

For the Week of February 21, 2023

Manager's Message

Aaron Frank, Town Manager

Tuesday, March 7th is Town Meeting Day - Please Vote!

Request an Early/Absentee ballot:

<https://colchestervt.gov/3243/AbsenteeEarly-Voting>

The deadline to return your voted Town Meeting absentee ballot is Monday, March 6th by 12 p.m. Use our GREEN Drive-Up Drop Box between the Town Hall and Police Department Buildings. On Tuesday, March 7th, bring your voted absentee ballot to the Colchester High School Gym.

You may also vote in-person on March 7th between 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Colchester High School Gym at 131 Laker Lane (off Blakely Rd.).



Voter registration info: <https://colchestervt.info/VoterReg>

Sample Ballot: <https://colchestervt.gov/DocumentCenter/View/7925/2023-Town-Meeting-Sample?bidId=>

Ballot Items:

Learn more about the proposed **FY24 Municipal Services Budget** here: <https://colchestervt.gov/349/Budget-Documents> or contact Deputy Town Manager Renae Marshall at 802-264-5509 or rmarshall@colchestervt.gov.

Learn more about the proposed **Colchester Recreation Center** here: <https://colchestervt.gov/3292/Colchester-Recreation-Center> or contact Parks and Recreation Director Glen Cuttitta at 802-264-5641 or gcuttitta@colchestervt.gov.

Colchester Recreation Center Video: If you would like more information on the proposed recreation center and the amenities included, please click [here](#). For the closed captioning version, please click [here](#).



Letter of Support for the Colchester Recreation Center from the Colchester Selectboard:



Colchester
VERMONT

781 Blakely Road • Colchester, Vermont • 05446 • 802.264.5500

www.colchestervt.gov

January 13, 2023

Dear Colchester Resident,

We, as your elected Colchester Selectboard, are writing to ask for your support of the Colchester Recreation Center, Article #7, on the upcoming Annual Town Meeting Election Ballot.

The Selectboard recognizes the immense value recreational opportunities and amenities bring to the community, which is why we are asking you to consider this proposal. This project came to fruition after 20 years of community engagement and outreach, and it will respond to the identified need for more multi-generational, multi-purpose, indoor recreational and group gathering spaces.

The proposal for this 29,427 sq. ft. facility located on the Town-owned, 14-acre Bayside/Hazelett property includes multi-purpose exercise and gathering spaces, including a gym, track, weight room, studio space, classrooms, a kitchen, and locker rooms. With more recreational and community gathering spaces, active and vibrant lifestyles for all ages can be encouraged for years to come, and businesses too will benefit, as a year-round facility will bring people to our commercial center.

We still remain focused on fiscal restraint for the benefit of all taxpayers, which is why this project's funding is another benefit. We are seeking voter approval for \$15,907,000 to fund construction, but there is \$9 million in Local Option Tax (LOT) (1% sales tax) available in reserve for this project, and the remaining \$6,907,000 will be financed over 10 years and repaid with LOT funds. This results in NO increase in property taxes to support or construct the facility and NO increase to the LOT (repayment is funded with existing 1% sales tax). Additionally, Recreation Center operations will be funded by memberships and facility rentals.

With these positives in mind, the Selectboard urges you to vote YES on this project, as Colchester's health, economy, and social fabric can only benefit from the Colchester Recreation Center.

We also encourage you to contact Glen Cuttitta, our Town's Parks and Recreation Director, at gcuttitta@colchestervt.gov or 802-264-5640 with questions or for more information.

Once again, thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Your Colchester Selectboard


Pam Loranger, Chair


Tom Mulcahy, Vice Chair


Jacki Murphy, Clerk


Mahreen P. Dakin, Member


Charlie Papillo, Member

Town Audit: The Town of Colchester has received its annual audit from Sullivan, Powers & Co., P.C. (Certified Public Accountants). We have a clean audit, with no findings.

Congratulations to Finance Director Lara Alemy and staff members Amy Baker and Lorena Bortz for their consistent production of accurate financial records; to the Town Clerk/Treasurer Julie Graeter and her staff for billing and recording revenues in a responsible manner; and to the entire Town staff who must follow ten different Selectboard polices related to financial management.

Find the audit report at: <https://colchestervt.gov/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/836>

Thank you to Peter Brigante for donating one of his original oil paintings depicting the Colchester Reef Lighthouse! It will be on display on the third floor of the Town Offices.



Colchester Historical Society Remembers the "Buffalo Soldiers" of Fort Ethan Allen: In honor of Black History Month, the Colchester Historical Society presents this information about the 10th U.S. Cavalry at Fort Ethan Allen.

Nicknamed the "Buffalo Soldiers," the 10th U.S. Cavalry served a four-year assignment and were stationed at Fort Ethan Allen in Colchester. It was one of the first peacetime all-black regiments established in the regular U.S. Army after the Civil War. There were 750 black

enlisted men; however, the actual number of black Americans arriving was higher – around 1,500 – because the regiment had a large camp that included wives, children, and other relatives and followers.

Many of these new families became involved in their local communities and some settled here. The Winooski United Methodist Church, built in 1860, became the home church for many. According to a *Burlington Free Press* article by April Barton (July 26, 2022), at least four soldiers retired from the Army and decided to stay in Winooski and remained members of the church.

Learn more about the church and its history

at <https://www.winooskiunitedmethodistchurch.org/history.html>

Sadly, in 1917, the church burned to the ground; however, the Buffalo Soldiers were instrumental in its rebuilding. In 2001, the church was placed on the U.S. National Register of Historic Places for its depiction of the Carpenter Gothic architectural style. More recently, the church was placed on the Vermont African American Heritage Trail which explores the lives and stories of African Americans in Vermont and those dedicated to issues of freedom and equality.

Learn more about the Vermont African American Heritage trail

at <http://vtafricanamericanheritage.net>

To view a short video by the Vermont Historical Society about the Buffalo Soldiers, please visit <https://vermonthistory.org/buffalo-soldiers-at-fort-ethan-allen>.

The Colchester Historical Society, founded in 1975, is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to preserving and sharing the town's local history. Learn more

at <https://colchestervt.gov/422/Colchester-Historical-Society>.



This photo depicts the 10th U.S. Cavalry on horseback at Fort Ethan Allen, 1909-1913. (Photo courtesy of William Parkinson, Curator and Executive Director, Fort Ethan Allen Museum)

Department Updates

Public Works: The Town of Colchester will be concluding our local administration of the State Potable Water Supply and Wastewater Permitting Program as of April 1, 2023. We will no longer accept wastewater permit applications, certifications, I/A reports, or other program

related materials as of March 1, 2023. On and after March 1, 2023, applications may be submitted to the State of Vermont wastewater program through their ANR Online website. These permit applications will likely be reviewed after, and for certain not issued until April 1. If failed systems are found between March 1 and March 31, we are asking folks to please reach out to the Town and we can discuss the best way to expedite applications for replacement systems. Certifications, annual reports, and I&A related materials will not be accepted by either party between 3/1 and 3/31. Requests for test pit attendance scheduled on or after March 1, 2023 should be sent to the State of Vermont’s regional engineers in the Essex Regional Office. State employee contact information can be found at <https://dec.vermont.gov/water/contacts>. Please reach out to Brett McCreary at Colchester Public Works if you have any questions about this transition. He can be reached at 802-264-5515 or by email at bmccreary@colchestervt.gov.

The rationale for this change is that the locally borne costs outweighed the benefits of local administration of this program given that the State of Vermont would operate the program within Colchester as it does in all but one other community in the State. More information about the rationale can be obtained here:

https://clerkshq.com/Content/Attachments/Colchester-vt/221108_04b.pdf?clientSite=Colchester-vt

Upcoming Town Meetings

Selectboard: Tuesday, March 14th, 6:30 p.m. 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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Now follow us on Instagram! <https://www.instagram.com/townofcolchestervt/>

For more information or to comment, call 802-264-5509 or email townmanager@colchestervt.gov.