

Colchester's Weekly Town News

For the Week of September 21, 2012

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: Rubi Simon, Director

This week at the Burnham Library we’ve had our full slate of story times (four a week), as well as our monthly Pajama Story Time. Our tutoring program is just getting underway, with students from Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences (Colchester campus) providing support in reading, math, and science. The program takes place on Monday and Wednesday evenings, and Saturday mornings, and is primarily meant for grades 1-6; call to sign-up, or for more information. On Saturday, we’ll have the first part of our Practice SAT program. Next week, we’ll have a discussion on Vermont and the Civil War (9/25 at 1 pm), and the Farmers’ Market Wellness Table (9/26 from 4-7 pm) will be focused on Massage, with Laura Emerson.

IT – Alice Greig – Technology Department

Helpdesk calls covering software and hardware issues, network maintenance and organization kept us busy this week. Connections are being finalized in equipment between the Town Offices and the Police Department building.

Police Department –Chuck Kirker, Police Chief

Colchester Police returned to our refurbished home at 835 Blakely Road this past week. We re-united the enforcement staff with our dispatch center into a wonderful new facility. The renovations include increased office space, a secure area to process and temporarily hold detainees, new dispatch area and equipment, greatly improved evidence storage and locker rooms and an exercise area for town employees. An open house was held last Saturday where the new community room was dedicated to Chief Charles A. Kirker. The police department wishes to thank everyone who made these renovations and additions possible.

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

Rescue & Technical Rescue Squads - Amy Akerlind, Rescue Chief

Colchester Rescue responded to 18 calls, and transported 17 patients to the hospital. We also participated a joint training with the two fire departments, one vehicle extrication, and trauma assessment. This is always a great way for us to work together, and practice our skills.

Colchester Technical Rescue assisted Rescue in extricating a patient, who was having a medical emergency, from the Sunny Hollow Trails.

Parks and Recreation – Glen Cuttitta, Director

The Muck it Up Adventure Race was held on Sept. 15th with great weather and a great race. 19 teams of two competed for the right to say they conquered the challenges of trail running, paddling and mountain biking. The race was considered by all to be a huge success. We would like to thank all who participated, all the volunteers and businesses that supported us in the first race of this kind hosted by our department

There was a pre- bid meeting on Sept 19 for the renovation of the Bayside Beach slope that was impacted by the high flood waters from a year ago. The bids are due Sept. 26th with construction started shortly after. Colchester Causeway work is ahead of schedule as the weather has been perfect this fall. Parks crews have been busy over seeding athletic fields for fall grass seeding. They have also been aerating all the turf areas in town which helps with strong turf growth.

Public Works – Bryan Osborne, Director

A pre-bid meeting was held for the repair of a storm water outfall line on Malletts Bay Avenue that was damaged during the 2011 spring federal damage declaration. The project is eligible for federal aid resulting in approximately 80% of the project being paid for by federal funds.

A bid opening was held for the repair of a portion of the Town's municipal sewer line located near the Hercules Drive wastewater pumping station. The pipe had become badly deteriorated as a result of the formation of hydrogen sulfide gases within the system. The Town has long since begun the use of pre-treatment agents to control these gases to prevent this type of damage. This project will be funded by the Town's sewer fund where the proceeds come from user fees paid by those properties that are connected to the system.

A speed study has been completed for East lakeshore Drive to determine the appropriateness of the current posted speed limit. The study is now being reviewed and will be followed by any recommendations to the select Board as appropriate.

Planning & Zoning - Sarah Hadd, Director

As of September 24th most planning and zoning fees will change. Please visit our department's website (through the Town's website at www.colchestervt.gov) and see the form's page for the new fees. All Development Review Board applications will now require a PDF version as well as paper. While some of

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the fees have increased as the Town seeks to have the department become more “fee for service” based as opposed to tax reliant, the cost of temporary sign permits has dropped from \$150 to \$50. While temporary signs were free during the summer transition, the new fees will apply to all applications received on or after the 24th.

Clerk’s Office – Karen Richard, Town Clerk

The Clerk’s office has been extremely busy wrapping up tax appeals for this year, so that we can transition to the election mode. We will be mailing ballots to the military and overseas voters this week. When the paper ballots arrive we will begin the process of mailing all of the requests on hand for absentee ballots. If you have moved to town recently please call 264-5520 to verify if you are on the checklist.

We now have the capability to accept credit cards, if you choose to pay by that method. It is a fee based system. We will be posting the details of the fees on our website.

Assessor – Bob Vickery, Assessor

The Board of Civil Authority (BCA) has heard all appeal regarding the 2012 Grand List (GL), The BCA will be inspecting the properties over the next month. As soon as we receive the decisions from the BCA we will be entering into the Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal (CAMA) software the information from the BCA. When all the decisions are entered we will be able to finalize the GL and start entering data for the 2013 Grand List.

There are 7 appeals that are scheduled in the months of September and October to the State Appraiser from the 2011 reappraisal. The town Assessor is working on the propagation for these scheduled hearings.

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

Did you know that the Town divided the General Fund operating budget into segments by departments? In FY 13, the 5 departments that consumed the largest portion of the budget were as follows:

Police	34%	\$ 3,745,204
Public Works	20%	\$ 2,240,948
Fire Department Contributions	7%	\$ 793,252
Parks & Recreation	6%	\$ 625,229
Planning & Zoning	<u>5%</u>	<u>\$ 553,552</u>
	72%	\$ 7,988,185
Total FY 13 Budget	100.0%	\$11,085,390

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We expect these percentages to stay about the same for FY 14. The remaining departments include the Assessor, Civil Board, Community Development, Finance, Information Technology, Library, Manager, Rescue, Technical Rescue and Town Clerk.

Town Manager's Office – Al Voegele, Town Manager

In addition to attending the Open House of the Town's refurbished Police Department, I also attended the twentieth anniversary of the Chittenden Unit for Special Investigations. This organization is composed of police detectives from area police agencies including Colchester. Its purpose is to investigate sex crimes against children and women. The awareness this Unit has brought to the public's attention about the depravity of these crimes has made possible today the provision of immediate medical and support services to the victims of these crimes. During the past twelve months there have been about 400 of these crimes in Chittenden County alone. Of those reported many are against children. There remain many not reported.

For the past two weeks the Town has been inspected by Vermont Department of Labor Occupational Safety and Health Administration. For unknown reasons the Department of Labor has chosen to inspect the work practices of the Town's employees in every department. The legislative purpose of this law that authorizes these inspections is well intended – worker and workplace safety. Heretofore the Town has relied on voluntary (requested) inspections to assure we both complied with the law and met the latest standards in safety practice. This inspection was unannounced.

As Ex-Officio, I also attended the Colchester Economic Development Advisory Council (CEDAC) and the Burnham Memorial Library Trustees Committee. Through CEDAC we are moving forward to explore options for developing increased commerce in Malletts Bay. At the Trustees Meeting it was announced that the Library will be resuming its Saturday hours. These two issues are tied together by virtue of looking at ways to increase the Town's tax revenue so valuable municipal services are protected from financial cuts resulting from voter disapproval of future budget/spending requests. Of concern is that exploring today's options will not produce immediate results. Thus we will continue to have the ongoing question of how to sustain this community as an attractive place to live, learn, work and play.

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