

Colchester's Weekly Town News

For the Week of September 28, 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 Burnham Library, we had a well-attended talk on Vermont's role in the Civil War, in concert with the Vermont Humanities Council. Our tutoring program (with students from the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences) has had great interest, and the schedule is nearly full. Last Saturday's SAT Practice Test was a big success, with the review and scoring session taking place this Saturday. This marks the third week after the return of Saturday hours - stop by between 9 am-3 pm. Lastly, the 2012 Farmers' Market has two more sessions: On Oct. 3rd, we'll have a chili cook-off, where many of our vendors will offer a cup of chili for \$1 (proceeds go to cover future events at the Market). If you're interested in sharing your own family recipe, get in touch with Rubi Simon at the library. We'll also have the band The Fiddleheads perform from 5-6 pm, and the wellness table will feature a member of the Rescue Squad talking about Bike Safety (free helmets for kids). The final session on Oct. 10th will feature the popular Social Band, and our wellness topic will be Immunizations.

IT – Alice Greig – Technology Department

Helpdesk calls covering software and hardware issues, network maintenance and organization continue this week.

Police Department –Chuck Kirker, Police Chief

Did not report.

Rescue & Technical Rescue Squads - Amy Akerlind, Rescue Chief

Colchester Rescue responded to 19 calls, and transported 19 people to the hospital. Due to being a busy week, we also had to turn over 4 calls.

The Technical Rescue Team had a quiet week.

Parks and Recreation – Glen Cuttitta, Director

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

End of the season work continues in our parks. As the grass starts to slow down the Parks Department focuses to preparing the fields and park amenities for winter. We are currently cutting back baselines on the baseball and softball field so that when spring arrives they are ready for play. Aerating and over seeding athletic fields will continue this week as well. Next week we will be repairing a large sinkhole at the Bayside Softball Field that has been gradually getting worse over the last two years.

Recreation staff attended the Vermont Governor's Conference on Recreation on Thursday. This in state training at Lake Morey Resort has many educational opportunities for our staff to bring back to our office and share with our community. As the fall program brochure has been out a few weeks we are now starting to focus on the winter programs. If you have any ideas for programs that you would like to see in our community we encourage you to contact us at 264-5640. The next special event that will be occurring is the "Junk In Your Trunk" that will take place on October 13th. This is a version of a rummage sale that will take place at Bayside Park. For more information contact Kelly McGinley at 264-5646.

Public Works – Bryan Osborne, Director

A bid opening was held for the repair of a storm water outfall on Malletts Bay Avenue that had been damaged by the flooding during the spring of 2011. All Seasons Excavating of Colchester was the low bidder. This project will begin right away and should be completed in a few weeks. Federal assistance funds will cover the majority of the project expenses.

A meeting of the Circ. Alternatives Task Force was held Wednesday evening in Williston with the Director of Public Works, Town Manager, and Selectman Landry representing the Town of Colchester.

The task force discussed the various planning studies and capital efforts underway within the county to provide improvements to the overall transportation system in the absence of the now abandoned Circ. Highway.

Citizens had expressed concerns regarding vehicle speeds and the overall safety along US Rt. 2 in the northern area of Colchester. As this is a state highway, we had requested a safety evaluation be conducted by the Vermont Agency of Transportation. This draft study along with recommendations will be posted on Front Porch Forum and can also be viewed on the Department of Public Works web site.

Planning & Zoning - Sarah Hadd, Director

The Department continues to be busy with permits as well as Board applications. In October, the Development Review Board will hear applications on their October 10th agenda that include a 19-unit residential development off of Fox Run, an 18-unit congregate care facility off of River Road, an extension of time for the approval of a mixed use development at Severance Corners where the old Claussen's Greenhouse was located, and a garage and additional parking for the Spanked Puppy in Colchester Village. The October 24th DRB meeting will include applications for a new restaurant in the Bellwood Plaza off Porters Point Road, a two-lot residential subdivision off of Brae Loch Road, and a two lot subdivision off of East Lakeshore Drive. If you are interested in serving on the DRB or Planning Commission, applications can be downloaded from our website or obtained from the Manager's Office (264-5509).

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Clerk’s Office – Karen Richard, Town Clerk

This week I had the pleasure of attending the Vermont Municipal Clerks & Treasurers Association annual meeting. It was an opportunity to attend training sessions re: changes to the election process as well as updates to the vital records. There is legislation proposed that will make Vermont a “closed” vital record state. At that point if you request a copy of a birth certificate for someone else you will need to provide identification and proof that you are a relative. I will keep you posted on the status of the legislation.

As we travelled back and forth to Killington it was surprising to note that the damage from the Irene storm is still evident and that some towns still have so much work left to do. We need to count our blessings that we were spared from the worst of that storm in our town.

Assessor – Bob Vickery, Assessor

The Assessor’s Office is now starting to work on the FY 2014 Budget. Part of this process is to review budgets from the past years as well as plan on how this office can better serve the Town going forward.

There are 5 appeals that are scheduled in the months of 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)

Last week I wrote about the percentage of cost of various departments to the total budget. One citizen asked how we compared to other towns. That’s a very good question, but a difficult one to answer. The Town of Colchester includes all benefits in each department, as well as utilities. Some towns leave these costs out of the departments and include them a town-wide numbers. The closest way I can make a comparison to other municipalities is to compare the Statement of Activities in each town’s financial statements. This statement is basically prepared the same way and should be relatively comparable.

The Statement of Activities divides the expenses into the same categories with General Government, Public Safety, Public Works and Culture & Recreation being the largest ones. General Government is basically everything not included in the other categories. Public Safety is police, fire and rescue. Public Works is highway, stormwater, snowplowing, etc and Culture & Recreation includes the library, recreation and parks.

	<u>General Government</u>	<u>Public Safety</u>	<u>Public Works</u>	<u>Culture & Recreation</u>
Colchester	22%	40%	26%	12%
Essex Town	23%	41%	22%	14%
Milton	22%	35%	36%	7%
Burlington	23%	38%	23%	16%
Williston	21%	45%	18%	17%
South Burlington	20%	55%	18%	7%

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The percentages do vary among the towns, but there is enough similarity to see that Colchester is not out of line with the other municipalities listed.

Town Manager's Office – Al Voegele, Town Manager

On Tuesday I announced my intention not to seek a renewal of my expiring contract. I have enjoyed working for the Town and its citizens. In my opinion it is not fair to the community for me to continue as Town Manager given my age and thus limitation to complete the 10 year goals of the Heritage Project. In the coming months I will continue to serve the Town and its citizens and support the Selectboard in anyway requested to find a new Town Manager – who hopefully will enjoy the complete support of the community. I leave much undone. The challengers facing this community are awesome – most involving money, that is taxes, and governance issues around “turf”. Hopefully, by the time a new Town Manager is appointed the legal “leased land-amenity value” issues will be behind the Town and Camp Holy Cross will be forgotten so people can come together as a community again and look to Generation X and Generation Y to begin their roles in leading and managing the affairs of this wonderful Town.

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