

For the Week of January 23, 2023

Manager's Message

Aaron Frank, Town Manager

The Selectboard recently decided not to pursue Regional Dispatch as initially envisioned with the Chittenden County Public Safety Authority (CCPSA). Below provides information on the evolution of the CCPSA, Town involvement, and an explanation for the Selectboard's recent decision.



Background: A majority of the voters in Colchester approved the [creation of the Chittenden County Public Safety Authority \(CCPSA\) in 2017](#), which enabled the formation of a new regional government, but not any funding. At that time, the approved [governance model and financial plan](#) to create a regional dispatch included incremental transitions and cost neutral methods, combining local dispatch entities one at a time with the goals of: 1) minimal expansion in operating costs; 2) recycling existing equipment, reducing capital costs; 3) incremental expansion in use of existing radio infrastructure and dispatching policies to cover more and more public safety agencies; 4) savings in staff to occur with attrition of staff over time; and 5) an iterative approach of operations, planning, testing, training, and improvement for each community's onboarding.

Initially there were eight communities considering regional dispatch (Burlington, South Burlington, Williston, Winooski, Milton, Town of Essex, Colchester, and Shelburne). Essex, Shelburne, and Milton decided not to move forward, and Williston wished to delay implementation for at least a year. Following the approval by the voters of those who continued to consider regional dispatch, only two member communities desired that envisioned incremental approach, so the CCPSA Board adopted the majority view. The majority view was to combine members into a single entity, with all receiving dispatch services almost simultaneously, which was more complex and costlier.

The CCPSA agreement the Colchester voters approved included a requirement that the Selectboard or Council from each community "ratify" the funding agreement for CCPSA. It was always clear that the governing bodies of each municipality would make this final decision on whether each community would receive and pay for regional dispatch services. The Colchester Selectboard did what was required of them in the CCPSA agreement, and also their duty in considering the Town of Colchester's budget, whereby the Selectboard evaluates and then proposes a budget to the Town voters.

Costs: Regional dispatch requires significant additional costs, in professional services and insurance, software and IT services; rent, utilities, telecom and supplies, amounting to [\\$1,160,100 annually](#). The reduction in possible communities from eight to just over

four had a significant impact on the remaining communities considering regional dispatch.

The Town of Colchester's Public Safety Communications Center dispatches for four public safety organizations: Colchester Fire, Colchester Rescue, Colchester Police and Colchester Technical Rescue. The proposed annual cost for regional dispatch next year was \$770,376, [plus \\$206,477 in capital costs requested by CCPSA](#), totaling \$976,853.

The funds requested by CCPSA represent 8% of the Town's proposed \$12,622,189 FY 24 municipal service operating budget that is funded by property taxes (excluding fee funded services). However, the Town of Colchester has budgeted \$558,071 for dispatch services provided by the Town in FY 24, and the cost for a full year of CCPSA dispatch services would be \$770,376, which is \$212,304 or 38% more.

Decision: On November 29, 2022, after considering the benefits and impacts of CCPSA, and in light of the increased recurring annual costs of \$159,000 and the additional capital costs of \$206,000 to the Town of Colchester, the Selectboard voted on ratifying the Cost Sharing agreement, which failed. Additionally, the Selectboard voted to request that the CCPSA funding be removed from the draft FY 24 Budget. This was not intended to be a dismissal of the vision of regional dispatch. Rather, it was due to the increased cost, which represented a 38% increase in our dispatch budget in a year where we are facing unprecedented cost increases due to inflation.

The Town of Colchester values regional dispatch even if it is not the path for Colchester. To this end, the [Colchester Selectboard has informed CCPSA](#) that it may keep the Town's two prior contributions of \$57,614 and \$62,696, requesting that the funds be spent on capital, in matching shares to the other CCPSA communities' contributions. The Town has also let CCPSA know that we desire to better coordinate with our neighboring communities and would like to arrange for access to, and use of, any Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) System used by CCPSA or neighboring communities. The computer aided dispatch system would help dispatch police, fire and rescue more quickly when assistance is needed from other communities.

The Town is still a member of CCPSA and plans to attend meetings as discussions continue.



Provide Input on the Future of Vermont State Parks!

This is your opportunity to help shape the future of Vermont’s incredible park system. Your feedback is important for how we can best plan to meet current and future needs of one of Vermont’s most cherished assets. Public Survey Open NOW Through February 15, 2023: <https://berrydunn.mysocialpinpoint.com/vspmod>



Visit <https://vtstateparks.com/> for more information!

Department Updates



Parks & Recreation: Mark your calendars for the 39th Annual Winter Carnival happening from Friday, February 3rd, 2023 until Sunday, February 5th, 2023. Bracelets for this winter tradition cost \$7.00 and are required by all in attendance over the age of two. Review the full schedule of events here: <https://colchestervt.gov/663/Winter-Carnival>

Town Clerk’s Office: *Attention Colchester dog parent!* It’s time to renew your dog’s annual license.

Fees:

Fixed dog \$15.00
 Non-fixed dog \$20.00
 To avoid an additional \$5.00 fee, license your dog before April 1st.



The state of Vermont requires all dogs to be licensed with their town. A current rabies certificate along with proof of spay/neuter and fee is needed to issue the license and tag.

Licensing can be completed online, by mail or in person. For more information go to <https://colchestervt.gov/323/Dog-Licensing> or call 802-264-5520.

Upcoming Town Meetings

Selectboard: Tuesday, January 24th, 6:30 pm at the Colchester Town Offices, 3rd Floor Outer Bay Conference Room, 781 Blakely Road. Residents are welcome to attend the meeting or alternatively send a note, up to 1,000 words, to TownManager@colchestervt.gov with “Citizens to be Heard” in the Subject and their name and address in the body of the email. 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).

- Watch the Meeting Online via Live Stream: <http://lcatv.org/live-stream-2>
- Agenda: www.bit.ly/Colchester-SB-Agendas

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

Note: Agendas are posted at least 48 hours before the meeting, so you may find past agendas when clicking the link. Revisiting the link closer to the date of the meeting should provide you with the current agenda.

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