

For the Week of April 18, 2022

Manager's Message

Aaron Frank, Town Manager

This week is National Volunteer Appreciation Week. On behalf of the Town of Colchester, we would like to recognize the 30 volunteer Emergency Medical Service providers of Colchester Rescue Squad, the 50 volunteers of the Colchester Fire Department, the 18 Fire Members and 42 Rescue Members at



Saint Michael's Fire and Rescue Departments, the 40 volunteers that run the Colchester Technical Rescue Squad, around 85 people who serve on the Town's nine boards and commissions, and over 200 youth and special event volunteers for their dedication and selfless service to the Town.

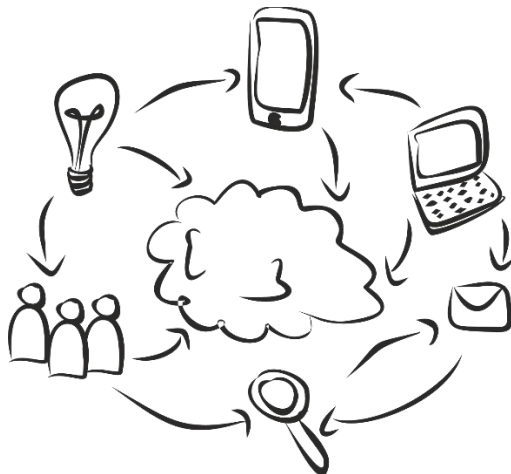


The last two years have been difficult and filled with constant adjustments. Through it all, our volunteer EMS providers, firefighters, and Technical Rescue Squad continued to provide services, and took many precautions to keep themselves safe and

healthy to maintain their availability to serve the community and beyond. We are extremely proud of our emergency responders, as well as our board, commission, youth and event volunteers committed to making our Town so much stronger. We couldn't do it without you! Thank you.



Social Media & Town Requests Reminder



You are welcome to post on social media, but if you wish for the Town staff or Selectboard to act on or consider something, please contact us directly by phone or email. We may need to obtain more specific information or dialogue with you about the issue to understand and resolve it through more direct communication.

For issues of local concern that you believe should be addressed by your Town government., please contact the Town Staff Directly. The staff directory of phone and email contact information for various Town departments is provided here: <https://tinyurl.com/Col-Town-Dir>

If you are uncertain who to contact, or are not satisfied with the response to a Town Department, feel free to contact the Town Manager’s office at 264-5509 or TownManager@colchestervt.gov.

Your Town Selectboard serves as the legislative and judicial branch of your municipal government, and oversees the Town Manager. If you have something to be shared with them at a Selectboard meeting, you are welcome to send a note, up to 1,000 words, to TownManager@colchestervt.gov with “Citizens to be Heard” in the Subject and your name and address in the body of the email. The email will be shared with the entire Selectboard prior to the upcoming Selectboard meeting and included in the following information packet.

Individual Selectboard member contact information is available here: <https://colchestervt.gov/401/Selectboard>

Broadband Update

Since Act 71 was signed by the Governor in June 2021, Town Staff have been considering opportunities for Colchester to utilize the financial resources the State is dedicating to broadband expansion. There are significant challenges for Colchester to be able to access the available

funding. Without legislative changes, it is unlikely meaningful progress will be made to improve the availability of high-quality broadband service throughout Colchester.

Prior memos on the broadband subject released in September 2021 and January 2022 summarized the Act 71 legislation and its challenges, as well as related issues concerning Communication Union Districts.

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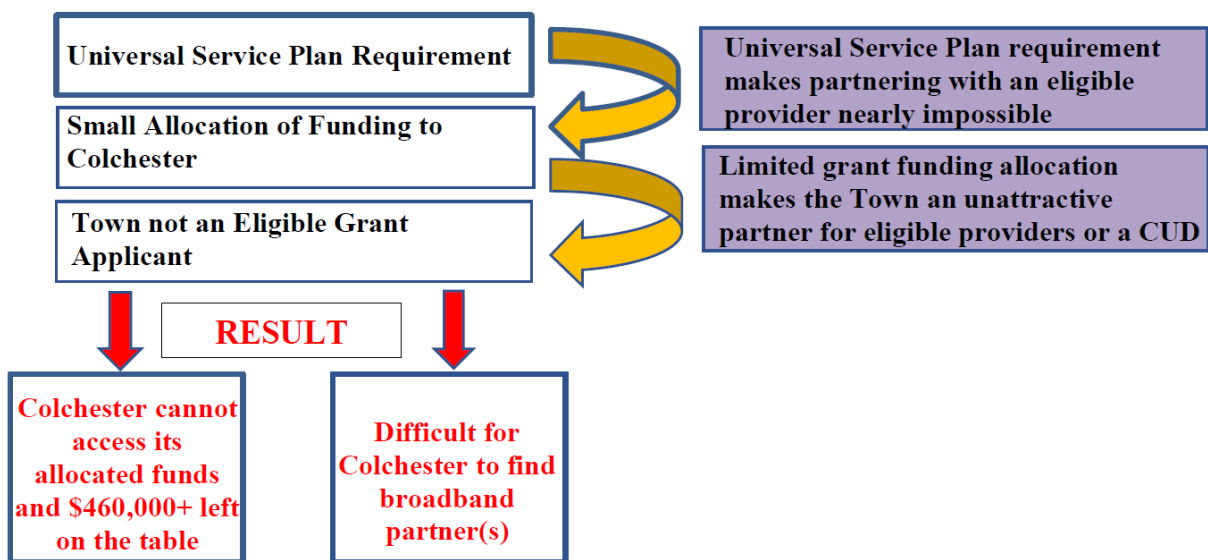
[220111_7e.pdf \(clerkshq.com\)](#)

More recently, staff offered testimony about Colchester’s broadband challenges to the House Committee on Energy and Technology on March 25, 2022. The hearing can be viewed at the following link, with Colchester’s testimony beginning at minute 38 of the recording.

[House Committee on Energy and Technology 03-25-2022-01 – YouTube](#)

There are several important underlying conditions in Colchester, and in other Chittenden County communities, that are at odds with the current legislation and funding framework:

Summary of Challenges



Possible Solutions: Considering the above challenges, staff developed the following list of potential solutions:

- **Funding Allocation:** Acknowledge that the current State VCBB funding allocation formula based on “un-cabled” road miles does not reflect the realities of the cost of broadband expansion in Chittenden County. Re-work the allocation formula to better reflect that, even though Chittenden County communities have existing infrastructure,

costly extensive overbuild is required to bring broadband to all unserved and underserved addresses.

- **Universal Service Plan:** Modify the Universal Service Plan requirement to allow for individual projects within a community to be funded individually as long as there is an acknowledgment and documentation of the town-wide need.
- **Eligible Applicants:**
 - Allow municipalities that are not CUD members to be VCBB grant applicants/recipients. This will allow a municipality to take the lead on behalf of its residents if it determines that is the best way to expedite a project.
 - Allow communities who have not joined a CUD but have existing Consolidated Communications and Comcast infrastructure to partner directly with those ISPs and provide them access to the Town's allocated grant funds. This will allow the most efficient use of existing infrastructure, will avoid excessive overbuild, and will help expedite broadband expansion. One possible approach would be to put the Town's VCBB funding allocation towards the existing Line Extension program (LECAP), which was recently successful in bringing Comcast service to a Colchester neighborhood.

More immediately, at the March 25, 2022 meeting of the House Committee on Energy and Technology, Committee Chair Briglin suggested an openness to receiving suggested legislative changes before the end of this year's session that could improve the broadband options for Towns facing challenges, such as Colchester. Staff has had an initial discussion with other Chittenden County towns and the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission regarding potential legislative changes that could offer additional options. Staff is in the process of gathering additional information from regulators and service providers in order to develop a specific legislative proposal.



Earth Day Sale Event

CSWD invites Chittenden County residents to celebrate Earth Day from **9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Saturday, April 23, 2022** with a great deal on Soil Saver back yard compost bin or Green Cone back yard digester at this one-day-only, special event being held at their Williston Road location.

The **Soil Saver** makes it easy to turn yard waste and food scraps into compost, while the **Green Cone** aerobic digester is the perfect complement to a backyard composting system as it reduces

food waste to its natural components of water, carbon dioxide, and a small amount of residue. CSWD staff will be on site to answer composting and set-up questions.

For prices, specifications of products, and event details, please visit: <https://cswd.net/general-topics/earth-day-composter-and-green-cone-blow-out-sale/>



Department Updates



The Department of Public Works is excited to announce our participation in a regional Adopt a Drain program that will be kicking off on Earth Day (April 22). Colchester residents will have the opportunity to join residents from Milton, Essex and Essex Junction, and Burlington to get involved in an exciting citizen-science

program to assist with water quality research. More information will be available as the launch date arrives – stay tuned to the stormwater utility website for details!

Upcoming Town Meetings

Selectboard: Tuesday, April 26, 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 Town News

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Colchester – What do you want to do today?

Conservation Commission: Monday, April 18, 6:00 pm in the Kirker Room of the Colchester Police Department.

Library Board of Trustees: Thursday, April 21, 4:30 pm in the Burnham Room of the Burnham Memorial Library with a remote option by calling (929)-205-6099 with Meeting ID: 862 3641 3737 Passcode: 368943.

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