



# Town of Colchester, Connecticut

127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

**Town of Colchester**  
**Board of Finance Meeting Minutes**  
**AGENDA – May 5, 2020 – Virtual Meeting – 6:30 PM**  
**BOARD OF FINANCE BUDGET WORKSHOP**

RECEIVED  
COLCHESTER, CT  
2020 MAY -6 AM 10:44  
CAYLE FURMAN  
TOWN CLERK

(All items on this agenda are subject to possible action.)

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Rob Tarlov, Michael Hayes, Mike Egan, Andreas Bisbikos, and Andrea Migliaccio, Bernie Dennler

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**OTHERS PRESENT:** First Selectman Mary Bylone, Tax Collector Michelle Wyatt, CFO Maggie Cosgrove, BOE Chair Mary Tomasi, BOE Member Amy Domeika

\*\*\*All members and citizens were present via Zoom webinar

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chairman Tarlov called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.
2. **CITIZENS COMMENTS:** Concern was expressed over the Governor's recent announcement regarding the State's deficit.
3. **CORRESPONDENCE:** Attached
4. **BOF DISCUSSION - REVENUE:** M. Cosgrove reviewed projected revenue in comparison to the current fiscal year as well as previous years. Numbers were based on the budgets the Town and BOE currently have forward. ECS funding is expected to be received this year as planned with the potential to be jeopardized next year. Examples of how a tax collection rate would affect the mill rate were provided. The General Fund is adequately funded and could be used to offset a portion of the budget if necessary.
5. **CITIZENS' DISCUSSION:** State Representative Brian Smith stated there has been no discussion at the State level regarding cutting ECS funding. There has been no update on the status of the BOE budget.
6. **BOF DISCUSSION:** The budget calendar was updated. Executive Order 7HH states that there will be no referendum. The budget will be set by the budget-making authority which is the BOF. Members would like additional citizen involvement in the process. The budget vote will be set in time to allow tax bills to be sent out by July 1st.
7. **CITIZENS' DISCUSSION:** Concern was expressed as to if the collection rate being used is realistic based on the unemployment rate due to Covid and the financial security of the State going forward.
8. **BOF DISCUSSION - NEXT STEPS:**
9. **ADJOURNMENT:** M. Hayes motioned to adjourn, seconded by B. Dennler. Vote was unanimous.  
**MOTION CARRIED.** Chairman Tarlov motioned to adjourn at 8:27 p.m.

Submitted by,

*Dawn LePage*  
Dawn LePage, Clerk

**Attachments:**

Revenue report  
Correspondence  
Updated Budget Calendar

	FY 2017-2018 Actual Revenues	FY 2018-2019 Actual Revenues	FY 2019-2020 Adopted Budget	FY 2019-2020 Projected Actuals	FY 2020-2021 Proposed Budget
<b>REVENUES:</b>					
<b>Property Taxes:</b>					
Current taxes	38,810,079	39,110,431	40,304,659	40,118,516	41,704,706
Delinquent taxes	371,693	575,624	550,000	450,000	375,000
Interest & lien fees	357,284	342,189	330,000	280,000	250,000
Total property taxes	39,539,056	40,028,244	41,184,659	40,848,516	42,329,706
<b>Intergovernmental:</b>					
In lieu of taxes - PILOT	0	74,928	74,928	74,928	74,928
Mashantucket Pequot/Mohegan Fund	65,420	23,167	23,167	23,167	23,167
Municipal Stabilization Grant	207,276	134,167	134,167	134,167	134,167
Distribution to Towns	4,900	5,677	5,000	6,550	5,000
Disability Exemptions	1,682	1,454	1,674	1,610	1,888
Additional Veterans Exemptions	7,770	7,082	7,211	7,357	7,255
Local Capital Improvement	213,497	136,187	116,454	116,454	116,454
Youth Services Grant	17,408	17,732	17,000	17,732	17,732
Emergency Management	0	7,404	0	8,065	8,065
Total	517,953	407,798	379,601	390,030	388,656
<b>Intergovernmental - Education:</b>					
ECS	11,733,946	12,660,380	12,359,179	12,359,177	12,040,218
Special Education - Excess Costs	688,712	539,115	500,000	624,553	500,000
Total	12,422,658	13,199,495	12,859,179	12,983,730	12,540,218
Total intergovernmental	12,940,611	13,607,293	13,238,780	13,373,760	12,928,874
<b>Charges for Services:</b>					
Ambulance Fees	582,728	629,052	575,000	519,000	500,000
Recreation Fees	11,765	12,140	12,000	3,337	6,000
Total charges for services	594,493	641,192	587,000	522,337	506,000
<b>Revenues from use of money:</b>					
Investment interest earnings	272,088	348,258	225,000	298,400	196,200
<b>Licenses/permits/fees:</b>					
Vendor permits	1,520	1,245	1,200	990	1,200
Copier fees	16,770	15,313	17,400	17,197	17,850
ZBA fees	1,250	350	700	1,350	700
Conservation Commission fees	4,953	7,447	5,500	6,420	5,500
Zoning and Planning fees	11,290	17,590	13,000	10,000	13,000
Building fees	278,638	350,726	245,000	360,000	245,000
Fire marshal inspection fees	360	0	240	60	100
Conveyance tax	181,592	179,773	185,000	185,719	186,000
Town Clerk fees	83,141	87,421	87,000	101,187	102,000
Sports licenses	460	392	470	250	250
Land Records - Town	1,823	1,757	2,000	1,706	1,800
Pistol permits	8,960	7,186	8,500	5,160	5,000
Road inspection fees	7,349	12,067	3,900	28,867	17,750
Transfer Station fees	139,958	134,162	127,500	136,762	130,000
Library fines & fees	9,201	6,704	7,600	7,250	7,000
Dial-A-Ride	3,414	2,896	3,150	3,500	3,500
Total licenses/permits/fees	750,679	825,029	708,160	866,418	736,650
<b>Other revenues:</b>					
Tuition	344,894	426,778	402,038	468,300	305,000
Telecommunication property tax	29,377	27,723	27,000	26,915	26,000
Elderly Housing/Dublin Village	14,689	14,416	14,350	14,350	14,350
Miscellaneous	20,802	11,602	5,000	5,000	5,000
Insurance Reimbursement	2,685	9,765	0	125	0
Recovery	0	0	0	57,902	0
State Fund for Building Inspection fees	1,069	1,747	1,000	1,200	1,000
CIRMA Member Equity Distribution	44,723	46,727	0	0	0
	458,239	538,758	449,388	573,792	351,350
<b>Other financing sources:</b>					
Use of Fund Balance	0	0	0	414,089	0
Total other financing sources	0	0	0	414,089	0
Total revenues	54,555,166	55,988,774	56,392,987	56,897,312	57,048,780

## Correspondence for 5/5 BOF Meeting

**From:** GEORGE <gtc44@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 5, 2020 12:31 AM  
**To:** Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>  
**Subject:** Budget

Just approve last year's budget.

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**From:** Bibee, Noreen <NBibee@montvilleschools.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 4, 2020 5:10 PM  
**To:** Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>  
**Subject:** no new taxes

BOF please don't raise taxes. Thank you, Noreen  
Yes, I live in Colchester.

*Noreen A. Bibee*  
*English Teacher, Montville High School*  
*Secretary, Montville Education Association*  
*President, Friends of Cragin Memorial Library*  
[nbibee@montvilleschools.org](mailto:nbibee@montvilleschools.org)

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**From:** Karen Lutkus <karenlutkus@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 4, 2020 4:22 PM  
**To:** Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>  
**Subject:** Support BOE budget

Hello, My name is Karen Lutkus. I have been teaching Family and Consumer Sciences for 17 years and a resident of Colchester for 10 years. As I am unable to access the emails of the Board of Finance on our town website, would it be possible to forward this to them & copy me?

I write to ask you to adopt a Board of Education Budget that does not negatively affect the needs of our teachers and students. A flat budget, will mean cuts for our schools.

I am still very disappointed that the entire Family and Consumer Sciences program was cut as our two middle school Family and Consumer Sciences teachers retired. Those courses taught life skills and employability skills that all students would benefit from. They also are part of developing a student's fine motor skills, which have become even more important as technology has become ingrained in so many lives. Clearly this isn't the year to bring any part of that program back, but I encourage you to keep that loss in mind.

Through the past four or five years, my colleagues and I have observed a much greater need for social and emotional support for our middle schoolers. Our time counseling these students, our attempts to mitigate the challenges and the communication with parents has increased dramatically as well over the past several years. I have heard this from many teachers in multiple districts at statewide meetings and within my PLC, and it is a common factor in education now. I fear that with many students and families facing troubles during this time of distance learning, the need will only increase and we will need more counseling support than ever before. That will also increase our need for teachers and all support staff, as we will need to not only work to meet the social & emotional needs of these children, but also catch them up academically. Teachers will again be tasked with doing more, yet the hours in their day do not increase.

I ask that you consider the importance of keeping interventions that may be in place, as well as continued support for our technology & technology staff. Those who work with struggling students & those who work behind the scenes supporting teachers and students are so valuable.

Our custodial & nursing staff is also pivotal at this point. We will be calling on them for additional responsibilities when we eventually return to our buildings.

I ask that you ensure that they will have the necessary staff, and other existing parts of the puzzle, here for our students and teachers when they return to school in whatever they can and whenever they can next fall.

Thank you for your time and dedication,  
Karen Lutkus

### Karen Lutkus

Family and Consumer Sciences Teacher ~ Portland Middle & High School

93 High Street, Portland CT 06480

CEA Portland ~ Co-President/CEA communications

[www.cea.org](http://www.cea.org) [www.facebook.com/eaportland](https://www.facebook.com/eaportland)

American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences/CT affiliate member [www.ctaafcs.org](http://www.ctaafcs.org)

860-478-3576 call or text

[karenlutkus@gmail.com](mailto:karenlutkus@gmail.com)

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**From:** magyajj@aol.com <magyajj@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 4, 2020 3:52 PM  
**To:** Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>  
**Subject:**

Do not raise our taxes! There are people in our town who are hurting already. Use the budget from last year until we can have a vote!!

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**From:** Banning, Susan <Susan.Banning@espn.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 4, 2020 12:58 PM

**To:** Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>

**Subject:** budget vote

Dear Mr. Tarlov,

The form of government in our town allows voters to have a say at the ballot box. I think it is wrong of Gov. Lamont to, with the stroke of a pen, take that from us.

My hunch is that Mr. Lamont has about as much perspective about eastern Connecticut and our referendum "crowds" as any typical Greenwich person does. Fairfield County and New London County couldn't be more different in almost every way. I have stood at longer lines at grocery stores during this pandemic than I have ever been in at a referendum vote.

As his EO offers no leeway, a vote-by-mail should be arranged. I do not write this as a partisan – I am a registered Democrat – but as a citizen.

Sincerely,

Susan Banning

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**From:** Michael Szewczyk <mszew923@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Monday, May 4, 2020 9:49 AM

**To:** Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>

**Cc:** colchestervoter@gmail.com <colchestervoter@gmail.com>

**Subject:** Zero Increase Budget!

Good morning,

I emailed last week to express my concerns over the necessity of having a referendum prior to passing any budgets. Well, since the Governor's EO last week effectively killed that option, I am now writing to express my strong desire for a ZERO increase budget.

Since the Governor is taking away our right to vote, it is the responsibility of the BoF to pass a flat, ZERO increase budget. I can't think of the last time a town budget has been passed on the first vote and that is because the citizens of this town care about how our money is spent and won't just blindly approve unchecked increases in budgets.

Using that information, one could reasonably extrapolate that if an increased budget came to vote this year, it stands a better than 50% chance of being rejected and having to go to 2 or more votes until passed. Based on that, I think if the BoF truly represents the citizens, it is your duty to pass a ZERO increase budget since the citizens are being deprived of their right to vote.

Thank you for your time.

Mike Szewczyk  
Colchester, CT

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**From:** Lynn Stewart <lwarrenstewart@yahoo.com>

**Sent:** Monday, May 4, 2020 7:48 AM

**To:** Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>

**Cc:** Mike Egan <megan@colchesterct.gov>; Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>; Mike Hayes <mhayes@colchesterct.gov>; Andreas Bisbikos <abisbikos@colchesterct.gov>; Andrea Migliaccio <amigliaccio@colchesterct.gov>; Bernard Dennler <BDennler@TownofColchester.onmicrosoft.com>; Dave Stewart <tachikara@sbcglobal.net>

**Subject:** Fw: Budget Concerns

Good morning,

In advance of this week's Board of Finance meeting, I would like to reiterate my position that if there is no way to conduct a referendum, that the 2019-20 budgets (last year's budget) for both the town and the Board of Education be adopted for 2020-21. There should be NO tax increase whatsoever. Moving forward with a budget resulting in even a minimal tax increase is taking advantage of a difficult situation on the backs of the taxpayers and is demonstrating a lack of sensitivity to our neighbors and friends.

Thank you all.

Best regards,  
Lynn Stewart  
95 Caisson Road

----- Forwarded Message -----

**From:** Lynn Stewart <lwarrenstewart@yahoo.com>

**To:** megan@colchesterct.gov <megan@colchesterct.gov>; bofchair@colchesterct.gov <bofchair@colchesterct.gov>; mhayes@colchesterct.gov <mhayes@colchesterct.gov>; abisbikos@colchesterct.gov <abisbikos@colchesterct.gov>; amigliaccio@colchesterct.gov <amigliaccio@colchesterct.gov>; bdennler@colchesterct.gov <bdennler@colchesterct.gov>; townhall@colchesterct.gov <townhall@colchesterct.gov>

**Sent:** Wednesday, April 29, 2020, 09:50:38 AM EDT

**Subject:** Budget Concerns

Hello everyone,

I hope this email finds you all healthy and well.

I am writing to express my thoughts regarding the budget. I have sat in on and listened to as many meetings as I have been able, and I have reviewed both the town and BOE budgets. At this point, there are two things that concern me:

- (1) The potential for an increase in taxes if the town and/or BOE budget increases from last year; and
- (2) The potential that there may be no referendum and no opportunity for the townspeople of Colchester to voice their support (or not) of the proposed budgets.

With regard to the first issue, in light of the unusual circumstances associated with Covid-19, there are many individuals who have been relieved of their employment unwillingly. Many of these individuals were deprived of **any** income for an extended period of time for many reasons (e.g., delays in receiving unemployment, being self-employed, delays in receiving the relatively small stimulus, etc.). As a result, there are many people in this town who are stressed and anxious about where their next meal will come from or whether they will be able to pay their bills. This affects people now, but will also affect them even after they go back to work as they try to make good on deferred payments/bills and re-establish a sense of financial security, which may or may not have been present to begin with.

The Mission Statement of the Board of Finance is "Balancing the needs of Colchester **with its ability to pay.**" I believe that this year, the ability of many Colchester residents to pay additional taxes is non-existent. While not all residents are in the above-described situation, any decision to increase taxes would affect all residents regardless of income, and in light of the present circumstances, would be insensitive and unconscionable.

I am also of the opinion that the scenario created by Covid-19 is a rainy day scenario, and that if there are expenditures that simply cannot (i.e., versus WILL NOT) be deferred, that this is a perfect time to utilize the rainy day fund - which has been funded by the taxpayers in this town - as the resource to cover these expenditures.

With regard to the second issue, I believe the people of the town should be given the opportunity to voice their opinion through a vote. If there is no way to conduct a referendum, I advocate that the 2019-20 budgets for both the town and the Board of Education be adopted for 2020-21. In my mind, moving forward with any budget resulting in even a minimal tax increase is taking advantage of a difficult situation on the backs of the taxpayers and is demonstrating a lack of sensitivity to our neighbors and friends.

Thank you for your time and effort as you work to develop a budget for the upcoming year.

Best regards,  
Lynn Stewart  
95 Caisson Road

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**From:** jmcnair3@comcast.net <jmcnair3@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 4, 2020 7:09 AM  
**To:** Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>  
**Subject:** Feedback for your consideration

Rob,

Please share with Board members if you see this of any value

James McNair

(Attachment is a separate document)

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**From:** Personal Email <kaylee.czajka@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, May 3, 2020 8:38 PM  
**To:** Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>  
**Subject:** I support a tax increase because I support our town.

Good evening.

I want to start by saying I am fully supportive of raising taxes for the BOE and our town to provide necessary services for our community because I support our community.

I also understand the need to move forward with a budget for both the town and BOE without a vote during a time of crisis for safety reasons. I'm sure this was a hard decision to make, but I also know the process to create the budget has been in the works for months now and has had received feedback, praise, and criticism already. I am choosing to trust that the Board of Finance, Board of Ed, and town officials make the right decisions.

With this being said, I know there will be naysayers who insist "no vote, no increase." These are likely the same people who would have also voted for no increase in the first place, which I am sure you are well aware of already. Please do not resort to 0% increase for either budget. There are essential services this town provides and financial needs the schools need to perform well and help students grow. The town and schools will need more financial support than ever as we reopen in the upcoming months. Although some may cry that taxes are a hardship, these taxes are crucial for the success of our town and our schools. Our students are Colchester's future—the more we pay into their success now, the better our town will be in the future (even for people who do not have children in the school system).

And if a 0% increase was pushed forward for the town and BOE, what services would be cut and which programs would we lose? Laying off teachers would lead to increased class sizes during a time when we are encouraged to stay 6-feet apart and we already have sizes with you to 30 students in one room. Or would our students lose their extra curricular activities? Art, music, world language? Or would they lose their clubs and sports? Students are going to need more academic support than ever to recover (especially our at risk students) and will need more services than ever, not less. Not to mention the social and emotional support that will be needed when we return to school and business as usual because this pandemic is a trauma for our students and members of our community.

As a teacher in this community, I want to emphasize that my colleagues and I were called to action when schools closed to find a way to continue teaching and we answered that call to do what is best for our students during this unprecedented crisis. We have been working around the clock to transition to digital learning and provide the best opportunities for our students to keep learning and to keep connecting with them. To be honest, this is harder and requires more hours than working in the building during a normal school year because my colleagues and I are working so hard to learn how to teach digitally, connect with students, provide effective feedback, attend meetings, and increase student growth. And I'm sure there will be more changes in the fall if it's safe to go back to school, not to mention the interventions that will be needed for our at risk students or lower level students to recover from the lost seat time even with our rigorous digital work. This means more services, meetings, one-on-one learning opportunities, differentiated curriculum, and support.

I understand that I have a unique perspective as a member of this town and as a teacher here, but I think in many ways it gives me a clearer insight into what is most important: supporting our students, community programs, and bettering our schools. I will always support funding for our schools even when I have completed my teaching career, because I have had the opportunity to see what our students give back to our community. After ten years working in this district, I have seen graduates returning to our community to take part of our local businesses or after graduation and college and becoming successful contributing members of our community too. They work at our restaurants, our local businesses, banks, and grocery stores. They bought houses, rent apartments or condos, put their kids in our local daycares and soon into our school system (some are there already). The ones who left Colchester have become successful doctors, lawyers, business owners, and teachers themselves. I know this is an uncertain time and a time of crisis, but I fear a zero percent increase for the BOE or town would have far worse consequences in the long run. We need an increase of taxes for the town and the BOE because we as a community need these extra funds to support Colchester and our schools more than ever now. My husband and I are both tax payers in town and we support the tax increase for the town and the BOE.



Thank you for reading this email and for your consideration. I know you are busy and you do not need to respond, I just wanted to send a message as a tax payer in support of increasing taxes because I understand the benefits of this tax increase will lift us all in the long run. And I also understand the damage a 0% or a minimal percentage increase will have on all of us.

Thank you,  
Kaylee Czajka Manning

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**From:** jmcnair3@comcast.net <jmcnair3@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Sunday, May 3, 2020 10:33 AM  
**To:** First Selectman Bylone <mbylone@colchesterct.org>  
**Cc:** Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>  
**Subject:** Chart convention

Mary,

Now that I have some time to dig into the weeds of the budget, I'd like to make this observation.

Normal charts with time series data read left to right. All the financial reports are that way. Yet, the work measurement charts are the opposite. I suspect to the untrained eye a person may misinterpret activities rising when in fact they are going down. Dramatically in some cases.

May next year change format to be consistent with financials?

Be well,

James

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**From:** jmcnair3@comcast.net <jmcnair3@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 4, 2020 9:37 AM  
**To:** Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: where are costs reflected in contract negotiation years?

Found it for BoE. Curious why so low for certified staff and nothing mentioned for benefits. I'll have to ask.

**From:** Robert Tarlov  
**Sent:** Monday, May 4, 2020 7:39 AM  
**To:** jmcnair3@comcast.net <jmcnair3@comcast.net>  
**Subject:** Re: where are costs reflected in contract negotiation years?

On town side - HR/contract settlements.

On school side, don't know.

On May 3, 2020, at 9:42 AM, [jmcnair3@comcast.net](mailto:jmcnair3@comcast.net) wrote:  
Rob,

I just noticed the detail in the BoE proposal for the 2020\_2021 school year use salaries from the 2017\_2020 teacher contract. Where does Maggie put her estimate for the additional costs of the new contract that will impact 2020\_2021? I've forgotten.

Thanks,

James

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**From:** James McNair <[jmcnair3@comcast.net](mailto:jmcnair3@comcast.net)>  
**Sent:** Saturday, May 2, 2020 4:39 PM  
**To:** Robert Tarlov <[BOFChair@colchesterct.gov](mailto:BOFChair@colchesterct.gov)>  
**Cc:** First Selectman <[selectman@colchesterct.gov](mailto:selectman@colchesterct.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: 3 to 3

Thx for your time.

**From:** Robert Tarlov <[BOFChair@colchesterct.gov](mailto:BOFChair@colchesterct.gov)>  
**Sent:** Saturday, May 2, 2020 3:57 PM  
**To:** James McNair <[jmcnair3@comcast.net](mailto:jmcnair3@comcast.net)>  
**Cc:** First Selectman <[selectman@colchesterct.gov](mailto:selectman@colchesterct.gov)>  
**Subject:** Re: 3 to 3

On our board a motion needs 4 votes to pass if all 6 members are present. If 4 or 5 are present, 3 votes would be needed.

On your second question I would not be responding with certainty of the answer at this time.

Rob

Rob Tarlov, Chairman, Board of Finance  
860-608-4293

**From:** James McNair <[jmcnair3@comcast.net](mailto:jmcnair3@comcast.net)>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 1, 2020 8:04 PM  
**To:** Robert Tarlov <[BOFChair@colchesterct.gov](mailto:BOFChair@colchesterct.gov)>; First Selectman <[selectman@colchesterct.gov](mailto:selectman@colchesterct.gov)>  
**Subject:** 3 to 3

Rob,

If any motion to approve a budget by the BOF is 3 to 3 does the motion fail?  
If true, then if a stalemate thru July 1st, what happens?

Thanks,  
James McNair

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**From:** Monica Swyden <[monicacegan@gmail.com](mailto:monicacegan@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Saturday, May 2, 2020 1:17 PM  
**To:** Mike Hayes <[mhayes@colchesterct.gov](mailto:mhayes@colchesterct.gov)>; Robert Tarlov <[BOFChair@colchesterct.gov](mailto:BOFChair@colchesterct.gov)>; Andreas Bisbikos <[abisbikos@colchesterct.gov](mailto:abisbikos@colchesterct.gov)>; Andrea Migliaccio <[amigliaccio@colchesterct.gov](mailto:amigliaccio@colchesterct.gov)>; Bernard Dennler <[BDennler@TownofColchester.onmicrosoft.com](mailto:BDennler@TownofColchester.onmicrosoft.com)>; Mike Egan <[megan@colchesterct.gov](mailto:megan@colchesterct.gov)>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Citizen Correspondence

FYI- I am sending this to your Board because it pertains to comments made at one of your meetings. Please include it as part your correspondence because it does follow up on some comments made on April 30th. Thanks for your hard work during the budget process

**From:** Monica Swyden <[monicacegan@gmail.com](mailto:monicacegan@gmail.com)>  
**Date:** May 2, 2020 at 11:35:11 AM EDT  
**To:** [BoardofSelectman@colchesterct.gov](mailto:BoardofSelectman@colchesterct.gov), [selectman@colchesterct.gov](mailto:selectman@colchesterct.gov)  
**Subject:** Citizen Correspondence

Dear Board of Selectman,

I attended the most recent Board of Finance budget hearing on April 30th. At that meeting, a member of your Board, Taras Rudko, claimed that based off his interactions on social media, he was certain that townspeople want the budget to be cut and brought to zero. He certainly was not speaking for me, so I decided to research his comment.

I came across one shocking post which I have attached in full. To quote directly from Mr. Rudko, speaking as a Selectman, "Here is the bottom line. The budgets are filled with wasteful spending. Every year, the citizens never get a line item look back at the previous year's budget, only newly proposed spending. This becomes a gluttonous game of Hungry, Hungry Hippo. Keep in mind what I am asking for is for the removal the wasteful spending. Both the FS and the BOE are really good at perpetually padding."

This post is extremely unprofessional and contrary to everything that Colchester stands for.

First off, his statement about not reviewing budgets is untrue. Every single month Ms. Cosgrove reviews the current budget and what has been spent against it with both the BOE and BOF. Budget line items are always compared to the year before as mandated by the Town Charter in Article 1105, which I happened to write as part of the Charter Revision Commission. To spread falsehoods as a Selectman is unethical and deserves reprimand.

Next, I would like to point out that, until recently, Colchester elected officials have always worked together to do what is best for this town, regardless of party. This is what is (or perhaps was) great about our town. However, since Mr. Rudko brought it up, the "Hungry Hungry Hippos" he is referring to that have led

our town of the past years are his very own political colleagues. Until this past November, the office of First Selectman was help by a Republican for many years. The Board of Education was chaired by Republicans and the BOF continues to be chaired by a Republican who has held that position for many years.

Lastly, as for having a pulse on the town, I would like to point out that Mr. Rudko received four comments on this post. One person thanked him for "hijacking" his children's education. Another asked him to point out the wasteful spending, and a third echoed that sentiment. Mr. Rudko never responded. So as for knowing what we want, I think that he is either mistaken or purposefully misrepresented the responses.

As we proceed with the budget process, I am asking that Mr. Rudko publicly identify the wasteful spending he has found so that we can move the most responsible budget possible forward.

Kind Regards,  
Monica Swyden  
10 Vicki Lane  
Colchester, CT

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**From:** Monica Swyden <monicacegan@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Saturday, May 2, 2020 11:54 AM

**To:** Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>; Board of Finance <boardoffinancemembers@colchesterct.gov>

**Subject:** Citizen Correspondence

Hello,

I first want to thank the Board of Finance for giving citizens multiple opportunities to comment during your virtual meetings. This gives people who cannot make it until the end a chance to speak and is appreciated, especially in the online format.

However, I have noticed that there are a few citizens who insert the exact same comments into your meeting multiple times as if they were sitting on your board themselves. They become repetitive and repeat the same sentiments over and over, thus hijacking your meeting and extending its length unreasonably.

It would be most appropriate to hear the ideas of each person in the public once. The comments should be concise and to the point. Clarifying questions or new ideas should be entertained, but I am asking that you please limit comments from people who have already spoken to new points so that your virtual meetings can move along in a timely fashion.

Thank you very much,  
Monica Swyden  
10 Vicki Lane  
Colchester, CT

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**From:** jmcnair3@comcast.net <jmcnair3@comcast.net>

**Sent:** Saturday, May 2, 2020 7:34 AM

**To:** First Selectman <selectman@colchesterct.gov>; 'First Selectman Bylone' <mbylone@colchesterct.org>  
**Cc:** Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Mary, now that it's official

Mary,

No need to dig any deeper. 100 is a little higher than the typical number.

I get back to you with a thought,

Be well,

James

**From:** First Selectman <selectman@colchesterct.gov>  
**Sent:** Saturday, May 2, 2020 7:31 AM  
**To:** jmcnair3@comcast.net; First Selectman Bylone <mbylone@colchesterct.org>  
**Cc:** Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Mary, now that it's official

That's a great question. I know when you are on the meeting as a panelist, you can see the number. Of course it fluctuates. I am sure there is a dashboard to view the attendance. Let me check on this. Heide Perham, executive assistant, really handles all of the behind the scene info with Zoom. Let's see what we have and I am happy to share it. I do know we have not broken 100 people including the panelists because I purchased the 500 seat capacity and we have noted we probably didn't need it.  
Mary

**From:** [jmcnair3@comcast.net](mailto:jmcnair3@comcast.net) <[jmcnair3@comcast.net](mailto:jmcnair3@comcast.net)>  
**Sent:** Saturday, May 2, 2020 5:17:09 AM  
**To:** First Selectman Bylone <[mbylone@colchesterct.org](mailto:mbylone@colchesterct.org)>  
**Cc:** Robert Tarlov <[BOFChair@colchesterct.gov](mailto:BOFChair@colchesterct.gov)>  
**Subject:** Mary, now that it's official

Mary,

Good day. Just curious about public participation in the zoom meetings. These are historic days and I'm curious how much people paid attention and when. Does zoom give meeting stats that are public record?

Be well and again and again thanks for your time and consideration,

History is upon us all,

James McNair

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**From:** Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>  
**Sent:** Saturday, May 2, 2020 4:01 PM  
**To:** jmcnair3@comcast.net <jmcnair3@comcast.net>

**Cc:** First Selectman <selectman@colchesterct.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: one voter's request

We will be setting the calendar on Tuesday night.

I doubt we would be ready before late May for a vote.

Rob

Rob Tarlov, Chairman, Board of Finance  
860-608-4293

**From:** jmcnair3@comcast.net <jmcnair3@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Saturday, May 2, 2020 6:35 AM  
**To:** Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>  
**Subject:** one voter's request

Dear Rob,

With the great weight of the VOTE upon the BoF, I am lobbying to have your initial vote in late May. My understanding is that only 2-3 weeks are needed to send out tax bills.

For good or ill, most voters do not spend time giving the BoF input via surveys, public hearings and workshops. Thousands digest the budget in their own way between the last public meeting and the first vote. Getting an accurate read of the voter's will is challenging. As a reminder to the Board, over the last 17 years, about 45% of initial budgets were rejected by the voter.

But then it didn't matter. Whenever, budgets failed to pass changes were made until voters approved it. Now 6 people will decide for thousands.

This is why I personally feel you should take some time to let voters react to losing their vote for the first time in history. Give them a chance to offer comment now they know they won't have a vote. It may give the BoF a better read of the cross section of all our Community.

Best regards and be well to all,

James McNair  
Colchester

---

**From:** MICHAEL Hayes <michaeldh@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 1, 2020 4:28 PM  
**To:** T. Heldmann <theldmann@comcast.net>; Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>  
**Subject:** Last email

Tricia when I stated that using the senior center as a source of contact was my idea i would like you to know that it was our BOF Chair that actually contacted Patti about implementing the idea. We all work together as a board and in my rush to answer emails I forgot to give credit to our Chairman Rob Tarlov for his role.

Respectfully  
Michael Hayes  
Board of Finance Member

----- Original message -----

From: michaeldh <michaeldh@yahoo.com>  
Date: 5/1/20 3:37 PM (GMT-05:00)  
To: T Heldmann <theldmann@comcast.net>, michaeldh@yahoo.com  
Subject: Re:

Thank you Tricia, it actually was my idea to have the senior center send out meeting notices because of their large outreach to the seniors. I am glad you verified that it worked. I will forward your Suggestions to the BOF.

Thanks  
Michael Hayes  
Board of Finance Member

----- Original message -----

From: T Heldmann <theldmann@comcast.net>  
Date: 5/1/20 2:52 PM (GMT-05:00)  
To: michaeldh <michaeldh@yahoo.com>  
Subject: Re:

Hello Michael,  
Thank you for the email message.  
Unfortunately, it has become a real challenge to keep everyone informed.  
I rely in email for the most part and got an email notice from the Senior Center about the meeting. Can't remember who sent the notice to the CSC, but I do not think it was you.  
I'm on the BoD of an international service and we have conducted our meetings via Constant Contact for years. I'm a member of another service and we Zoom our meetings. For both these organizations notice goes out days or weeks ahead of time, so no one has search for a web site and try to hunt up the information on that site.  
Just my thoughts -  
Stay well,

Tricia Heldmann  
Sent from my iPad Air 2  
Vote BLUE anyone will do  
Remember in November

On May 1, 2020, at 2:23 PM, michaeldh <michaeldh@yahoo.com> wrote:

Hi tricia, I am sorry it took so long to respond to your email due to time restraints. I agree with you regarding notices of public meetings. After several BOF workshops I noticed that public attendance was minimal. The BOF, BOE & BOS have all discussed ways to inform the residents of public meetings. As you know the River East News paper is closed. The paper was one of our main ways to post town meetings. There have been notices about the meeting by several individuals as well as the 1st Selectwomens office on Facebook and All Things Colchester. I am glad you saw my notice and attended the meeting. I will continue to post meetings on social media and All Things Colchester. The

next BOF meetings are next week on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. (FYI) The town website posts all of the town meetings and it is updated on a regular basis. It also has all proposed budget information for both the town and education. If you have any further questions or concerns please don't hesitate to contact me or the BOF directly.

Respectfully  
Michael Hayes  
Board of Finance Member

----- Original message -----

From: T Heldmann <theldmann@comcast.net>  
Date: 4/29/20 6:29 AM (GMT-05:00)  
To: MICHAEL Hayes <michaeldh@yahoo.com>  
Subject: Re:

Maybe if this was sent out more timely ...

Tricia Heldmann  
Sent from my iPad Air 2  
Vote BLUE anyone will do  
Remember in November

On Apr 28, 2020, at 3:08 PM, MICHAEL Hayes <michaeldh@yahoo.com> wrote:

**Please Attend**

**The BOF meeting today. We need peoples comments about the budget, the process, and protecting our town.**

**Board of Selectman at 4:30 today.** Agenda packet attached.

When: Apr 28, 2020 04:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Topic: Board of Selectmen Meeting

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82769704050?pwd=WFVxdFprTWEwN2N0RlJKU1Joa0xhZz09>

Password: 853581

Or Telephone:

US: +1 301 715 8592 or +1 312 626 6799 or +1 929 205 6099 or +1 253 215 8782 or +1 346 248 7799 or +1 669 900 6833

Webinar ID: 827 6970 4050

Password: 853581

**BOF Budget Workshop – Town Budget** – Agenda and correspondence attached.

When: Apr 28, 2020 06:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Topic: Board of Finance Budget Workshop - Review Town Budget

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82609458071?pwd=VStaL0dEcUtzdUUxbjJLTUh1dFJxdz09>

Password: 460777

Or Telephone:



US: +1 312 626 6799 or +1 929 205 6099 or +1 301 715 8592 or +1 346 248 7799 or +1 669 900 6833 or +1 253 215 8782

Webinar ID: 826 0945 8071

Password: 460777

Thanks for helping and staying involved. Our town needs to make good decisions about the budget and moving forward.

Michael Hayes  
Board of Finance Member

---

**From:** Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 1, 2020 12:36 PM  
**To:** jmcnair3@comcast.net <jmcnair3@comcast.net>  
**Cc:** First Selectman <selectman@colchesterct.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: access to handouts for Revenue workshop

The handouts are in the agenda packet if available in advance. Otherwise they are part of the minutes. In addition, those that were in the agenda packet are also with the minutes.

The mill rate calculation will be posted when completed.

Rob Tarlov, Chairman, Board of Finance  
860-608-4293

**From:** jmcnair3@comcast.net <jmcnair3@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 1, 2020 9:37 AM  
**To:** Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>  
**Cc:** First Selectman <selectman@colchesterct.gov>  
**Subject:** access to handouts for Revenue workshop

Rob,

Traditionally handouts are placed on a table for people to pickup when they come into a meeting. It gives people a chance digest it to ask questions later. Since I work at night, I have not been able to attend any workshops. How will that be done for this meeting. Will there be a mill rate calculation report made available on line?

Thanks,

James McNair

---

**From:** Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 1, 2020 1:19 PM  
**To:** Christos Stravoravdis <cstravoravdis9267@yahoo.com>  
**Cc:** Board of Finance <boardoffinancemembers@colchesterct.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: town budget

Hi Christos,

Thanks for attending and participating last night.

A majority of the BOF members did not weigh in last night on where the BOE budget should end. I think most, if not all, felt we needed to review the revenue before commenting on a particular level for the final proposed budget.

Rob

Rob Tarlov, Chairman, Board of Finance  
860-608-4293

**From:** Christos Stravoravdis <cstravoravdis9267@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 30, 2020 5:28 PM  
**To:** Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>  
**Subject:** town budget

Dear Rob Tarlov,

I appreciate the continued work put into the well-being of the town, especially under these unprecedented circumstances. I am writing to say that I am also thankful that the leaders of our town are taking the time to look at our budgets with the understanding that our town will get through this catastrophic event and will need room to grow and prosper. I attended the Board of Education meeting and I'm happy to hear that we are no longer considering the 0% increase to our budget, especially considering the work our teachers and a variety of other staff in our school systems are putting in to the continued support of our kids. As an active resident of Colchester I would like to stress the importance of preserving the things we provide our town that not only incentivize families to stay but also attracts new residents to Colchester. Whether it's through the continued support of programs like those through Parks and Recreations, Colchester Public schools or any of the other wonderful programs we have available we need to continue funding these programs so we can not only make it through this event but also thrive. Thank you, and have a good rest of your week.

Sincerely,

Christos Stravoravdis

## Some random feedback for the Board of Finance

Dear Bof members,

I applaud your strength on this historic occasion. For the first time in centuries (???) voters will not get to approve how their money is being spent. After being on the BoE and BoF, I learned 4 things.

1. This is a frugal community. Over the last 17 years, on average it took 2 tries to pass a budget.
2. Public meetings and workshops did not offer a good cross section of the public. Most people did not attend. The crowds tended to be those that had the most to gain from budgets being passed.
3. Those that voted no tended not to come to meetings. I saw some shocking things when some poor soul gave any push back to budgets.
4. The vote was the vote. If a budget passed, so be it. If it failed, roll up my sleeves and modify the budget so it would pass. I did not really worry about getting it exactly right. The voter would let me know.

Today, things are quite different. You 6 must decide what to do for thousands. No other Board has had to divine the will of the people as much as your final decision. Some good news is using your survey results.

Before the Covid-19, 33% would support some increase in taxes to maintain services, 39% no and 28% maybe. I would argue the Covid-19 pandemic would increase the no increase.

I moved here in 1999. My neighborhood is upscale for Colchester. Since then, 4 of 9 houses experienced significant reductions in income from layoffs. One house is empty from foreclosure. Two moved because of divorce or a spouse dying. So, in my neighborhood taxes rose significantly and income fell.

Lastly, in a highly unusual way, I want to share comments on social media. I know this is not a traditional thing to do. Yet, given there is no vote, I feel it may help in your deliberations. I make no claims this is a cross section. I also recognize until knowing the mill rate, public opinion may change. I focused upon those giving pushback in case you have not heard through alternative means. I also excluded the No vote no increase comments. There are lots of those too. In my many years of following public opinion I've seen more new names than ever.



Andreas Bisbikos - Colchester Board of Finance

Send Message

Liked

View 1 more reply



Craig Schuck

Freeze pay increases until we can reopen fully...that would be a start

...

Like · Reply · 1w

4



Tricia Heldmann

As a couple of seniors living on fixed incomes and watching our pension investments shrink, we suggest the budgeteers do exactly what the rest of us are doing, TIGHTEN YOUR BELTS! Why, oh, why are these meetings schedu... See More

...

Like · Reply · 1w

1

2 Replies



Tony Priolo

As a community member and taxpayer of Colchester, I would like to know the town leadership's definition of a "rainy day". If In fact there is a \$9M fund.....use some of it NOW!!!! Doesn't get much worse than this my friends

...

Like · Reply · Edited

6

Like · Reply · 1w

Lance Lusignan

My question has always been "Where have all our Leaders gone? This is how the great divide between the haves and the have nots occur. If there is one thing that our society has lacked is true leadership without any agenda's, biases or prejudices. While the people are evidently very occupied the officials will push their agenda's with no resistance. Lamont has already given the local municipalities free reign knowing that the people will not be paying attention.

Like · Reply · 2w



Steven Caron

Look none of us know in this time of pandemic how will it affect the tax base. That real number should dictate what budget we can support. Right now the numbers are highly speculative. There should be a real analysis going on in the background on what cuts could be made to match real revenues. None of know what those numbers will be at this moment in time. I hope there are contingency plans being developed.

...



Vincent Romano

I attended both presentations. Here's my take. I'm very concerned over the low turnout, although typical, because of the possible impact from the Governor's Executive Order. I found the FS and School Superintendent disingenuous by presenting increases, but yet expressing concern for the taxpayers. Comments like and I'm paraphrasing, "This isn't set in stone," "We still have a lot of work to do," "the Town still has to function." These presentations were recorded. I encourage everyone to listen for themselves. The Executive Order has the support of the towns and cities. I'm concerned because more and more as this virus persists we are witnessing a power grab by our officials. I won't jump the gun. I won't comment yet on some of the budget items. We have the workshops coming up. We are being assured that the Town meetings and referendums are being planned. Will taxpayers make their presence known or will town leaders adopt the budgets without meetings or referendums due to lack of interest or worse ignoring the will of the taxpayers. Speak up now or complain later.

Like · Reply · 2w · Edited



→ View / more replies



Terri Shaw

Please dont raise taxes again

I'm on a fixed income. Things are getting harder to pay for. Besides. I feel we have been given a lesson with Corona 19. If we all can get by without certain things, get by with less, and count our pennies than why cant t... See More


...

Like · Reply · 2w




Merja Lehtinen

Andreas..the problem has been from the start a lack of understanding of the roles of the boards and the role of electors. Officials serve on behalf of the electors, not their buds on boards or former boards. There is a gross lack of knowledge of Muni Finance as well. Compounded a 2.99% increase will eat the equity of private homes within


 **Craig Schuck**  
Freeze pay increases until we can reopen fully...that would be a start ...

Like · Reply · 1w  4

 **Tricia Heldmann**  
As a couple of seniors living on fixed incomes and watching our pension investments shrink, we suggest the budgeteers do exactly what the rest of us are doing, TIGHTEN YOUR BELTS! Why, oh, why are these meetings schedu... See More ...


Like · Reply · 1w  1

↳ 2 Replies


 **Tony Priolo**  
As a community member and taxpayer of Colchester, I would like to know the town leadership's definition of a "rainy day". If In fact there is a \$9M fund.....use some of it NOW!!!! Doesn't get much worse than this my friends ...

Like · Reply · 2w · Edited  6

Like · Reply · 1w

 **Ed Mielczarek**  
Is This not the RAINEST DAY OF THE YEAR ? Use The Fund already !!! ...

Like · Reply · 2w · Edited  6

 **Susanne Labonosky Zahacefski** ...  
No tax increase!

Like · Reply · 1w  2

 **David Malcolm** ...  
0 and that's it.....  3

Like · Reply · 2w

James D. McNair III  
Colchester CT

May 4, 2020

# 2020 BUDGET CALENDAR (revised 05/05/2020)

via Zoom Meetings (see website and agendas for log on instructions)

Meetings will begin at 6:30 pm.

Wk

## APRIL

1	14	Tuesday	Budgets to Be Posted on the Website
	15	Wednesday	BOF Budget Public Hearing to Present the BOE School Budget
	16	Thursday	BOF Budget Public Hearing to Present the Town Budget
2	21	Tuesday	Board of Finance Budget Workshop: Review Town Budget with 1st Selectman
	23	Thursday	Board of Finance Budget Workshop: Review Education Budget with Board of Ed
3	28	Tuesday	Board of Finance Budget Workshop: Review Town Budget with 1st Selectman
	30	Thursday	Board of Finance Budget Workshop: Review Education Budget with Board of Ed

## MAY

4	5	Tuesday	Board of Finance Budget Workshop - Revenue
	6	Wednesday	Board of Finance Regular Meeting
5	12	Tuesday	Board of Finance Budget Workshop: Review Town Budget
	14	Thursday	Board of Finance Budget Workshop (if needed)
6	19	Tuesday	Board of Finance Budget Workshop: Review Education Budget
	20	Wednesday	Board of Finance Regular Meeting
	21	Thursday	Board of Finance Budget Workshop (if needed)
7	26	Tuesday	Board of Finance Budget Public Hearing
	28	Thursday	Board of Finance Budget Public Hearing

## June

8	2	Tuesday	Two week comment period	BOF Regular Meeting
	3	Wednesday		
	4	Thursday		
9	9	Tuesday		
	10	Wednesday		
	11	Thursday		
	16	Tuesday	Budget Vote by Board of Finance	