

Question 6 - Rate Colchester as a Place to Live

Additional Comments

- 1 lived hear for 52 years. While it was certainly less crowded back then, I still think it is a lovely town
- 2 Good schools, plenty of restaurants, mostly quiet living
- 3 How about learning something from surrounding towns, like Marlborough and lure some decent businesses to town. It would be nice to have another big grocery store, a restaurant like Panera, a Home Depot or Lowes. Do you know how much revenue you would bring to this town instead of sending business to Waterford or Manchester? If you want people to move to this town or bring people to this town you need to do something different. I know too many people that have only lived here for < 5 years that have already moved or are considering moving. There's no much in this town to fill the average person needs. Tractor Supply and some Asian restaurants are not enough. NEED A FULL TIME PD! Colchester is too big for only 11 cops and part time at that. That is not enough, especially in this day age. Or come up with some kind of regionalized plan. In regards to experience with the CFD, there's a problem when the next town over FD beats the town I live in FD to an emergency. That's not good.
- 4 Taxes are too high. There is no land untouched. Stop building more houses traffic is horrible at best. This used to be a nice quiet place to live and now it's over developed!
- 5 Stop allowing the destruction of forest give a break to encourage use of existing buildings and homes property
- 6 Housing is not that affordable for me here and its hard to make end meet
- 7 Great family focused events, nicely connected community of parents
- 8 Would like to see more for adults. Better maintenance if rec fields, parks, etc
- 9 Would like to see more for adults. Better maintenance of town facilities, parks, etc
- 10 When I moved to Colchester in '86, the town's population was just shy of 6,000 people. We became the fastest growing town in the state for many years. We hired & paid for a "town manager's" position. Hmmm, to plan what? Water source contaminated, mom & pop businesses coming and going-too many to count. Box stores denied access to build in our town, providing jobs & tax base contributions. You approve many low income housing, which has minimal tax contributions. Meanwhile, the mill rate is OUT OF CONTROL. People are literally walking away from their homes because they can no longer afford to live here. We continue to deny there is a drug epidemic in our town. NOTHING is being done to help our tax base. What was once a quaint and sweet town to live in, is no longer. Shopping strip malls built but remain empty. The Chevy building eyesore sits in the center of town, almost as a simile to the slow, steady downfall of our town and it's top heavy budget.
- 11 Colchester is safe and stable, but it also seems chained to yesterday.
- 12 Park and rec offers quality programs but not enough. Taxes are high with little return on services. Have lived in other parts of the country with lower taxes and much better services such as free curbside garbage pick up. Leave removal etc. disappointing to experience that and come back to Colchester
- 13 Would like to see additional police presence especially evenings and weekends

- 14 Needs more good quality restaurants in town (not chain) similar to Vintage.
- 15 Too many unoccupied buildings many in disrepair. This should be addressed as our town center area is not attractive.
- 16 Need more sidewalks, street lights for walking. More options for food stores other than stop and shop and Noel's.
- 17 I wish Colchester had more public facilities, such as a public swimming pool.
- 18 We could use large businesses. A kohls, target or aldis would help.
- 19 We have lived here 40plus years and know what a caring, kind and energetic community Colchester is.
- 20 My spouse & I would like to see more land protected which would nudge the "Good" closer to "Excellent".
- 21 No place is perfect but Colchester feels reasonably safe. It's OK to walk down the street at night or early morning. Just don't expect most cars to stop for you when in a crosswalk.
- 22 With my children grown and moved out of state Colchester does not have a lot to offer that I am interested in. That said I will miss Colchester when I move to a more tax friendly state.
- 23 I have my own car but public transportation is desperately needed to get people other locations. The current service is extremely unsatisfactory. The Senior Center does it's best but it doesn't meet the needs of those who do not qualify for their service.
- 24 I travel back and forth to Glastonbury and West Hartford to grocery shop or do fun things. We need more businesses and nice restaurants in Colchester.
- 25 Taxes are too high.
- 26 Great community feel - lots of options for the family and for the children to participate in activities. Love the use of the Town Green for many events throughout the year.
- 27 We need a teen center or a community center to offer programs and a place for kids to be in a safe environment.
- 28 Taxes are too high. It is becoming difficult to put the money away to pay the Real Estate taxes.
- 29 Roads are terrible. School budget is a joke. Taxes are not allocated correctly

30

I love our announcement board on the green! We have great schools. The park is lovely. I love that we preserve our natural land as well. That being said, the job opportunities are extremely limited here. I am blessed to work at S&S Worldwide, but there is NOTHING like that around here. You've got some offices in the business park, or you can work at McDonalds forever. I dont want to leave my town, but it's coming to that... To make matters worse, affordable housing is criminally lacking. I am 21 and work full time, but cant move out unless I got into the city. I dont want to leave my current job, church, OR family. I love Balaban, and think we need MORE complexes like that. It would empower recent Bacon Gradutes and also can provide senior housing. My second real complaint is the roads-- down right hazardous and a disgrace to the town. We also have way too many abandoned or empty buildings, (old Toyoya dealership has been a carcass for HOW many years now??) That's just the worst eyesore. Also consider, "crack alley," the run down area around Mill Fabrics. Empty businesses there, too. And who can ignore the local vernacular. Ideally some family friendly/ gathering places would show up. I would LOVE a real community center; we only have senior and youth facilities. Roller skating, ice skating, re-vamped Gallery, bowling, laser tag. We've grown enough in the last 20 years; the extra traffic won't break us. Also, what's with the neglected baseball diamond on the green? That floods every time it rains, too.

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taxes for retired people could be lower. we are on fixed income at this point in life. with no kid to raise we should not be paying the school portion of the tax or a lowered amount

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Very friendly town, I love Colchester is Kind group and events hosted by Lion's Club. However, I wish Colchester had more Adult Ed classes like they do in Glastonbury.

33

High taxes makes it hard for seniors to live on a fixed income.

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Taxes are too high especially getting into retirement, affording a home, and being limited with funds to do those things I did when working.

35

The senior center is shameful. Seniors in my neighborhood pay 10k a year apiece. No benefits of living here. Put the same importance of budget into the senior center as you have for the schools.

36

Way over use of salt on roads. Not enough care for the environment. Careless destruction of trees and local habitat to clear lots. No thought in how to incorporate the environment with businesses.

37

I raised all three children in Colchester. I volunteered a lot and worked to give children a better start in life.

38

Three children went through the school system.

39

Lacking business/ variety of food/ restaurants

40

Need business development

41

Too much traffic. Have to pay for trash removal. Hard to see where tax dollars go. Too much trash along the streets. Too many of the same restaurants - Dunkin, Pizza, Chinese. Vacant retail space and yet more is being built.

42

taxes are too high

43

people are encouraged to be narrow-minded and to "group think" which makes them largely obnoxious.

44

pay big taxes, get no services

- 45 Colchester needs to do more to promote business that can help with the tax base . We need eating establishments other than pizza places and chinese food. Colchester needs to develop a plan promote our history by preserving historic places and making the community aware of them. Make the town interesting and inviting.
- 46 need more retail downtown but not at the cost of sacrificing historic structures. new construction should resemble historic construction, not a metal box like Dollar General. Need more parking downtown as well since it is very difficult to find metro parking and many businesses have little to no parking. .
- 47 Need more local shops & services, much lower taxes, access to municipal water and sewer; better roads.
- 48 More businesses in town would help
- 49 Sometimes it's too quiet. Need more shopping
- 50 Would say "excellent" except for all the driving we have to do to get to other towns for entertainment, work, etc. Just the price we pay for lower housing costs and the small town feel of Colchester (though it feels more like a bustling suburb now, than the small Town it was when we moved here in 1991).
- 51 The unique historic character of Colchester adds greatly to the attraction of the town over others.
- 52 Need more indoor activities for the kids on the weekends..like an indoor rec plea would be awesome!
- 53 need more businesses in town
- 54 pay a lot of taxes with no return on investment. roads are in very poor condition.
- 55 Taxes are too high, services provided are average at best, and in some cases poor.
- 56 nothing offered for kids to do, board of finance and P&Z C are entities that obstruct doing business in town
- 57 taxes too high
- 58 We chose to live in Colchester because of its new England small town flavor. The town green activities, the excellent schools etc.
- 59 TAXES TOO HIGH FOR RETIREES. VERY LITTLE HELP OR NO HELP WITH TAXES IF YOU HAPPEN TO TAKE SOME MONEY FROM REIREMENT DURING THE YEAR BECAUSE YOU HAVE TO PAY TAXES.
- 60 Can't believe you charge \$5 to discard my Christmas tree at the dump. Also, \$65 to setup a new account for water/sewer seems ridiculous.
- 61 Too much traffic in center of town, especially during evening hours.....Town green traffic lites need to be better synced to enhance flow process.
- 62 The taxes are way to high, especially for seniors
- 63 expensive, for people on fixed incomes
- 64 Taxes too high

- 65 The parks are beautiful and clean. Tons of activities for families. Love the farmers markets on the town green. I really love everything about the town EXCEPT for how far it is from everything retail. I really do wish there were more in the town for shopping so I wouldn't have to travel to Manchester, Middletown, or Waterford to get things I need.
- 66 I wish there was some kind of kid activity in town, where they could get exercise indoors
- 67 New business would take the burden off the tax payer.
- 68 generally good. But higher and higher taxes and business decisions to help operations save money have led to diminished returns on my tax burden. meaning the roads dont get plowed nearly as well and if school is going to be cancelled the public's works crew is not dispatched on OT to clear roads for normal use.
- 69 Senior Center building is inadequate programs patronizing and boring except exercise Need for more recreation especially an indoor swimming pool!
- 70 Need a food store like Aldi's!! More restaurant choices than Italian & chinese
- 71 There is a huge opportunity to improve the area around the green as a draw to the town. The buildings surrounding the green need major repairs and traffic/parking needs to be studied and improved. We also need to stop letting awful developments being built for example Nature Ave is an unmitigated disaster but I'm glad you guys let someone get rich off it.
- 72 We need more businesses in town. We are currently traveling out of town for a variety of restaurants and stores.
- 73 I do wish there were more stores and restaurants (Walmart, Chili's, etc).
- 74 There is traffic congestion on Broadway. There should be better traffic flow during the center of town.
- 75 Would love a different variety of restaurants; driving 25 minutes to shop is getting old; if opportunity presents itself, should welcome another grocery store, variety store, etc.
- 76 While I think it's a great place to raise a family, with lots of parks and things to do, it would be great to have more economic growth, such as a few more stores (housewares, everyday needs), as well as less blight. We need a stronger ordinance around that. Someone on Rt 16 had a toilet in their front yard for weeks!
- 77 R.E. taxes are too high
- 78 Hard to answer based upon a lack of common metrics.

Question 7 - Rate Colchester as a Place to Raise Kids

Additional Comments

- 1 Raised both my children here and they and I enjoyed it
- 2 Not as many things for kids to do, and high school influenced by light drug use

- 3 Decent school system. Teachers are good. Security at the schools def need to be improved. Playgrounds at the elementary school are exposed on the road side with a fence anybody can see the kids playing. Need more of a police/security presence in the high school/middle schools. Keep one officer there and 1 in the elementary schools. .Why not hire retired/armed police officers for the schools like Glastonbury does? It would be cheaper. it's ridiculous to have only one school resource officer for all the schools. More cameras needed.
- 4 Good options for sports, good local doctors, nice park facilities
- 5 too much heroin use with the kids
- 6 We do hear that folks with children are concerned about issues with drug abuse in town/in schools.
- 7 I loved my childhood in Colchester but I see so many people in my age group whose lives have been taken over or even ended by opiate addictions. This problem is not unique to Colchester. Many rural communities are dealing with the same thing, but it weighs on me now. As an adult I'm happy to stay in Colchester. If I became a parent, I don't think we would stay.
- 8 Outdated playgrounds and parks/fields- no fun places for kids- have to go to Glastonbury for everything
- 9 No opinion
- 10 The strength of the community is great but it lacks the aspects that would ever make Colchester attractive to our youngest citizens. Ask any kids, few if any want to stay in this town and that is discouraging.
- 11 Considering potential relocation to other communities in Connecticut with more to offer
- 12 I am very concerned about the use of drugs and vaping among middle and high school students. I believe that if students don't have a ride home they cannot participate in school activities which would help them feel connected and also stay out of trouble. There aren't any evening activities/places for kids to go ie: bowling, dance club, YMCA, mall etc.
- 13 Not enough things for children to do here.
- 14 Don't have kids
- 15 There is much more focus on family friendly activities as the years progress.
- 16 Not sure if it's changed but when son was in middle school is was hard to find activities in town for his age group unless into sports.
- 17 School system was fair for one of my children and poor for the other.
- 18 See above, school has great teachers, but terribly under budgeted.
- 19 Schools O.K. Severely underfunded, but masterfully staffed. My heroes work at Bacon Academy. However: We had no money for paper several years during my attendance. We don't teach languages until 7th grade; that is a disgrace. And once we do, ONLY French and Spanish. The school does not have on-site drivers ed. The district does not run late buses. Non-existant public transport to the town in general also stops me from rating higher.
- 20 Should have a community pool

- 21 Too much money was spent on how the schools look versus giving kids quality education. The kindergarten rooms need extra help to manage them. We have children, all different levels in one kindergarten class. The teacher can't possibly give them her full attention. So the kids that are advanced get overlooked and don't get any attention. The teachers are over worked with little resources or help. Kids should be assessed prior to entering kindergarten to eliminate the chaos in the current rooms. Some of these children are just not ready for the structure of kindergarten these days. Study after study shows that kids learn best through play and getting breaks. The schools are run completely opposite of that.
- 22 The schools could use improvement...it doesn't matter how beautiful the school is, the education the kids are receiving is what is important. The kindergarten teachers need extra help in the classrooms. Children enter Kindergarten at all different levels, making it difficult to manage a classroom. Kids that are advanced or above grade average get little, if any attention. If there were additional paraprofessionals in the classrooms the rooms could be better managed. Or children should be evaluated prior to ending kindergarten And if additional help is needed it can be planned and obtained. All kids deserve quality education and attention needed to progress. They aren't getting it now.
- 23 All students should be able to do after school activities & have a bus to get home. Many families have 2 people working making it hard or impossible for them to pick their child up after school activities. This can impact the students getting into the college of their choice due to transportation problems.
- 24 Not much to do in activities for children. Education was good although I made sure my kids were being educated and not politically indoctrinated. Town puts money into employees to teach and admin. costs, but not personally into children such as a rec center or late after school buses for after school activities. Teachers are paid too much. Too many administrators with high salaries.
- 25 Of course the schools are funded to the extent that there are copper roofs or look like sculptures.
- 26 School system leaves a lot to be desired.... very poor test scores for \$44 million.... embarrassing results!
- 27 Schools do not challenge the kids enough. Teachers are too soft and kids are not prepared for college.
- 28 The only reason I did not say excellent is I had to go outside Colchester for my children's interests. We can do better in the Arts, and need more activities for children.
- 29 I know everything costs money but we need to offer a more comprehensive education. Gifted education also and Paras or help for a large 19 kindergarten class.
- 30 Great community to raise kids. However,if education funding continues to be cut, we will look elsewhere
- 31 I don't care.
- 32 was ok when my kids were young, any place is scary these days
- 33 Good schools ,good youth programs
- 34 More town resources needed. Town pool? Activity center?
- 35 In the past I would have rated Colchester as an excellent place to raise children, however I do not believe our budget allows our schools to prepare our children for the competitive workforce as well as they could. Our high school is well behind the curve in technology and continued cuts are widening that gap. The schools need more staff, not less, to meet the needs of the students.

- 36 I have limited ability to answer this since I do not yet have kids.
- 37 Good schools; safe environment; strong police presence
- 38 Better recreation facilities (fields & pool) would help
- 39 The drug epidemic in town soured my experience somewhat.
- 40 Nothing for them to do here in town other then the movie theater
- 41 Colchester is a good balance of small town and quality education
- 42 Plenty to see and do on warm days, Need more indoor places to burn off energy.
- 43 Excellent for teachers, which are over payed for the results they achieve in the classroom.
- 44 We chose to live in Colchester because of its new England small town flavor. The town green activities, the excellent schools etc.
- 45 That's how you should promote our town. Great Schools Great teachers!!
- 46 No experience to form an opinion.
- 47 away from big city violence
- 48 We plan on having our children here.
- 49 My son's teacher for Kindergarten last year was good, but his first grade teacher is excellent.
- 50 Disappointed with the current schooling and classes offered.
- 51 Lots of activities for the kids to do. Recreation does a wonderful job keeping the kids busy.
- 52 The schools are better than average and the park is nice but we need sidewalks for kids to walk to the park on Old Hebron towards Miller Rd. THERE ALSO NEEDS TO BE STRONGER ENFORCEMENT OF SPEED LIMITS. THERE IS TOO MUCH SPEEDING IN TOWN AND IT IS DANGEROUS FOR CHILDREN.
- 53 Park and Rec costs are increasing in a worrying rate.
- 54 I have heard disturbing stories about vaping and drugs at schools.
- 55 LOVE the fact that ALL kids go to same school; not segregated by neighborhoods (one reason I chose to live here); feel rec. & youth services have been above average in keeping kids engaged in outside activities.
- 56 CES has been amazing. While having a lot of kids, our son gets support and attention, which we really appreciate. The school offers some fun activities for the families as well. I do wish we had holiday concerts, graduations, talent shows, etc. so we can come see our kids on stage.

Question 8 - Retire Additional Comments

- 1 high taxes for elderly to scrape together, especially after death of spouse

- 2 Senior Center is excellent for seniors. They will take you places if you can't drive and is a wonderful place to make friends
- 3 Wish I was able to live in a warmer climate
- 4 Cost of living is not conducive for the elderly or middle class to live in Colchester CT
- 5 I do not know
- 6 Nothing for seniors to do in this town. Taxes too high to retire here.
- 7 Taxes too high for people.
- 8 Ct tax to death
- 9 It's not really Colchester, I look at the entire state as a poor place to retire.
- 10 Too early to tell but so far don't plan on retiring here, doesn't seem too "senior" focused
- 11 We have concerns about the level of taxes; other towns have lesser mill rates and more services. There need to be more activities for seniors. For folks who are mid-lifers, we pay significant taxes and receive no benefits.
- 12 UNAFFORDABLE
- 13 Lack of affordable 55 and over housing development, limited walkable downtown area, insufficient adult enrichment programs, lackluster senior services.
- 14 Connecticut in general is too expensive to retire in! High taxes and everything is taxed!
- 15 Needs public transportation.
- 16 It would be better to have closer access to certain stores for personal needs.
- 17 Connecticut as a whole is a terrible place to retire - colchester would be a bad choice in an already terrible state- Lyme or Old Saybrook would be better with their lower taxes
- 18 High taxes
- 19 *would be excellent if it was affordable, which it is mostly not
- 20 Property taxes excessive.
- 21 Property taxes are too high
- 22 Not sure, hope to retire within the next couple years. Also depends on the state. People are way over taxed in the state of CT
- 23 concern about cost of 55 and older housing, rents, etc. whether that is in Colchester or across the state.
- 24 Property taxes are high. There needs to be a tax freeze at age 65 so we can afford to stay in Colchester.
- 25 All of CT has high taxes
- 26 Mostly lower because all of CT is way to expensive tax wise.

- 27 weather is an issue but you cannot change that!
- 28 Just CT in general not singling out Colchester
- 29 CT altogether is not an option for retirement, taxes are too high
- 30 Taxes are high but I love Colchester.
- 31 Taxes are too high. School taxes should not be paid by retirees and town taxes should be frozen when you reach 65.
- 32 Rural, harder to get around, especially if you can't drive and need to get to medical appointments.
- 33 There's everything we need.
- 34 The state of CT is not a place to retire
- 35 I'm not familiar with all the services for retirees. I know we have the senior center and bus, but beyond that?
- 36 Taxes becoming impossible
- 37 Not applicable yet. I have heard that for a small senior center that we have a lot to offer in activities compared to newer senior centers in other towns according to a few friends.
- 38 Nothing positive to offer retirees, moving to Georgia
- 39 Town is a great place to raise children -- good schools, recreational programs and facilities, movie theater, restaurants, etc. But there is a cost in terms of taxes and home prices/mortgage that those on a fixed or lower income would struggle with.
- 40 Not just Colchester, all of Connecticut
- 41 Too young so not sure
- 42 If I could save enough to get out of this town I would, but as I said earlier taxes are too high.
- 43 Taxes and expenses in town are too high to stay for retirement.
- 44 Not because of Colchester specifically but Connecticut is not a place I picture myself spending my retired life.
- 45 Needs more restaurants
- 46 Would help to have more options to shop closer than 30 minutes away
- 47 Taxes are high for our elderly. Would be nice if our seniors could have a tax break once they reach a certain age.
- 48 I'd rather go somewhere warmer. If you get solar roadways I would reconsider
- 49 Not sure. I'm not retired yet! I like that we have a senior center, and have noticed the mini buses providing transport.

- 50 being on fixed income and with property taxes rising being able to stay in the area may not be affordable or even living in the state
- 51 Too expensive
- 52 State and local taxes would prohibit us from retiring here. We plan to leave the state upon retirement. If you had Colchester in Pennsylvania - I would stay indefinitely! :/
- 53 Not yet retired, so can't comment
- 54 Connecticut is 1 of highest tax states. Tolls are coming soon. State is full of "sanctuary cities". If I didn't meet my wife here I would have left the state.
- 55 Way too expensive for what is given for retirees. Our community owns our own roads so they do not need Town ploughing or roadwork. We pay the same taxes as everyone else. The senior center facility is falling apart and does not serve seniors like it could if facilities were appropriate/updated. Water damage in ceiling tiles makes me wonder if one is breathing in mold.
- 56 Unreasonable taxes. Grocery stores are limited with high prices. Activities are minimal.
- 57 Services are limited and the building is disgusting!
- 58 Taxes taxes and more taxes!!! Can't wait to move!!
- 59 Taxes are way too high.
- 60 Not enough info to comment
- 61 Taxes are too high to retire here
- 62 I love the peacefulness of it now but taxes are high and Seniors get a bad rap. There should be more perks as you get older.
- 63 I tend to keep to myself but need to offer older residents more breaks than just low senior discounts.
- 64 expensive to live in this town
- 65 Good, but we don't want to retire in CT. Too much in taxes!
- 66 Taxes too damn high. Not good to retire. That comment goes for the whole state.
- 67 Limited retail and entertainment options
- 68 can't afford big taxes, always increasing...nothing in return....prices too high, people are leaving CT at an alarming rate, and we are stuck taking up the slack
- 69 While Colchester is a great place to live, Connecticut is a difficult place to retire from a tax and cost of living perspective.
- 70 Lack of public transportation is a problem.
- 71 Could be better with lower taxes. Better senior center.
- 72 Expensive. Taxes have increased significantly since I moved here.

- 73 There may be a little less activity than I would want as a retiree, but I am only 28 so it's difficult to say.
- 74 Haven't really thought about it yet.
- 75 Tax rate is ridiculous!!!! Retirees living on fixed income probably can't afford to own a home here.
- 76 Colchester is fine, CT is not a good place to retire
- 77 Not many facilities and travel to entertainment venues distant
- 78 Again it's nice and quiet.
- 79 Obviously, CT in general is very expensive. Weather can make older people shut-ins here in New England. For most of our seniors in Colchester, I assume they must still drive or get rides when they are going out for some reason, so not the most "walkable" Town - depending, of course, on the specific location where one actually lives.
- 80 I likely will not stay here in retirement due to high property taxes.
- 81 Property taxes are too high to consider retiring in town. It's not a problem unique to Colchester, the whole state is too costly to retire in.
- 82 Taxes are very high. In former residences, the town tax were frozen at age 65. Not here. It is scary to think I may have to sell my house if I can't afford the tax increases.
- 83 Could have more cultural programs for seniors
- 84 taxes are too high and there are not enough services.
- 85 high taxes
- 86 High taxes which is squandered on over paid school faculty and outrageous looking school buildings.
- 87 CT taxes are the concern for retirement but my wife and I do not plan to leave Colchester at retirement
- 88 Taxes are too high.
- 89 Because no retail businesses have been added to the Grand List, our taxes are higher than similar population-based towns, making the decision to leave more cut-and-dried every year.
- 90 Love Colchester, just not sure if we will be able to afford CT on retirement income.
- 91 It is not a good place to retire financially I believe. Hopefully it will change when the time comes for us.
- 92 Taxes too high, will be looking to move upon child graduating from school.
- 93 taxes too high
- 94 too expensive. Taxes etc.
- 95 Not planning on retiring in Colchester
- 96 Taxes are too high

- 97 The problem with retirement within Connecticut is a function of the State tax policies. The Towns (with budget processes similar to Colchester) do a fine job of minimizing tax implications to residents, however the State has a regressive tax structure to retirees with income tax and estate taxes that other State do not have. Additionally, Connecticut has a mandated funding of education via all local property taxes with reducing their contribution to Towns that do not meet their "concept" of needy. Therefore as the other States keep improving their quality of life, more retirees will continue to relocate away from CT, and all it Towns. It's not the Town's fault.
- 98 Too expensive fr the reirees that have lived here for tears. Or for any retiree. Property taxes kill us.
- 99 Colchester is excellent. Unfortunately, Connecticut with its taxation is not.
- 100 Need better tax rates for those of us over 65.
- 101 Taxes in state, not necessarily the town, are excessive and do not promote retirement within the state.
- 102 Taxes are still too hire for seniors.
- 103 It's an expensive place to retire to
- 104 I can not afford to continue to live in Colchester the taxes are way to high
- 105 Too expensive. Weather sucks
- 106 It's a great town for retirement, except for what I stated before about everything being very far away. I wouldn't want my parents retiring here knowing they were driving so far for essentials.
- 107 Price of living is too high and the weather isn't ideal, but there are a lot of great senior services in town.
- 108 Taxes too high
- 109 Taxes are too high, when the time comes, we will move out of Colchester.
- 110 Leaving conn once kids are done with collage
- 111 High Taxes, but that's all over Connecticut
- 112 It is the state of CT not the town that makes retiring here less than desirable.
- 113 Not enough varied activities No public transportation Not enough dept store type services Very high groc costs Nothing of any interest in Westchester
- 114 State of CT is no place to retire - We will be moving out of state
- 115 This must be a trick question as it would be foolish to retire anywhere in CT.
- 116 I think a more developed Town Center with Senior Center located on the green might be a way to improve Senior living in town
- 117 The state of CT taxes us retirees too much. Can't afford it. Moving south.
- 118 Comment is more about CT though. We plan on leaving CT after our youngest child (currently a senior at Bacon) graduates college.

- 119 There needs to be more attention to seniors.
- 120 ANY town in CT would be tough to afford in retirement, not just Colchester
- 121 I would not retire here. I want someplace warm year round and where everything is a short drive or walking distance.
- 122 Senior benefits are none
- 123 Taxes are too high, no discounts for seniors.
- 124 Taxes increase as percent of disposable income
- 125 Colchester is a great town in a lousy State. Every day goes by, a new reason to support my decision to leave CT soon.

Question 9 - Quality of Services Used

Additional Comments

- 1 0/13 services utilized. Garbage pick up beyond city limits should be included in out taxes.
- 2 Library needs better/longer hours. Public Works services are poor. Plowing is never good. Always too late and the job is terrible. Too many chewed up lawns, mailboxes, curbing, etc. Flipping the cutting edges every season would help do a better job. Curbside mowing is not done frequently enough. And response time for trees down/emergencies is always very slow. i have worked for another public works dept. in another town so I have some insight into the problems that I have seen in this town,
- 3 The tax brackets need to change. MV taxes need to end the town is not maintaining my vehicles. People who rent and have kids in the school system need pay more taxes than people that don't.
- 5 Water needs to be filtered before it tastes drinkable
- 6 Library doesn't have the funds to carry a lot of newer books from what I can tell. LOVE the youth center programs
- 7 We have used the building department. We very much appreciate the assistance of Mr. Gustafson. We had to use 911 for a problem once, and they were more concerned with the town to which we paid our taxes than sending out assistance.
- 8 Wetlands regulations a joke.
- 9 Too expensive. One water source contaminated. We were informed in writing about the existing water source has a high salt content. As if putting it in writing absolves the town of any liability.
- 10 Dealing with the tax collector assessor is an effort in futility and frustrating
- 11 Library needs more current books, I know it's tough with current financials but that would be nice
- 12 Need additional library hours.
- 13 The Library is the shining star of downtown. Excellent for kids- high quality.

- 14 I have two children who are not yet school age(that wasn't a choice)
- 15 For such a limited aging space, the Senior Center does a good job. I volunteer at the Food Bank and the space is deplorable with leaking, freezing temps in winter and stifling heat in summer. Food should not have to be covered with tarps.
- 16 Would love to see the library weekend hours expanded a bit.
- 17 Hours for youth center are not friendly to youth and families; facility needs major structural and other enhancements. Plan to combine senior center with youth center as a "community center" should be planned for future rather than stand-alone services. Library hours during evenings should be expanded as well.
- 18 The library is amazing!!
- 19 About the only benefit I get from paying Colchester municipal taxes is the excellent Public Works dept. Fire and police are OK but expensive given the service level they provide.
- 20 We only moved here in July so we haven't been to all services yet, if needed.
- 21 Would like sewage at Piekarz Rd.
- 22 Our town website is bad. It is extremely...ugly...and hard to navigate. It might as well not exist because no one uses it. The ONLY time I go there is to pay car tax. Ideally there would be a user friendly and robust recreation schedule, along w any other town happenings. It's unprofessional and messy that I need to follow the police on Facebook... :/ what about recreation, school notices, town closings, etc? I know there are places to access this info, but it should be plain and easy on the website. In one place. This is my opinion and I'm a tech-saavy 21 year old!
- 23 having used 911 a few times the response was excellent
- 24 Library and food bank drop off donation hours are too limited. We miss out on many opportunities to have townspeople give back. Our only interaction with the PD is the SRO (School Resource Officer), Rob Suchecki, who is amazing & will be missed in retirement.
- 25 Wish Transfer station was open more days. Rec programs are costly.
- 26 I called 911 for an ambulance once for chest pains and difficulty breathing. After waiting 20 minutes, the dispatch person called me back and told me that Colchester's ambulance was en route to Backus hospital with another patient, and he was sending another ambulance from East Hampton which arrived 6 minutes later. So I never used Colchester's ambulance though I needed it. Having a second ambulance for a town this size may be advisable...
- 27 Gunther came to my home and tested water. Very informative and helpful in explaining findings.
- 28 I have never had a problem with any of the Departments.
- 29 Roads need to be better maintained. Improvements in Park and rec fields have been noted
- 30 The roads are a mess. The public works department has been understaffed and under equipped for years. Too much good old boys mentality, it's hard to believe any work gets done.
- 31 The library is an outstanding resource, and is a critical component to our happiness in this town.

- 32 when asking about top of my street because it is so busy was told nothing can be done until something happens!
- 33 Don't use them, shouldn't be taxed for them.
- 34 We have a TON of excellent personnel on the town payroll. Every individual I've ever dealt with, from the transfer station, to the library, etc, has been so knowledgeable, approachable, friendly &, eager to help.
- 35 Senior center lacks space and parking is very limited. The library and the Senior center should have meeting rooms available in the evening.
- 36 Library hours need to be extended. Computers need to be updated and better internet is needed.
- 37 Library closes too early
- 39 Need more actives for older people.
- 40 Youth center could use a refresh and some new equipment
- 41 My youngest child graduated Bacon 6 years ago, I haven't had the need of most town services.
- 42 Senior Center has excellent services and programs but building is beyond antiquated and parking is inadequate,
- 43 Refrain from building less than appealing looking schools and use the money saved on Colchester's shoddy roads and streets.
- 44 Love the 57 Fest. Would like to see the playground at the RECPLEX revamped.
- 45 Why dont the police patrol? Why do they all stay at town hall?
- 46 we were on town water and sewar for 8 years, we now live off of harbor road and have well and septic.
- 47 I feel the Colchester area is ripe for development commercially and the building department is hindering the growth of business. I have spoken to several people who won't even try to bring their business to Colchester because of the reputation of how difficult the building department is to work with.
- 48 Sewer and Water people at Town Hall very friendly and helpful. My problem is with the fee to setup a new account.
- 49 Library should reduce cost by NOT putting current issue of periodicals in plastic covers--waste of time and in most cases can be read easier out of plastic cover-maintenance issue in need of elimination.
- 50 No benefits for taxes paid
- 51 we could do better with customer service in our town hall and those departments in the town hall.
- 52 Joanie in the Town Clerk's Office is always helpful. She has done many notaries for me and always has a pleasant attitude and wonderful smile.
- 53 I would prefer not having to worry about road salt in my drinking water
- 54 The few services that I utilize are Public works and my comments are above. I wouldn't bother calling the Police in this town ever. They cant be trusted.

- 55 Sewer and Water has been extremely helpful with a landlord/tenant situation where we had to turn the water off and on and change billing details. They're great! For parks and rec: - We love the summer camp, but it would be better if there was a building onsite to go inside. Being outside all day is a lot for my kiddo - Offer classes during the day or early mornings - all are at night and I can't make those - Offer drop in classes. I can't always commit to 6+ weeks straight
- 56 Interesting how to answer police and fire. Few people actually use fire. As for police, if they patrol neighborhood or answer calls in neighborhood to set speed traps, is that considered using?

Question 10

Additional Comments

- 1 Senior Center could offer more programs, mini classes, trips to Hartford Library, Goodwin Park etc
- 2 Whenever I selected "maintain spending", I would support increases in spending if necessary to maintain quality service, or to relieve existing budgetary constraints that make it difficult for those departments to properly function. I support increased funding in instances where we have the capacity to expand on services, but also understand that we cannot afford to increase spending without specifically identifying what and for what purpose.
- 3 In all areas, spending can be reduced. There is not one area that should not be reduced. Much too high spending in the town. Other towns have increases and decreases in mill rates. Colchester only has increases. This is an indication of overspending.
- 4 The library needs people who know how to fix computers. There are often issues like Word Programs not working or viruses which infect computers and the staff just puts a "out of order" sign instead of getting them fixed in a timely manner.
- 5 Money continues to be tight for my and many other families, but I don't want to see services reduced.
- 6 Some of the areas should be self-supporting, through fee generation. With regard to some of the town hall areas, we would hope that savings could be achieved through efficiencies—the state will be promoting cooperative relationships with neighboring towns, and there is the hope that Colchester may avail itself of some creative relationships with adjacent towns.
- 7 I believe deeply in investing in our community
- 8 This town needs to get serious about the heroin problem. Just because people aren't dead doesn't mean they're not suffering or in danger. If all you see are the deaths, you have no idea how bad the problem really is. We need to give more support to families in need and more activities for students, especially in middle and high school. Programs like DARE are not what I mean.
- 9 Due to the increase in crime, we needed 24/7 police coverage.
- 10 Stop throwing money at the police department. They don't need more money. For the hours they work, they need less money.
- 11 I would really like money to go towards better traffic design downtown, a light at intersection of bulkley hill to slow traffic down and change light at top of 16 and Main Street into a traffic circle for better flow

- 12 Fix the roof of town hall. The leaks are ridiculous!
- 13 fund our programs!!
- 14 We have neither public sewer or water.
- 15 We must update the schools' technology to match that of WJJMS. We need around the clock police. We need to make sure there are things for the kids and families to do in town. Fields are in bad shape.
- 16 The biggest speners reduce the most. Not enough info here to be 100% sure about some of these.
- 17 Let's help people in need.
- 18 There is a different tone in the Town, pride seems to have gone down.
- 19 With the high number of children and adults using the Rec Plex, considerably more attention and services will need to be allocated to the maintenance of the existing Rec Plex and the need to be looking for additional land to develop for more Rec opportunities.
- 20 I think it would be most frugal to maintain the status quo (for the most part) leave the town's people with a bit of breathing room. Rather than tax the purses further.
- 21 In the future, I would recommend defining public works, town hall, building department, and sewer/water in a different way on this survey. Not clear what these line items refer to. Staffing, projects, or maintenance of infrastructure?
- 22 Too much being spent on the school system that doesn't improve education. Did the morning delete school really need to spend tax payer money on an outdoor ropes ?course? How does that improve education
- 23 I think that town hall employees get paid far too much. I would recommend increasing the funding for Schools, youth center, and library so it benefits future generations. Also, the increase to public works should help out with the poor upkeep of infrastructure around town (i.e roads)
- 24 I am willing to pay high(er) taxes if I'm getting something from it and funds are not mismanaged. I want to actually benefit from continually spending money in the town- even if the high school hired 10 new teachers. I dont personally benefit, but that is something I value HIGHLY and provides obvious bonuses to the community.
- 25 We need to maintain schools & roads/infrastructure and have sacrificed maintenance for increased staffing. Recreation should be covered by fees and grants for low-income slots or subsidies. Rec is doing a poor job balancing communicating this year.
- 26 The town roads are in need of repair and resurfacing. The youth center is vital because there are few youth programs outside of school.
- 27 Please see comment on ambulance service in prior question. I assume this is under Fire Department.
- 28 The upkeep of our schools is atrocious. The Old Bacon Academy is still standing yet we need a totally reconstructed middle school and our high school I'm sure is not far behind. Lower admin. salaries and teachers salaries through insurance and pension benefits. This town is a poor steward of its citizens money.

- 29 Can't answer without knowing the needs of these areas. If they have a need and the current spending does not meet it, increase. They are vital for the quality of life in the town and for attracting future residents.
- 30 Re-evaluate the number of school administrators.
- 31 If you continue to raise taxes for new programs I will no longer be able to afford my apartment.
- 32 More thrifty use of resources would benefit the town. Over use of road salt is insane. Excess tree trimming is ridiculous. Spend money like it's your own please.
- 33 I do not think I am qualified to answer these questions because the strength of a town and it's services make it more attractive to new homebuyers.
- 34 School & Recreation increase suggested, in part, for dual purpose—improve BA & RecPlex fields or add lights to BA varsity field. Also for schools, add teachers to reduce class sizes at any/all schools.
- 35 My child was in portable classrooms. Schools would get rehabbed or rebuilt after he attended. Why do our new schools look like the Taj Mahal???
- 36 We have too many police, please cut back
- 37 See comments above go library and Senior center
- 38 Young people in Colchester who wish to start families are finding it very hard to find affordable housing due to rising property taxes.
- 39 Add access to more public sewer and water lines
- 40 Need to invest in RecPlex field upgrades.
- 41 Even when my children went to school, we spent too much on education
- 42 I am not opposed to small budget increases that enable Departments to maintain current services. If I had more specific knowledge I could express more targeted recommendations.
- 43 I would love to see increased spending however that is unlikely in this climate. Keep in mind that if you want families to Move to Colchester you can't keep cutting the educational budget. Motivate businesses to come to town and help our tax base.
- 44 Hire more aides for the schools. Fix the youth center or build a brand new one. The kids need more indoor places like a community center or indoor rec plex for classes.
- 45 We need to start on the Senior Center
- 46 less new construction building department should not need as much funding recreation programs usually overlap what is available in private sector and should not be competing w our small resource of small businesses in town already overburdened w taxes and townspeople expecting contributions for every cause
- 47 As a senior citizen, our resources are limited so obviously I want the town to be to be as fiscally responsible as I am with our money. I can't honestly put my 'vote' in on schools, rec programs, youth centers without a share of bias on my part...because I don't have need of these services.
- 48 taxes too high

- 49 As long as maintain means the same dollar amount and not an increase in costs to maintain what we currently have.
- 50 It is impossible to know if a specific department requires an increase to move forward or, indeed, just to maintain services. Would it not be more useful to provide the citizens with the major needs/requests of each of the services listed above before asking the questions?
- 51 Lets tighten the belt. Us seniors always have to. We cant tighten anymore.
- 52 Social Services is only part time. Although I do not need to partake of her programs, I see from volunteering that with the size of this town, we need a full time person.
- 53 Need better methods of running services and cutting labor costs.
- 54 with the number of children in town declining I don't think more spending is needed there BUT our teens need more to do and our police department needs a better presence.
- 55 Everything should get more funding. Things are getting more expensive and none of those departments should be struggling to find money
- 56 Enrollment is down, but budget keeps increasing. Class sizes are already large at Bacon anyway. Adding 3 or 4 more students per class is not going to make a difference in the effectiveness of the class.
- 57 Garbage collection times should be expanded. It was ridiculous that more times were not made available when the holidays fell on a tuesday.
- 58 re: school: Has the statute regarding increase/decrease of school spending each year in relation to prior spending been changed? It is unfortunate that many towns have their hands tied to his.
- 59 For school system maintain spending per pupil but reduce if enrollment declines.

Question 11 - State Funding

Additional Comments

- 1 cannot afford
- 2 While I did not choose an option to decrease services, I am of course supportive of funding cost saving measures whenever possible. It is of course an enormous challenge to do so for our respective boards, but any possible savings that can be generated in the long term should be prioritized.
- 3 I believe the town should obtain professional outside help in reviewing all depts. though a comprehensive efficiency study to identify all areas of wasted time and resources contributing to the increasing budget requests. Times are changing and town management must be aware of all inefficiencies in each dept.
- 4 As other towns have done, the schools should be combined with neighboring towns to reduce costs. Also, the elementary school recently built is beyond the needs of a school causing unnecessary spending.

- 5 Increased taxes will not help as people will not tolerate it and will move to other towns. If there are other places to cut without significantly impacting their performance it should be there as I have heard teachers say multiple times they are doing the best they can but it would be much harder with reduced budget. Invest in our future and instill a Colchester pride so people know where they come from, a place they won't forget to give back to.
- 6 Live within your means! Cut the budget on this town's free range of spending. No more new vehicles maintain the ones you have. Stop wasting taxpayers money driving town/Fire Dept vehicles around town for coffee and lunch and personal use.
- 7 REDUCE ALL SPENDING AND PAY INCREASES TO KEEP THEIR BUDGETS TOWN DEPARTMENTS WASTE\$\$\$ SO THEY DON'T GET REDUCED, AS I was told from a certain town employee
- 8 I feel that the residence in Colchester pay a fair amount of taxes already and the town should look at executive spending and see who is abusing things within the system you already have.
- 9 I can not afford a tax increase and I don't think my neighbors can either. I will not support a budget that raises taxes.
- 10 Why is there no option for cut things besides education.
- 11 NO more tax increases. Enough.
- 12 I am assuming that you are aware that not all possible permutations are listed above. Therefore this question cannot but be biased as asked. Cuts to the budget have been devastating in recent years and both Colchester and the state need to step up and fulfill its obligations to its citizens to provide needed services. In particular education has suffered in terms of class sizes and reduced offerings to students.
- 13 How come there isn't just an option to reduce town services. You have an option to just reduce education. But then you go right to a combination of town and education?
- 14 None of these responses allowed for reduction of town budget without the additional reduction of the education budget. We need students. Without students, we will soon be nothing.
- 15 I just want to reduce town services- not the education budget which is in all the other options. Education is power.
- 16 Unrealistic responses. Property taxes too high across board
- 17 Smart spending. Reduce frivolous budget items. Not sure why other communities can do more with less. Why does Colchester have high taxes and spending without much to offer
- 18 Small tax increase please
- 19 All of these are awful choices!
- 20 Must have economic development.
- 21 Taxes have been excessive for decades. Towns cities and states need to learn to live within their means, just like working people.
- 22 And work to bring more business into town to increase revenue. We have a revenue issue not a tax issue.

- 23 As a tax payer in town I cannot afford to see an increase in taxes. I'm a retired senior and see too much that could have been in this town. Relying on the current citizens for funding the budget needs to be halted. We need bigger businesses to help support our budget. It's about time this happens.
- 24 STOP reducing the education budget. It will affect the quality of education for our children. We need to increase the school budget.
- 25 careful with tax increases they can have a way of backfiring and driving people away from this tax burdened state --- try to maintain education budget
- 26 The option I wanted is not included. Which I find odd and disappointing. I would like a combination of tax increase and reductions in town budget.
- 27 We should also look at an increase in shared services which is clearly needed for towns such as ours; I applaud the bringing in of high-school students from Norwich as a great example of beginning to look for these opportunities. Our schools are vital to the quality of life in our town, but we can look to a better regional model in the medium and long term to help maintain their quality in a state with shrinking resources.
- 28 These options are ridiculous. Why is there a reduction in the education budget tied to each answer except the first?
- 29 Why is there a choice to reduce education programming only but not to reduce town services only? Or not a choice to raise taxes and reduce town services? There is a bias here.
- 30 Tired of taxes being raised. So want to move out of Colchester because of this reason.
- 31 I would like to see a combination of tax increases and well thought out management of expenses. I understand the budgets have been streamlined and do not include excess any longer and I appreciate that. I do not want to see our services suffer because they are the draw for living in this community.
- 32 The only way to decrease any of the budgets is to get the contracts for education benefits and town employees back to the drawing board so everyone gives a little. Back to the drawing board for everyone.
- 33 Why would you think it would be acceptable to only take away from the education budget? How about reducing town official paychecks first. The fact that more than 50% of the towns budget is for salaries is outrageous
- 34 Stop taking from education funds. This is not the kids fault and they deserve the same education I got here. I would have education funding cut LAST. SCHOOLS ARE A PRIORITY.
- 35 Colchester has less students and the budget should reflect this
- 36 Our tax burden is insane compared to surrounding communities & states with similar services and population sizes. This is NOT sustainable. However, parents of school aged children can't continue to cover the cost of all arts & sports plus increased taxes. Too much of the budget costs are being shifted to school-aged parents right now and it sounds like the recommendation is to make it worse. Idle hands of tweens & teens can be dangerous. Let's be caution what we sacrifice.
- 37 I don't support reducing services, and flat budgets don't cover pay increases necessary to attract and retain good teachers and town staff.

- 38 Reduce First Selectman's salary or at least no raise for highest paid people on the town's payroll. I have not had a raise in 11 years, so it's hard to pay more taxes so someone else can get a raise well above my own income.
- 39 There are too many Administrators in the Schools. Student Enrollment is decreasing and the number of Administrators should be reduced. You could hire 7 paraprofessionals for the classrooms for the salary of one Administrator.
- 40 Use the money we do have in more appropriate ways. Paraprofessionals aren't paid much. They can be used as additional support in the schools.
- 41 How about our state rep takes some ownership of the reduced funding? What's the point of having a long-term incumbent if this is what happens?
- 42 Time to bring the BOE to reality. Less enrollment, less \$\$\$ needed. The BOE hides \$\$\$ and skews facts to hide the truth on how much they waste. A thousand less students, yet the same number of high paid administrators?? Look at the test scores! Why do we keep funding mediocre performance?
- 43 Cut the taxes as this is absurd.
- 44 Education spending should never be decreased. Children our the future of this state and this country. Decrease spending on town services.
- 45 Can not answer this because taxes can not increase yet there are areas that need changing. I don't know whose idea it was to take the Paraprofessionals out of kindergarten but the consistency of help needed for the kindergarteners can only be a win win. I do volunteer in my Grand daughter's class and I see how hard the Teacher's work and it is very difficult to maintain structure with 19 children a class. The Paras salary couldn't have been that expensive. We need more recess for children for their health physically and mentally. There needs to be a look at salaries and restructuring before taxes go up.
- 46 I do not like any answer. The town needs economic and business development to increase tax revenue.
- 47 I don't know enough of the standing of each category to determine where funding comes from.
- 48 Stop building new schools!!!!
- 49 With a decline in student enrollment there is no reason for the education budget to continue to increase.
- 50 I will vote AGAINST any budget that reduces school services. Do not assume my vote against means more needs to be cut.
- 51 Bring in more office type businesses to relieve some tax burden.
- 52 Why is the only option to decrease anything education and not social services or senior programs?
- 53 Start taxing sand and gravel like you do stores for inventory product on hand to be sold other towns already do more revenue
- 54 Why do four out of five options include reducing our education budget? It's already stretched too thin...

- 55 Our schools need to move forward, not backward. Reducing spending on education is not a responsible action to balance the budget. The town budget is already bare bones. Reductions will only hurt our students and residents by not providing what we need.
- 56 bring in more businesses to improve tax base
- 57 I am not sure reducing is 100% needed. I think maintaining is what is needed. As far as raising taxes, that's funny, I already pay a large amount for a small lot in the woods with a 40 year old home. Taxes have gone up every year for the 4 years we have lived here. I think you need to look into taxing the hundreds/thousands of renters and state funded housing we have in this town whose children go to our schools for nothing. Families that just keep having children that fill our schools and said families pay no taxes towards our education programs. They also buy older beat up cars that have no value therefore keeping them from paying hardly any taxes on said vehicles and that's assuming they are even registered in this state or even at all. I think there is a huge problem with more and more renters moving into town with larger families cause they know the schools are great and then the rest of us are left to pay higher taxes to put not only our own children through school but there's as well. That's ridiculous and something should be done about it. There should be some kind of renters tax for said renters or pass the tax increase off to those landlords renting or subletting there properties and have them pay for the increased demand for higher educational costs. Not everyone else who owns a home and has a family and kids of their own and works their tails off to stay above water.
- 58 meet with other towns to look for ways to consolidate services, combine purchasing to earn bulk discounts
- 59 No more tax increases. Rising taxes driving people to leave Colchester and Connecticut.
- 60 Would like explanation of consolidation for schools. There are so many high paid personnel. Also can we attract more students to our schools. Also I'm never clear how the tuition was spent
- 61 With any financial issue, your options appear to be to either increase income (i.e., taxes), reduce expenses, or both. By doing a combination, we can maintain the current community lifestyle with little tax burden on the residents.
- 62 Lower pay for town employees in the town hall. And benny's. There doing a job like everyone else.. I have heard that our teachers are paid \$8000 more then in other towns.
- 63 Do not raise taxes under any circumstances!
- 64 A review of possible efficiencies should be undertaken also. There is always a way to improve efficiency
- 65 Devil would be in the details, as they say.
- 66 The schools need the most funding.
- 67 A tax increase on already high taxes is not appropriate. Would encourage me to move.
- 68 All horrible choices. Leave education alone and cut the bloat in Town Hall
- 69 Taxes are painful, but you can't have goods and services without them

- 70 Can't raise taxes any more. Don't see much with what we pay now...roads need to be paved and we could benefit from a full time police department or more officers on each shift..yes this does cost money, but something gotta give and bringing more businesses to town will definitely help offset these costs.
- 71 There is not an option to reduce just the town services and NOT education. Education should be maintained. NO increase in taxes, CT is already Taxing us too much, people are moving out of this state as it is and we will have to look into that if the taxes keep increasing . There has to be another way besides of just making cuts in education and increasing taxes.
- 72 Reduce town services only
- 73 Have the teacher's fund their retirement instead of property owners.
- 74 every budget needs to fit what it's income IS not what it hopes it will be. If a household loses an income cuts are made.
- 75 None of the above are good options. Need better options
- 76 Put a hold on salary increases for town employees. I'm not guaranteed a raise at my job. If we have a slow year, no raises go out. I only get a raise every 2nd year or so
- 77 Try not to reduce education. Be more budget conscience. Cut waste only.
- 78 None of the above. There is no option available where the education budget isn't slated to be cut other than increase taxes. We need to provide opportunities to attracted businesses. Ex. A wal-Mart or shopping center like how Waterford did it. They were smart to build the whole shopping complex and yet we turned down opportunities for big business to come into our town and help with the tax burden.
- 79 taxes too high
- 80 One of the top reasons we moved to Colchester was because, of the amazing schools. We would be incredibly disappointed if the school budgets were reduced. Ultimately reductions here would affect the level of education and the school facilities. We have finally found our spot and would like to stay.
- 81 combination of tax increase with reduction of town services from the town budget - leave education alone.
- 82 No new taxes or increases in spending. Time to cut the fat out of the budget.
- 83 You shouldn't have built a brand new school that was much larger than needed!
- 84 What is Education programming? Education services provides the children of our town with the best education we can give them. Why on earth would we not want them to have the very best? Every option but one cuts education!
- 85 Education budget should never be cut
- 86 I would actually prefer to Reduce town services but not Education but this was not an option.
- 87 Cant afford ANY increase. I cant pay my taxes now!!
- 88 Streamline operations and search for better methods of doing things as used in other communities around the world

- 89 we can not afford more taxes
- 90 Fund raisers also help!
- 91 Why is it that the education always takes a hit... what about looking at other places to cut back???
- 92 Funny there is no option to reduce town services without reducing education
- 93 Please don't reduce education programming
- 94 Leave education budget alone. Education is so important it's produce future educated people for the town and society..
- 95 More involvement from the town on economic development.
- 96 None of these are good options as all but one affect the education budget. Why is there No option that does NOT include reducing education budget? How about an option that says only Reduce Town Services from the town budget or combination of tax increase and reduction of town services? Why is the education budget the first to always come up on the chopping block? Or, maybe the town learn to "live within it's means"
- 97 Reduction in town services and a smaller slighter decrease in education program. I think people come to Colchester for the great school system.
- 98 Our town continues to grow. You can't cut spending, but always being more mindful of spending is something that always needs to be considered.
- 99 One of the biggest draws to the town for families is the school system, we need to continue to fund education appropriately.
- 100 The Property Taxes are very high, no more tax increases.
- 101 reduce town service and leave Education alone
- 102 How many administrators and teachers does the town truly need? Enrollment is decreasing; break with the unions and take a hard look at the costs. Also, how much does the town contribute to pension accounts?
- 103 Modify the Town's culture to do more with less rather than do less with more.
- 104 How about we stop increasing the amount of apartments in town. They pay only car tax and have children in school. We need to think about how to increase the taxable base like more business, things that would draw more people into town to spend more money in Colchester.

Question 12 - Maintaining Services

Additional Comments

- 1 If a unbiased study of all depts. is completed to justify the current expenditures.
- 2 Please offer refuse pick up beyond city limits as there are no other towns services I have utilized in our greater than 20 years in this community.

- 3 How about finding where there's an excess of town spending and cutting that instead of keeping current levels and just raising taxes.
- 4 All those in favor of raising the taxes can pay the tax increase for everyone else.
- 5 But let's not get carried away
- 6 It is hardly affordable as a middle class worker as is with 1 child.
- 7 We don't get any town services.
- 8 The current level of police coverage is zip, therefore it is confusing as to why so much money goes to the police department.
- 9 On fixed income very strict budgeting will have to look for another town to live our taxes are high enough Like I have to reduce. All town spending until we can meet needs
- 10 So far, our street has been plowed. Other than that we see NO town services.
- 11 What services ? I don't feel that the spending is done efficiently
- 12 I would like to see you come up with creative ways to save money and or find solutions to the gap. Think out of the box!
- 13 taxes are already too high .. cannot retire here because of it.
- 14 as long as the increase is below cost of living
- 15 If the town can increase revenue by bringing in more businesses.
- 16 Realizing expenses have gone up as they do in each household, the money has to come from somewhere but there is only so much one can get out of a paycheck! People are leaving this state because it is just too expensive. Perhaps those salaries that are excessive should not be increased every year. The 2% raise on \$30,000 is a lot less than on \$100,000. The higher paid person has a better chance of recovering from no raise than the lower income personnel. You should also look at personnel who are not using sick time properly and expecting a large payout when they leave!! There needs to be tighter control of work time and time off. Full time employees should not be working elsewhere or having days off that the supervisor does not know about and then get paid when they have been elsewhere.
- 17 Depends on what is being maintained? Road services sure, education no.
- 18 If we vote for tax increase to go to something specific like police dept. then the \$ need to go there.
- 19 Absolutely!! Please do not cut education funding.
- 20 Depending on what services you want to increase. Fire/EMS , Public Works and Seniors yes. PD NO.
- 21 Efficiencies/regionalization options are needed.
- 22 Depends on if any future thought & any other ideas for fiscal responsibility within the town. Happy to do our part, however also don't want to be the main part with no end in sight.

- 23 This is too vague. If all extra spending has been audited and cut where there is unnecessary expenditure, then I would expect a tax increase to maintain the current services, if the cost of offering those services has risen. Especially for infrastructure, parks and a safety net for the needy.
- 24 I dont see why we have the levels that we do benefiting my family other than the fire department that gets paid from other towns that use our equipment and fire services.
- 25 If you actually allocated the money to those costs
- 26 Fringe benefits are the most contentious budget line in any budget and there may be cost savings in outsourcing some costs (e.g. cleaning). These should be explored, where feasible, to limit their annual increases.
- 27 As a person on a fixed income, you most look to ways of saving, it is my hope this happens with the budget. You can only stretch so far before it snaps.
- 28 It depends on what the operating costs are; see above comment.
- 29 I will not support any tax increase until the BOE has a plan that reduces the number of Administrators. The salaries and benefits of Administrators suck up money which is needed for the classrooms.
- 30 ONLY for the library; everything else can have its budget cut first.
- 31 Cut, cut, cut! Time for fiscal reality and stop putting the “ little bang for the buck” BOE Budget on the back of the Elderly!
- 32 Can not afford any increase.
- 33 I have always been for increases but it is getting to a point that most residents can not afford increases and will move out of town or State.
- 34 The town needs economic and business development to increase tax revenue.
- 35 I would need to see that the town's leadership thought creatively about the budget, exhausted other possibilities, worked as hard as they could to keep taxes at the same level, before I would be comfortable paying a higher tax to increase cover the increase in operating costs. I would also like to see evidence of the town's leadership making significant efforts in bring in new businesses to increase the tax base. Increasing tax rates is often the path taken when local government leaders do not want to put the effort in to bring new businesses into the community.
- 36 With the town already performing poorly they shouldn't be rewarded with an increase of funding which will continue to breed laziness.
- 37 I will vote AGAINST any budget that reduces school services. Do not assume my vote against means more needs to be cut.
- 38 too high already

- 39 It depends very heavily on which services. For one thing, I think commercial development needs to be curtailed regardless of the budget situation Let's have no *new* development* projects -- the town is devouring up its green-space and it's heartbreaking to watch. As far as social services, I'm not sure to what extent the people who need these are being provided for, because I'm fortunate, but I can see as a town we need at least a moderate-level of spending to happen here. Our infrastructure isn't crumbling -the roads are largely in good shape, so it would seem no large expenditures need to happen here if cost cutting is required. Please do NOT cut funding to the Police Department -We are so fortunate as a town to have Troop K located right in the neighborhood, but if their funding is being cut this year, and with petty crime in Colchester remaining naggingly high, the local units will need a boost.
- 40 But fewer police
- 41 Fixed income.
- 42 Maybe look into not giving out pay increases for all town employees and officials. When some are already making six figures, which is too much for most of them as it is, they don't really need a yearly wage increase. Instead put those wage increases towards a line item that needs it. Literally moving the money around to make ends meet. Not increasing spending and just passing the expense off to the town tax payers. You know, basically like how most families figure out how to pay their bills.
- 43 Do you have energy saving programs in place to save electricity? Is paper used conservatively.
- 44 Within reason.
- 45 Not that this question really matters.
- 46 Do not raise taxes under any circumstances!
- 47 Depending on which services
- 48 Would support justifiable small increases in taxes, but not "any" increase, as your question is written.
- 49 We do pay more and really haven't seen much improvements or changes to the town...taxes go Up and nothing to show for.
- 50 No, until excess baggage in the schools is corrected and teachers are on pay merit system instead of tenure.
- 51 Property tax is almost 10,000, too high
- 52 refer to above comment
- 53 For the services i get from town my tax r to high.
- 54 With the volunteer population dwindling across the State I would be willing to pay higher taxes for Fire EMS.... possibly create our own paramedic program to bring in money
- 55 Operating cost should not include company vehicles that are used on personal time. Or seeing town employees out to breakfast at 9-10am. When you know they are on the clock.
- 56 Have to learn to live within available budget. As a senior citizen, on a fixed income, we do not have the luxury of digging into someone else's pockets

- 57 We have a tax level on the higher end of moderate right now which should be plenty of money to adequately fund the needs of the town. Other towns can make a budget work with lower taxes and more things to fund. Colchester should be able to make it work.
- 58 if all is done to avoid and maybe a very small increase only.
- 59 As a retired person on a limited budget, any increase would be hard to absorb in a budget.
- 60 taxes too high
- 61 Not one more penny!
- 62 **Absolutely not!
- 63 Planning on moving out if state if taxes rise another year
- 64 Plan to retire to another state where taxes are considerably lower
- 65 I've paid my dues to this Town for 40+ years.....Should only pay for services I use.....Get with it guys!
- 66 Please don't let Colchester be a spend and tax town. It is already very expensive, a pay to play model should be employed where people would have to pay a fee to participate in programs they want to enter.
- 67 It would depend on what it was for and how bad we need it
- 68 Re-examine where the money is being spent before you consider asking more from the taxpayers. Provide excellent service and then maybe the taxpayers would consider giving more of their hard earned money.
- 69 How about asking the same question about maintaining current levels of education funding?
- 70 WE NEED TO INVEST IN OUR TOWN OR IT WILL DECLINE LIKE SO MANY OTHERS
- 71 It would have to a very small increase.
- 72 reduce town services
- 73 Again see above..you're thinking like Democrats, tax and tax more.

Question 13 - Tax Change

Additional Comments

- 1 I think this is a bit of a false choice, though I understand I am not overseeing the budget on a regular basis. As much as I strongly support our town budgets and hope to increase services whenever possible, I struggle to understand how operating costs increase so consistently as to require a minimum of a 1-2% mill rate increase annually. It's entirely possible that it does make sense, but even well informed members of the public don't really understand that and find it difficult to justify. I think that's something that needs to be more effectively communicated so Town residents at least understand why this is the choice we have.
- 2 Really - "the cost of things goes up every year"? I think restructuring expenses, renegotiating contracts, and changing the way the budget is created would achieve significant savings. That is exactly why the costs go up...expectations of doing the same thing with costs is what causes these increases. Non-creative problem solving.

- 3 The town, and most surrounding towns are seeing large numbers of residents moving out of state, but the costs continue to grow when they should decrease. We've also experienced significantly lower fuel costs during this past and current year. Therefore, budgets should be reallocated for the heating and gasoline savings in order to pay for the services which have experienced an increase.
- 4 The only reason for my response to this question being this is because it is just compensating for the rising cost of what we have, not including more things. I want that to be clear.
- 5 My paycheck doesn't go up annually so why should my taxes. Get a grip and live with what you have and make it work.
- 6 The town needs a a budget review from an outside source to see where wasted money is going
- 7 I work in healthcare for a nonprofit hospital in the state. For several years we have had to decrease spending while providing raises to our staff, programming and services for the community to meet increasing patient experiences all while becoming more cost-effective and efficient in our daily care of patients. We (hospitals) have successfully decreased our expenses each year for multiple years. I do not understand why the town continues to seek increase spending. There is waste and inefficiencies in town spending. Please look at all expenses with an objective eye while aiming to be budget neutral.
- 8 Between property and motor vehicle tax it made our expenses outrageous.
- 9 Current Service budgeting is not something I endorse. The current year should not be the basis for next year. Build the budget anew, in light of need. Priorize spending. Eliminate where categories where possible. Don't simply figure out how much it would cost to continue the same level of all services.
- 10 It's very difficult to answer this without even some suggestion of what services may be cut. Of course people will be inclined to answer against raising their own taxes in a generic question like these. Seems like a survey designed to give the impression of public support for eventual cuts that won't be nearly as popular.
- 11 Increasing the Grand List would also help.
- 12 I don't mind an increase for necessities, but what needs to happen first is a 10% cut across the board. Everyone gets a minimal cut, nothing is outright destroyed. But y'all will never do that, you'd rather mess around and make everyone angry and move away.
- 13 Reduce town spending.
- 14 Reduce the brick and mortar monuments.
- 15 I can't see spending more when I feel the services offered are few and far between.
- 16 We can't keep funding to stay the same. We have to get better and keep up. This will mean more money is needed. It would be great to bring in new tax producing business. But in the meantime, we cannot just let things stay the same or get worse.
- 17 My family can't afford for things to keep going up
- 18 No more taxes. My income didn't go up either.
- 19 Increase revenue to cover the difference.

- 20 No increase.
- 21 I'd say maintain vital services, utilize nonprofits to supplement educational programs and other programs to services seniors and those in-need, whether low-income or with differing abilities. Sometimes the community can help more than the Town can for people.
- 22 maintain is preferred over add new services
- 23 Depends on what items are held. I am willing to pay for increases to education as I see that as an area of growth. The pain in squeeze to town budget and educational budget do not appear equivalent.
- 24 Question is too vague.
- 25 Efficiencies/regionalization options are needed.
- 26 Decrease the town services and please stop increasing taxes. No one will be left in Colchester. Do you see all of the for sale signs on houses.
- 27 Inconceivable in a small town that the education budget is as high as it is. I have no problem funding actual student / teacher expenses for education, but lack of transparency-the big question is how much is for supporting increasing benefits and retirement funding for teachers? There have been no changes or concessions to improving the retirement plans and they are not maintainable.
- 28 Cost are going up everywhere. But retired individuals basically live on a fixed income. Every increase anywhere in costs (food, medications, heat, electricity, water/sewer, TAXES) means seniors are forced to choose between eating, purchasing medications, heating their home, paying the electric bill, paying the water bill or paying their taxes (real estate, personal property). Why don't seniors get a tax break??
- 29 If you managed your current funding better, we would be in a better spot as a town
- 30 My SS went up \$35 this year. Not much room for higher taxes
- 31 There should be significant cost savings in working with surrounding school systems for special needs and special programming. It is crazy to have so many staff in each school dedicated to a single student and I expect our actual "per pupil spending" has gone down since many of the services and much of the school space is dedicated to a small % of the school population. Why can't we create efficiencies rather than cuts?
- 32 Seriously the taxes are out of hand. Stop it.
- 33 There has to be an out of the box approach to reducing expenses but not ruining the town.
- 34 The town needs economic and business development to increase tax revenue.
- 35 Hard work can also improve services without requiring an increase in funding.
- 36 I will vote AGAINST any budget that reduces school services. Do not assume my vote against means more needs to be cut.
- 37 Please distribute any increases more heavily among the highest tax brackets.
- 38 Reduce the police

- 39 Likewise in these tough economic times I have not received an increase (freeze for last 2 years) so any increase will negatively affect me
- 40 The school system has too many Administrators for a decreasing school population.
- 41 No additional taxes
- 42 While expenses go up, tax dollar amounts should also increase without increasing the mill rate as the value of property increases. Property values should increase at a rate close to inflation, such that the tax dollars for the town are nearly even with the increase in expenses due to inflation.
- 43 Consistent with inflation
- 44 We have to stop increase somewhere. But putting town services and education in the same platform of a question.. Is not fair. I hear out west that some towns charge \$5 a week busing.
- 45 Do not raise taxes under any circumstances!
- 46 Again, I would want details and justification for any increase.
- 47 See #12 response
- 48 there needs to be departmental accountability to find ways to trim unnecessary expense. Those departments that are able to streamline their budget should be recognized and commended.
- 49 Learn to live with available means!
- 50 The Town and school 'unions' need to stop getting automatic raises. We have received a raise in income in 8 years. How much more can the town and state take before we all go crazy? We are already broke!
- 51 Senior on a limited budget
- 52 taxes too high
- 53 I didn't get a raise so where do I get the additional money from? I have to cut - so should you!
- 54 Cant afford it. Get some businesses in to help defray the cost of taxes on the citizens of Colchester.
- 55 Each Town service should be graded on its merit to Town growth and necessity to our Town's population needs...Eliminate or reduce services as annual study of each warrants.
- 56 skip a year or two in increases and reduce services
- 57 daily I see town trucks running up and down to the transfer station. Why? the transfer station isn't open every day and it seems a waste of gas and time. We as a town need to become more efficient.
- 58 We want this town to be the best it can be
- 59 Current employers no longer offer cost of living raises, the town shouldn't expect more from the taxpayers.
- 60 Cut costs. No additional funding
- 61 Living on Social Security cannot sustain tax increase more than inflation

62 WE NEED TO INVEST IN OUR TOWN OR IT WILL DECLINE LIKE SO MANY OTHERS

63 Again, look at the personnel and programs in each department - is it all necessary? Can we combine one principle and assistant for CES and JJIS? Share services?

Question 14 Other Possible Initiatives

Additional Comments

1 new senior center

2 I support finding for womens basketball - all ages

3 I answered yes to all as necessary but again hope it is done in a fiscally responsible way.

4 To make the determination for this extra spending, I would need to know specifically how infrastructure is to be improved and why any services need to be increased when the town continues to experience decreases in it's population.

5 The town fields are maintained terribly now. Why would I want to contribute more? We need another location for town fields than just one huge one in the center of town. It's a nightmare on the weekends and when every one has a game.

6 Not at the expense of the schools

7 For Rec Fields and other areas that are clearly user-based, consideration should be given to fee structures that help to support those areas. We support the young, the old, those needing social service programs. We don't benefit from any of those things. We don't even get trash pickup. We feel that we pay and pay, but we receive no benefit.

8 THERE IS NO NON STATE POLICE SERVICES AT NIGHT. WHY ARE WE PAYING THEM AS THOUGH THEY ARE ON DUTY AT NIGHT. Rec fields are ok as is.

9 Recreation is not a priority fire and police service should be met first

10 Include a turf field at high school, upgrade high school baseball and softball fields which are awful in current state

11 field improvements could be a great volunteer opportunity for different organizations

12 These are not frill services...these are necessary

13 How far into the future are you looking at??We need for this State to change and have people want to live here without being taxed to death!!!

14 By shitting priorities, not raising taxes.

15 Recently there has been a slow response to emergencies. The dedication is not there so eventually there will have to be more paid responders and that will be a big hit to the budget.

16 Is there a large crime problem for police expansion? 911 can help with medical emergencies? Not everyone uses recreational fields, but everyone can use the outdoors anytime. It also promotes health, happiness and exploration.

- 17 Recreation programming fees and fees charged should be able to help offset field improvement fees.
- 18 All of these items are important to improve the quality of life for our town and invest in our resources. Police for 24/7 needs to be seriously reviewed, additional EMS coverage, a short and long term field plan (fields and grounds at our schools and park are hazardous and embarrassing). We also miss opportunities for land acquisition like the land adjacent to the park that should have been purchased years ago (now has new residential property).
- 19 The fire department cannot manage the paid staff they have now. The volunteers get paid but want to be treated as volunteers. The last thing that Colchester should consider is further increasing the bloated, mismanaged FD budget and hire more paid staff for a paramedic program. New leadership with a much higher proficiency is needed.
- 20 Most of our local PD are lazy and do not want to do their basic jobs.
- 21 Quality of life issues are important for the town to thrive.
- 22 Doesn't seem the police or fire department services needs increases at this time.
- 23 I believe that with the new business coming into Hartford and the amount of housing developments planned or in progress in Colchester, all of the above will be unavoidable.
- 24 Recreation field improvements and maintenance are necessary.
- 25 There is no reason as a community we csnt do this ourselves. Just as we have a green day and we have at the green to clean and plant in the spring. We can come together to get our fields in order. A little sweat equity goes a long way.
- 26 Need a better understanding of what our PD vs State Police do to protect the town. Seems like duplication when comparing to Salem. We have several fire stations, so I'm not clear what would be recommended for improvements. Sewer/Water improvements should be covered by rates NOT taxes since much of the town is on wells/septic and does not have access to this service. Rec fees are quite high, so I would be very interested in understanding what % is covered by program fees vs taxes. Not at all clear now.
- 27 Land conservation growth should be done with voluntary donations, not tax dollars. Increase in number of officers and/or hours of police coverage, I support. I will not support building a new police station. I will support maintaining or extending existing station. Recreation fields could charge a fee for use (if not already done) to help support them.
- 28 You are already taxing sports leagues that use the fields.
- 29 Rec center is perfectly fine - no expenditures needed here. The Fire/EMS vols are great - they seem adequately funded, though.
- 30 We have too many police
- 31 Police locally is only during day core hours. There should be a balance to support activity at night instead of relying on the state.

- 32 In addition, it is vitally important to devote significant resources (i.e., money) to aid in the preservation of historic buildings (such as that white house next to Noel's) in order to maintain the town's historic/cultural identity and to improve the downtown by acquiring and improving unsightly blite such as the deplorable former Jack's Chevrolet location, which is a disgrace.
- 33 These types of improvements should be well planned out in advance and voted on by the tax payers not just decisions made by the town. Then after funds are allocated for projects like these and the funds are then exhausted there is no need to try and keep that fund increase in every following years annual budget just so employees can get wage increases or the town can buy a new vehicle to replace a vehicle that was not in any need of replacement.
- 34 working with the state cultural/historic agencies to save historic houses;
- 35 These areas I would consider after learning about results of conservation measures . Also people should research more grants for schools and federal programs for town
- 36 A lot of maybes because the answer fully depends on the circumstances and the cost.
- 37 Land conservation & field improvements can be funded by private donations
- 38 Should put in artificial fields, sports bubble like Waterford/ Portland
- 39 Rec plex can definitely use a major upgrade...or build a rec plex annex in another part of town...many sports use the recplex and sometimes scheduling practices is not easy because of lack of space.
- 40 Depends why the increases are need and if they are really truely needed.
- 41 Colchester is in dire need of field improvements.
- 42 If infrastructure includes roads, yes more attention needs to be given to MAINTENANCE
- 43 Isn't this what the 10 per player fee is to be going to?
- 44 User of fields MUST pay to play / maintain. They should not be exempt
- 45 We need to make our town attractive for people to want to move in and this is through excellent schools so the money should go there. I would also suggest making the old car dealership that is now an eyesore as a community center with an indoor pool and fitness center. This would also help to make the town attractive for more families to move in.
- 46 taxes too high
- 47 Our town needs more police.
- 48 Need to look at regionalizing emergency services before increasing spending.
- 49 NO!!
- 50 Be sure each of above is carrying its weight in Town population needs...Maybe co-sharing of services should looked at between neighboring communities.
- 51 I would support spending on getting natural gas lines in town, adding retail space, increasing safety for kids in school... a wide range of things, it really depends on what the money is going to.

- 52 The Rec plex seems like it needs drainage work
- 53 Services need to be cut.
- 54 Those fields are dangerous. The ground is like cement, with kids playing on hard dirt, instead of grass. I'm surprised there aren't more injuries. How is it still playable and not shut down?
- 55 WE NEED TO INVEST IN OUR TOWN OR IT WILL DECLINE LIKE SO MANY OTHERS
- 56 Rec fields should rely upon higher fees from parents. They never should have kept approving more and more activities beyond capacity of fields.

Question 21 - How increase voting

Open-Ended Response

- 1 more advertising?
- 2 not sure, maybe more info about where to go and more provision for rides to and from voting places
- 3 More awareness
- 4 Increased social media information/reminders, e-newsletters
- 5 Email and River east for information
- 6 More signage on the town green, pamphlets, fliers at all local businesses.
- 7 Send mailings to citizens as the budget process moves along. advertise meetings in Rivereast.
- 8 I'm not sure. I've never missed a primary, budget referendum or election. it has to be important to the individual. I feel it is an honor to exercise my civic duty.
- 9 Either make it available more than one day or promote mail in ballots. Also the transparency website will help if it is marketed right as they have a better understanding if they access it.
- 10 Have online voting. More voter locations.
- 11 Take back local control. Period.
- 12 Increase awareness of impact
- 13 More information in rivereast
- 14 Listen to ALL taxpayers. Make others aware that most live paycheck to paycheck.
- 15 Beter times for informational sessions so all people in thw community can make an informed decision
- 16 IDK. - it's just a sad situation to know more people choose to not vote.
- 17 More social media presence
- 18 It boggles my mind that people don't vote, I'm not sure
- 19 Make things more transparent, easily accessible, make citizens more away beyond lawn signs.

- 20 Not sure, but I don't appreciate the pressure of candidates and their supporters lining the driveway and near the townhall on voting days. It's chaotic enough to figure out where to park. They shouldn't be allowed on the property. Same goes for all of the children who are out on the property at budget referendums.
- 21 Increase voter awareness at high school level. Online/mail-in voting.
- 22 Make sound and reasonable adjustments to the budget. Stop spending \$ for trucks and equipment that are not a necessity.
- 23 Automatically register all 18+ citizens, provide information on absentee voting to everyone- especially college aged people. Provide interesting raffles to voters- local businesses could donate raffle baskets- cross marketing. Could be a joint venture with chamber of commerce.
- 24 Get as much Info out to the general public .
- 25 Implement Early voting immediately Study online Online voting and implement as soon as secure and available
- 26 Offer food.
- 27 Improve communication
- 28 Facebook / town mailer
- 29 Increase polling hours, leave flyers in mailboxes, try to help people understand that there vote does count (political cartoons do this surprisingly well)
- 30 Absentee ballots and do not close schools please for voting!
- 31 Teach civics and history in our schools
- 32 More education on social media
- 33 Not have to vote in a church sanctuary
- 34 Registration in Bacon academy for seniors! This seems simple and is soooo important. Make voting more accessible by absentee or by expanding hours.
- 35 Propose significant increase in taxes
- 36 craft a budget which excites its citizens and makes them proud to live in Colchester
- 37 Better publicity on time and location.
- 38 Provide better information on town website. Provide highlight of increases and increases to town and school budget including rationale why
- 39 I don't know—people need to vote and take it seriously. Not really the Towns issue
- 40 Personally I've never missed a vote and do not understand why many do. Perhaps an incentive of some sort?
- 41 Advertise on the green

- 42 More signs up in locations around town. Stop and Shop, highway entrance and exits, town green, texting
- 43 Shorter lines in polling places.
- 44 That is a great question. Ending apathy starts with leadership. Perhaps a change in leadership would be the best place to start
- 45 Make people want to participate by making them feel part of the community- better communication from the town hall.
- 46 That's a great question, I don't know.
- 47 Wish I knew
- 48 Make people more aware of the voting
- 49 talk to students
- 50 Call, billboards
- 51 I have no ideas on how to urge people to participate in voting. It's just said.
- 52 Have information with clear details emailed out or on Facebook so we know what is being voted on and when. When it is vague information I feel that I shouldn't vote because I don't actually know what the details are.
- 53 Be more transparent with budget
- 54 Continue to educate children about how to vote and why it's important to vote.
- 55 The awareness has improved over the years, there is just a lot of apathy. You can lead a horse to water but you can't make it drink!!
- 56 More heads up
- 57 Do not know.
- 58 Get the parents more involved. Alert parents of the voting through the school messenger system.
- 59 Signs need to go up in Westchester, commuter lots. Blitz people at town events to get e-mails to put on data base.
- 60 Get the young people registered and involved. This means making it easier for college students to vote while away at school
- 61 Continued publicity and requests for attendance.
- 62 send out reminder via phone and text a week before, a day before and the day of voting via the automated system that is used for snow and storm events
- 63 Early voting, mail in voting, online voting
- 64 Utilize the town phone alert system for voting reminders (other towns permit). Add more reminder "signs" in town at other high visibility intersections.

- 65 Keep engaging with people, make sure budget referendums are held early so that they allow parents with school-aged children to vote.
- 66 Signs in the center of town reminding the date and place.
- 67 Do voting on a Saturday -- more people are off -- and try online voting.
- 68 Honestly, I have no idea.
- 69 Mail in votes
- 70 Public Presence. Stores, Town Green etc
- 71 More public info, mailers, etc.
- 72 More communication at various events to provide better understanding of why the budget is the way it is. Educating the public goes a long way I think to helping gain support.
- 73 Better information release about what we are voting on ahead of time
- 74 More info sent to houses
- 75 good question not sure there is any real answer
- 76 Have voting on non work days, referendums only of course. Then people will have no excuse. Advertise on the GREEN. We should have town bulletin board for just town business. If we can advertise for events we should certainly use the green for town business
- 77 Get the state to pass early voting whenever a vote is required, federal, state or local. A two week early voting period, including weekends, would increase the voting participation greatly.
- 78 Better/easier access to information and proposed changes
- 79 Provide transportation. Satellite voting locations--Westchester is FAR! Hard to get info. More Facebook posts, more communication, better website. The budget transparency software is great.
- 80 a lot of people don't seem interested the town budget. I see more seniors vote because most are on fixed income
- 81 Succinct reports from Departments on what their budget represents (e.g. FTE's, locations, budget breakdown and justifications). I am used to seeing individual department presentations (Fire & EMT were usually combined) with clear layout of costs and where bulk of budget is earmarked (e.g. salary & fringe or road repair/maintenance). Without this, there will be inherent mistrust. Not everyone can attend Finance Committee, Board of Ed and Town Meetings - are there replays available online?
- 82 Keep getting the information out. It's totally up to the individual to vote. Get the word out.
- 83 Use the emergency contact services to get the word out.
- 84 Tell people you're going to increase their taxes. 🙄. Seriously, I wish I had an answer for this. I've never missed an election in my life, and I can't understand why people don't vote.
- 85 Email reminders

- 86 Send reminders on various Colchester FB group pages, reminder emails, reverse 911 call, get volunteers (Colchester is Kind group is a great resource) to drive people to voting place if they do not have a way to get there. :)
- 87 Please stop using children and sports as pawns to push for increases in the school budget! A budget that truthfully addresses the issues in the Schools will have support.
- 88 Make more people aware
- 89 Send out bullitens
- 90 Perhaps have more than 1 Day in which to vote and provide anyone who needs it a ride to do so.
- 91 Increase awareness
- 92 Canvas door to door. Send notices in the mail or email.
- 93 Get more o
- 94 Voting by mail would be a solution if the state moves ahead with it.
- 95 Non partisan GOTV campaign using multiple media outlets.
- 96 Transparency! Honesty! Have a Biard Of Finance that actually does the job they were elected to do!
- 97 Stop holding prefunctionary meetings where most attendees are town employees who are supporting raises and PUBLICIZE the old Town Mewtings where issues are discussed prior to Selwctmen meetings and not just using the pro forma annual Town Meeting Stop allowing town employees to dominate meetings. Know your place. You work for us. You are driving us all into unsustainable spending.
- 98 Promote it!!! Conveniently it was not well pubisized until the day before
- 99 Town does enough. Most people are indifferent to the budget. If they don't vote, then they don't care what the results are.
- 100 Make sure people are aware that they need to go out to vote. Still too many people in town that don't realize when they need to. Need to reach citizens that feel it won't matter if they vote cause they feel the town will do whatever they want anyway.
- 101 Propose raising taxes
- 102 Add public meetings at different times/days to accommodate those with schedules who can't attend the regular meetings (one meeting on a weekend, one during the day and one at night)
- 103 Weekend voting. Tuesday voting is difficult
- 104 It is a very difficult task.
- 105 Add polling station

- 106 not sure. people will vote if they are motivated. The "base" (say 15%) of the voters are motivated. The rest will vote if they feel passionately about something. I'm not sure low turnout is a bad thing. They either trust the few of us to make decisions, or they don't care one way or the other. Let's spend time on Colchester's issues, not worrying about voter turnout.
- 107 1-2 days/month (e.g., first and third Tuesday of each month during school year), have someone outside BA cafeteria during lunch so students can register to vote at school.
- 108 Early voting; vote at home online like Colorado; no-excuse absentee voting
- 109 I wish CT allowed for voting on weekends like most other states or to make it a holiday so folks can make it to vote.
- 110 Vote on a Saturday when people don't have to work.
- 111 make sure the date is well advertised
- 112 Call every household multiple times prior to and on the day of voting.
- 113 Unfortunately with the current voting format, probably not a lot.
- 114 more advertising/website
- 115 Residents need to be accountable.
- 116 Advertise the upcoming elections and referendums in more places. The weekly emailed newsletter should provide information starting at least a month before; usually it's not even mentioned there.
- 117 give us something to vote for that makes sense
- 118 really not sure
- 119 Have earlier voting assn option. Simplify absentee voting .
- 120 I wish I knew.
- 121 Provide more information about the candidates/issues.
- 122 Work with residents that are already involved or interested in town government to reach out directly to nonvoters. Welcome the involvement of high school and college age students. If they get involved now, they are more likely to continue to stay involved.
- 123 move voting to a Saturday? Multiple days, early voting? when 30% is considered high turnout, I'm at a loss as to how to increase
- 124 More and better outreach.
- 125 serve coffee and donuts?
- 126 Not sure there is a great or solid answer for that.
- 127 Make people care more about the outcome
- 128 text an alert in the morning advising people to vote. include any referendums.

- 129 Put signs up in the outskirts of town, not just in the center of town.
- 130 To stress importance of every vote does count. Many say it's only one vote.
- 131 Put signs up on the town green and the off-ramps from Route 2 to remind everyone to vote.
- 132 Put flyers out in the stores maybe.. But I think everyone knows.. Just don't want to because they feel the people with children and grandparents will out vote us anyway.They always push the parents..
- 133 Engage the younger population by being present at some of the town events frequented by younger individuals — farmers market immediately comes to mind.
- 134 Nothing. It's up to individuals to decide if they're motivated to cast a vote.
- 135 vote on sat and sun
- 136 Not sure
- 137 Social Media Items limited to specific topics and one issue at at time. Need to educate the public on why financial decisions and budgets were proposed.
- 138 Education on importance and relevance
- 139 Put items on social media so people know issues
- 140 Make more people aware through Facebook and other media
- 141 Not sure, haven't studied that issue.
- 142 Communicate budget in various ways to people
- 143 E mail
- 144 More transparency through mediums mentioned above.
- 145 Stop running only one candidate.
- 146 Send ballots by mail.
- 147 Encourage the State of CT to make election day a holiday. Offer transportation to those unable to drive.
- 148 Give the citizens what they want more for the town to offer things to do/shopping so we spend our money in town instead of having to leave and spend it elsewhere.
- 149 Pick up service. Making it know that there can be curb side voting.
- 150 If there was a secure way to vote online, that would make it easier with peoples busy schedule and for the people who live on the edge of town who don't go into the center of colchester on there way home from work.
- 151 Better transit. Weekend/ multi-day elections
- 152 canvas, phone banking, more signage - free food always brings them in!!
- 153 Make on line voting available

- 154 Get the word out to all other citizens, rather than just the teachers, students and PTA.
- 155 I really have no idea.
- 156 Depends on issue they are voting for.
- 157 Engage the younger voters in town, including those at college out of time, promote absentee ballots.
- 158 Keep reminding folks that if they do not vote, they are not entitled to complain.
- 159 Nothing. If it's important to people to vote, they will vote.
- 160 As ridiculous as this sounds, stop being so "political" and just state facts w proof, for example if the town is losing money from the state exactly how much and why
- 161 Online voting system
- 162 Unless a person has either a propensity to be actively involved in town politics/issues or they have a 'stake' in the particular voting issue, I don't see how you can make it any easier or user-friendly than you do now.
- 163 More Information with clearly written proposals
- 164 I have no idea. I'm sure if they could vote using their phones/online it would be better but I can't imagine the security needed for that.
- 165 Figure out a way to make it an incentive.
- 166 Increase awareness
- 167 Use all means available to create dialogue on issues!
- 168 Increased transparency
- 169 Via email
- 170 email reminders, post on social media, online voting
- 171 Send a voter card registration to my mail box
- 172 make a competition between the different voting areas to see who gets more percentage to vote and publically recognize the area that gets the most
- 173 Stop the Bullshit budgets!
- 174 Give us someone good to vote for! STOP with the political games. The lying, backstabbing BS is out of control.
- 175 Allow people to vote online
- 176 Political Parties must do more for out reach, both Democratic and Republican parties

- 177 MAKE SURE SENIORS HAVE RIDES TO THE TOWN HALL. PUT A PHONE NUMBER UP AT THE GREEN FOR SENIORS TO CALL TO GET RIDES. ALSO AT THE SENIOR CENTER. SENIORS OFTEN DONT SEE THE SIGNS TO REMIND THEM. MAIL A FLYER TO BE RECEIVED TWO DAYS BEFORE VOTING WITH PHONE NUMBER IF THEY NEED A RIDE. I WOULD VOLUNTEER TO PICK THEM UP AND BRING THEM .
- 178 Decrease taxes
- 179 I wish I knew.
- 180 Find out what the barriers are to people not voting now. If it's just because they find it too much trouble to vote due to inconvenience or lack of interest, then I wouldn't spend any money on trying to make it easier for them.
- 181 Online voting
- 182 Do it via social media communicate.....why waste time going to Town voting locations--better/easier for me....Cuts labor costs and vote counting process...Get with it Colchester!
- 183 Increase the interaction between town and residents. For example, use SeeClickFix app (from New Haven based company). <https://seeclickfix.com/pages/about.html>
- 184 Combine with other events that would bring people to polling location.
- 185 I don't know.
- 186 Stress the importance of each person voting. Door to door soliciting and phone bank calls.
- 187 Elected Officials ie: Shilosky and BOE need to stop with doomsday scenarios. Force the BOE to adjust to decrease in enrollment. Stop creating new school programs to take on students from other towns.
- 188 people are fed up, all you do is increase taxes and we get nothing
- 189 on line voting
- 190 I think the turnout for voting has been good, but as a younger member of the community I don't feel as compelled to attend in-person meetings. Perhaps encouraging young people in the area to attend would keep participation up?
- 191 Email and News
- 192 advertise more pre voting rather than just one day. Have voting available on weekends.
- 193 Signs! Also I recently signed up for the town emails, so I should know this time around.
- 194 Most people cannot make the meetings.. getting the info out to all
- 195 Voting is fine in town
- 196 Make spending information more readily and easily accessible
- 197 Vote on line
- 198 Hope that people will want to be involved. The town does a good job with notifications.

- 199 Robo Calls? More social media presence.
- 200 More information
- 201 Decrease apathy and do more to display town pride.
- 202 nothing
- 203 increase communication regarding polling hours & locations, increase transportation services for those who need it and communicate the options available
- 204 I think emails and online forms helps voting
- 205 Talk it up more articles Rivereast
- 206 Make calls to have volunteers drive people to vote.
- 207 Mail in ballots
- 208 free cookies and coffee/cocoa
- 209 I think they do a good job already.
- 210 Increase use of social media.
- 211 good question I have no answer for you
- 212 Communication through signs, ads, emails, etc. Regarding the town website, do all depts. and associated social media pages link to the town site?
- 213 Reminders via email and text
- 214 Communication
- 215 I see people on FaceBook who live in Apartments and are encouraging people to vote yes on increasing the school budget and haven't paid their car tax.
- 217 Answer how well money is being spent with data rather than just focus on how much.
- 218 Nothing, people who do so will do so regardless, and those who don't will say the town needs to do more to promote voting, but still will not vote.

Question 23 Any additional budget related comments or questions

Open-Ended Response

- 1 More recreational funds
- 2 I much preferred the schedule Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday for the Transfer Station. Our taxes remained the same, but are receiving fewer days of this service.
- 3 What do we borrow? What are our interest payments? How much of the budget is paying our interest?

- 4 We don't have the necessary businesses or services in this town to be able to compete with other surrounding towns.
- 5 Stop wasting money and stop building houses on every inch of land that is left.
- 6 It is critical that we maintain the quality of our schools to keep residents in town
- 7 With the budget website are we going to see transaction of how the money is being used? That would help the most with transparency with how th budget is being spent
- 8 There are too many bigwigs in the schools. We need paras in the classrooms not more Administrators.
- 9 Need to add laungage to young ages. More recess less academics at a young age
- 10 Yes. You should have a study to reduce waste and cost. Teacher contracts should limited in duration in anticipation of changes to state mandates. When the education budget is crafted, we're going to need a lot of related data—enrollment (kids in Colchester schools) trends for the past 5 years; special ed students for the past 5 years; special ed costs for special ed students for the past 5 years; students outplaced to other district schools (magnet, VoAg, OPEN Choice) for the past 5 years; transportation costs for the past 5 years; per-pupil expenses for the past 5 years; per-pupil expenses for other towns in Colchester's DRG for the past 5 years; revenue by source for the past 5 years; line item expenses for the past 5 years; costs of PD for staff for the past 5 years; etc.
- 11 We need to fix our playing fields. They are an embarrassment
- 12 Keep funding our schools!!!
- 13 When looking for improvements to our school system do not limit it to "like/comparable" towns and schools. Look at what the best schools in the state and country are doing. Aim high. Have stretch goals and do not be content with the status quo. Where could we take the schools system if they got a meaningful increase in investment? That should be the starting point for discussions.
- 14 Cut waste and provide more or equal amount for the kids- that's what increases property values
- 15 Why is all the decrease in budgeting for education in many of the questions? I realize it's the highest allocation but I don't think education should be cut over others
- 16 When we make cuts, we need to look at impact. In the past, the first line of cuts hurt us the most always classroom teachers or sports. As our district gets smaller, we need to make other cuts that are less impactful on students. Past cuts have drastically affected our students learning. For example, cutting an entire writing period out to save 60,000 is not the best choice and has had a major impact.
- 17 With the state police right in colchester why do we need our own police force? Is it more cost effective to pay for a resident trooper?
- 18 Increase spending/funding for fire dept who continues to have increase in calls year after year and town does nothing to assist with the number of hours volunteers continue to put in. Start a separate account with money from ambulance billing so fire dept can use that money when it comes time to purchase things such as new ambulance

- 19 Traffic studies need to be done, can we get DOT grants? They got them in new London after several fatal accidents. Town is getting bigger with more cars, need to do some work on downtown, put a traffic circle where the light is at the top of 16 near Colchester federated church.
- 20 No tax increase. Build a new senior center The building being used is a disgrace how about those over 65 for a change We gave the kids a beautiful recarea and the senior center is a DUMP
- 21 Not at this point
- 22 Fund our schools! These kids are our future, inadequate funding in this will only hurt us in the long run. Perhaps increase revenue through a fee on single-use plastics, an idea gaining steam nationwide.
- 23 I would love to see a complete list of all cuts being considered before a referendum so parents can speak out. A list of all items cut if the referendum isn't passed and another list if it isn't passed on the second go around. People truly do not know what is eliminated until after the budget is passed. I am frustrated to learn that areas/programs are cut in schools and parents do not know they were even considered. ie: family consumer science at WJJMS
- 24 Just wondering what is taking so much time to get OpenGov up and running when we have been paying for it for about 6 months.
- 25 I appreciate that there are so many willing to give their time. Thank you
- 26 Don't tax us out of CT
- 27 I believe we need to increase our town's revenue by allowing and urging more businesses to locate here.
- 28 I have heard that kids are getting bused in from Norwich to try to supplement money needed for Bacon Academy. Is it possible to ask for volunteers to run programs that are being cut instead?
- 29 Do people who only pay auto tax have the same vote as property owners?
- 30 No increase in taxes this year!
- 31 Please protect our education funding. Good schools are not only important for our students, but they are also a vital asset to ensuring the prosperity of our town in the long run.
- 32 Why does school budget keep increasing when enrollment keeps declining? When will teachers start participating in their health care costs?
- 33 No to the in-house Paramedic Program
- 34 Please fix the options so that education is not slighted.
- 35 There is nothing in the questions talking about raising revenue via increasing the grand list. Instead, it's all about prioritizing cuts or raising taxes.
- 36 The " Pay to Play" rule is another tax on families that is unfair. Do a survey of other towns that are part of our CIAC Sports leagues and see how many of those towns have Pay to Play. Our do a DERG survey. Similar size towns. You will find zero of them have this unfair tax. With that mentality why not tax ALL use of facilities? Library, Park, Dog Park, Town Green. ALL have cost associated with them. Why target are youth anf those families? Its wrong!!.

- 37 Taxes are too high. Look back over the past 20 years and look at the rate of building in home sales in Colchester, and you will see a decline in sales. It's hard for people to justify the commute (because jobs are in Hartford or New London area), when taxes are so high in this town. In retrospect I should have bought a home in Glatonbury over 25 years ago when I moved here because I would have paid about the same taxes, had way less wear and tear on my vehicles, my kids would have gotten a better education, and my home value would be much higher today. Our town government is so out of touch with reality.
- 38 Please consider the disservice we do to our community and reputation when the budgets are cut too much. Please also consider how to increase residents in the community by advertising what our community has to offer. A larger tax base can help spread the burden.
- 39 The baseball diamond on the green is an eyesore, as well as the abandoned car dealership across from the CVS plaza
- 40 I love having Youth Services and Senior Center, but it doesn't sit right that school-aged parents pay so much for in-school programming while these services are subsidized with taxes. If the decision is to "pay to play" this should be true at any age. Too many young children are obese or antisocial since the resources to get them active are out of reach, yet playtime for older kids and seniors is free - seems like a disservice to the community. Do fundraisers for the "nice to haves" and - if they are a priority to the majority - they will be funded. If not, they will be reduced based on interest and support. Not all social services and recreation can come from taxes.
- 41 Reduce the number of school Administrators. Reduce salaries of elected positions.
- 42 Students need at least 1 after school bus. Seniors need tax relief and a new Senior Center.
- 43 I'm concerned why the town gets a vote of no on 3 referendums on many votes we've had since I've lived here and then intimidates parents with threatening them with less than quality education, lack of services, etc. and appeases the town by lowering the budget by minimal dollars and cuts nothing? It's intimidating and evil.
- 44 Cut the GD Education Budget so it reflects enrollment! What is wrong with the BOF?
- 45 Really need to reduce education proportionally or consolidate operations of schools
- 46 Start finding ways to attract business and industry into town.
- 47 What services or operations can be combined with other towns in the area to achieve cost savings?
- 48 The new Director of Special Education is going to cost the town millions. She is already breaking the law. The teachers where she worked before took a vote of NO Confidence against her! Well I can tell you from personal experience they did the right thing. She is a menace.
- 49 I essentially get nothing for the taxes I pay. Fire and police take over 20 mins to get to my house. No trash pick-up. No town water or sewer. Street was paved horribly last summer. Last to be plowed- plow always takes out our curb.
- 50 I trust the elected officials on the BOS, BOF and BOE to listen to the citizens of Colchester and do what's best for us.

- 51 The education budget cuts or no increase cannot continue to sustain the brunt of Colchester's budget. The town needs economic and business development to increase tax revenue.
- 52 Why do elected positions start at the salary of the last person who worked the job? Establish minimum salaries for all elected positions and make the employees EARN any increases!
- 53 I will always support education and the library. These are key components to a successful community.
- 54 I would like to hear more about what our town leadership is doing to bring in new businesses to Colchester.
- 55 I do not support decreasing education spending.
- 56 Stop building schools that look like castles. Do they really need to be so elaborate???
- 57 I will vote AGAINST any budget that reduces school services. Do not assume my vote against means more needs to be cut.
- 58 Yes to Paramedic service
- 59 I think this survey is very leading in how you what the money spent and not giving the participants much say other than the answers you want.
- 60 Unfortunately many taxpayers do not take advantage of the public hearings on the budget and either do not vote or are not informed when they do vote
- 61 Please don't cut library budget.
- 62 Control the message, don't allow others, and I would hope you know who I am referring to, control the message.
- 63 Acquire the Jack's site. Even a municipal parking lot (which we need) would be better than the eyesore we have now. It is by far the worst thing in town and it ruins the downtown. While you are taking comments, please get rid of the stupid and ugly orange barrier around the Town Christmas tree. It looks so bad it would be better to have NO tree at all. Who thought that was a good idea? I've never seen such a ridiculous thing around a Christmas tree in any other town, so why ours?
- 64 expand tax base
- 65 Not really at this time
- 66 work to bring businesses into the town's industrial park. look for grant money to improve the downtown. work with businesses to link parking lots to reduce congestion of traffic. look for ways to increase tourism by promoting historic area and local business/entertainment: covered bridge, wineries, Airline Trail, ...
- 67 Can the town establish term limits? The town needs more young people involved but the old dinosaurs that have been running the town since I was a kid are still in power. It's time to change things up!
- 68 I was unaware of the state reducing funding to the town of Colchester. What is the background and reasoning for that?
- 69 more for seniors..
- 70 Do more to attract local businesses and decreases our tax base. It's driving residents away...

- 71 You can't have unlimited budget on a farming community. See if you can hire retired military ad traffic control to ease police overtime.
- 72 Please take good care of our Town workforce, treating them with as much respect and dignity as possible.
- 73 Tow and educationto work together on budgets, share resources when possible
- 74 The Town of Colchester should purchase the property that was previously Jack's Chevrolet. It is currently and eyesore located in the center of a historic section of town. Acquisition would give the town control over the development of the strategically located property.
- 75 Spend the budget wisely...many services are always needed everywhere...more cameras for evidence of crime, more police patrols.
- 76 Better available room and hours of the senior center. Paramedic services
- 77 We MUST learn to live within our means.
- 78 Opposed to CHFD instituting it's own paramedic program.
- 79 Continue to fund school athletics.
- 80 Stop valuing personal property ie homes, cars etc so high. Stop squeezing the tax base. Instead expand it. Get more people in town. Town population is shrinking.
- 81 Please prioritize the playground at the RECPLEX. It was new and nice when my child was small, but now looks old and dilapidated. Just putting mulch down and weeding the edges would be helpful.
- 82 to reiterate, all departments need accountability. It gets very tiring hearing how short the schools are when lights are left on all night long and ridiculous fences are constructed and landscape that is going to continuously need replacing keeps being put in
- 83 My taxes are way too high for the services and quality of life in Colchester. I would sell my home, but the level of disrepair prevents me and the taxes are too high to allow me to save. I feel like I'm trapped in Colchester.
- 84 Strangle hold of unions on municipalities has to be broken if we are to survive, both as a town and as a state!
- 85 cut out red tape - (P&ZC), reduce "input" of BOF
- 86 A reduced rate for seniors who don't have any children in the school system and don't use the school system.
- 87 taxes too high
- 88 Hopefully the BOF will not abdicate their responsibilities to the BOS like they did with Malloys budget cuts. Hold the Superintendent accountable! So much "fake news" from the Administration and the BOE during budget talks it's sickening.

- 89 All town employees are given to much in benefits. Health ins. co-payments (I pay \$900 a month just for me), days off for "holidays" (I get the standard 6 days) Town Hall closing for a snow day (really?) etc. These areas all need to be re-visited. It should be hard to ask residents to pay additional taxes when we don't have nearly the benefits that you do.
- 90 I feel the town wastes money on unneeded maintenance, an example I live on a very low traffic road, every year the sides of the road are mowed (small brush, small trees tall grass). On my road this could be done once every 5 years if not even less frequent.
- 91 Support ACLS ambulance - higher level o f evidence based practice that saves lives!!
- 92 More 'pizzazz' in Town Newsletter-it R dull now Use Social Media more to share and get feedback on Town issues/news
- 93 I will not support an increase in the budget. Colchester's schools must reign in spending. Will not support an increase in Town Budget especially since Shilosky have monies appropriated to the town over to the schools.
- 94 Why is the police department providing coverage for utility work outside of Colchester.
- 95 Let's not lose our programs at Bacon Academy.
- 96 No, not that anyone would listen anyways.
- 97 Cut taxes. The school budget needs to be cut. It's excessive
- 98 Last time, the budget passed on the first try. I think asking more of the residents the first go around is a better approach. You don't have a second chance if people approve a low budget.
- 99 Abundance of wasteful spending
- 100 What are you planning to do with the Rec Plax Playground? My niece wants to go there but I won't let her. It's a mess. I am glad to see something was done with the splash pad though. That's nice.
- 101 Cuts should be made. Lower enrollment means cuts. No increase should even be considered.
- 102 WE NEED TO INVEST IN THE TOWN OR IT WILL DECLINE. DOWNTOWN AREAS NEED IMPROVEMENT.
- 103 Need more businesses to reduce our taxes.
- 104 Are there areas where money is spent and no longer needed? Any areas of efficiencies that can be exploited by using technology?
- 105 Do people who only pay auto tax get the same vote as property voters on all budgets?
- 106 use metrics to show how well money is spent

Question 24 - Any comments that can help us better serve Colchester?

Open-Ended Response

- 1 go forward with new Colchester Senior Center

- 2 More adult activities
- 3 1) Waste removal should be included. 2) Timely snow removal. It is very delayed and prevents us from leaving home on snow days when it's a sizeable storm. 3) When we experience widespread power outages in Colchester, it needs to be made known if charging stations, showers or water may be available. And if any of those are not available during outages, I would ask that they be available as many of us have Wells and have no means to shower.
- 4 Market the transparency project right and use a combination of teaching methods so everyone can use it. Not just the tech literate younger people. Also there needs to be more talk about our future, I understand there so much going on right now as we brace kind of turbulent waters, but theres a lack of hope toward a better colchester, almost like everything is focused on the present.
- 5 Trash pickup. Full Time PD. Longer library hours. A town pool. A senior center. Why ask the question if you're not going to be willing to implement anythnig anyone puts in this box.
- 6 Huh?? The town can't even provide basic services.
- 7 How about something other than Chinese food and Pizza!
- 8 Ct residents are overtaxed I am near seinor and will not be able to retire and have time to enjoy my life and I have worked my whole life now I have to move out of state and lose my connection to my children and grandchildren due to taxes
- 9 We need better maintenance of our rec fields to support our in town aports clubs and a more cooperative use of these resources
- 10 I wish some of the services with thw aocial services office helped family's that have kids with behavioral issues and disabilities. I feel like they are a minority that are being left behind in our community
- 11 Can't you provide garbage pick up? For those taxpayers who get no other services, at least we would have this.
- 12 When plows destroy a mailbox, the town should give replacement. Santa should come up Bull Hill when the fire department goes around town.
- 13 A new .
- 14 Greater transportation for seniors, more affordable options for those deemed ineligible for " affordable senior housing " Not all retired seniors wish to live in 400,000 plus development in homes larger than the one they are trying to downsize from.
- 15 Community center with a pool, gym, etc with youth center, new senior center in one place where families can come for activities and fitness. LONG overdue. Sadly, I recognize that there is no funding for this in today's economic environment in our town. So frustrating after moving here from Saline, Michigan which also made the list of best places to live when we were 57th!
- 16 Affordable housing
- 17 increase offerings for young children- better parks and playgrounds! Are there any blight ordinances?? Seems like 25% of the town properties are owned by rednecks who don't have any pride in their land with trucks and garbage all over. Let's create/enforce blight rules- it will help increase property values!

- 18 Town pool
- 19 More for seniors
- 20 The Town needs a food bank that isn't in town hall. The food bank is pathetic compared to surrounding towns. Hebron is a model food bank.
- 21 Town provided trash/recycling services by way of individual curbside pickup weekly.
- 22 pay to play sports fees are a ripoff of our working families
- 23 You need to consider not just the town center. You have a large geographic area with citizens outside the town center also.
- 24 When I first moved to Colchester I filled out a survey regarding a pool. Whatever happened? A YMCA would benefit our town and seniors!
- 25 Please consider opening the transfer station on more days
- 26 Trash pickup, or at least disposal at the dump.
- 27 I don't need it but I hear from others and understand their issues...full day preschool would help since Colchester has many working families.
- 28 An increase in public safety to expand the police department to 24/7 coverage and at a minimum, have 24/7 career staff coverage within the fire department at the BLS level, with ALS being optimal.
- 29 The events on the town green are great and the community involvement is why we chose Colchester. Maybe some more volunteer opportunities would be good?
- 30 Provide better transportation to seniors for Dr. appointments, shopping etc.
- 31 More activities for adult recreation and education. Environmental opportunities for volunteering.
- 32 I wish Colchester had a public pool that includes lap swimming.
- 33 Does asking for more services at a time when tax streams and State funding are reduced make any sense??
- 34 Somehow there needs to be a transportation system for out of town appointments or ways for people to get into town center. It's easy for people to get isolated.
- 35 Community swimming pool
- 36 24 hour Police services
- 37 Town meetings and information should be on public access via Bacon students or Comcast or Livestream/Webcam.
- 38 Improve the parking lot for the Air Line Trail spur!
- 39 More teen programs
- 40 The library does a great story time for babies - maybe a playtime for babies during the summer out at the rec fields?

- 41 Colchester offers much -- more than surrounding towns. Adding retail off exits (like Lisbon does) would boost the grand list and minimize the effects on quality of life in town.
- 42 Do not make it so very, very difficult for new businesses to open here in town.
- 43 Not that I can think of right now...
- 44 This is a trick question because any answers will serve to empower town government to justify the survey expressed need for more services, as justification for tax increases. Sorry I'm not taking the bait.
- 45 Swimming pool
- 46 Blight services . Too many houses near me with blight .
- 47 change the statute or law in CT that doesn't require a police officer to respond to a vehicle accident when the accident occurs in a "private/public" parking lot. Police reports at the scene of an accident, regardless of where the accident occurred, are extremely valuable for insurance reporting purposes. Without a police report any such incident can become a "he said/she said" situation - and really now, who do you believe??? That law/statute is ridiculous and does not serve the public properly.
- 48 Would be nice to have someone purchase the old Chevorlet bulding. It is an eye sore on main street
- 49 Clear list of what Bacon Academy offers - improve website. I have been involved in a number of conversations in the last year where townspeople were surprised Bacon offered certain programs and why we are losing students to Magnet Schools. HS websites need to be more like colleges to avoid attrition... otherwise we need a plan to attract out of town kids to fill slots (Norwich, Bozrah, Lebanon - but that comes with complications too).
- 50 I wish people would maintain their sidewalks and property better. Our town doesn't present an attractive appearance- dirt and debris on sidewalks, run-down buildings, unmown grass. It doesn't make people driving through want to live or do business here.
- 51 paramedic services in house
- 52 I would hope that Colchester can attract more businesses that will not pose competition with the small and family owned businesses that exist.
- 53 As mentioned previously, Adult Ed classes like they have in Glastonbury. That town charges fees for them and holds them in the high school. I'd like to see more of that here. :)
- 54 I would like to see dedicated cycling lanes through the center of town
- 55 More enrichment activities and programs for children.
- 56 Yes start realizing we the people pay your salaries and serve us not your pockets or political cronies.
- 57 Better senior services
- 58 I wish there could be better public transportation within this town.
- 59 Press releases to Newspapers ...all of them about when meetings will be held at least 10 days prior.

- 60 First selectman and board have been in too long and are invisible to the community
- 61 Why are you looking to increase services?
- 62 Economic Development needs to bring in stores such as Aldi's, TJ Maxx
- 63 Always keep our environment in mind. When businesses come, ensure the environment is not destroyed.
- 64 Yes, of course things could be more robust. But we can barely get budgets passed to keep things the same or with slight reduction of services year after year while taxes go up year after year. How can we ever move forward?
- 65 I wish the middle school had a public pool in it, but other than that, Colchester is a great community and the elected officials and volunteers that run the town are doing a good job. Keep up the good work!
- 66 A more local regional animal control service than NECOGG
- 67 Reduce our taxes or expect to see more people moving out of town and out of state.
- 68 I always wished we had a community/rec center.
- 69 Would love a town pool. The recent renovations to the middle school came out wonderful and really give people a sense of pride. Anything that can be done along those lines to increase the value of our town is what attracts people to this town. Taxes are a fact of life and if we are providing real improvements to the town, I'm willing to pay more taxes.
- 70 Have the state DOT check the timing on the traffic lights. The congestion harms local business
- 71 I wish the library was open more.
- 72 I will vote AGAINST any budget that reduces school services. Do not assume my vote against means more needs to be cut.
- 73 Stop putting in apartments and get tax payers. The multi-sport facility would have brought much more revenue to the town than the apartments, which just incurred more tax dollars to education.
- 74 More library hours.
- 75 A free community clinic (medical, dental services) - protecting the public's health is as constitutional mandate of government, yet so many people in this very town aren't provided for by the ubiquitous employer-funded system. I'd also love a free-cycle shed (at the transfer station -?) for people to bring good items they no longer need rather than leave them on the side of the road to be a hazard (or getting rid of them!)
- 76 no, any more would cost more so NO
- 77 Better transportation facilities other than the very limited Senior center bus
- 78 More handicap accessibility requirements from businesses. Preserving the historic sidewalks but on opposite of streets more level walkways for strollers and wheelchairs. Find ways to preserve historic buildings. Transform the old Chevy dealer into a park.

- 79 After-school transportation (such as a late bus), so students with parents that work out of town can attend after school activities.
- 80 LOTS!!! A pool, more businesses, variety of restaurants, stores, etc
- 81 Something needs to be done with Jacks chevy building it's a disgrace in the center of town. The town needs to take a positive step to preserve its history and historical structures. We need more parking when there are town wide events,concerts on the green, tag sale on the green, etc. Colchester need to be attractive and welcoming offering a variety of things to do and places to go. When new construction takes place in the business district it should be attractive. Why does our Dollar General store look like a box when the same store in other towns have great facades that fit in with the character of the town. How about being really proactive with blight.
- 82 Ymca
- 83 36 linwood ave the owner putting in a demolition order. set up a system to alert historic agencies and town planner and try and work with the owners, the historic district and the historical society to look for a way to sell and save this house, not react when the owners apply for demolition. this house is important contributing structure in the downtown. like Mangia, it can be saved and repurposed.
- 84 A possible improvement would be a virtual suggestion box where residents (or business owners) could provide suggestions for town improvements in the form of infrastructure, programs, activities/events, town laws, etc.
- 85 Vote out Shilosky! He has no clue how to run a town or speak effectively to communicate with citizens in a meeting.
for 1st Selectman!!
- 86 Bus to Norwich and New London so people can get to jobs and doctors.. We had it years ago.. We need it more now. Ct transit should be doing this.
- 87 Would like access to municipal water and sewer. Free or discounted trash removal. Improved roads. More local businesses and a better variety of restaurants.
- 88 Bulk trash pickup
- 89 Tax reduction for seniors
- 90 Focus on Economic Development, Fund Regional Economic Development Agencies. Increasing Grand list best way to manage Tax issue.
- 91 Try to get businesses to come
- 92 No, but thank you for seeking our input and for serving the community.
- 93 BUILD A NEW SENIOR CENTER!!!
- 94 We needs bigger tax base bring business to town

- 95 See previous comment as it relates to Town of Colchester leadership demonstrating a commitment to the preservation of Colchester as a small New England community by focusing maintaining and planning for appropriate architectural development. The Cragin Memorial Library is a great example of a project with a great outcome because of a focus on the architectural appropriateness of the addition. We need a Town Planner with VISION!
- 96 More businesses. Dept store
- 97 A community center or indoor rec plex would be very beneficial to the town. A place all can go to and enjoy. A swimming pool would be a great addition to the town too...both indoor and outdoor. The splash pad gets overwhelmed with out of towners so maybe a small "water park" like area in town for all to enjoy.
- 98 A new senior center
- 99 If we can't even afford the services we have in our budget then we shouldn't be adding more services. We can't just keep increasing taxes.
- 100 I love Cragin Library!
- 101 24 hour town police coverage.
- 102 Question #2- Road/street repair and/or replacement. Not just for streets such as "Deer Run"!
- 103 More transportation for our elder townspeople.
- 104 Prioritize the Senior Center as our population is aging.
- 105 Keep library open on weeknights until 9:00 so public meeting rooms can be used for the purposes originally intended. One maintenance worker on duty to lock up when last meeting attendees leave is all that would be required to keep building secure for another hour a day Monday thru Thursday.
- 106 Things may not be perfect, but I want to thank you for your time and have work.
- 107 Lower taxes!
- 108 Not to be snide or rude, but other than police/fire/rescue and school/rec things...what 'services' do you provide? No trash pick up, no leave pick up? There is no evidence that Colchester wants to grow its retail base. If I need a pair of socks, I have to go to either Waterford or Manchester. Why isn't there a Target (example) in town or at least another chain grocery store? I just don't understand the "small town" mentality that exists in today's world. I'm not saying we need a Wal-Mart...but some type of business that will help alleviate our taxes should be worth serious consideration by the Town.
- 109 Late bussing to get kids home from programs/clubs/sports when parents work. This town is in the dark ages assuming there is a stay home mom.
- 110 Senior center improvement or a completely new building is necessary in this day and age!
- 111 Trash or Bulk Pick up days
- 112 Fund economic development
- 113 See comments provided in survey earlier

- 114 taxes too high
- 115 Will vote NO for any budget that seeks to increase taxes.
- 116 I believe a pool in our community would be a huge draw for people and some new residence.
- 117 I WISH WE DIDNT HAVE TO PAY FOR GARBAGE PICK UP. WITH THE HIGH TAXES WE ALREADY PAY.
- 118 I wish we had enough police officers to cover third shift and to control the speed of traffic on our residential streets.
- 119 Reduced rates for seniors and disabled vets at places like transfer station, etc. Keep our seniors in CT.
- 120 Community pool & wellness activities, especially for middle age & older working adults.
- 121 Need Food Trucks in Town on Fridays! Other daze too!
- 122 I wish Colchester had an indoor town pool. While very expensive to build, it would be a great source of additional income for the town via swim lessons, adult swim, pool memberships, birthday parties, etc. It would also enable Colchester to have a middle and high school swim team. I know MANY people who travel elsewhere (self included) for many of these services. It would be wonderful to see our money go back to Colchester instead.
- 123 Common sense budgeting. Regionalization of Services to save money. Reduce the number of Administrators in Colchester Schools!
- 124 We need an updated senior center.
- 125 The seniors need a discount on there taxes we can not afford them
- 126 Let's move to getting the Senior Center built. More resources for technology.
- 127 No, not that anyone would listen anyways.
- 128 I already mentioned more retail space because everything is so far from town. Also, I wish there were more street lights on my road (Stollman) as it's a very active community with young families and Rec Plex attendees but at sunset it gets very dangerous because there's lots of cars and very little lighting on the road. I reached out to someone about this but no one every responded to my inquiries. Which is unfortunate and frustrating. Also, the addition of natural gas heating lines would be amazing! But I know that last but is pretty far fetched.
- 129 I don't have town garbage pickup nor have street lights.
- 130 As an artist, aesthetics is important to me. I think the way our town looks is important. This is a very small gripe - I'm not a huge fan of our holiday setup on the green; I think the arches look a bit gaudy and the happy holidays sign should be retired. We've got a wonderful gazebo that could be beautifully and tastefully decorated, and other elements that could be decorated on the green. An aesthetics committee would be great!
- 131 Yes garbage removal and better snow removal
- 132 Do we have some sort of program that offers discounted tickets to area attractions? 6Flags, Big E, Dino State Park, Etc? If not we should.

- 133 Don't sacrifice the Town side of the budget for the School budget.
- 134 The garden club provides excellent services (and gets good support from DPW) but we need a more appealing main street area
- 135 New senior center is needed. The current building lacks the amenities of other similarly sized towns, and there is not adequate parking to meet the current needs.
- 136 No. they dont provide services they should within the budget.
- 137 Swimming pool senior water aerobics Tai chi Writing group More stimulating and intellectual discussion groups
More varied restaurants Cheaper and better fresh food options Public transportation
Coffeeshop/bookstore/meeting site in Westchester
- 138 Improve the Senior Center.
- 139 Colchester provides a lot of services for its community members. We are very lucky, as we know families in surrounding towns do not have the same community atmosphere that we do.
- 140 We really should consider making the Town Green a rotary and with that increase the parking around it to facilitate more town growth. Also get the cruising to the green to move to another location like the chevy lot.
- 141 No. Good job.
- 142 Garbage pick up
- 143 Organize volunteer initiatives to handle certain expenses. For examples, parent participation in some recreational sport needs for kids.
- 144 - Better blight ordinances - Economic growth (Target, Salad shops, etc.) - Healthier food options - most restaurants are pizza, Chinese food and DD/McDonalds
- 145 My taxes are about \$8K and I have no children in school, no sewer or town water, no garbage pick -up and people are doing 60mph on my street where the speed limit is 25mph.
- 146 use metrics to show how well money is spent