

Colchester's Weekly Town News

For the Week of January 11, 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

Greetings from Burnham Library. Last week at the library, we said farewell to our Director, Rubi Simon, who is headed to a new position at the Fletcher Free Library. This week, we've had our usual programs, including the teen writing group, adult yoga, and preschool music. Next week, our full slate of story times start up again – for preschoolers on Mondays and Thursdays, for toddlers on Tuesdays, and drop-in story time on Saturdays. There will also be another session on planning for college costs on Wednesday, Jan. 16, at 6:30 pm; it's put on by 123College.com. Finally, starting on Jan. 23, we'll have one-on-one tutoring on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays - call 878-313 to sign-up.

IT – Alice Greig – Technology Department

Plenty of updates and upgrades occurred this week which caused small problems with unrelated software and user's desktops. When a computer has a problem and we have to troubleshoot and eventually solve the issue, it quite often will change the look or arrangement of shortcuts on a computer's desktop. This is something that a common occurrence and although it is annoying for the user, it can't be helped. Each person's desktop is setup the way they like and unfortunately it is their job to arrange things again after the computer has been repaired. Thankfully for the technology staff, our town employees are very understanding when this happens.

Police Department –Chuck Kirker, Police Chief

On January 1, 2013 the police department began using a new Computer Aided Dispatch/Records Management System, commonly referred to as CAD/RMS. Our new system, VALCOUR, was developed in a collaborative effort by the Burlington Police Department, Colchester Police Department, South Burlington Police Department, the University of Vermont, and California based CrossWind Technologies.

CAD/RMS is extremely important to law enforcement agencies as it is the method we capture and manage all records having to do with calls from the time they are received until the a case is completed. In addition to Burlington and Colchester, South Burlington, Winooski, UVM Police, Middlebury, Milton,

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Chittenden County Sheriff's Department, and the Department of Motor Vehicle Enforcement Division have transitioned to VALCOUR.

VALCOUR provides our employees with the tools to efficiently capture the necessary information while saving time and money. It eliminates repetitive data entry, and will allow these police agencies to move seamlessly to the next technological advancement, E-ticketing. No longer will data need to be physically entered into the CAD/RMS system. A swipe of a driver's license and all information will be electronically input into the database, saving a great deal of time.

Rescue & Technical Rescue Squads - Amy Akerlind, Rescue Chief

Call volume had seemed to slow down that last couple of weeks of the year. However, things have picked up with 33 calls since the start of the new year. We transported 21 people to the hospital, and turned over 5 calls while on another call.

The Tech Team has had a few call outs, most of which have been cancellations before leaving the station.

Parks and Recreation – Glen Cuttitta, Director

Planning for the 30th Colchester Winter Carnival is in full gear. The carnival flyer and bracelets should be out in Colchester stores and our department by the beginning of next week. Winter Carnival is February 1st and 2nd. Colchester Youth Basketball started their games this past Saturday and the season will continue until February school break. Registrations for Colchester Youth Lacrosse are steadily making their way to the office. If you have any questions about Youth Lacrosse contact Kelly McGinley at 264-5646. Winter Programs are in full swing so check out our website at www.colchestervt.gov

Program Coordinators, Jenn and Kelly are working on the Spring/Summer Program Brochure. If you have any talents or skills that you would like to share with the community please contact them. Also, if there are programs that you would like to see offered please call our office.

In the Parks, Cross Country track grooming has been done at Airport Park. We apologize for the delay as our snow machine had to go into the shop for an unexpected repair. As soon as this warming pattern ends we will plan to get the ice skating rink up.

As always if you have any questions please call 264-5640

Public Works – Bryan Osborne, Director

The department is working with the CCMPO and researchers from the University of Vermont to better understand how transportation policies and investments affect traffic speeds throughout the transportation system. As traffic speed continues to be a concern for residents throughout the county, the goal would be to ensure our policies and investments working toward addressing those concerns.

As part of the Circ. Alternatives process, we have initiated the Colchester Essex Network Analysis, (CENTS), to develop mitigation strategies for the Severance Road and Rt. 2A corridors which are currently receiving unintended traffic from the partially constructed Circ. Highway. The goal would be to

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develop a series of projects that can be forwarded to the legislature for funding as a part of the 3rd and final round of implementation projects next fall.

Design and permitting work for the replacement of the water storage tank on Water Tower Hill has now begun. Additional water storage is needed to allow the continued build out of the Severance Corners Growth Center.

A grant application is now being finalized for the West Lakeshore Drive Shared-Use path project. The application to the state's Transportation Alternatives Program is requesting a total of \$300,000 in federal funds. The department has previously acquired approximately \$140,000 in federal grants for this project.

Planning & Zoning - Sarah Hadd, Director

The Department of Planning and Zoning has deemed the structure at 1149 E. Lakeshore Drive unsafe and a possible liability to adjacent properties. As the property owner has been un-responsive in making the structure safe, the Department is soliciting bids to remove the structure until 4PM on January 25, 2013. Access to the property for bidding purposes can be arranged by contacting us at 265-5606.

Clerk's Office – Karen Richard, Town Clerk

Happy New Year from the Clerk's Office! With the New Year comes the request for tax forms. We have not yet received the tax booklets from the State of Vermont. They should be here in the next week or two. If you would like a statement of your property taxes paid for last year please stop by, or call or email the request. We are happy to email the statements.

Please note – a change in filing your state income tax: For the past few years you did not have to file a homestead form unless you moved to a new home. This year the State is again requiring each household to file a homestead form, which enables the residential tax rate to be applied to your tax bill. The homestead form will be available in the tax booklet from the State of Vermont. The Tax Department should be notifying you regarding this change.

Assessor – Bob Vickery, Assessor

Nothing new to report.

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

FY 12 Financial Statement Highlights

The auditors will be presenting the results of our audit on January 22, 2013. The General Fund ended FY 12 with an excess of expenditures over revenues of \$350,192. This is \$96,724 less than the planned deficit of \$446,916. A budget deficit was planned to reduce the Fund Balance and in turn reduce the size of the property tax increase. The largest variances from the FY 12 budget were as follows:

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Difference</u>	<u>Reason</u>
Select Board Contingency	\$50,000	\$0	\$50,000	Matching funds not needed for grants
Comm. Dev. Prof Services	\$0	\$37,500	(\$37,500)	Preparation of Comm.Development Plan
Police Salaries	\$1,707,460	\$1,673,484	\$33,976	Officers deployed

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Police Overtime	\$229,621	\$158,130	\$71,491	Scheduling efforts to reduce OT
Police Gasoline	\$55,540	\$75,568	(\$20,028)	Higher prices than budgeted
Emergency Road Repairs	\$0	\$55,569	(\$55,569)	Tropical Storm Irene

Town Manager’s Office – Al Voegele, Town Manager

This week marks the beginning of the Vermont General Assembly legislative session. Keeping track of what happens in the General Assembly is important to us all as taxpayers and citizens. Here are several means to follow what happens in Montpelier. First, the Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce sponsors “Legislative Breakfasts” are on January 7th , February 11th and March 11th. These meetings host the Governor, State Government officials and Legislative leaders discussing legislative issues. These meetings will be broadcasted on Channel 17 and www.CH17.TV.

Secondly, Channel 17 will produce weekly “Under the Dome”live broadcasts that are “live” meaning one can see these programs on TV or over the Internet as they are occurring and in which the view can call (862-3966) the station and speak directly with a legislator. These programs will be held every Monday beginning at 11:00 AM from January 28 to the adjournment of the Legislature in May or June.