

For the Week of December 30, 2019

Manager's Message

Aaron Frank, Town Manager

Reminder for Drivers: This fall, a student coming home from school barely avoided being hit by a car at a crosswalk. **One car didn't stop and ran into another car.** Just Monday, I saw two adults waiting at the crosswalk on Blakely and Williams Roads. No cars stopped. When a pedestrian is at a crosswalk with a traffic signal, cars and pedestrians have to obey the signal appropriately. In the case of a crosswalk without a signal, motorists should stop and let them cross.

Please pay attention while driving. At some point you or your loved ones are walkers, bicyclists, or motorcyclists without the protection of thousands of pounds of metal, seatbelts, and airbags. We want everyone to get **where they're going safely.**

Human Waste Pollution in Malletts Bay: On Tuesday, January 14 the Colchester Planning Commission will present to the Colchester Selectboard their findings of six months' evaluation of alternative solutions to the problem of human waste in Malletts Bay. We invite you to attend and learn about the alternatives proposed. Water quality in Malletts Bay is important and the Selectboard would like to hear from those who are interested.

Town Budget: The Selectboard will hold a public hearing on the proposed budget at their meeting on January 14, 2020. The proposed budget maintains our current level of service and addresses significant needs in emergency services caused by slow, steady growth over past decades. The Operating Budget is comprised of twenty-five service categories. The expenses of eight of these service categories have been reduced and sixteen have increased. **Before factoring in non-tax revenues, the operating budget increase is 0.0%.** Major changes include:

- Fire services: An increase of \$207,428 to fund four career staff that will provide fire coverage during weekday daytime when we do not have an adequate number of volunteers to protect life and property.
- Rescue: Creation of a Rescue enterprise fund that moves all expenses and non-tax revenues out of the property tax based General Fund. This change: 1) recognizes that Rescue generates 74% of its own revenue and is a significant cost center with a total budget of \$760,645; and 2) allows Rescue to better respond to call demand by staffing up or down according to call volume.

- **Public Safety Dispatch:** Increases Colchester's contribution to its public safety dispatch service by \$89,064 to maintain staffing following the departure of a contracted community from our dispatch center.

Estimated 21 Tax Rate: Taking into consideration prior voters' approvals for capital items, the use of \$504,312 of Local Option Tax revenues to pay for debt, and [estimated] growth of 1.18% due to investments in Colchester properties, the FY 2021 estimated municipal tax rate will be \$0.5485. The tax rate is projected to increase by \$0.0056 (a little more than one half of one cent) or a 1.02% increase over the prior year.

We wish all in our community a safe, happy, and productive New Year!

For more about the Town Manager's Office visit <http://colchestervt.gov/manager> or call (802) 264-5509.

Upcoming Town Meetings:

- Planning Commission: 1st & 3rd Tuesdays of the month, 7:00 PM. Next meeting: 1/7/20
- Development Review Board: 2nd Wednesday of the month, 7:00 PM. Next meeting: 1/8/20
- Recreation Advisory Board: 2nd Wednesday of the month, 7:00 AM, Champlain Room, 2nd floor. Next meeting: 1/8/20
- Conservation Commission: 3rd Monday of the month, 7:00 PM, at the Bayside Activity Center or per agenda. Next meeting: 1/20/20
- Library Board of Trustees: 3rd Thursday of the month, 4:30 PM at Burnham Library. Next meeting: 1/16/20
- Selectboard: 2nd & 4th Tuesday of the month, 6:30 PM. The 12/24 meeting is cancelled in observance of Christmas Eve. Next meeting: 1/14/20

(All meetings take place at the Colchester Town Offices, 781 Blakely Road, in the Outer Bay Conference Room on the 3rd floor unless otherwise noted.)

Upcoming events:

- **Friday, 1/31: Colchester's Got Talent: ALL STARS!** This special, invitation-only show will feature crowd favorites from the past 10 years of Colchester's Got Talent.
- **The 37th Annual Colchester Winter Carnival** is coming up on 1/ 31, 2/1 & 2/2! More details available at: <https://colchestervt.gov/WinterCarnival>.

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For further information or comment, please call Linda Gustainis at 802.264.5509



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