

**For the Week of December 14, 2020**

**Manager’s Message**

**Aaron Frank, Town Manager**

**Loss of a Colleague:** Michael Willette, a valued member of our team serving as a Mechanic in the Town Garage since 2016 passed away on December 4, 2020. We will miss his calm manner, skilled hands, and his friendship.

**December 8 Colchester Selectboard Meeting Highlights:**

- Hearing on Potentially Vicious Dog: These are difficult considering both the trauma and fear caused by dog bites and the bonds people make with their dogs.
- Determined that Town Meeting 2021 will be held by Australian ballot with only the Town Municipal Services Budget and the Re-Authorization of the Public Safety Capital Plan to be proposed by the Town Selectboard.
- Approved a plan to send to send postcards to all registered Colchester voters allowing an alternative to in-person voting by giving them the opportunity to request an absentee/mail-in ballot for the Town Meeting Election on March 2, 2021.
- Appointed two youth Get Engaged members, Maeve McCullagh and Logan Mock to the Colchester Conservation Commission
- Approved the Town Municipal Services Budget and the Public Safety Capital Plan for a public hearing on Tuesday, January 12<sup>th</sup> at 6:40PM
- The proposed **Town Municipal Services Budget** would result in an estimated 2% municipal tax increase for next fiscal year to maintain the current level of municipal services and add resources related to COVID recovery and grant management, highway maintenance and fire equipment maintenance. For a residential property valued at \$300,000 the increase would be \$34/year or 65 cents/week. More info: <https://colchestervt.gov/349/Proposed-Budget>

Residential Assessed Value	FY 22 Tax Increase	Weekly Increase
\$200,000	\$22	\$0.43
\$250,000	\$28	\$0.54
\$300,000	\$34	\$0.65
\$350,000	\$39	\$0.75
\$400,000	\$45	\$0.86
\$450,000	\$50	\$0.97
\$500,000	\$56	\$1.08

- The **Public Safety Capital Plan** re-authorizes advance savings for specialized public safety equipment such as diagnostic monitors, power cots, stair chars and radios for Rescue; inflatable boats, air packs, harnesses and a search camera for Rescue; and the police boat.



This plan allows us to avoid tax spikes that would be caused by purchasing these items with cash or interest costs if we had to take a loan out to purchase these items. More info: <https://colchestervt.gov/DocumentCenter/View/6388/FY22-FY27-Public-Safety-Capital-Program-Reauthorization-SB-Presentation---revised-12-11-2020>

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## COVID UPDATE

**Thanksgiving Surge?:** Contact tracers and emergency room doctors in other states are hearing repeatedly from new COVID patients that they socialized during the Thanksgiving holiday with people outside their households. It appears Vermonters mostly avoided or kept gatherings small and therefore did not have a surge of COVID cases from Thanksgiving events. Good job!

**Help needed:** Statewide, we are in need of nurses and caregivers at long term care facilities for both paid and volunteer positions: More information on opportunities for full time, part-time workers, retirees, unemployed individuals, college students:

[https://dail.vermont.gov/sites/dail/files/documents/C19\\_Staffing\\_Press\\_Release\\_12-11-2020.pdf](https://dail.vermont.gov/sites/dail/files/documents/C19_Staffing_Press_Release_12-11-2020.pdf)

**Vaccine:** According to the Vermont Department of Health, we are in the very first stages of vaccine production and distribution to the states, and there will likely be a limited supply of the vaccine early on. Meanwhile, cases of COVID-19 continue to increase in Vermont.

We all need to continue to do our part to prevent illness and spread of the virus in our communities. You can find the latest information, recommendations and resources from the Health Department at [healthvermont.gov/covid19](https://healthvermont.gov/covid19):

- Wear a mask and keep a 6-foot distance from anyone outside your household.
- Do not get together or socialize with anyone you don't live with (see more details here: <https://apps.health.vermont.gov/COVID/faq/#4761>)
- Avoid traveling when possible, even within Vermont. Anyone who travels to or from Vermont must quarantine. <https://apps.health.vermont.gov/COVID/faq/#4618>
- Essential Travel exceptions: <https://apps.health.vermont.gov/COVID/faq/#4637>
- If you're sick, stay home.
- Even mild symptoms (like a headache or dry cough) could be signs of COVID-19. Talk to your health care provider about getting tested, and stay home while waiting for your result. <https://www.healthvermont.gov/covid-19/symptoms-sickness/symptoms>
- Learn more about who should get tested and find a test site near you: <https://www.healthvermont.gov/covid-19/testing>



### **Take Care of Your Emotional and Mental Health**

If you or someone you know is in crisis or needs emotional support, help is available 24/7:

- Call your local mental health crisis line (802) 488-6000
- Text VT to 741741 to talk with someone at the Crisis Text Line:  
<https://www.crisistextline.org/>
- Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255.  
<https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>
- For more information visit [healthvermont.gov/suicide](https://healthvermont.gov/suicide).
- Visit the Health Department's Coping With Stress web page:  
<https://www.healthvermont.gov/covid-19/protect-yourself-others/coping-stress>
- Get connected to Alcohol and Drug Support Services at VT Helplink. <https://vthelplink.org/>
- Get self-help tips and connect to mental health services at COVID Support VT  
<https://covidsupportvt.org/>

### **Need to be connected to food resources?**

If your financial situation has recently changed, you may now qualify for Vermont nutrition and food programs. They include: WIC program (Women, Infants and Children), 3SquaresVT/SNAP, and more. Newer programs such as Farmers to Families and Everyone Eats are helping to fill the gaps. All these programs can help keep healthy food on the table.

Contact the Health Department at <https://www.healthvermont.gov/family/wic> or Hunger Free Vermont at <https://www.hungerfreevt.org/coronavirus> or call 2-1-1 for more information.

**COVID19 Metrics:** Northeastern trends are reflecting the highest case numbers and rates since beginning of pandemic. Regional infection rates are nearly three times the national rate, while the Vermont rate is about twice the nation's rate. National trends show an increase in infections, with record high case numbers, positivity rates, and hospitalizations indicative of a Thanksgiving surge. The Midwest continues to have the most infections, though rates appear to be increasing faster in other parts of the country. Vermont ICU and medical/surgical bed capacity is projected to meet anticipated hospitalizations over the next four weeks despite about 20 hospitalized patients each day with one quarter of them in ICU beds.

[https://dfr.vermont.gov/sites/finreg/files/doc\\_library/dfr-covid19-modeling-120820.pdf](https://dfr.vermont.gov/sites/finreg/files/doc_library/dfr-covid19-modeling-120820.pdf)



**St. Michaels College COVID Cases:** 82 total cases as of 12/11/2020. The College of 1,600 students conducted 9,418 COVID tests this last semester. Students are completing the semester following Thanksgiving, at home online. Find their updates at <https://www.smcvt.edu/return-to-campus/>

**COVID Cases in Colchester:** 230 total cases as of 12/09/2020. This is 21 more cases than two weeks ago but does include the Saint Michaels cases.

COVID Cases by town: <https://www.healthvermont.gov/covid-19/current-activity/covid-19-communities>

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**Bryan Osborne**  
**Director Public Works**

- Working within the right-of-way phase for the reconstruction of the Prim and West Lakeshore Drive intersection
- Currently working on the design and engineering needed for the future construction of a single lane roundabout at the Bayside intersection
- Working within the right-of-way phase for stormwater improvements in Shore Acres and the surrounding area to improve water quality in Malletts Bay
- Advancing repairs to the Town's three fire stations following the completion of a detailed condition assessment
- Advancing additional COVID-19 protective measures for Town facilities
- Continuing the development of a phosphorus control plan to improve water quality in Malletts Bay

Visit <http://colchestervt.gov/publicworks> or call (802) 264-5620.

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**Kathi O'Reilly**  
**Director Economic Development**

- Continue to monitor the impacts of COVID-19 on our business community and communicate funding options that exist
- Working with business to support potential expansion
- Monitoring opportunities and sales of commercial properties



- Working with CCDC on potential development opportunities
- Continue monitoring and working with our business community on the long-term effect of COVID
- Monitor availability of vacancies for future businesses

Visit <http://www.colchestervt.gov/312/Economic-Development> or call 264-5508.

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## Upcoming Town Meetings

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

- **Planning Commission:** Next meeting: TBA
- **Development Review Board: Development Review Board:** Next meeting: January 13 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 (Iridle@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:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month. There will be no meeting in December. Next meeting: January 18, 2021
- **Library Board of Trustees:** Next meeting December 17 at 4:30 PM via Zoom. call-in number for the public is (929) 205 6099, Meeting ID: 975 3438 1520, Passcode: 011559
- **Selectboard:** Next regular meeting: Tuesday, January 12, 6:30 PM. Residents may watch the meeting online via live stream: <http://lcatv.org/live-stream-2> or attend via phone 1-929-205-6099; Meeting ID: 967 6487 8386; Passcode: 234888 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.
  - Selectboard Agenda: [bit.ly/Colchester-SB-Agendas](http://bit.ly/Colchester-SB-Agendas)

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

For more information or comment: 264-5509 or townmanager@colchestervt.gov