

Colebrook Selectboard Meeting

March 22, 2021

Colebrook Town Hall Courtroom

1:00PM

Selectmen Members Present: Greg Placy, Chairman; Sue Collins, Selectman; Ray Gorman, Selectman.

Staff Present: Sharon Penney, Town Manager; Christine Charman; Assistant to the Town Manager; Melanie Matthieu; Tax Collector; Greg Marchand, Water & Sewer Department.

Others Present: Jake Mardin, The News & Sentinel, The Honorable Donald Dostie, Coos County State Representative.

Present on the 1:30pm TEAMS engineering meeting: Jamie Emery, Emery & Garrett; Bill Straub, CMA Engineers; Paul Schmidt CMA Engineers; Hannah Schur, CMA Engineers. Josh Bouchard of CMA Engineers joined later.

Chairman Greg Placy, called the meeting to order at 1:07pm.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**The Chairman called on Donald Dostie to discuss affordable & available housing challenges in Colebrook (this was #5 under “New Business” on the agenda: Donald Dostie – CH MHP).**

Sharon reported that the Colebrook Mobile Home Park did not get their CDBG grant and that, most likely, the grant was rejected due to a lack of matching funds. In Sharon’s conversation with Joia, Joia mentioned that perhaps the concept of “workforce enhancement” along with “infrastructure improvements” would be a compelling grant application. This would be in connection with the anticipated needs of American Performance Polymers (APP).

Greg Placey noted that Brian LaPerle, Chairman of the School Board, is interested in talking with Rich Renehan of APP regarding housing issues relative to the Colebrook Academy Building and the possibility of using it for workforce housing – both temporary and permanent.

The board members and Donald Dostie discussed the various housing options and challenges relative to the Colebrook Mobile Home Cooperative – particularly in light of the CBDG grant getting declined.

The discussion centered around the Colebrook Academy building and the options for retrofitting that building to allow for at least temporary APP work housing.

Greg mentioned that, in terms of the Colebrook Mobile Home Park, the biggest issues have to do with the water and sewer lines. Greg Marchand responded that the sewer lines were in a lot better shape than the water lines.

There was some concern that even with new trailers placed into the park, some of the existing trailers were not in good condition and would not make for a great “new” housing option.

Mr. Dostie asked about the timing of grant applications and funding and potential project starts.

The group discussed the idea of starting over or starting a new housing project versus rehabbing existing properties (including trailers).

Discussion continued around the various options and the needs of APP for relatively immediate housing as the company continues to increase its capacity and output.

Mr. Dostie noted that perhaps the Colebrook Academy Building was the best option at this point.

Greg Placey and Greg Marchand agreed that the Academy Building could be retrofitted relatively easily for dorm-style living in the short-term.

Sharon noted that the Town is looking at a number of levels when it comes to housing: plant housing for APP, rooms, and several other types of housing. She mentioned that perhaps a 501(c)(3) should be created in order that there be an entity eligible for CBDG funding.

Greg Placey suggested that perhaps Beno (Benoit Lamontagne) could help put together a group of interested parties/people to brainstorm ideas for available/affordable housing.

Sue noted that there are feasibility grant funds available to, for example, look at the Colebrook Academy building’s feasibility for housing.

Mr. Dostie said that he would set up a meeting with Beno. Sharon reminded Mr. Dostie to include APP in any discussions and Greg Placey noted that APP is interested in helping.

Mr. Dostie had follow-up questions on the status of the Colebrook Mobile Home Park and their need for funding and sewer and water upgrades.

AHEAD is not involved with the Mobile Home Park. They now own Monadnock Village. Greg Marchand suggested that perhaps AHEAD could be involved.

Sharon suggested that Donald talk with Ben Frost at the NH Housing Finance Authority. She stated that the situation is in flux with so many housing needs. A group needs to sit down and take a broad-brush analysis of what is needed and what can be received for funding.

Sue commented that she hopes Colebrook can receive some of the American Rescue Plan funds from the Federal Government’s \$1.9 trillion plan.

The board thanked Mr. Dostie for his help, and he departed the meeting.

**Request to meet with the Board: Jamie Emery (Emery & Garrett geohydrologists) with CMA remotely by TEAMS meeting at 1:30pm.**

The select board met with Jamie Emery, Paul Schmidt, Hannah Schur, and Bill Straub in a virtual TEAMS meeting. Jamie presented his plans for salvaging the wells North of Colebrook. He noted that although the wells failed, there was infrastructure there that can be used so his priority would be to “salvage that asset.”

Earlier this morning, Jamie sent a revised proposal which was approximately \$20,000 less than the previous proposal shared with the select board. The cost difference had to do with the proposed drilling technique.

While Jamie did not want to guarantee that the problem could be solved (that the existing infrastructure could be used by drilling new wells within a reasonable distance of wells 5, 6, and 7) he outlined very specifically his proposed plans and anticipated challenges.

For many reasons, an exploration of the site around wells 5, 6, 7 north of town, will be a potentially faster way to more water for the Town, than starting over completely. He did note that his main concern is that so much fill was removed from the site during the failed well construction, that there could be a huge cavity close to well #5.

Jamie and Greg (Placy) discussed the reality of working in mud season. Jamie noted that he will be using a track-mounted “small rig” to start the drilling process.

After Jamie has a chance to look at the site and understand the issues with the soils, sediment, aquifer(s), he will outline a plan of action. DES will be involved at every stage. He noted that just the commencement of this exploration/feasibility is a huge relief to the staff at NHDES.

He reported that he anticipates having “next steps” by mid-May.

Bill Straub and Jamie discussed some specifics relative to the types and thickness of clays; the data to be collected; the capability of the modified drill rig. Jamie noted that, for sure, he would be collecting samples; performing a sieve analysis; determining the size and types of screens to be used.

He is interested in, primarily, water quantity, but, of course, water quality as well. He reported that he is planning for 8” to 12” wells which would pump approximately 100-200 gallons per minute.

After established the possibility of new wells, he would perform a long-term pumping test and go through the DES permitting process. His close work with DES along the way will help prevent any surprises at the end of this study. He noted that DES permitted the original site.

The group discussed more details about the proposal with Jamie answering questions.

Sue Collins made a motion for Emery & Garrett to move forward with the latest proposal, received from Jamie this morning, to begin Phase One in the development of the Town of Colebrook’s North End wells.

Ray Gorman seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Jamie followed up by saying that he would send his start date to Sharon and that he would get someone to Colebrook in the next week to 10 days. He noted he would like to go to the existing wells.

Greg Marchand is going to send Jamie all immediate data from the existing wells.

Jamie is curious about the capacity of the existing wells. Greg Marchand and Greg Placy will be included in emails for planning Jamie’s visit and “tour” of the existing wells.

Sharon said she will get the names of all the people included in the video conference to Jamie as soon as possible.

Jamie exited the video conference.

Paul Schmidt gave a “run-down” of the APP wastewater situation. He reported on the water use, recycling and Nitrogen loads relative to APP.

Relative to Nitrogen loads, Paul noted that the EPA will likely accept 32-35 pounds/day from all Colebrook sources.

Currently, we are at 24 lbs./day. The question, then, is what percentage of the remaining 13 lbs. will APP take up with industrial discharge from their plant?

An overall concentration in the range of 10? Paul said that Colebrook can “provide” this to APP without compromising the Town’s long-term well-being.

If APP’s Nitrogen loads come in somewhere between 10 and 15, there is an acceptable window. The Town needs to plan for future other growth and to have some flexibility.

He reported that with APP’s Phase II plan, the Nitrogen load is less than 5 lbs. per day. But, with the EPA, if this is your permitted number, this is what you get. There is no opportunity for a higher Nitrogen load.

And anything higher than 5 lbs. will risk the Town’s flexibility.

Phase III – if this Phase gets us to 29+ per day, it still leaves 6 or 7 lbs. per day for operational flexibility and growth.

Paul is encouraged and impressed with the APP engineers. They have not argued for higher Nitrogen levels and he notes that this is favorable. He wants APP to get their Nitrogen levels as low as possible and then see if we can work with that number.

He thinks that we have “rounded the corner” on the Nitrogen needs.

Ray Gorman asked about the sewer plan and the significant funding needed for evaluation and upgrades.

Paul noted that the SEARCH grant (for \$30,000) should be decided in mid-April. CMA is laying the groundwork for future funding for 2022.

Sue noted that billions of dollars are supposed to be coming to New Hampshire for infrastructure projects through the 2021 Recovery Act. No details have been made available about this funding yet.

Paul noted that APP has decreased their original outflow projections based on information from Malaysia (on the new machines) and APP’s aggressive recycling plans.

Relative to the IDP (Industrial Discharge Permit). Paul noted that it must be:

- Enforceable

- Outlines limits clearly (says “what we mean”)
- Gives the Town power for quick enforcement.

The CMA staff members exited the meeting after some discussion about potential grant funds. Paul noted that it is important to get through the next steps in order to have a better idea about fund targets.

The Draft Agenda was changed to accommodate Sharon’s request to leave early for a doctor’s appointment.

**Old Business:**

1. **Hughes Road reflectors.** Sharon reported that TJ (Rossitto) is going to install reflectors on the stop sign at the junction with Route 3. Greg Placy said that TJ needs to check with the State of New Hampshire before proceeding. Sharon will let TJ know this.
2. **Cease & Desist Rte. 26.** After some discussion on whether or not the C&D had been served successfully, Chief Rella joined the meeting. Dakota spoke to the son of the store owner when the C&D was served. The board requested Chief Rella’s presence to explain this situation (*see #7 below*).
3. **Employee Handbook Update (*under New Business on the Agenda*).** Sue Collins requested that any changes to the Employee Handbook be highlighted so that it is obvious what needs to be changed. She went on to say that this topic needs to stay on the select board agenda with a specific goal date for completion. With the recent changes, the handbook should go out to all department heads for review and eventual approval.
4. **Landfill DES Report (*under Town Manager Update on Agenda*).** Sharon reported that David Brooks was notified that the annual DES landfill report must be completed by a P/E. David has been filling out this report for years. Sharon noted that Ron Guerin has the name of someone who could do it.

Greg Placy wanted to know if David had received anything in writing to this effect or was it just hearsay? He noted that it may be possible to agree to this requirement for next year’s report.

David Brooks will be invited to the next select board meeting for further discussion.

5. **NBRC Letter of Intent Due March 26, 2021 (*under Town Manager Update on Agenda*).** Sharon reported that the Letter of Intent has a maximum request of \$1,000,000. The Colebrook Letter of Intent will include this amount.
6. **Dan Ouimette quote for aggregate 2021. (*under Town Manager Update on Agenda*).** The board took no action on this item and requested the 2020 price list in order to compare with the quote. This item will be included on the next meeting agenda.

Signatures Needed:

Cemetery lot – Crawford (signed)

Cemetery lot – Frizzell (signed)

Chuck Boutot - part-time prosecutor appointment. Upon entering the meeting to discuss the Rte. 26 Cease & Desist situation, Chief Rella reported that he has known Chuck Boutot for 30 years and that this is a “turn-key” appointment. He noted that Chuck will be a tough prosecutor. Boutot is replacing Chief Rella.

- 7. Continuation of Cease & Desist Order.** Chief Rella reported that the Cease & Desist Order was served to the store owner on March 20, 2021. The officer was able to contact the owner and she was cooperative. She noted that she was waiting for approval from NH DOT to approve parking on Route 26. She has the Town’s paperwork. She reports that she has not really been selling anything.

Greg Placy was skeptical about the NH DOT statement because they will not allow backing out onto a State Highway (Rte. 26).

Sharon sent a registered letter following up on the C&D. She read its contents to the select board. Sharon will review the NH RSA relative to this situation.

They suggested that she take her sign down – it is down, but the “OPEN” sign is still lit up in the window. The police department will follow up.

Chief Rella left the meeting.

### **New Business:**

- 1. Abatement request – Eva and Terry Guy.** This request was discussed among the select board members, Melanie Mathieu, and Greg Marchand. Because the increased water bill was due to a leaking toilet (which Greg helped the owner identify and fix), the select board denied the abatement request.
- 2. Library Trustee appointment – Terri Rosi (*under Town Manager update on Agenda*).** In Sharon’s absence the board was unclear about this agenda item.
- 3. Gary Fournier – Map 109 Lot 60 McClure.** Gary left for the day. The select board would like him to review this topic with them at the next meeting.
- 4. Marsh-ATV trail access permit.** Greg Placy made a motion to allow Michael and Lisa Marsh 1.5 miles of access on Reed Road from their driveway to the trailhead. Sue Collins seconded the motion which passed unanimously.
- 5. Water Meter Project update.** Greg Marchand gave an update on the water meter project. He and Ryan from Stiles will be going out on Thursday and Friday of this week to inspect all meters with problems. In the meantime, Dottie and Melanie are calling all those people with problem meters to let them know of this impending inspection. Greg reported that they are making a lot of good progress.

He noted that on April 2, 2021 he will pull all the data that they have on water use and then Greg M will do a ride and read on any outliers. He reported that by the end of the next full week the bills will be printed and ready to be sent – if not sent. He reported that 99% of the calls about bills (from customers) have been resolved.

Stiles wants 99% project completion before allowing customers to log into the software and monitor their own accounts. Greg Placy asked again about having a few test customers to use the software to identify issues and report back before the software is live for everyone.

Greg M replied that Stiles can only do a 100% go-live. Altogether there are 90 meters that Ryan and Greg M are going to inspect.

**Regular Agenda:**

1. **Review edited draft minutes 3-5-21, 3-8-21, 3-12-21.** Sue made a motion to accept the minutes as edited for March 5, 2021, March 8, 2021, and March 12, 2021. Ray Gorman seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.
2. **Sherry Washburn Property.** Mel reported that the letter was ready to go and that the repurchase price is \$57,588.72. Sherry and Suzanne will receive the letter via Certified Mail. Tammy recommends that the Town wait a little past the 90 days required, to 105 days. Sue thanked Melanie for her work on the letter.
3. **Old fire call bills.** Sue noted, based on a report from Dottie, that the Town's total "old" accounts receivable was \$14,096.32. Sue is going to coordinate a meeting with Tammy, Dottie, Melanie, and Sue to go over the list and make decisions and recommendations about write-offs. Christine and Dottie will work on the fire call bills and letters to accompany the bills.
4. **MOU with Jonathan and Amber Dodge.** Tabled for Sharon's presence.
5. **Gate at Town Forest – burn area.** Tabled for Sharon's presence
6. **2021 2% COLA. (under New Business on Agenda).** Sue made a motion to approve a 2% Cost of Living raise for Town Employees effective April 3, 2021. Ray seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Ray noted that the select board recognized a lot of people at town meeting, and that he would like to recognize Jonathan Frizzell for Jonathan's work on the Hydrosorce mediation. The select board agreed to send Jonathan a thank you note on behalf of the Town of Colebrook.

Christine presented some information from Caleb Inter-Faith Caregivers based in Lancaster, NH. This is a non-profit organization that uses local volunteers to offer help to seniors with the goal of allowing seniors to stay in their own homes. The group would like to begin establishing a Colebrook volunteer base to offer services to Colebrook residents. If this local start-up is

successful, then Caleb Inter-Faither Caregivers will present data as well as a request for money from the Town in the March 2022 budget process. The select board agreed to this concept.

Sue brought up the Hazardous Waste Day program and noted that there is money in the budget (\$4,300) for this. Mel is going to contact North Country Council about other towns' participation.

Sue noted that the select board needs to sign a Letter of Intent. The select board was clear that the Town of Colebrook will not be a host site but will offer the Hazard Waste Day to Colebrook residents only – upon proof of residency (dump sticker and current driver's license).

Mel will take care of this.

**Regarding Capital Reserve Funds:** Sue made a motion in accordance with 2021 Warrant Article 22, that the capital reserve funds for the 250<sup>th</sup> celebration and the funds for the Colby Street Ditch fund be discontinued and all monies therein be moved to the general fund.

Ray Gorman seconded the motion.

Motion passed unanimously.

A copy of these signed minutes needs to go to Melanie as a follow up to this motion and vote.

Sue brought up that the City of Manchester is reported to be receiving a total of \$44,000,000 in American Rescue Funds (50% this year, 50% next year). Colebrook is slated to receive approximately \$210,000.

She mentioned the Elon Musk Starlink project which promises to bring broadband to rural communities/areas, of which Northern Coos County is one. She wondered if the group that Sharon is working with will have access to this Starlink project and resources.

Sue made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Christine F. Charman*

Christine Charman

Transcriber