

For the Week of

Manager's Message
Aaron Frank, Town Manager

Bicycling: When you can, please use multi-use paths for bicycling instead of roads. Be courteous of walkers, joggers, other cyclists AND automobile drivers. If you use a bicycle on the road, which is a right of bicyclists on most roads, that right comes with a responsibility--to obey traffic laws as if you were driving a car. Ride safely and predictably for everyone's safety. We seem to be at an all-time peak for bicycle use in Colchester so remember there are others using these shared transportation and recreation spaces.

September 22nd Colchester Selectboard Meeting Highlights:

- **Selectboard Chair:** The Selectboard unanimously selected Pam Loranger as Chair.

- **Fire Dept. Update:** Chief Steve Bourgeois reported that:
 - The Department has responded to 203 incidents since July 1st of which 154 are during the weekdays Monday through Friday and 124 of these calls were during the hours that the new daytime staff are on duty. They responded to a call and arrived on scene before the homeowner knew their house was on fire, and even woke them out of bed.
 - Training is ongoing members of the department have trained a total of 1,431-staff hours since July 1.
 - The Public Works Garage staff has been making and overseeing repairs and maintenance on the fire department apparatus, which will be more cost effective.
 - Town staff has taken on the duties of finance, IT, buildings, and human resources allowing the fire service to concentrate on training and core activities.
 - Overall things are going very well with the merger. There are a lot of little pieces to merge into the one department and those things are moving along very well, with morale high.
 - If you have any questions or concerns about the Department please contact Chief Steve Bourgeois at: sbourgeois@colchestervt.gov or 802-862-4415

- **Police Dept. Update:** Chief Doug Allen invited Jill Evans of Essex Community Justice, a contracted and Town funded organization, to discuss community problem solving. Ms. Evans spoke about how alternative justice works in Colchester from the perspective of the offenders and victims and how it impacts society as a whole including the advisory board from Colchester. In the last year

there were 55 Colchester referrals to community justice in Colchester. Ms. Evans spoke of the value of the offenders discussing the effect their actions had on the victim and the community. There are about fourteen volunteers from Colchester who engage in this process on an ongoing basis. Ms. Evans spoke of the Circles of Support and Accountability for people who are released to help them successfully re-enter society. Chief Allen spoke of how the CPD's goals to reduce crime in the community and change behaviors were supported by Restorative Justice by their efforts to successfully meet these goals.

- **FY 2022 – Budget – Initial Selectboard Input:** The Town takes a conservative approach to budgeting, first reducing expenses, then using non-tax revenues and service fees, and using property taxes as the last dollar in. We take a business approach to providing public services: aggressively bidding out contracts (our health insurance costs are going up only 4.18% this year) and assertively going after federal and state grants. Colchester continues to offer a high level of services yet maintains the third lowest tax rate per resident in inner Chittenden County.

Three new areas to consider this coming budget year:

- Weekday daytime fire protection services of \$207,000 a year.
- Contingency for a loan to cover State Education Taxes that the Town is required pay to regardless of whether we collect the taxes, with interest cost of \$37,000 assuming a rate of 2% and 5% of unpaid education taxes at \$37M
- Additional time for emergency management to make the position 20 hours a week at a cost of \$27,000 annually.

Selectboard Member Mulcahy suggested using savings from FY 20 to help cover the special expenses to assist in keeping the budget and tax changes in line with past years.

- **Town Boards and Commission Appointments:** There are about 85 elected and appointed positions for various purposes in local Town (municipal) government. We thank the following appointed volunteers for their help in serving these important roles.
 - Inge Schaefer, Board of Ethics
 - Colchester Conservation Commission: Theresa Carroll and Patrick Volz,
 - Development Review Board: Angela MacDonald, Evan Fitzgerald, Zafir Bludevich, and Bert Severin, with Mickey Palmer as an alternate member
 - Planning Commission: Sarita Austin, Rebecca Arnold, and Robert Scheck, with Prinsha Neupane as the Get Engaged Youth Member
 - Library Board of Trustees: Thomas Buckley, Get Engaged Youth Member
 - Recreation Advisory Board: Dick Pecor and Jim Neary
 - Winooski Valley Park District: Susan Gilfillan

- **Interim Appointment to the Selectboard:** The Selectboard appointed Charles Papillo to fill the vacant seat from Jeff Bartley's departure. Charlie will serve from September 23, 2020 thru Town Meeting Day, March 2, 2021.
- **Refinance of Fire Truck:** The Board approved a proposal to refinance a fire truck saving \$42,000 over the life of the loan.

Minutes: https://clerkshq.com/Content/Colchester-vt/council/2020/sep22_20td.htm

Rental Housing Stabilization Program: The Vermont State Housing Authority is funding landlords on behalf of tenants in need of rental arrearage assistance due to COVID-19 to avert tenant eviction. <https://www.vsha.org/rental-housing-stabilization-program/>

Emergency Mortgage Assistance: The State of Vermont received money to help people pay mortgage payments they have missed due to COVID-19. Funding is limited and applications will be accepted until funding expires. Eligibility requirements include: Homeowners living in Vermont as their primary residence; Mortgage entered before March 1, 2020 (home-equity loans and reverse mortgage are NOT eligible); Two or more missed payments due to a COVID-19; and Income for all borrowers for the previous 90 days does not exceed \$24,000. <https://www.vhfa.org/map/>

Dr. Fauci cautions that a Covid-19 vaccine won't eliminate the need for masks and public health measures: <https://www.cnn.com/2020/09/24/health/us-coronavirus-thursday/index.html>

Cases in Colchester: 65 as of 9/23/2020. This did not change since last week. This is total known cases, not current cases. <https://www.healthvermont.gov/response/coronavirus-covid-19/current-activity-vermont#town>

Colchester Rescue
Chief Scott Crady

- We answered 157 emergency medical calls in the last 30 days, compared to 150 calls last year at this time.
- Thanks to all the members here at Colchester Rescue, both our volunteers and career staff. They have all done such a wonderful job working through these difficult times and have continued to provide the community with quality, professional service throughout this pandemic. It is not easy to be dressed in

Personal Protective Equipment that at times feels like it is restricting your breathing and to communicate with patients and each other through masks and eye protection that fogs up, making it difficult to see. They continue to perform this way on call after call and keep coming back shift after shift without complaint. Working alongside EMS providers such as these is what makes me so proud to be a part of Colchester Rescue.

Colchester Rescue: <http://colchestervt.gov/rescue/index.shtml> or call (802) 264-5990.

Planning & Zoning
Sarah Hadd, Director

- The Colchester Planning and Zoning Department would like to remind the community that seasonal camps must be vacated by November 1st. There is a process to convert to year-round occupancy. Contact our department for details.
- The Colchester Planning Commission will meet next online via Zoom on October 6th at 7 pm to consider the Capital Plan.
- A reminder on signs! Per State law, 10 VSA Section 494, “signs to be maintained for not more than two weeks announcing an auction, or a campaign, drive, or event of a civic, philanthropic, or religious organization” are exempt from permitting requirements. While a permit is not needed for signs that meet this definition, signs should only be placed with permission from property owners or subject to fines under 13 VSA Section 303. All signs should be kept out of the public right of way as they may be removed by the municipality or State at any time in order to ensure the safe passage of traffic, mowing operations, or other required functions. Posting on utility poles is prohibited altogether and subject to fines. These same rules apply to yard sales, fall registrations for sports, and other community events.
- For signs that advertise businesses and other things that are not exempted above, a sign permit must be obtained. An example is sales, for-profit events, or events that are more than two weeks out. Signs such as banners or A-frame signs require a sign permit too. A temporary sign permit can be obtained online at www.tinyurl.com/colchestersigns
- Please submit permit applications online via www.tinyurl.com/ColchesterApply

Visit <http://colchestervt.gov/planningz> or call (802) 264-5600.

Upcoming Town Meetings

Agendas available at: <https://clerkshq.com/Colchester-vt>

- **Planning Commission:** Next meeting: October 6 at 7:00 PM via Zoom; details will be included in upcoming newsletters.
- **Development Review Board: Development Review Board:** Next meeting: October 14 at 7:00 PM via Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/9359846003>; Zoom Webinar ID: 935 984 6003
 - **Live stream:** <http://lcatv.org/live-stream-2>
 - Mail or email public comments prior to the hearing (Iriddle@colchestervt.gov or Town of Colchester, c/o Development Review Board, 781 Blakely Road, Colchester, VT 05446) or participate at public comment periods during the zoom meeting.

Recreation Advisory Board: Next meeting: TBA

- **Conservation Commission:** 3rd Monday of the month. Next meeting: October 19, 6:30 PM in the Kirker Room at the Colchester Police Department.
- **Library Board of Trustees:** 3rd Thursday of the month, 4:30 PM. Next meeting October 15 via Zoom. To join meeting: Dial: (929) 205 6099 US; Zoom Meeting ID: 942 2903 7120, Passcode: 948533
- **Selectboard:** Next meeting: Tuesday, October 27, 6:30 PM. Third Floor Outer Bay Room, 781 Blakely Road
- Residents are welcome to attend the meeting or alternatively send a note to TownManager@colchestervt.gov with “Citizens to be Heard” in the Subject and their name. As with in-person Citizens to be Heard we ask that you **SHARE YOUR ADDRESS**. The email will be shared with the entire Selectboard prior to the meeting and included in the information packet at the next meeting (as the information packet for the current meeting is sent out along with the agenda).
- Live stream: <http://lcatv.org/live-stream-2>
- Selectboard Agenda: bit.ly/Colchester-SB-Agendas

Subscribe to the Town Newsletter: <https://www.colchestervt.gov/list.aspx>

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