

**For the Week of April 1, 2024**

## **Manager's Message**

Aaron Frank, Town Manager

**Solar Eclipse Eye Safety:** On April 8, 2024, beginning at approximately 3:26 p.m., a total eclipse of the Sun will be experienced from northern Vermont for the first time since 1932. To view the eclipse, you either need special eclipse glasses or a handheld solar viewer that meets the ISO standards. **Eclipse glasses are available for free from the Clerk's Office at the Town Offices (2 pairs per person) and at the Colchester Burnham Memorial Library while supplies last.**



**Traffic Alert:** Please be prepared for significant traffic congestion. A very large number of vehicles and people will be traveling around Vermont and New England the weekend before and especially the day of the eclipse. On April 8<sup>th</sup>, Burlington will be closing the Beltline and other significant roads including Battery Street, parts of North Avenue, North Champlain Street, and Pearl Street.

**If you wish to avoid possible significant traffic disruptions—stay home if you can on April 8<sup>th</sup>—Especially if you live in the Bay, west of the Blakely/West Lakeshore Drive intersection.**

**To learn more about how to protect your eyes during the event and to prepare for traffic disruptions, please visit this link:** [https://clerkshq.com/Content/Attachments/Colchester-vt/info240326\\_a3.pdf?clientSite=Colchester-vt](https://clerkshq.com/Content/Attachments/Colchester-vt/info240326_a3.pdf?clientSite=Colchester-vt)

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***The Island Line Revisited* by James “Jim” Jones**

**Monday, April 15, 7 p.m.**

**The Meeting House**

**830 Main Street, Colchester**

Please join the Colchester Historical Society for this presentation by James "Jim" Jones based on his latest railroading book, *The Island Line Revisited*. This 204-page book chronicles the life and times of the Rutland Railroad's fabled island-hopping route from Burlington across the Colchester Causeway through the Champlain Islands to Alburgh and Rouses Point. It features 477 images, many of which Jim will be showing as part of his presentation. He promises to have

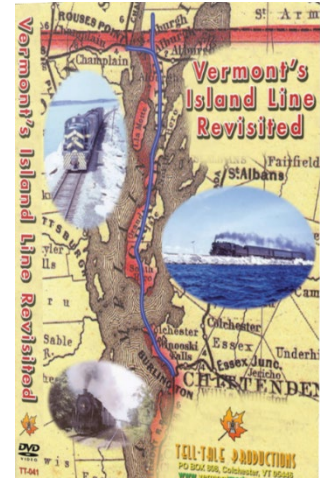
signed copies of the book available for sale at the meeting.

A third-generation railroad enthusiast, a Burlington native, and currently a Colchester resident, Jim has maintained a life-long interest in railroading. His love for the iron horse stems from early Alco cab rides with his father, noted railroad author Robert C. Jones. Jim's grandfather, Cecil O. Jones, began the family tradition when he signed on with Canadian Pacific in 1916.

All are welcome to attend this program. Parking and admission are free. Light refreshments and fellowship will follow.

### About the Colchester Historical Society:

The Colchester Historical Society is a local nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving Colchester's history. It shares historical information and hosts history-related events within the community. To learn more or become a member, please visit <https://www.colchestervt.gov/422/Colchester-Historical-Society>. Everyone is welcome at programs and events. Membership fees, sales, and donations help support the organization's mission to preserve and share Colchester's wonderful local history.



*Courtesy of James "Jim" Jones*

## Department Updates

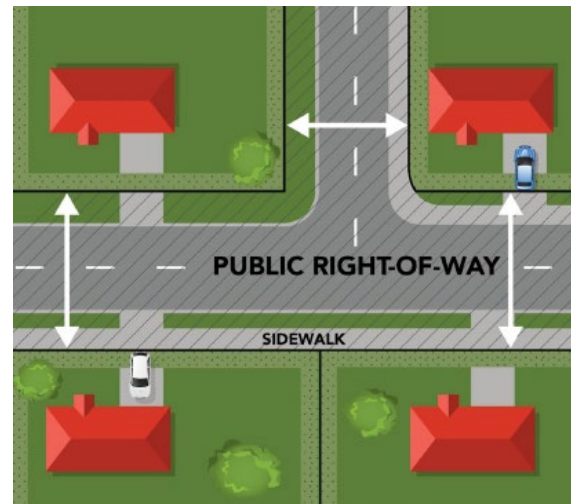
### Public Works: Public Right-Of-Way (ROW) Facts

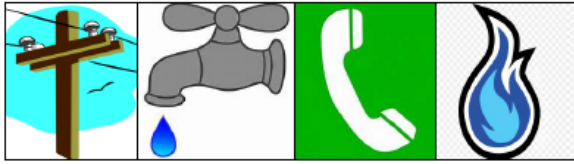
**Did you know?** In 2023, Town highway crews used 100 tons of hot asphalt mix in the summer, and 14 tons of "cold patch" mix in the winter, to address potholes on paved Town roadways. The Town manages 93.7 miles of total roadway, including both paved and gravel roads.

### What is the Public Right-Of-Way?

The Public Right-of-Way (ROW) is a dedicated space for public infrastructure, including:

- Roadway, sidewalks, and bike paths
- Street lights & traffic signals,
- Street trees, signs, and guardrails
- Overhead utilities like electric, telephone, cable
- Subsurface utilities like water, sewer, stormwater, gas, electric, etc





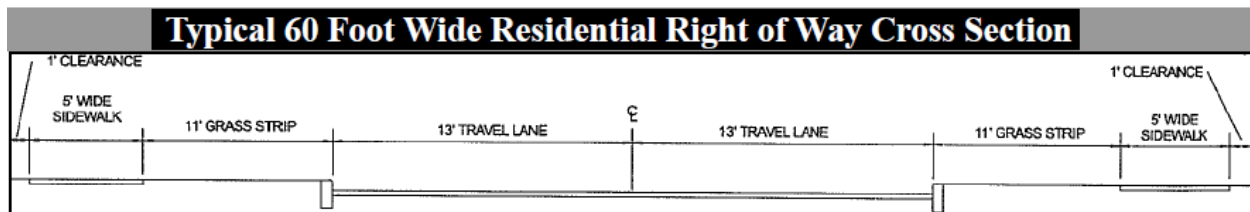
### Who owns what is in the Public ROW?

**Utility Companies:** Power poles, waterlines, telecommunications, gas, etc. are owned and operated by individual utility companies.

**Town of Colchester:** Owns and maintains Town roadways, sidewalks and paths, streetlights, traffic signals, trees, road signs, guardrails, ditches, culverts, drainage structures, and sanitary sewer infrastructure.



**State of Vermont:** Roosevelt Highway (Route 7), College Parkway (Route 15), Main St (Route 2A), Route 2, and Highway I-89 are state-owned roadways, and the Agency of Transportation is generally responsible for infrastructure maintenance, traffic signals, snow removal, and road improvements.



**Funding for ROW Maintenance:** Maintenance of Town infrastructure is funded in several different ways, including:

- Stormwater fees, which fund stormwater system operations and maintenance
- Sewer system user fees, which fund sewer system operations and maintenance
- Municipal taxes, which fund public roadway maintenance
- Capital Transportation Funds, which support paving and transportation projects
- Grant funds, which DPW staff pursue for eligible projects
- Loans as approved by Colchester voters

**Can I put my fence in the ROW?** Private use of the Public ROW is governed by Chapter 13 of Colchester's Code of Ordinances. The following items are prohibited in the ROW:

- Fences, railings, or similar
- Vegetation that obstructs the sidewalk or road, including required sight distances
- Basketball hoops or other recreation equipment as this can interfere with plowing or mowing activities

These items are not actively policed, but the Town has the right to remove them if they pose a maintenance issue.

Property owners can have their mailboxes within the public ROW if they meet U. S. Postal Service Mailbox Standards, as well as private drive-way entrances, with the understanding that plowing, repairs, and other maintenance are the responsibility of the private property owner.

**What ROW maintenance work is done?** Town highway crews perform maintenance year-round, with activities involving the following:

- Snow removal (plowing) on streets, sidewalks, and multi-use paths.
- Cleaning/repairing drainage systems including roadside ditches, stormwater collection structures, stormwater pipes, roadway and driveway culverts, and ponds
- Street sweeping of paved roads
- Gravel road maintenance: grading, dust control, and spreading additional gravel
- Paved road maintenance: filling potholes and cross walk and stop bar line painting
- Vegetation management such as tree pruning, brush cutting, hazardous tree removal, and roadside mowing
- Roadside sign installation and replacement

Some Town ROW maintenance work is carried out by contractors due to the specialized equipment necessary to perform these tasks, including:

- Roadway repaving
- Stormwater pipelining
- Wastewater system cleaning
- Traffic signal maintenance
- Removal of hazardous trees
- Sidewalk repairs and replacement
- Roadway centerline and edge line striping



The administrative section of Public Works completes a competitive bidding process to ensure residents are being provided these services at the lowest cost possible.

**Requests for Maintenance or Upgrades:** Requests for maintenance on a Town roadway, such as a pothole that needs fixing, a plugged drainage structure, or a malfunctioning traffic signal, should be directed to the Public Works Department at **(802) 264-5620** or [DPW@colchestervt.gov](mailto:DPW@colchestervt.gov).

Requests can always be submitted in person at the Public Works Department, located on the second floor of the Town Office at 781 Blakely Road, Colchester, VT, 05446. *\*Town Staff does not accept requests made via Facebook or Front Porch Forum.*

Unsure if the road is Town-owned, State-owned, or privately owned? Please still contact DPW and we can ensure the request is directed to the responsible party. Once an issue is reported, a work order is sent to DPW Operations personnel for assessment and scheduling based on safety, necessity, funding, and resource availability.

*Requests for New or Upgraded Infrastructure:* Requests for new crosswalks, flashing beacons at existing crosswalks, new sidewalks, new drainage structures, or similar can also be submitted to the Public Works Department at (802) 264-5620 or [DPW@colchestervt.gov](mailto:DPW@colchestervt.gov). These requests will be evaluated based on safety, necessity, available funding, compliance with applicable standards, laws, regulations and other criteria.



### Quick Facts:

- The size of the ROW varies by roadway and typically extends well beyond the edge of the traveled portion of the roadway. ROW widths generally range from 50-60 feet wide.
- The Town employs 12 full-time maintenance workers responsible for maintaining the Town's ROW infrastructure and buildings.
- The Town maintains approximately 80 miles of paved roadways and approximately 13 miles of gravel roadways.



### ROW Considerations:

- Snow should not be placed in the ROW, whether the roadway or sidewalk, when clearing your property.
- While trash and recycling bins should be put in the ROW on collection days, please do so in front of your own property.
- Parking in front of your neighbor's home, either for you or your guests, is discouraged on a regular basis.
- If a construction project on your property involves disturbance in the ROW, ensure your contractor inquires as to whether a ROW or other permits are needed from the Town.
- The location of underground utilities may not always be apparent. Always contact DigSafe at 1-888-DIG-SAFE at least 48 hours before you dig, even if your project does not involve ROW disturbance. Utilities are commonly located outside of the roadway ROW and can create dangerous conditions if damaged.

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## Upcoming Town Meetings & Agendas

**Selectboard Meeting:** Tuesday, April 9, 6:30 p.m. at the Colchester Town Offices, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Outer Bay Conference Room, 781 Blakely Road. Alternatively, send a note, up to 1,000 words,



to [TownManager@colchestervt.gov](mailto: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: <http://lcatv.org/live-stream-2>
- Agenda: [www.bit.ly/Colchester-SB-Agendas](http://www.bit.ly/Colchester-SB-Agendas)

**Planning Commission:** Tuesday, April 2, 7:00 p.m. at the Colchester Town Offices, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Outer Bay Conference Room, 781 Blakely Road. Agenda: <https://clerkshq.com/Colchester-vt?docId=PLANAGENDA>

**Recreation Advisory Board:** Wednesday, April 10, 7:00 a.m. at the Colchester Town Offices, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, Outer Bay Conference Room, 781 Blakely Road. Agenda: <https://clerkshq.com/Colchester-vt?docId=RecAdv&path=BOARDS%2CRecAdv%2C>

**Development Review Board:** Wednesday, April 10, 7:00 p.m. at the Colchester Town Offices, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Outer Bay Conference Room, 781 Blakely Road. Residents are welcome to attend the meeting or public comments can be submitted prior to the hearing by email to [zmaia@colchestervt.gov](mailto:zmaia@colchestervt.gov) or by mail to Town of Colchester, c/o Development Review Board, 781 Blakely Road, Colchester, VT 05446. Agenda: <https://clerkshq.com/Colchester-vt?docId=DRBAgenda>

**Colchester Conservation Commission:** Monday, April 15, 6:00 p.m., at the Colchester Town Offices, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Champlain Room, 781 Blakely Road. Agenda: <https://clerkshq.com/Colchester-vt?docId=ConservCommssn&path=BOARDS%2CConservCommssn%2C>

**Library Board of Trustees:** Thursday, April 18, 4:00 p.m., in the Burnham Room of the Burnham Memorial Library. Agenda: <https://clerkshq.com/Colchester-vt?docId=LibBoard&path=BOARDS%2CLibBoard%2C>

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For more information or to comment, call 802-264-5509 or email [townmanager@colchestervt.gov](mailto:townmanager@colchestervt.gov)