

For the Week of May 4, 2020

Manager's Message **Aaron Frank, Town Manager**

COVID CASES: As of May 1, there have been 39 positive tests for COVID-19 in Colchester, which is not surprising considering our residential and employment populations as well as our location in the most populated county in the State of Vermont.

[CDC Director Redfield](#) stated that people infected but without symptoms could be as high as 25%. [A Johns Hopkins study](#) reports the median time to develop symptoms is 5 days and that 97% of the people who develop symptoms do so in 11 days. So in addition to those who will not show symptoms, those who will show symptoms have a lag-time.

The CDC indicates that nationally most cases are due to close contact vs. travel. [CDC also lists community transmission in Vermont as occurring in “defined area\(s\)”](#). So, it is important for everyone to take hand washing, physical distancing, work restrictions and non-medical cloth mask wearing seriously to reduce and slow the speed of the spread of the virus.

Considering those without symptoms and the time symptoms take to show, we need to be much more careful than the testing information would indicate. [As recommended by Vermont Health Commissioner Levine](#), and later [the CDC](#), in addition to physical distancing of 6', **we should wear cloth face covers when near others outside our household.**

We have flattened the curve here in Vermont. But we need to crush the curve. Do not let up now. Continue to be careful. Bring masks with you when leaving the home. Wear them when in stores and around others who don't live in your home. Crush the curve!

COVID Information:

[Centers for Disease Control](#)

[Vermont Department of Health](#)

[UVM Medical Center](#)

[Vermont Emergency Management](#)

For further information or comment: 802.264.5509 or townmanager@colchestervt.gov

[COVID-19 Community Guide](#)

[vtdigger COVID-19 FAQ](#)

Town Role in COVID-19 Response: Your Town staff is focused on continued delivery of crucial public safety services such as rescue, fire, and police. We support these services with facilities, equipment, and support such as: information technology, human resources, finance, treasury, coordination of resources and local public information.

Colchester has a well-developed Emergency Operations Plan which was updated by the Selectboard on March 17th. We have been monitoring the COVID-19 situation since January, and developed continuation of operations plans for municipal services. The plans help maintain the crucial services; help keep the public safe, and help maintain the capacity of our first responding public safety services. Also in March, I declared a State of Emergency under the Colchester Code of Ordinances Chapter 16, Emergency Management. This declaration allows the Town to exercise emergency powers to help protect the public health and safety of our community.

We are also in regular communication with the Vermont Emergency Operations Center regarding conditions in Colchester and taking advantage of State and Federal resources when they are available.

Town Services: The Town follows the recommendations from the State of Vermont and the Centers for Disease Control as they pertain to the Town as an employer and a provider of emergency and municipal services. With the exception of crucial municipal services such as rescue, fire, police, dispatch, critical road and infrastructure maintenance, most municipal departments will be working remotely as dictated by State orders.

The Town is temporarily operating with reduced staff and other resources due to COVID-19, resulting in the reduction or suspension of some Town services. This is necessary due to the impact of Federal and State COVID-19 related work rules on service delivery, higher Town expenses related to COVID-19, and reductions in Town fee revenues due to the evolving public health emergency and related economic and regulatory climate. The Town receives about \$7.5M annually or about 40% of its total annual revenue from non-tax fees.

Due to decreases in activity related to COVID-19 and the Governor's orders to keep the public safe--including work restrictions and physical distancing requirements, we are not generating some fees at all, such as Recreation programs, and others at lower rates, such as Rescue.

For further information or comment: 802.264.5509 or townmanager@colchestervt.gov

Statewide [lost municipal revenues are estimated to be 20%](#). Considering the changed economic climate, the reduced ability to provide services, the remaining work restrictions, and the concern for revenues, the Town has implemented a purchasing freeze, a hiring freeze, and furloughs accounting for 27 full-time staff. This is 25% of our total workforce and [50% of the workforce excluding public safety](#). This will have a [profound](#) effect on service delivery and limit our ability to address non-urgent complaints or issues. We are carefully attending to Town revenues, reporting to the Selectboard monthly, and will work carefully to align services with revenues.

Many municipal services are available via phone, email, U.S. mail, and online. Library programs and Recreation programs, and before/after school care are suspended until further notice. The Library is closed to the public but continues to deliver online services. The Town Offices are closed to the public until further notice.

We thank you for your patience and understanding during this challenging time.

Information about changed services:

[Assessor](#)

[Colchester's Burnham Library](#)

[Parks & Recreation](#)

[Planning and Zoning](#)

[Public Works](#)

[Town Clerk/Treasurer](#)

Selectboard: Your Town Selectboard continues to meet on their regular schedule through this emergency, although remotely. There is both a live stream available on LCATV as well as a call in number for citizen participation.

Updated COVID-19 Town Services and Resources: <https://tinyurl.com/Col-Town-COVID>

For more about the Town Manager visit <http://colchestervt.gov/manager> or call (802) 264-5509.

Upcoming Town Boards and Commissions Meetings:

For further information or comment: 802.264.5509 or townmanager@colchestervt.gov

- **Planning Commission:** 1st & 3rd Tuesdays of the month, 7:00pm. Next Meeting: TBA
- **Development Review Board:** 2nd Wednesday of the month, 7:00pm. Next meeting: 5/13. Live Stream to watch: <https://lcatv.org/live-video>; Zoom to participate: <https://zoom.us/j/94177232353>, meeting ID: 941 7723 2353; or send comments to lriddle@colchestervt.gov or Town of Colchester, c/o Development Review Board, 781 Blakely Road, Colchester, VT 05446.
- **Recreation Advisory Board:** 2nd Wednesday of the month, 7:00am, Champlain Room, 2nd floor. Next meeting: TBA
- **Conservation Commission:** 3rd Monday of the month, 7:00pm, at the Bayside Activity Center or per agenda. Next meeting: TBA
- **Library Board of Trustees:** 3rd Thursday of the month, 4:30 PM at Burnham Library. Next meeting: 5/21. If stay-in-place orders are still in effect at that time Instructions for residents to attend remotely will be included on the Agenda.
- **Selectboard:** 2nd & 4th Tuesday of the month, 6:30pm. Next meeting: 5/12 During the State of Emergency the Town Hall is closed to public access. The public is invited to call in to participate in the meeting. To attend remotely:
Dial Uber Conference: (802) 255-4075
Enter Participant PIN = 03883
 - You may watch the Selectboard meeting at 6:30 PM on live stream TV: <http://lcatv.org/live-stream-2>
- These instructions will also be included on the Selectboard Agenda at: bit.ly/Colchester-SB-Agendas

Notices:

- **Colchester Historical Society:** Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the May program has been canceled. Spring 2020 newsletter <https://colchestervt.gov/DocumentCenter/View/6026>. Visit our website at <https://colchestervt.gov/422/Colchester-Historical-Society> for interesting historical information and to get updates on events as details become available. We're on Facebook, too!

 **Follow us on Facebook** (@TownColchesterVT)

 **Share your photos of Colchester with us on Instagram** (@colchestervt)

Notify Me: Subscribe to Town news that matters to you most. Visit www.colchestervt.gov and click on the Notify Me icon to sign up.

For further information or comment: 802.264.5509 or townmanager@colchestervt.gov