

Colchester's Weekly Town News

For the Week of February 1, 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 had our adult book discussion on *Killing Lincoln*; for next month, we’re reading *Swimming to Antarctica*. For kids, we had an assortment of story times, music, and tutoring. Next week is the start of the AARP Volunteer Tax Aide service, which assists seniors and lower-income Vermonters with their taxes. The sessions take place on Saturdays through April 13 (except Feb. 16); call to set up an appointment. We are still waiting on paper copies of most Federal and all State tax forms. Lastly, the request for applicants for the library director position has been posted - you can find more information at the Town’s Human Resources Vacancies page (<http://colchestervt.gov/HR/hrVacancies.shtml>).

IT – Alice Greig – Technology Department

Updates, backups and warnings dominated this week. Servers are backed up to tape every day and one of the practices is to check whether the backup was successful (the scheduled backup completed, the software shows that all data was backed up and the backup tape was ejected from the drive). Also of importance is to determine whether the tape is in good condition and can allow files to be restored from the tape back to the server. A test file is saved on each server and then a test 'restore' is performed.

The Department of Homeland Security, FBI and other security related entities have notified us to disable or remove Oracle's JAVA software from computers. This is important not only for the town's computers and network, but also for home computers. Hackers have found a way to exploit JAVA and to install malicious software and malware on a computer. The software then may be able to steal identities or use (unknown to you) your computer to join a botnet that shuts down networks or performs denial of service attacks. To learn how to disable or remove JAVA from your computer you can go to your favorite search site and enter "Remove JAVA" as your search topic.

Police Department –Chuck Kirker, Police Chief

During the last week the police department investigated 307 incidents of which the majority were traffic stops. The winter weather can impact driving conditions and motorists should be aware of the fact that you can be charged even if you are driving the posted speed limit, if your speed is “greater than is reasonable and prudent under the conditions” (Title 23 Section 1081 Vermont Statutes) We are

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striving to increase your safety on our roads where we have seen an increase in crashes with injuries over the last year. Please use caution and drive appropriately for the conditions. Let's work together to make Colchester's roadways safe.

Rescue & Technical Rescue Squads - Amy Akerlind, Rescue Chief

Rescue responded to 22 EMS calls this week, and transported 13 people to the hospital. Nothing to report from the Technical Rescue Team this week.

Parks and Recreation – Glen Cuttitta, Director

Winter Carnival is finally here! Despite the lack of snow there is a ton of fun activities for you and your family. Starting with the Talent Show on Friday night. Because of the numbers of people wanting to see the show, we have a live feed of the show in the cafeteria so that everyone can see what talent there is in Colchester. Saturday is chock full of activities inside and out. To get the schedule visit our web page at www.colchestervt.gov.

Two weeks from when the carnival ends the summer program guide will be headed to the printers and in your mailboxes by the beginning of March. If you have a child interested in playing youth lacrosse the deadline for registering is growing closer every day.

The interesting winter weather has led to some opportunities in the parks to get some non-snow work done such as trimming trees. But when the cold weather comes we are working on the skating rinks and when snow falls grooming xc trails.

Public Works – Bryan Osborne, Director

The department has been working on the development of the 2013 paving program expected to begin during the early summer months. The program is managed through the use of a computer program developed by the U.S. Army Corps that focuses on the pavement condition index, (PCI), as a measure of the overall pavement condition. As the deterioration rate of pavement occurs more rapidly with the passage of time, managing the Town's transportation system based upon the PCI significantly lowers the cost of maintaining the Towns roadways. As an example, paving a roadway before the PCI becomes too low would typically allow such strategies as a simple 1 ½" overlay yielding a typical life of approximately 7 years. If it costs approximately \$120,000 to overlay a mile of roadway, this yields an annualized cost of about \$17,000/yr. However, if maintenance is deferred and the PCI is allowed to become too low, simple rehabilitation strategies such as overlays are no longer an option. Instead, more aggressive strategies such as full depth reclamations are necessary to restore the pavement back to an acceptable condition. Although these more aggressive strategies will typically yield a longer roadway life of 10-12 years, the cost of this particular strategy would typically be around \$440,000 for the same mile of roadway yielding an annualized cost of about \$37,000 to \$44,000/yr.

Planning & Zoning - Sarah Hadd, Director

The Planning and Zoning Department has been working on file maintenance over the past week and preparing for new software to be deployed this spring. The new software will increase efficiency and transparency and allow for the application and processing of permits online. Over the next few weeks,

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the Department will be checking compliance with gas stations to ensure that canopy sprinkler systems are being maintained. Please be reminded that as of January 1, 2012 all commercial buildings must maintain a fire department lock box on the exterior of the building with current keys.

Clerk's Office – Karen Richard, Town Clerk

Did you know that it is a state law to license your dog? Often when a dog is picked up by the animal control officer we find that the dog has been vaccinated, but not licensed. When the owner comes in to claim the dog they are not aware that the dog should be licensed. In order to license your dog you need to bring a copy of the current rabies vaccination certificate. The fees are: \$11.00 for neutered and \$14 for a non-neutered dog until April 1st. The fees increase after April 1st. As of this date we have registered 34 dogs. A year ago we had registered 97 dogs. Please remember to stop by and license your dog! Call us at 264-5500 if you are not able to get into the office during the day.

Assessor – Bob Vickery, Assessor

Nothing new to report.

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

This week the emphasis is on the services the Town of Colchester offers in the Administrative Services category. This category includes the Manager's Office, the Finance Department, the Assessor's Office, the Town Clerk and Treasurer's Department and the Planning and Zoning Department.

Administrative Services make up 23% of the FY 14 budget for a total of about \$2.3 million.

Some of the services offered by this segment of the budget are as follows:

Planning & Zoning

- * Oversee development and construction
- * Help with real estate closings
- * Flood Insurance assistance
- * Wastewater Revolving Loan assistance
- * Land use planning for economic growth and sustainability
- * Handle citizen questions and comments
- * Strategic planning for Town's future

Town Clerk & Treasurer

- * Tax billing & collections
- * Licensing
- * Land & vital record recording
- * Elections
- * Passport processing
- * Notary Services
- * Handle citizen questions and comments

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Assessor's Department

- * Appraise and maintain physical data on all properties in Town
- * Maintain ownership data of all current landowners
- * Updates 911 maps for emergency responders
- * Historical record of land values
- * Handle citizen questions and comments

Manager's Department

- * Handle citizen questions and comments
- * Supervises all operations of Town
- * Provides leadership in developing Town goals and policies

Town Manager's Office – Al Voegele, Town Manager

Once again the Town is entering the advent of Town Meeting Day. Over the past 13 years, the rhetoric has changed significantly from cordial and respectful to hostile and disrespectful. Whether positive or negative these conversations over the years have always been by a minority of the citizenry. More recently, the printed word whether it is on Front Page Forum, the Colchester Sun or blogs on the Burlington Free Press, has been portraying Colchester very negatively. Freedom of Speech is and remains important. So too is the image of Colchester important to us all if we wish this community to thrive and be a town of which we all can be proud. Hopefully, in the coming four or five weeks before Town Meeting Day, our most thoughtful quiet citizens will make an effort to share their thoughts, for or against any issue, in the printed and social media forums modeling dialogue that reintroduces cordial and respectful discussion. The issues facing this Town are significant. Understanding of them requires factual knowledge. Erroneous statements about alleged tax increases or Town actions being “illegal” are just not factual or true. But unless people take the time to seek out the information and report their independent findings to the public unfortunately many people will choose to believe factually inaccurate information and untruths. Democracy requires an informed electorate. Solving Colchester's problems for the greater good requires understanding the facts that define the Town's difficulties.