

For the Week of February 16, 2026

Below is a letter from your Town Selectboard:

Dear Colchester Voters, Residents, and Taxpayers,

We, your Selectboard, are writing to provide information on the Town of Colchester's FY 27 Municipal Services Budget to be voted on Town Meeting Day 2026.

The proposed FY27 municipal services budget, of \$18,163,756, represents a 7.2% increase in planned expenditures for maintaining our current level of Town services, and addresses additional resource needs for: 1) paid on-call staffing for the Fire Department; 2) increases in salary, benefits & training for the Police Department; 3) increases in salary, benefits and training for the Rescue Department; 4) increased costs for necessary software for Information Technology (IT).

Forty-four percent, or \$7,967,487 of the FY27 Municipal Services budget is dedicated to the Town's public safety services – Police, Fire, Rescue, Technical Rescue, and Public Safety Dispatch.

This amount doesn't include the other municipal support services provided for public safety equipment, vehicle/building maintenance, information technology, human resources, finance/payroll, and general management needs. With those costs included, the public safety services would represent well over half of our municipal services budget.

The largest factor impacting this budget is Vermont's Labor Market. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Vermont only has 60 available workers for every 100 open jobs. Due to the high cost of living and limited available housing, both private and public sector employers are competing for this same small pool of workers. We must ensure our pay and benefits continue to retain and attract quality employees in all work groups. Employee turnover in any department can cause delays in service delivery to the public and result in higher costs for training and onboarding new staff.

FY27 Estimated Municipal Services Property Tax Impact:

<i>FY27 Estimated Municipal Services Property Tax Impact</i>			
Assessed Value	200,000	300,000	400,000
Annual	\$1,439	\$2,158	\$2,877
Monthly	\$119.88	\$179.83	\$239.77
Weekly	\$27.67	\$41.50	\$55.33

<i>Estimated Municipal Services Property Tax Increase (Compared to FY 26)</i>			
Assessed Value	200,000	300,000	400,000
Annual	\$90	\$134	\$179
Monthly	\$7.47	\$11.20	\$14.93
Weekly	\$1.72	\$2.58	\$3.45

The tax impact of the FY27 municipal service budget, along with previously approved capital items, represents an estimated 6.6% increase to municipal services property taxes compared to the prior year.

Based on 2025-26 taxes, Colchester's municipal services taxes are 17% below average and the second lowest per resident among the seven inner Chittenden County communities. We ask that you support the FY 27 municipal services budget with your vote.

Sincerely,

Pam Loranger, Chair; Charlie Papillo, Vice Chair; Jacki Murphy Clerk; Maureen P. Dakin and Paul Pecor

Volunteer Drivers Needed – Special Services Transportation Agency (SSTA)

If you'd like to support your neighbors and are looking for something to fill up some of your time, **SSTA is looking for volunteer drivers!** Being a volunteer driver is incredibly flexible; you choose your hours and SSTA will coordinate the rest for you!

You can be in the comfort of your own vehicle, while still supporting your community! SSTA reimburses at the current GSA mileage rate of 72.5 cents per mile for your travel.

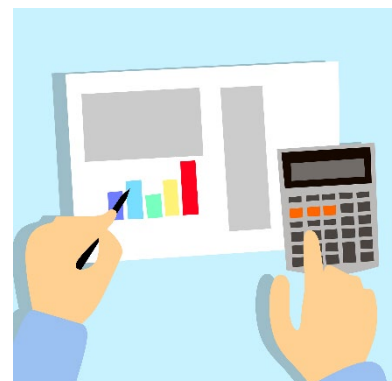
If you'd still like to support the vital services SSTA provides to our community but don't have time to spare, donations are always welcome! Donations go directly to SSTA and help keep this essential program running.



If you are interested in becoming a volunteer driver or donating to the program, visit <https://www.sstarides.org/volunteer-community-drivers> or call (802) 878-1527.

Town Audit

The Town of Colchester has received its annual external audit from Sullivan, Powers & Co., P.C. (Certified Public Accountants). We have a clean audit, with no findings. Congratulations to Finance Director Lara Alemy and staff members Amy Baker, Lorena Bortz, and Ben Castor for their consistent production of accurate financial records; to the Town Clerk/Treasurer Julie Graeter and staff members Erin Hogan, Krissy Jenkins, Denise Wood, and Valen Jones for billing and recording revenues in a responsible manner; and to the entire Town staff who must follow ten different Selectboard policies related to financial management. Find the audit report here: <https://colchestervt.gov/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/1010>



2027 Town Plan Kick-Off: February 17th, 7:00 PM

The Town Plan is THE vision document for the Town of Colchester. Revised and adopted every eight years, the plan is the exciting culmination of a comprehensive, transparent, engaging process to ensure that as many stakeholders as possible provide insight into planning for the future of this amazing community. The Town has evolved over more than 250+ years and its economic vitality, natural beauty, and engaged citizens strive to keep moving it in a direction reflective of its best self. The previous plan was adopted in 2019, and work is beginning now for the 2027 Colchester Town Plan. We invite you to be a part of it!

Join the Colchester Planning Commission on Tuesday, February 17th at 7:00 PM for the first kickoff meeting to let us know what is important to YOU when thinking of Colchester's future. If you cannot join us on the 17th, there will be at least 10 more subject-based meetings to follow. A full schedule will be posted on the Planning and Zoning website shortly.



For more information, contact clarose@colchestervt.gov, call (802) 264-5606, or visit <https://colchestervt.gov/3374/2027-Town-Plan>.

A Message from the Town Clerk's Office: Stormwater Bills and Property Tax Bills

With US Postal Mail service having difficulties with staff shortages, here are some services that the Town Clerk Office provides to assist the community in receiving and paying these bills.

Property Tax bills are sent by US Postal Mail annually in July of each year, the bill covers July 1st through June 30th of the next year. There are three installments on that bill.

Stormwater invoices are sent by US Postal Mail annually in January of each year, it also covers July 1st through June 30th. There is only one payment due within 30 days to the Town of Colchester. For more information on Stormwater go to <https://colchestervt.gov/1837/Stormwater>. Stormwater bills are due February 20, 2026.

New owners or owners who may not have received the mailed bills may contact the Town Clerk's Office anytime for a copy to be picked up or emailed. The Clerk's Office can be contacted by townclerk@colchestervt.gov or called at 802-264-5520. To pay these installments and not use the US Postal Mail;

- Town Clerk's Office maintains a secure drop box on the exterior of main entrance of Town Hall that is open 24/7 and checked multiple times per day.

- We accept payments during office hours, M-F, 8:00am to 4:30pm.
 - There is an online payment portal, <https://colchestervt.gov/2985/Xpress-Pay-Card-Payments>.
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Mail Service in Colchester: A letter from your Selectboard

Dear Colchester Residents,

The Colchester Post Office is experiencing significant delays in delivery time due to staffing issues and resource shortages. We have heard from residents who are understandably frustrated by the situation. We share your frustration and hope that our local post office and the postal service can get the help it needs.

The Selectboard and Town staff have no influence over the United States Postal Service (USPS). The USPS, including our local post office, is part of the federal government. The United States Postal Service is overseen by a Board of “Governors” appointed by the President of the United States with the advice and consent of the U.S. Senate.

The Selectboard has written to Senator Sanders, Senator Welch, and Representative Balint to ask them to properly resource our postal service, including our local post office.

Here are contact forms and information for the people who oversee the USPS and our federal delegation. The more people they hear from directly, the more they will appreciate and understand the magnitude of the problem.

The Board of Governors can be contacted here: <https://about.usps.com/who/leadership/board-governors/?video=bgs260205>

Senators Bernie Sanders and Peter Welch, and Representative Becca Balint can be contacted at the links below.

- Senator Sanders: <https://www.sanders.senate.gov/contact/contact-form/>
- Senator Welch: <https://www.welch.senate.gov/email-peter/>
- Representative Balint: <https://balint.house.gov/contact/>

We truly understand your frustration regarding this situation. We believe that contacting the folks listed above, who have influence over the situation, is the best thing for residents to do.

We thank the staff at our local post office who have been working hard with the resources available.

Regards,

Pam Loranger, Chair; Charlie Papillo, Vice Chair
Colchester Selectboard

Department Updates

Parks & Recreation Department: 2026 Causeway Race

CAUSEWAY RACE
5K, 10K & 15K
Saturday, June 6, 2026
8:00 a.m. at Airport Park

Choose to run either a 5K, 10K or 15K and enjoy the scenic Colchester Causeway. The race will begin at Airport Park and follow a gravel trail out onto the historic Causeway where runners will make their way to designated turn-around points on the Causeway before returning to the finish at Airport Park. This race is open to all ages, however, runners in the 10K or 15K legs must be at least 12 years of age or older. Due to safety concerns, bicycles, roller blades, baby joggers, and running with a dog will not be allowed in the race, or on the path during the race. To register and for more information go to <https://colchestervt.gov/358/Causeway-5K-10K-Race>



Upcoming Town Meetings & Agendas

Selectboard Meeting: Tuesday, March 10, 6:30 p.m. at the Colchester Town Offices, 3rd Floor Outer Bay Conference Room, 781 Blakely Road.

Residents are welcome to attend the meeting. Alternatively, send a note, up to 1,000 words, 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: <http://lcatv.org/live-stream-2>
- Agenda: www.bit.ly/Colchester-SB-Agendas

Planning Commission: Tuesday, February 17, 7:00 p.m. at the Colchester Town Offices, 3rd Floor Outer Bay Conference Room, 781 Blakely Road. Agenda: <https://clerkshq.com/Colchester-vt?docid=PLANAGENDA>

Recreation Advisory Board: Wednesday, March 11, 7:00 a.m. at the Colchester Recreation Center, 80 Dick Mazza Drive. Agenda: <https://clerkshq.com/Colchester-vt?docId=RecAdv&path=BOARDS%2CRecAdv%2C>

Development Review Board: Wednesday, March 11, 7:00 p.m. at the Colchester Town Offices, 3rd 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 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&path=DRB%2CDRB_Agendas%2CDRBAGENDA%2C

Library Board of Trustees: Thursday, February 19, 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>

Colchester Conservation Commission: Monday, March 16, 6:00 p.m. at the Colchester Town Offices, 2nd floor Champlain Conference Room, 781 Blakely Road. Agenda: https://clerkshq.com/Content/Colchester-vt/Boards/ConservCommssn.htm#_CPA1

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