that we asked Bangor for some prices to see how it comes up. For Bangor to do a weekly or bi-weekly payroll the cost is a thousand dollar set up fee, after that for a weekly payroll of forty employees it would be \$8,646.00. The biweekly cost is \$6,423.00. What the Town does for envelopes, paper, time sheets, and checks we spend over \$2,000.00. a year just to pay for the checks we use. Even those that get Direct Deposit get a paper check that is not really a check. If we use Bangor, all the employees would have an app that they log into to put in their time, once it is done it goes to the Department Head to sign off, then it goes to the Town Manager to sign off and send it. Bangor then has a two-day turnaround to send it back to the town if something is wrong or needs to be fixed. The amount that the Town would pay includes payroll, tax processing, tax filing, paperless payroll, electronic payroll reporting. Electronic quarterly payroll reports, new hiring reporting, DHS electronic garnish payments, employee self-service on-line app, direct deposit, electronic agency payments, check signing and sealing, time off accruals, general ledger interface reports, and an HR support center. Sue asked if any of the 50 towns they serve are in New Hampshire. Tim said they don't have any in New Hampshire yet, they are in Maine and Vermont. Sue said complying with New Hampshire Retirement reporting is what screwed up the other bank before. Heidi sent them the NH Retirement report that Melanie submits with our payroll, and they thought it looked standard. Tim and Heidi also showed them payroll sheets of other departments such as police and dispatch. They seemed fine with it. Tim explained to Bangor that the police have a lot of details and grant codes for their payroll, Bangor said it looked fine to them, that it wasn't something that they couldn't figure out. Tim said before they ever went forward, they would come and do a demonstration for the board. Tim said he knew that one of the issues that has been brought up numerous times is too much work and not enough time to get it done and asking for overtime and trying to get all this other stuff done, so that is why we wanted to do this. We wanted to give it to the board and let the board look at whether it is something you want to consider or not.

Sue is willing to consider it, she would like to read more about it. Discussion ensued. The board would like to meet with Bangor on March 17<sup>th</sup> at 2pm. Heidi will schedule this.

Trustee of Trust Funds: The Trustees would like to have John Falconer fill the rest of Rosemary Mulliken's appointment, then be appointed a Trustee of the Trust Funds at that time. Tim advised the board that he will make an appointment letter for John. The board agreed to sign the letter in

favor of John taking over Rosemary's appointment. Sue is in favor of John being a Trustee. Ray asked when Rosemary's appointment ends, Tim said Rosemary's term is up for Trustee in March of 2026.

Transfer Station Rates: Tim looked at how much money we have expended for disposing of shingles and tires. For shingles the Town has expended \$4,391.00 and we received as a revenue \$1,315.00, so the Town is definitely not getting enough money for shingles. Greg said he knows that part of the problem is people don't know that they have to pay for shingles. David Brooks said they are also not being measured by the right yards. Greg said what we really should have is a scale. Tim said for tire disposal we expended \$6,023.00, and received revenue of \$7,550.00, so we are making more than we are paying out. The other thing Tim just found out is that Noyes Chevrolet brings their tires down to our Transfer Station. Greg said to make sure the numbers are still accurate, check with Brian LaPerle that he doesn't bring his tires down to the Transfer Station. Discussion ensued. Tim said we should do a way with charging the shingles by the different size trucks and go with just the yardage, and make sure Dave Bunnell knows what the yardage is and what to charge, the town will be better off. Tim said there also should be a minimum amount as well.

Sue said that she had someone ask her if it would be cheaper to put the glass into the C & D container rather than in the compactor, because glass is hard on the equipment. David said they throw glass windows in the C & D container, not in the compactor. Greg asked, what is the C & D container. David said construction debris. Sue said but then we would need to re-educate people on where to dump glass. Tim will check on this. Sue asked, what if someone from The Black Bear dumps their glass there, they used to dump it in the recycling, what do they do now. David said that the Black Bear usually has glass in boxes or totes, I am not sure if they are doing it the same way or not, if they are putting it in the compactor or not. Greg asked, does whoever takes the C&D container want glass? Sue said it ends up in Mt. Carbery either way. Greg asked, at a cheaper rate. That is what Sue is asking, she is not sure. Discussion ensued. David mentioned that Clark Jeffers has a scale and that maybe we could give people a slip when they come to the transfer station to dump shingles, and they would take that over to Clark's gravel pit with how many tons and we would charge them by the ton. Greg thought of that also. David Brooks said he will reach out to Clark and find out. Greg said everything is charged by the ton in Vermont. David asked, "would the decision on how much we charged for shingles have to go to the Town Meeting or is that something the board can decide?" Sue said the board could set the rates because it is not an ordinance.

-David Brooks left the meeting at 2:45pm.

-Highway Safety Grant: An amendment had to be made to the Highway Safety Grant application. Tim asked the board if they would give him permission to sign the amendment in the amount of \$3,738.12. The Colebrook Police Department had to amend the grant due to one of the MDT's breaking in the cruiser. Tim already has a signed letter by the board that he is authorized to sign anything for the Highway Safety Grant from 2023 to 2029. Sue asked what an MDT was, Tim

explained it was a Mobile Data Terminal. Sue made a motion to authorize the Town Manager to sign the amendment to the Highway Safety Grant in the amount of \$3,738.12, Ray seconded the motion, motion passed.

**New Business:**

- A. Prices for disposing of singles & tires: Talked about in Town Manager's Report.
- B. Update on Sewer Infrastructure: Talked about already.
- C. Cremation & Burial Fees: Heidi explained to the board that we received a letter from Funeral Director, Mike Pearson of Jenkins & Newman Funeral Home asking the board to consider raising the cost of their cremation and burial fees. This is because Mr. Pearson got called to Colby Commons last week for the removal of a person that had no family or friends to pay for her to be cremated or buried, so he had to do it and incur the cost. He said this is happening more and more and he can't continue to do it. Tim said the town currently pays \$750.00 for a cremation. Mike's bill was over \$3,000.00 because of all the costs. Sue asked does Mike get money from Social Security? Greg believes he does not get money from anywhere to help with this. Tim advised the board that Mike enclosed a letter from Bryant Funeral Home in Berlin saying the City of Berlin just increased their rates of burial and cremation from \$750.00 to \$1250.00. Mike will be bringing the board another letter to ask for the amount to go up. Sue explained that if he brought in a letter asking for more than \$1250.00, the board would not entertain that. Sue is not sure she wants to raise the rate from \$750.00 to \$1250.00 all at once. Tim said that Mike is not obligated to do this and if he does not, who does that fall on? Sue said at the next meeting, could Heidi bring in the language from our Welfare Manual to increase the cost. Heidi said yes. Sue asked the board if they want to go up to \$1,500.00 or just to \$1,000.00.

**Old Business:**

-IRS Letter: Still no response, Heidi gave each board member a copy of the letter.

-Martha Laramie has paid her taxes.

-John Cotnoir Status: Melanie came in to talk to the board regarding the status. The letter that went out to Mr. Cotnoir said Melanie has until January 31<sup>st</sup> to take his property. Melanie sent him a courtesy letter last week via certified mail, saying he has a payment plan, but has not made any payments and he also owes a 2019 tax lien, so this is his last chance to pay or move out. Melanie received this letter back in the mail today from the Post Office saying it could not be delivered. Melanie advised the board that we have a lot of issues with the Post Office not delivering mail or returning mail that they say cannot be delivered, but that was never a problem before. Sue asked Melanie, Mr. Cotnoir has until January 31, 2025, to pay everything up, but you have done everything you can do, correct? Melanie said, yes. Greg asked so the town can take it February 1<sup>st</sup>. correct? Melanie said yes. The board wanted Melanie to make sure she had everything done that she needed to do, so that on February 1<sup>st</sup> the property can be taken. Melanie said, I have to

give the board a Deed Waiver and if you sign it, I don't take the property or I have to do a Tax Collector's Deed and if you sign it, I can take the property. The board would like the Tax Collector's Deed ready for next Selectmen's Meeting, unless Mr. Cotnoir comes in and pays off everything. Ray said with all the issues with the Post Office, should we have our police department or the county sheriff's serve it? Tim said we can have the Colebrook PD serve/take the letter to him that he did not get.

-Insulation update: Already discussed

-Dispatch Invoice: Northern Border Dispatch shorted the Town of Colebrook \$12,194.74, so Becky got permission from the dispatch board to pay the town out of the NH PDIP account \$12,000.00. Sue sent Becky an email asking about the \$194.74 amount owed to the town and Becky said she billed the \$194.74 to the Unified Towns & Gores. Melanie asked did Becky bill it or give it to Dottie to bill? Sue does not know. Greg said, what I think should be done is any financial things that Becky does, the selectboard needs to know because it is our books. Sue asked Melanie if she had requested the \$12,000.00 from Alicia for the transfer. Ray said we never talked about that, I just figured if we billed them, then they must have paid for the calls. Melanie said, so the \$12,000.00 is coming from their PDIP fund to fix that mistake, but they are also going to send a bill for \$194.74? Sue read to Melanie exactly what she sent to Becky and Becky's response was that she had sent a bill to the UTGs for \$194.74 as they will be paying for the per call. Sue said, how would we know that she sent them a bill? Ray asked, is Becky the one sending the bills or is Dottie? Melanie said Dottie is the one sending the bills. Discussion ensued.

**Tabled/Pending Items:**

- A. Working on Ordinances.

**For Approval and Signature:**

- A. Intent to Cut: James Lee, Selectmen signed
- B. Warden Service Bill: Selectmen signed
- C. Abatement for the Town of Stewartstown: they were billed in error for the Resource Officer, Stewartstown School should have been billed.
- D. Veteran's Tax Credit for Daniel Eaton will be for the next meeting, it is incomplete.

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

-Greg has asked many times for the Highway Department to plow in front of the Town Office and they still have not done it. Greg said it is a mess out front on both sides of the street. In front of the town office should look like we care, and it doesn't.

-Heidi advised that she called dispatch on Saturday to have the Highway Department go out and clear the snow in front Jenkins & Newman and on Main Street as people were having to jump over snowbanks to get to the funeral home, including elderly people that shouldn't have to do that.

Heidi also asked dispatch to send out the police to help cross people across the street as there was a lot of traffic on Main Street that day and people were having a hard time crossing. Heidi also brought up the fact that the board would like people to shop locally, but people aren't going to shop local if they have to jump over snowbanks to get to a store. Sue said that whoever is plowing sidewalks now, they are doing a great job, especially on the step up.

-Greg wanted to talk about Highway overtime. Greg is not positive about the personnel rules, but he is sure they say when you are called out, you get paid a certain number of hours. Greg would expect it to be 3am, Sue agreed yes. Greg said that he never used to see a plow truck until 4am and that there was no reason to see a plow truck prior to 4am. He saw a plow truck go by his house at 2:50am a couple times. Greg said, "that needs to stop." Tim asked, "who calls them?" Greg said he would think it was Dispatch that calls, but even if dispatch calls, they should know that they don't go out until 4am, and if the police department calls them, they should know that highway doesn't go out until 4am. NH DOT and the towns used to be in sync and the DOT intends everybody to be home by 11pm and nobody is out before 4am. Ray asked, "so they never go out in the evenings at all." Greg said, not between the hours of 11pm and 4am. Ray said I go to work at 10:30pm at night and I expect the roads to be as the snow was at 3pm in the afternoon on the state roads, so I have really good tires, etc. But what Ray has seen from checking the timesheets and everything is someone is checking the roads at 2am? Ray said he is really doubtful that dispatch is calling them at 2am. Ray said when you start plowing at 2am in the morning and you are coming home at 7am in the morning, there is still snow on the roads sometimes. Sometimes they are out there too early. Greg said when the school decides to send kids home at 1pm because of a snowstorm, the kids are going home on buses that are driving on roads with snow on them because the plows take care of the 7am rush and the 3pm rush. Tim asked on the checking of the roads, each year from November to March the Highway Department has someone checking the roads in the early morning. You want that person to not check roads until 4am? Greg said yes, that is what I would think.

-Greg has one more issue with the Highway Department, they are sanding again. When it is really cold out, there is no reason for them to sand the roads, period. If it is 28 or 30 degrees, then yes, they should sand. But you don't need to sand the flats, sand the back corners and the hills. Greg said, "when it is sanded between "Mike Gilbert's house and my house, they are throwing sand away." Sue said I have already reported Cummings Street, they are using the big truck, and they shouldn't be. Greg said, "we got the little truck for them to use on Cummings Street, that was the major reason they wanted it." Sue said yes, but it is the huge truck that comes to plow that street. Greg said, "he does not think the little truck is running." Sue said, "we had to buy a \$6,000.00 dollar plow for the pickup so they could use that for the little streets, I have never seen them use that." Ray said that was a big part of why we bought that truck, to do the little streets.

-Sue said we have a public hearing on our budget on February 7<sup>th</sup>, we only have one local newspaper. That ad has to be in this Friday and the Friday after. It has to be in by the 20<sup>th</sup> for sure to meet the public hearing rules. Sue was looking at the wrong month on the calendar, so she

said it has to be advertised on the 24<sup>th</sup> by law. Our Public Hearing is on February 5<sup>th</sup>. The ad has to be in on the 24<sup>th</sup>. It has to be to Donna Jordan by the 20<sup>th</sup>. Heidi said the 20<sup>th</sup> is a Holiday, so we will get it to them by the 17<sup>th</sup>.

-Greg wanted to discuss the article in the Colebrook Chronicle about the different Colebrook projects. Greg wanted to know if there was any wrong information in that article. Sue said it was not updated, they just took past stories and put that in. Sue said they should have called and talked to Tim. Tim said Donna called him and he couldn't talk to her and by the time he called her back, she said the paper had already gone out. Greg said the information on the Rec Center was totally wrong. Greg said we need to let them know that when there is information to be put in the newspaper about the Town of Colebrook, that the board needs to be notified far enough in advance to review that article before it goes into your paper.

-Sue said that she cannot continue doing the revenues yet because things are not closed or posted yet. Heidi stated that Maggie has given Melanie work to do, but Melanie has not been logging it into the shared File like she is supposed to, instead she is sending spreadsheets and things to Maggie via email. We need to explain to Melanie that Cohos Advisors want it done on the shared file. Tim advised that Maggie is coming tomorrow, and we will make sure these items get addressed. On our 2023 financials we don't have them yet because the MD&A (Management Discussion and Analysis) needs to be sent to the Auditors from the Town, have you checked with Cohos Advisors yet to see if they help with that? Tim said he spoke with Kendra, and they do assist with that. Sue said this is not something that Melanie does, this is Cohos Advisors, and they should have done this by now. In response to the Auditor's statement of a deficiency in reconciling accounts receivable, Greg said if we got that deficiency in 2023, we will get it again in 2024.

-Sue asked Tim how if he found out how reimbursement is going to work for the Bear Rock Bridge Project from the State of NH. The Town has spent over \$500,000.00 on it and has only been reimbursed some \$200,000.00, who is going to settle that all out so that we know how much to withdraw from our Bridge Capital Reserve Fund for our 20%. Tim said they were waiting to close it out, they received the final information from Trout Unlimited and CMA submitted it. Sue said it should be HEB Engineers, Bear Rock was an HEB project. Sue said CMA came in and checked HEB's work. Tim said Travis Adams was CMA and was out there every day. Greg said, right he was the Inspector. Tim said, no the Inspector was the older guy. Greg said, Alan Davis. Sue said this is an HEB project. Discussion ensued.

-Sue is very concerned about our cash flow, like Northern Borders Security grant has not been billed, Stonegarden hasn't been billed, in months. The Town probably has cash due to us out there for half a million dollars, that is just sitting in someone else's coffers because we have not asked for it.

-Ray said that Sue hit on most of the items he was going to bring up. He was really concerned about the Bear Rock Project. Ray said we have to figure out our Capital Reserves and to me if we



had this project to where we knew how much we used, it would be a good barometer for us on the next two projects. Ray said it is something we need done for the budget, and we are not going to have it. Sue said we will be fine with the bridge money to cover our 20% of red-listed bridge projects. Ray said but we are not fine on our budget here for 2025, and my guess is that we are not going to be. Sue said it is because of all the revenue that is not posted, she is trying to determine what our fund balance is going to be, but she can't. Sue also needs some language from Tim to complete one of the warrant articles on an alarm ordinance.

-Ray asked Tim if there was anything else on the status of the re-evaluations that he had heard. Tim said he has talked to Tammy Letson in Groveton and Tammy has an attorney that is going to look at everything and try to send it out so that it can go out for an RFP, with the understanding that all these entities are going to be paying their fair share. Greg asked if DRA is okay with this? Tim said yes, DRA said anyone can change the date of their cycle revaluation, it can only be moved up, it cannot be moved back. The only problem is finding a company to do it and an assessor up here that is willing. Sue asked, I thought Tammy had someone, Tim said yes, she does. Sue said, so that person will have to put in a proposal based on this RFP. Tim said the RFP will go out, then the company will say yes, we are willing to do it. Sue didn't realize it had to be a company. Tim said yes, the person has to be under an authorized company that is on the DRA list. This lady lives in the area and is a Real Estate Assessor, not a property one, so she needs to be under the company.

-Ray asked about the IRS Letter, Tim advised that we still have not heard anything back from them yet.

-Sue asked if everyone was okay with Article 17 regarding Kearsarge Solar. Ray and Greg said yes.

-Sue asked about the list that was sent in an email about items she wanted by today's meeting. Sue went over her list and asked about each item. Most of the items were things Melanie had to do or answer Sue. Heidi went to get Melanie for Sue. Sue apologized to Melanie for making her reverse the transfer that she did.

**Non-Public Session Under RSA: 91-A:3, II (c):** none

**Determine Date for Next Meeting:** January 27, 2025, at 5:00pm

**Adjourned:** Sue made a motion to adjourn, Ray seconded the motion, motion passed to adjourn meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 3:55pm.

Respectfully submitted,

*Heidi Lawton*

Heidi Lawton, Administrative Assistant, Town of Colebrook