

For the Week of August 15, 2022

Manager's Message

Aaron Frank, Town Manager

Congratulations to Danform Shoes, Doggie Styles, Wendell's Furniture and Studio 3 Dance for winning the Seven Days 2022 Daysies Awards in their respective categories.



Also, congratulations to the following finalists: The Village Scoop, Claussen's Florist & Greenhouse, Malletts Bay Veterinary, Sleepydog Kennel, LMC Law, Noel Property Maintenance, JMM & Associates, Geovann Painting, LaPlante's Plumbing & Heating, Northstar Electric, Cloud 9 Caterers, Haley Bouley, Local22/Local44 for "Best TV Personality," and Jane Lindholm and Mitch Wertlieb from VT Public for "Best Local Radio Personality."



The Causeway again won the "Best Place to Bike Award" and the Parks & Recreation Department's Causeway Race and Bayside Paddle Sports were finalists in their categories as well.

Congratulations to Ally McAuslan, Associate Director of Nutrition & Wellness at Age Well, who has been recognized by Meals on Wheels of America as an emerging leader with the Meals on Wheels Network. She will join 15 other rising stars for a six-month professional development program with leadership coaches, including Meals on Wheels CEO and Principal of HR.



Courtesy of Age Well

Congratulations to a job well done!



Congratulations to Dr. Rebecca Collman who will be retiring from her pediatric practice on September 30 after 33 years at her location on Main Street. Thank you for all you have done for our children for more than three decades!

Courtesy of Alek Fleury

Colchester Historical Society

The Colchester Historical Society is proud to announce the 15th Anniversary of the public opening of its Log Schoolhouse museum and visitor center. It was in August of 2000 that this 1815 building was discovered inside a local seasonal camp and saved for restoration. Once approved by the Selectboard, project managers were appointed to direct and oversee the restoration process. Funding from federal, state and local grants, as well as some private donations, became available in 2005. That same year, historical architects were brought on board to design the move from its location and plan for the schoolhouse's reconstruction. The following year, the foundation was built, and the schoolhouse was moved four miles to its current location at Airport Park. Finally, in May of 2007, the building was opened to the public.



How Did They Do It?

The 24' x 28' building is made of hand-hewn white pine measuring seven inches square. The windows and doors were missing, but their original locations were recognizable. A preservationist was hired to repair and replace some sections that were in poor condition. Then, the door was custom made to match the door panels found in photographs of other Colchester schoolhouses during that time period. Exterior restoration was dependent on two

historic photographs and on physical evidence remaining on or with the building. Some original trim and clapboards were still with the structure and were integrated into the restoration.

On the inside, the restoration was based on physical evidence that indicated where items had been originally located. For example, patterns left from the long-removed plaster and lath showed that a raised platform existed near the rear of the building, which was typical for schoolhouses during that period in history.

Further restoration was performed on interior walls, ceiling, and floor boards, and the platform was reconstructed with matching wood. To complete the interior, Historical Society members painstakingly acquired desks, furniture, and items that would commonly be found in a schoolhouse for that specific time period.



Community Impact

For the past 15 years, the Colchester Historical Society has offered the Log Schoolhouse as a fun, family-friendly historic site and visitor center. Hundreds of people visit each summer, and this summer, for the first time, the Colchester Historical Society offered “make-and-take” classes for children.

“Most of Colchester's history has escaped us physically with few exceptions,” said Tom Mulcahy, museum curator and director. “Fort Ethan Allen was constructed in the late 18th century and completed in 1911. However, the Log Schoolhouse appears to be our oldest known building still standing, having been built 100 years earlier. Most of us tend to visit the Colchester Causeway or Airport Park. On your way to these destinations, I recommend taking a few moments to travel back in time and visit this bit of our past. You will not soon forget the experience, and I am sure you will share it with others,” he added.



This little gem is open Memorial Day through Labor Day, every Friday through Monday, 10 a.m.

- 2 p.m. Parking and admission are free, and donations are always appreciated. Special thanks to the volunteer hosts and caretakers who help make this charming little museum a great success.

For more information about the Colchester Log Schoolhouse and its restoration process,

including photographs and a video, please visit <https://colchestervt.gov/477/Log-Schoolhouse-Restoration>.

About the Colchester Historical Society

The Colchester Historical Society, founded on January 8, 1975, is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization dedicated to preserving and sharing the Town's local history. Visit its website for more information and please use the membership form to sign up as a member at <https://colchestervt.gov/422/Colchester-Historical-Society>.

Town News Interviews

Keeping Track of a Town's Growth

An interview with Robert Vickery, Colchester Town Assessor by Alicia Tebeau-Sherry, Town Manager's Office, Communications Coordinator

I met with the Town Assessor, Robert Vickery, to learn what a year in the Assessor's Office looks like and how a future online appeal system and a current online Town map on the Town's website provide community members with important property information and resources.

ATS: To familiarize others about you and the Assessor's Office, can you tell me what services you offer to the Town of Colchester?

RV: Our main function is to assess all the properties in Town every year so that all property owners know what they're paying in taxes and are only paying their fair share. There are all kinds of things we do in support of this main function including: record keeping for all property data, including owner names, addresses, mailing addresses, land information, and building information; parcel mapping; inspecting the properties that make capital improvements, or those that affect the value; conducting inspections routinely and as needed; collecting sales data and tracking the real estate market; tracking rents, vacancies, and expenses of commercial properties; creating parcel IDs, SPAN identification numbers, and addressing for new parcels when subdivisions are approved; and managing the Vermont Enhanced 911 map and addressing for the Town.



ATS: What might the community not know about your department and what it offers?

RV: One thing that people tell me that they didn't know is that they could appeal any year. People assume they can only appeal their assessment in years that it changes. Property owners



have the right to appeal every year. The Town has the Assessor's Office, but we also have a Board of Appeals made up of three elected officials called Listers that review assessments and ensure there are no errors. This appeal process gives property owners the right to check our work. There's a timeline for this process that individuals should become familiar with so they don't miss the deadline. Most years' requests for appeals need to be in by the end of May.

ATS: What does a typical day look like for you?

RV: It changes day to day, and throughout the year. Many of my duties have statutory deadlines that need to be met, so my duties change over the course of a year based on these deadlines. The main function is to complete the Grand List (GL) by the end of Spring each year. My days may include going through last month's sales, permits and certificates of occupancy; inspecting new construction; managing requests for parcel data from other departments, property owners, real estate professionals; appraising a property or group of properties; or valuing a new subdivision.

ATS: What types of projects has your department been working on and what can the community look forward to from the completion of them?

RV: I've been working on developing an online portal for appeals that I am hoping to complete before the end of the year. Ideally, people could go to the Assessor's web page, click on a link, and fill out their appeal. This would help speed up the process, provide us with contact information to set up hearings, and then generate automatic replies saying we received their appeal, and possibly a date and time for their hearing.

ATS: What are you proud of that your department has completed? Did COVID-19 impact your work or progress?

RV: We take our State Equalization Study seriously here in Colchester. Over the last 10 years we have saved the Town taxpayers about \$2,000,000 in taxes. It's something we do every year, somewhat behind the scenes. We review the state's sales study and determine what should and shouldn't be included. We focus on minimizing errors in doing so, and every couple of years we save the taxpayers money. For instance, this year we saved the taxpayers around \$180,000.



COVID did impact our inspection process, as we ended up not doing interior inspections. We are back to conducting interior inspections, but we are taking COVID-precautions, like mask-wearing if asked, and making sure residents are comfortable with us entering their homes.

ATS: How do you collaborate with other departments to complete your department’s projects and services?

RV: We collaborate a lot with other departments. Betsy Peacock, the Property/Tax Specialist, splits her time between the Clerk’s Office and the Assessor’s Office, as her position is a



crossover position where a lot of her work has to do with tax billing and GL maintenance. We also work closely with the Department of Planning and Zoning, sharing data, such as current owner’s and parcel information, while they provide permits and Certificates of Occupancy. On a regular basis, I ask Planning and Zoning questions about permits, subdivisions, or something else that's being worked on to find out as much information as possible on a project because it all can play an important role in a parcel’s value.

ATS: How can the community keep up with your department?

RV: The website is the best resource. The online GIS map and the Parcel Data that can be accessed through the website is a great tool to find information on your assessment. The Grand List is lodged in May, and is available in the Town Offices for viewing. We send out Change of Assessment Notices at that same time and post Notices in Seven Days as well as five places around Town. Anybody that wants more information can always call me at (802)264-5671 or email me at vickery@colchestvt.gov.

Upcoming Town Meetings

Selectboard: Tuesday, August 23rd, 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



Colchester – What do you want to do today?

Planning Commission: Tuesday, August 16th, 7:00 pm at the Colchester Town Offices, 3rd Floor Outer Bay Conference Room, 781 Blakely Road.

Board of Ethics: Thursday, August 18th, 8:00 am at the Colchester Town Offices, Champlain Room, 2nd Floor.

Library board of Trustees: Thursday, August 18th, 4:00 pm in the Burnham Room of the Burnham Memorial Library.

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.

Subscribe to the Town Newsletter: <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/su/jkMAO2v>

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