



781 Blakely Road
Colchester, VT 05446
802-264-5500

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Town News for the Week of June 7, 2021



What do you want to do today?

Manager's Message



Aaron Frank, Town Manager

Colchester Historical Society Gardeners

Last week a team of gardening volunteers helped to beautify the grounds at The Parsonage on Main Street, the headquarters of the Colchester Historical Society. The volunteers, all over the age of 70, prepped the soil, pulled weeds, and planted an array of beautiful annuals.

A big thanks to Annette and Tom Mulcahy, Carol and Clinton Reichard, Pat and Bob Carman, Suzanne and Bob Furst, and Bonnie Potter for their hard work.

The Historical Society hopes to resume public programs and meetings in the fall. They also plan to reopen the Log Schoolhouse at Airport Park soon, and will need weekend volunteer hosts. For more information and to find out how to get involved, visit the Historical Society's [webpage](#).



Town Services

In spring 2020, community [financial conditions](#) were unwinding in Vermont and nationally. At the time, we had little insight into the length or breadth of the pandemic, only that it was not good and growing worse. We knew little about how much more it would affect Vermont financially if our cases went up. We were using more medical supplies, cleaning supplies, protective equipment and extra staff costs related to COVID, for which we spent \$525,000 through April of 2021.

Our town charter requires voter approval before the town can overspend the budget by more than 4%. With the Selectboard, we decided to avoid a situation where property tax funded or fee funded services did not cover their expenses.

As a service organization, this meant reducing staff. In spring 2020, twenty-five percent of the staff outside of public safety were laid-off, not hired, or furloughed. Due mostly to staff savings, we finished last year under budget. The Selectboard programmed savings of \$584,000 to reduce future taxes by assigning some to revenue in a future budget year and some towards items that would have required additional taxes including replacement of an ambulance, a fire truck and stormwater capital needs. The fire chief wound up replacing three trucks with a replacement cost of approximately \$1.3M with a single truck that cost about \$270,000.

Staffing has a very significant impact on the Town's level of service to the community. Unfortunately, it is easier to scale down than scale back up—or even conduct hiring during COVID. As of May 27th, there are 19 or 17% fewer full-time year-round staff than budgeted including: Police, 4 full-time; Library, 2 full-time and 3 part-time; Public works, 5 full-time; Parks, 3 full-time seasonal; Recreation 4 full-time; Rescue 1 full-time; and Planning and Zoning 1 full-time.

We are working now to fill these openings. However, the employment market is currently tight. Just in Colchester, 852 or 8% fewer people are available in the workforce compared with pre-COVID. As stewards of the communities' resources, we are being deliberate at hiring, while trying to build the town staff back even stronger. But this takes time.

We appreciate your patience and understanding as we gradually transition back to prior staffing and service levels.

Town Hall Update

Beginning Monday, June 7th, masks are no longer be required for fully-vaccinated employees, visitors, and

volunteers in the Town Hall at 781 Blakely Road. When outside of the Town Hall, Recreation Programs, Library, Library Programs, Police, Fire, and Rescue have separate rules due to the nature of their work.



Message from Your Colchester Town Selectboard

The Colchester Selectboard strongly opposes a proposal to take away the Colchester voter approved local option tax and provide those revenues to the State for “redistribution.”

The Colchester local option tax has been dedicated to make payments on voter approved debt beginning in 2015 after its passage. Previously, these debt payments were paid by property taxes. In 2015, this reduced property taxes by 5%. This practice continues and reduces the property taxes annually.

The Town is banking the remainder of the local option tax for future community and environmental projects, which will require voter approval. Without the local option tax as a direct revenue to the town, we cannot count on using the funds for recurring expenses such as voter approved debt.

This proposal takes away something important that the voters directly approved and puts local resources in the hands of a few state officials. The town voters approved the tax and also approve the use of the funds. This is democracy in action and we implore the Vermont State Representatives and Senators to oppose any further action on this proposal

[Click here to read the statement in full.](#)

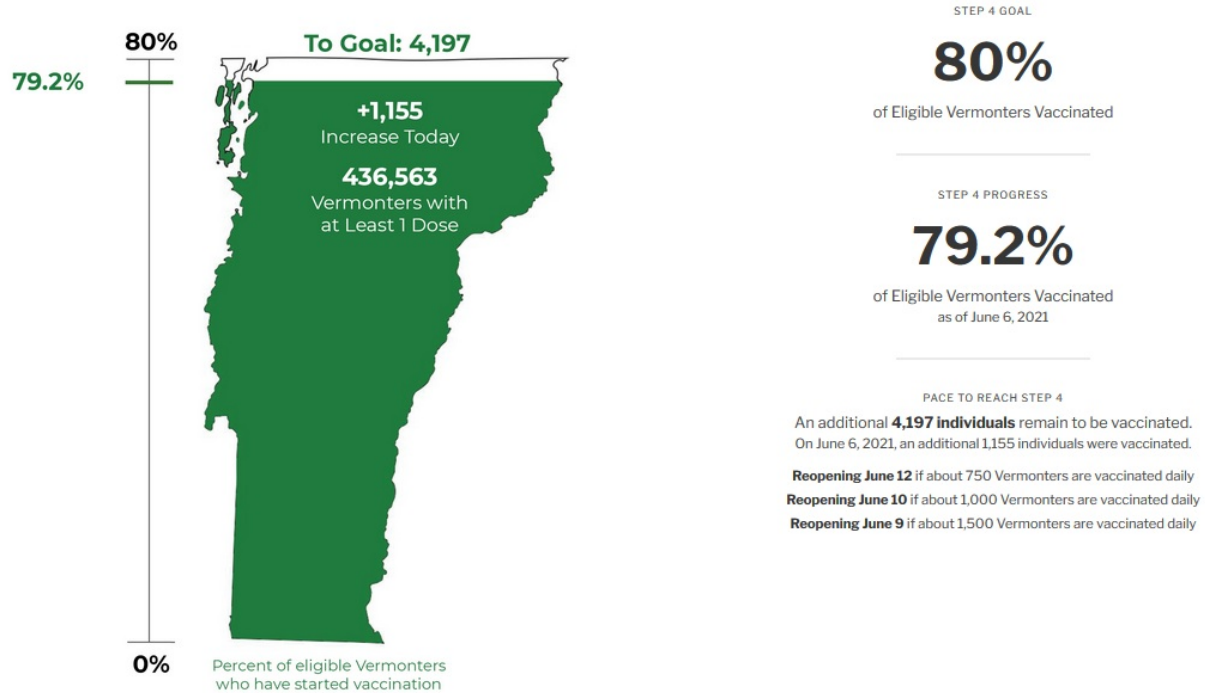
COVID-19 Update

Recent Cases: Chittenden County has had 28 new cases in the last 14 days. Read more [here](#).

Vermont Forward

When 80% of Vermont’s eligible population age 12 and older has received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, the state will enter Stage 4 of the Vermont Forward Plan and remove the remaining restrictions which include maximum inside and outside gathering sizes and masking requirements.

As of Sunday, June 6th, 79.2% of the eligible population has received at least one dose, with just 4,197 people away from the 80% goal. Appointments and walk-in clinics are still being offered around the state for those who need their first shot. You can find more information on the [Department of Health’s website](#).



COVID-19 Modeling

According to the latest modeling by the Department of Financial Regulation, Vermont COVID-19 cases are down 93% since April 1st and 57% in the last week. The state is seeing some of the lowest rates of infection since the end of last summer. In addition, Vermont has had zero deaths from COVID-19 in the last 15 days, something no other state can say.

As of Sunday, June 6th, 79.2% of eligible Vermonters have received at least one dose of the vaccine, putting the state just 0.8% shy of the Vermont Forward goal to end the remaining restrictions. Just 4,197 more Vermonters need to get vaccinated in order for the state to reopen early. Walk-in clinics are still being held daily around the state to encourage Vermonters to get vaccinated. Visit the [Department of Health's website](#) to view the walk-in clinic schedule. View the latest modeling [here](#).

COVID Infections per 100K in Vermont (7-Day Average)



Walk-In Clinics Available

Daily walk-in clinics are still being held around the state at various businesses, hospitals, and other establishments. Visit the Vermont Department of Health's COVID-19 Vaccine [webpage](#) to find a clinic near you.

VACCINE WALK-INS

Links

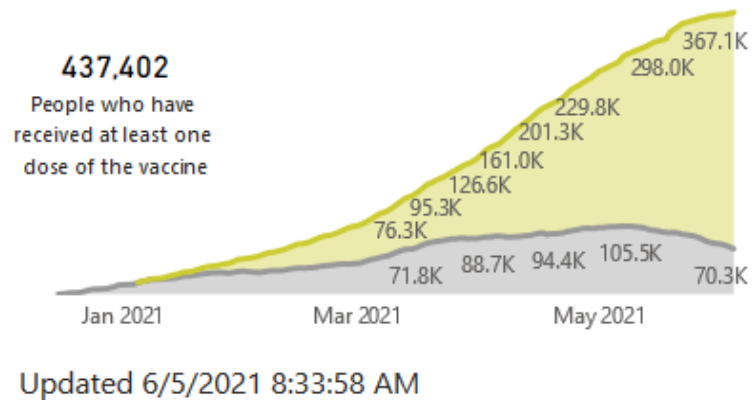
[DOH COVID-19 Dashboard](#)
[Vaccine Dashboard](#)
[CDC COVID-19 Information](#)
[St. Mike's Dashboard](#)

Vaccination Progress

All Vermonters aged 12 and older are eligible to receive the vaccine. You may set up an account with the Dept. of Health to register for a vaccine [here](#). Those without internet or who speak a language other than English can alternatively call 855-722-7878.

As of Saturday, June 5th, 437,402 Vermonters, or 79.2% of the state's eligible population have had at least one dose of the vaccine. 367,100 Vermonters have been fully vaccinated. Vermont still leads the nation in administered doses and percent of population that has received at least one dose of the vaccine. View the COVID-19 Vaccine Dashboard [here](#).

● Started ● Completed



Department Updates

Department of Public Works

The Department of Public Works completed some spring maintenance projects last week, including replacing a section of a sidewalk on Village Drive. 25 linear feet of the sidewalk was replaced after frost heaves last winter posed a trip hazard for pedestrians. DPW staff also completed their annual spring road grading last week. The town maintains 13 miles of unpaved road, and every spring and fall DPW staff use a grader to fix potholes, frost heaves, and add gravel to even out the roads. After grading, calcium chlorate is applied to help reduce dust. Thank you to our DPW staff for their hard work!



Village Drive sidewalk work.





Grading on Macrae Rd. last week.

Upcoming Town Meetings

[Agendas available here](#)

- **Planning Commission:** June 15 at 7:00 P.M. via [Zoom](#); *Zoom Meeting ID: 935 984 6003*

- [Live stream](#)
- Mail or email public testimony prior to the hearing (shadd@colchestervt.gov or Town of Colchester Planning Commission, 781 Blakely Road, Colchester, VT 05446)

- **Development Review Board:** Next meeting: June 9 at 7:00 PM via [Zoom](#); *Zoom Meeting ID: 935 984 6003*

- [Live stream](#)
- Mail or email public comments prior to the hearing (lriddle@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:** Next Meeting: In-person site visit to Law Island, June 13th, rain date June 26th.

- **Library Board of Trustees:** Next meeting: June 17, 2021 4:30 PM; *Dial in: (929) 205 6099 Meeting ID: 935 1861 4645 Passcode: 059024*

- **Selectboard:** Next meeting: June 8, 2021 at 6:30 PM. Meeting will be in person in the third-floor conference room at 781 Blakely Road, as well as via livestream. Residents must wear masks if unvaccinated. Masks are optional if you are fully vaccinated. Alternatively, send a note to TownManager@colchestervt.gov with “Citizens to be Heard” in the Subject and your 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. Watch the meeting online via [live stream](#).

[Selectboard Agenda](#)

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

More Info



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