

## **Colchester's Weekly Town News**

For the Week of February 15, 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 at the library, we’ve had programs for adults, children, and teens, including story time (four days a week), music, film crew, and yoga. There is still room in our free one-on-one tutoring program, which pairs students from the Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (Colchester campus) with students in grades 1-6, to work on reading, math, and science (tutoring is available in other grades for certain subjects). It takes place on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings, and Saturday afternoons. Parents, keep an eye out for the flyer that will be sent home with students soon.

On Saturday (Feb. 16), we have our Winter Book Sale, from 9 am-3 pm; it will include all kinds of books, as well as music and movies, and takes place at the library; for more information, call us at 879-7576. If you have an ereader or tablet, did you know that you can borrow ebooks through the library? Check out our web page at <http://colchestervt.gov/Library/libraryDLAudio.shtml> or stop by the library to learn more. If you’re looking for tax forms, we’re still waiting for the 1040 instruction booklet (we have the forms), but most other Federal and State forms are available. Finally, we’d like to remind everyone that the library will be closed next Monday (Feb. 18) for Presidents Day.

### **IT – Alice Greig – Technology Department**

This was a week of operating system and software updates. There were 57 updates for the Windows operating system on our work stations and JAVA and Flash security updates to contend with. Many times these updates can cause havoc with programs and settings already installed but this time the interruptions seemed to be minimum.

We also were able to replace a broken networked printer with a surplus printer from the Burnham Library which saved us several hundred dollars. Whenever possible we use older hardware in situations that don't require the newest technology.

### **Police Department –Chuck Kirker, Police Chief**

Nothing to report.

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

## **Rescue & Technical Rescue Squads - Amy Akerlind, Rescue Chief**

Nothing to report.

## **Parks and Recreation – Glen Cuttitta, Director**

In the Recreation Division, staff is putting the final touches on the Spring/Summer Program Brochure which will be sent to the printers on Friday and should arrive in mailboxes by the first or second week of March. Once you receive the brochure you can register in person or online. Preparations are also being made for the Family Snow Shoe Dinner which will take place on Friday, February 22<sup>nd</sup> at Airport Park. If you are interested please register soon as space is quickly filling up. This is the last weekend of Youth Basketball. We would like to thank all the volunteers who made this season a success. For more information on our current programs and events visit [www.colchestervt.gov](http://www.colchestervt.gov)

In the Parks Division, with little snow and warm temperatures, outdoor work on trees and summer planning is taking place. In a few weeks we will start advertising for our seasonal park staff. The seasonal park staff typically start around the first of April and continue through mid-November. It appears that we will be returning back to more seasonal temperatures this weekend so be sure to visit Airport Park for skating or skiing.

## **Public Works – Bryan Osborne, Director**

The Town's current overweight permits expire on March 31 and renewal reminders have been sent to almost 200 companies. No vehicles weighing more than 24,000 lbs. are allowed on town roads unless a valid overweight permit has been approved. The form can be found on the Town's website.

Meadow Drive Ditch Project - Recently completed draft revisions for the plans based on the joint meeting in December with State and Federal agencies. Updates have been relayed to Wetlands Consultant for revisions to the wetlands permit. Revisions of right-of-way plans proceeding to address state and federal regulatory constraints. Preparing easement documents and contacting property owners to discuss right-of-way requirements.

LED Lighting Upgrade Project - GMP started installs last week with work beginning in the following general locations: Edgewood Estates off Blakely, along Main St. from Roosevelt to East, most subdivisions north of Main St. west of East Rd., most of Canyon Estates off of Main, Bay Rd., and areas off of Williams Drive.

Exit 16 Sidewalks - Received inspection services qualification packages from interested consultants. A non-mandatory pre-bid construction meeting was held at the town offices on Tuesday at 10:00 to discuss the project with interested contractors.

River Road Sidewalks - Consultant has provided additional information regarding right-of-way which is currently under staff review.

Water Storage Tank - Consultant has received 2012 water usage data and is finalizing proposed tank volume.

Fort Ethan Allen Sidewalks - Scope of work sent to consultant for a cost proposal and schedule to complete the work.

West Lakeshore Drive Shared Use Path - Draft RFQ for design engineer services completed. Following additional in-house review, documents will be sent to VTrans for review and comment.

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Misc. maintenance operations over the past week have included sanding/salted of all roads Friday, Saturday, Monday night and Tuesday, opened up frozen ditches and culverts at multiple locations, removing roadside debris, and making improvements to supplied air systems used for performing preventative maintenance of Town equipment.

### **Planning & Zoning - Sarah Hadd, Director**

Supplement 32, form based code for Severance Corners, was approved by the Select Board on February 12<sup>th</sup>. These changes should stimulate development at Severance Corners and implement an economic development goal of the Heritage Plan. A presentation of the Department's Strategic Plan was also provided on the 12<sup>th</sup> to the Select Board. This plan can be downloaded from our department's website linked from [colchestervt.gov](http://colchestervt.gov). The plan details what our department does, permit revenue, and why and how we carry out the regulatory process. Since the completion of the Evergreen study in 2009 our department has decreased staffing levels and become more self-sustaining through user fees following the recommendations of the Evergreen recommendations. If you are interested in the budget, please take a minute to review our plan.

### **Clerk's Office – Karen Richard, Town Clerk**

Election Day is March 5, 2013. The ballots have arrived. You can stop by the office to vote, you can carry your ballot home to vote or you can request that we mail you a ballot. You cannot carry someone else's ballot out of the office, only your own. The deadline to register to vote for this election is February 27<sup>th</sup>.

On Monday March 5<sup>th</sup> there is a Town /School Meeting at the Colchester High School auditorium. The meeting begins at 7:30 p.m. Prior to the meeting there is a community dinner, provided by the Town and School officials. Guests are asked to bring a dessert to share. The dinner begins at 6 p.m. Please consider attending both events. It is an opportunity to hear an update from your legislators while you eat, and then to attend the informational meeting re: the budgets. We look forward to seeing you!

### **Assessor – Bob Vickery, Assessor**

The preparations for the 2013 Grand List is ongoing. We are now inspecting all properties that have had physical changes. These inspections will continue until all neighborhoods in town have been reviewed. As well as site inspection and assessing all new construction, we conduct ratio studies to ensure all properties are assessed at the same market level. By assessing all properties to the same market level we will have a fair and equitable property tax.

From February 26 to March 5 I will be out of the office welcoming a new member to my family. Donna O'Connor the Assistant Assessor will be available to assist with any assessment questions.

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

Over the last 20 years we have had a downward trend of municipal operating budget increases. The FY14 budget increase of 2.29% is the lowest increase in 20 years with the exception of FY 12. There is a downward trend of budget increases over the last 20 years. The average increase over all of the last 20

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years is 5.3%. The average increase during the highest five years from FY 01 to FY 05 was 8.1%. In FY 14 the increase is 2.29%. The rate of inflation when the budget was prepared was 3.11%.

Examples of operating budget increases in previous years are as follows:

FY 91	7.0%
FY 94	5.9%
FY 97	8.7%
FY 99	11.4%
FY 01	8.9%
FY 02	9.0%
FY 03	7.1%
FY 04	8.2%
FY 05	5.6%
FY 08	5.0%
FY 10	3.3%
FY 11	3.6%
FY 12	0.4%
FY 13	2.4%
<b>FY 14</b>	<b>2.3%</b>

#### **Town Manager's Office – Al Voegele, Town Manager**

The 91<sup>st</sup> Annual Town and School Report for the period July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012 is now available on line (<http://www.colchestervt.gov/Manager/TownReports.shtml>) and in print at the Town Offices. The Editor of this report is June Campbell, the Administrative Assistant to the Town Manager's Office. She has done an exemplary job in bringing this edition to the public. This report provides a comprehensive analysis of both the School District and the Municipal Government. It also gives insight into the operations of a school system and a municipal government. On the cover are pictures donated to the Town for this report by four very talented artistic photographers. Before Town Meeting Day, I do hope and urge every voter to read this report. The issues confronting both the School District and the Town require an informed electorate.

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