

Colchester's Weekly Town News

For the Week of December 21, 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

Despite the holiday, this was a full week at the library, with a full slate of story times and tutoring. We still have openings for tutoring, which is focused on grades 1-6, so call for more information. Next week, we have our intergenerational dessert book discussion and our adult writing group on Monday, and our adult book discussion on Tuesday. The Winter Book Sale is coming up on Saturday, Feb. 16, from 9 am-3 pm; the Friends of the Library are looking for help the day before and day of, so please call if you are interested. Lastly, there will be a two-part practice SAT exam, with an instructor from Princeton Review. The first part takes place on Saturday, Feb. 23; the link to register is on our website.

IT – Alice Greig – Technology Department

Nothing new to report.

Police Department –Chuck Kirker, Police Chief

A fire with serious consequences and the bitter cold we’re experiencing highlighted the need for safety this week. Officers responding to an activated fire alarm at Motel 6 early Wednesday morning, found a fire in a third floor room with an occupant still inside. Fire crews from Colchester Center, Malletts Bay, and Winooski worked to rescue the occupant who was treated and transported by Colchester Rescue. Investigation found that the injured male was smoking in bed while connected to a home oxygen supply unit. With frigid cold weather expected through the weekend, we remind everyone for the need to exercise extra safety precautions and to check on neighbors and family that may need extra assistance.

Rescue & Technical Rescue Squads - Amy Akerlind, Rescue Chief

Colchester Rescue responded to 13 EMS calls, and transported 9 people to the hospital. Although a slower week for us, we are happy to see the community is staying safe in these cold temperatures.

Nothing to report from the Technical Rescue Team.

Parks and Recreation – Glen Cuttitta, Director

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

Winter Carnival is just one week away and the “Colchester’s Got Talent” show is ready for Friday, February 1st. The auditions were quite difficult and we had to choose 27 performers from the 57 who auditioned. We are hoping for warmer temperatures for Winter Carnival weekend. Be sure to join us!

Planning has started for the Family Snowshoe Dinner. This great family event takes place on Friday, February 22nd at Airport Park. This event allows you to explore the park and stop at different locations around the park for appetizers, main course and dessert. What a great way to get some exercise and a dinner out. For more information and to register, visit our website at www.colchestervt.gov

Other business that we are working on:

- Summer Activity Brochure
- Field Use/Pavilion form and rates for 2013
- Causeway 5/15K Race in August
- Youth Basketball Program and upcoming tournaments
- Youth Lacrosse
- New Colchester Triathlon Website

The two ice skating rinks at Airport Park are up and running. The cold temperatures during the week have been quite a blessing and they are ready for the public to use. The rinks are open until 9:00 pm when the lights go out. Keep those fingers crossed for snow as we are ready to start grooming the trails for cross country skiing and snowshoeing.

Public Works – Bryan Osborne, Director

We are preparing to provide the next major update of the Integrated Water Resources Management Project to both the Select Board and the Planning Commission. The presentation will include the findings and recommendations associated with the detailed on-site wastewater needs assessment of areas identified as high priority from previous work. The high priority areas are not surprisingly mostly along the lake front. The presentation to the Select Board is scheduled for February 12, 2013 at 7:30pm, while the Planning Commission presentation has been scheduled for March 4, 2013 at 7:00pm. I would encourage the community to attend one of these meetings to learn more about the options of how the Town may better manage its water resources.

Planning & Zoning - Sarah Hadd, Director

A public hearing on Supplement 32 to the Zoning Regulations is scheduled with the Select Board for February 12th at the Meeting House. This supplement would change the zoning at Severance Corners to a form based code and allow for a greater range of uses. With the very cold weather, our department would like to remind residents to use extreme caution with space heaters. Many kerosene and propane heaters are not meant to be used indoors and must be adequately ventilated to the outside. Space heaters are not meant to be used for prolonged periods of time and should not be left in use unattended. Please remember to check your Carbon Monoxide detectors or have one installed if you don't have one (now required by the State in all homes prior to sales or resales).

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

Clerk's Office – Karen Richard, Town Clerk

The deadline to file your petition if you are running for office is January 28th at 5 p.m. You need 30 signatures of registered voters. To date the following petitions have been filed: Dick Paquette – Selectman, 3 years; Tom Mulcahy- Selectman, 3 years; Marc Landry – Selectman, 2 years, Leora Black-Library Trustee, 5 years; Karen Richard – Town Clerk/Treasurer, 2 years; Jerry Flanagan – Moderator, 1 year; Dirk Reith-School Board, 3 years; Christine Shepard- School Board, 2 years; Lincoln White- School Board, 1 year remaining of a 3 year term . There is an open position on the cemetery commission. It is a 5 year term. There is a Lister position, 3 years. Please call 264-5520 if you have any questions about the positions or the petition process.

There have been a lot of requests for tax forms. We are still anxiously awaiting the forms from the State of Vermont. Rumor has it that they will be here by the end of the month.

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 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.

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

This week the emphasis is on the services the Town of Colchester offers in the Culture and Recreation category. This category includes the Burnham Library and the Recreation and Parks Departments.

Culture and Recreation make up 11% of the FY 14 budget for a total of about \$1.2 million.

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

Parks & Recreation

- * Well maintained and safe parks
- * Activities to build citizens of tomorrow
- * Maintain municipal green spaces
- * Access to community space
- * Community building special events
- * Creating opportunities for life-long learning

Library

- * Well-trained staff to help you with all your research and technology needs.
- * A collection of over 52,000 items for all types of readers, listeners and watchers.
- * Free access to computers and our wireless network.
- * Free access to databases, downloadable digital materials and online classes.
- * Free educational, creative and fun programming for children and adults.
- * Public service hours 6 days a week to accommodate our library patrons' busy and differing schedules.

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

* Free tutoring program due to a strong partnership with the Albany School of Pharmacy & Health Sciences.

Town Manager's Office – Al Voegele, Town Manager

The big news this week is the Natural Resource Board's Environmental District #4 Commission approved the COSTCO fuel pumps. An actual gas station is still has a long way from reality. The area gas station owners will probably appeal this decision to the Environmental Court and from there whoever loses will appeal the Environmental Court decision to the Supreme Court.

At Tuesday night's meeting of the Selectboard, members heard from , the Town's Auditor, Fred Duplessis of Sullivan, Powers & Company, Certified Public Accountants. He reported that the Town had "a clean" audit with no (negative) findings. He also reported that the municipal accounting rules for Government accounting had changed and that the Town with a one million dollar fund balance was at the low end of the recommended balance needed for cash flow. He also emphasized that the Fund Balance was not sufficient to be considered a "rainy day" fund/reserve. If the Town wanted a "rainy day" fund it should establish an account to deposit and hold such money for (unanticipated) disasters. To do this the Town would have to establish a line item in annual budgets for a certain amount of money to aside annually for such disasters.