

Colchester's Weekly Town News

For the Week of April 26, 2013

Preamble: "Colchester, Vermont, located on Lake Champlain's Malletts Bay, is a diverse, civic-minded community endowed with a rich heritage of commercial, agricultural, recreational, and educational gifts. Proud of the quality of life already enjoyed here, the people of Colchester seek to build upon this foundation to ensure economic prosperity, recreational opportunity, and an entrepreneurial spirit for future generations" – Vision Statement, Heritage Project, 2012.

By no means a total representation of all the work performed by the Town the following information highlights some activities which occurred:

Burnham Memorial Library: Hannah Peacock, Assistant Director

This week, we've had our typical schedule of tutoring, music, story times, and yoga. The big news at the library is that the candidates for our director position will be making public presentations next Tuesday (April 30) and Thursday (May 2), at 1:30 pm. After their short talks on "Libraries in the 21st century", there will be an opportunity for questions by the public. We'll also be providing forms to gather feedback. Next week, our Intergenerational Dessert Book Discussion (Monday at 6:30 pm) will discuss *The Running Dream*, our Adult Book Discussion Group (Tuesday at 1 pm) will discuss *The Boy Who Couldn't Sleep and Never Had To*, and our DCF Book Discussion Group (Wednesday at 6:30 pm) will discuss *The Mighty Miss Malone*.

IT – Alice Greig – Technology Department

This week the department continues to work on the installation of new software to be used by the Planning & Zoning and Public Works departments. There were also hardware issues and general technical help as well as server software and hardware updates.

Police Department –Chuck Kirker, Police Chief

During the last week the department handled 218 incidents ranging from a death investigation to animal problems. Traffic stops accounted 32.5 percent of the total in our continuing efforts to make our highways safe. The evening shift which ran from 6:00 PM April 24 through 6:00 AM this morning was particularly busy. Over 20 incidents were investigated which included arrests for domestic violence, a weapons offence, an arrest on a warrant and a DUI where the operator was involved in a crash on College Parkway at 5:25 AM. The operator was found to be over three times the legal limit, he told the officer he was on his way to work.

Rescue & Technical Rescue Squads - Amy Akerlind, Rescue Chief

For further information or comment, please call June Campbell at 264-5509.

Rescue responded to 18 EMS calls, and transported 15 people to the hospital. While on one of these calls, we had to turn another one over.

Nothing to report from the Technical Rescue Team this week.

Parks and Recreation – Glen Cuttitta, Director

In the Recreation Division, this week is school vacation and you would think that our department is on vacation also. No, we have lots of programs running such as the April Vacation Camp that takes place at Malletts Bay School. Most of our ACE staff work this camp and do a fantastic job keeping kids active and having fun during vacation week. The 250th Charter Day committee will be meeting and continuing planning for this awesome event on June 8th. The committee still needs volunteers so if you are interested please contact our office at 264-5640. With April vacation here start thinking about summer and check out our website at www.colchestervt.gov

In the Parks Division, with April School Vacation here lots of kids and families will be flocking to use the parks and they will be ready! The staff will be working on eliminating the curbing on the end lines of the lower Bayside tennis courts. This will eliminate a tripping hazard that has been there for many, many years. New windscreens will be arriving and when they do staff will get them up. Some resurfacing on the Causeway will need to be done as over the winter there were a few spots that water breached the armor rock. This will be easy work that staff can do internally. Be sure to get your bike out and go for a ride this week.

Public Works – Bryan Osborne, Director

Today is the last day of work for Gary Jennings, a 41 year veteran of the Highway Division within Public Works. Reflecting upon the legacy that Gary leaves behind, I believe it would be his defining characteristics. Over the past 22 years which I have had the pleasure of working with Gary, I have learned that these characteristics are dedication, commitment, and leadership. Whether Gary realizes it or not, he has also been a teacher to all of us on a broad range of issues beyond highway maintenance. Because of this, his time here has made a difference, and the Town of Colchester is a better place for his 41 years of remarkable service to the community and its citizens. While he will be missed, he has helped prepare us for the future, and we wish he and his wife Brenda all the best in their well-deserved retirement.

Planning & Zoning - Sarah Hadd, Director

Nothing to report.

Clerk's Office – Karen Richard, Town Clerk

The revote for the school budget has been scheduled for Tuesday May 7th. Voters in District 9-1 will vote at the Meeting House on Main St, voters in District 9-2 will vote at Colchester High School in the gymnasium. You can stop by the Clerk's office to vote early or email or phone in to request an absentee ballot. The last day to register for this election is May 1st by 5 pm.

For further information or comment, please call June Campbell at 264-5509.

If you live in District 9-2 (bay area of town) you should consider voting at the High School so that you can enjoy the wonderful artwork that will be on display in the gymnasium. The election coincides with the district-wide art show. The displays will include art projects from the kindergarteners to the high school students.

If you were fortunate enough to vote at the Meeting House in March you were able to view a quilt show sponsored by our local quilt group which is led by our very talented Fran Allyn, a retired art teacher. Please take the opportunity to enjoy the many talents we have in our community!

Assessor – Bob Vickery, Assessor

The preparations for the 2013 Grand List is ongoing. We are conducting field inspections on all properties that have building permits. These inspections will continue until all neighborhoods in town have been reviewed. The data collected in the field will then be entered into the evaluation software and reviewed. Notices of any changes to assessments due to permits resulting in physical changes to a property will be sent out at the end of May 2013.

Finance – Joan Boehm (Asst. Town Manager/CFO)

Will Health Exchanges affect the Town of Colchester? Health Exchanges are starting on January 1, 2014. This is the mandate from the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010. For many States, including Vermont, the exchanges will be run by the State. Vermont's exchange will be called *Vermont Health Connect*. Initially, the exchange will cover employers that have fewer than 50 employees and individuals. The Town of Colchester currently meets the definition of a large group employer and does not have to begin using the Exchange until 2017. We will be monitoring the new system carefully as it gets underway.

Town Manager's Office – Al Voegele, Town Manager

Social media, the telephone, Skype, and TV broadcasting don't come close to replicating talking directly person to person. I bring this up because the Town has a Governance Committee which is studying the Town Charter to see if it needs revision and whether the Town should consider changing the way it governs itself. Democratic self-governance requires in person dialogue between people. Communication between humans is multifaceted – it includes not only speech but also facial expressions, pheromones, physical stances and more. Technology just doesn't convey the subtle messages people convey in expressing their thoughts. The subject of self-governance is complicated and difficult requiring people's observation/perception of expression to assimilate what is being discussed. The Governance Committee is doing all it possibly can to be "transparent" but that sadly is not enough. The Committee needs people to attend its meetings and join the conversation about whether the Town needs a manager or a mayor or both; whether the community should be organized as a town or city; whether the community should have wards for electing its selectpersons or alderpersons. The answers to these questions will be the means by which future budgets will be established, how taxes will be distributed and how regulations governing all sorts of people's behavior will be enacted and enforced.

For further information or comment, please call June Campbell at 264-5509.

Now is the time to stop complaining about how things are and have been done and participate in establishing a more satisfactory way of self-governance. The Governance Committee meets the second and fourth Thursdays from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM in the Kirker Community Room located in the Police Department. Please take time to join these debates.

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