

# Town of Colchester, Connecticut

127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

Mary Bylone, First Selectman

Board of Selectman Special Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 15, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

via Zoom

Members in Attendance: First Selectman Mary Bylone, Selectmen Rosemary Coyle, Denise Turner, Denise Mizla and Taras Rudko

Others Present: Chuck Maynard, John Knapp, Tony Tarnowski, Marge Mlodzinski, Patty Watts, Mary Tomasi, Tiffany Quinn, Walter Cox, Sal Tassone, Rob Tarlov, Sean Nadeau, Ron Silberman, Kevin Hastings, Madelyn Starkey, and Linda Pasternak

1. CALL TO ORDER: Meeting called to order by First Selectman at 6:30 p.m.
2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
3. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS: Several residents called in and expressed their support for the Owner's Representative for the Senior Center Building Project.
4. CORRESPONDENCE - Attached
5. Discussion and Possible Action on the Presentation by Senior Center Building Committee and CSG – The Senior Center Building Committee will be separating the OPM proposal into the different components therefore this will need to go back out to bid and a revised RFQ needs to be drafted. No discussion or action taken.
6. Approve the Minutes of the August 20, 2020 Board of Selectmen Meeting: T. Rudko motioned to amend the minutes. Motion was not seconded. R. Coyle motioned to approve the minutes as written, seconded by D. Turner. R. Coyle, D. Turner and FS voted in favor of approving minutes, D. Mizla abstained and T. Rudko opposed. **MOTION CARRIED**
7. Approve the Minutes of the September 3, 2020 Board of Selectmen Meeting: R. Coyle motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by D. Mizla. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**
8. Approve the Minutes of the September 10, 2020 Board of Selectmen Meeting: D. Mizla motioned to approve the minutes, seconded by D. Turner. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**
9. Discussion and Possible Action to Reduce Subdivision Bond for Willow Land LLC Lot 4A and 5A on Stanavage Road: D. Mizla motioned that the Town of Colchester reduce Boston Indemnity Company Inc. Subdivision Bond number BC400821 from \$39,985.00 to \$3,999.00 and Boston Indemnity Company Inc. Subdivision Bond number BC400822 from \$18,970.00 to \$1,897.00 as recommended by the Town Engineer, seconded by D. Turner. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**
10. Discussion and Possible Action on Amending Our Local Option Ordinance Exemption for Volunteer Firemen: C. Maynard the Exemption Revision Commission spokesperson stated that the revision covered four main

goals, the first to get the retirement abatement for individuals, second to place the certification and audit responsibilities on the Chief and President of the Fire Company, third to make the program more inclusive of all activities not just emergency response and lastly to take advantage of state changes which includes all emergency responders and a maximum of \$2,000 for abatement. R. Coyle motioned that the Board accepts the recommendation and changes to the local option ordinance exemption for volunteer firemen and send to town meeting at the next available date per legal requirements, seconded by D. Turner. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

11. Discussion and Possible Action on Clerk for Boards and Commissions: No action taken.
12. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS: It was noted that the Exemption for the Volunteers was not actual tax dollars but is applied to the assessment for their personal property. A resident brought up the need to modernize intersection of Old Hebron and Old Hartford Road. Resident thanked the volunteers. A statement was read concerning the minutes.
13. FIRST SELECTMAN'S REPORT: FS reminded the board that the purpose of Executive Session was for the board to be totally confidential that any breach would be an ethics violation. FS stated that there have been a number of FOI requests recently and reports that had been generated in the past to inform the Board of Selectmen about FOIs will be created again. FS shared the most recent FOI requests. No new cases of COVID in the last 24 hours, Colchester up to 51 cases, a positive case at Colchester Elementary School. Governor Lamont is fining people for not wearing masks.
14. LIAISON REPORTS: R. Coyle – Senior Center Building Committee – Working on the exterior of the building. Long-Term Recovery Committee – Continues to meet weekly. Working with the CT Data Collaborative to analyze the data obtained in residential survey. Continuing to get responses from businesses. Open Space Advisory Committee – The Town will not be getting fees in lieu due to a subdivision on Stanavage Road being withdrawn. Jay is working on a new Trails brochure for Colchester. Commission On Aging – Worked on Senior Resource Guide. Senior Center's Directors Report, see attached. D. Mizla – Norton Park Committee – They printed 2,000 flyers to help with fundraising. They are looking at holding a public forum either on Zoom or in person. Parks and Recreation – They elected their new officers at their 9/14/2020 meeting. Fall programs are starting this week, some in person, some virtual. T. Rudko – No Meetings D. Turner – Ad Hoc Committee for Diversity and Inclusion – Held first meeting and elected officers. Will meet monthly.
15. ADJOURN: D. Turner motioned to adjourn at 7:38 p.m., seconded by R. Coyle. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**



# *Town of Colchester, Connecticut*

95 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

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Patricia A. Watts, Director of Senior Services/Municipal Agent

September 15, 2020

Town of Colchester Board of Selectmen  
Town of Colchester Board of Finance  
127 Norwich Avenue  
Colchester, CT 06415

Dear Board Members:

I am writing in support of the Senior Center Building Committee's recommendation to hire the Project Manager/Owner's Representative, Construction Solutions Group (CSG) and allocate the appropriate funding for their services. The Senior Center Building Committee have been dedicated in their service to the Town of Colchester, making progress in the charge set before them by the Board of Selectmen. The committee members have been working tirelessly with the architectural and engineering firm, Silver, Petrucelli & Associates, and together have developed a beautiful and appropriately-sized plan for the future senior center, with modern amenities to serve the seniors of today and tomorrow.

My primary concern is that during this time of COVID-19, when there are so many restrictions regarding social gathering and safety, attempting to educate the public about this project without many usual means available will have many barriers, perhaps insurmountable ones. With the professional services that CSG offers, we can, and I believe will, overcome those barriers. We need their expertise, especially during this time fraught with so many challenges on a global scale. Without the important function that CSG would play in the community education for the project, we run the risk of not being able to get the project passed through referendum.

The growing senior demographic in Colchester is well-documented, as is the growth rate of the membership of our current senior center. The senior citizens of Colchester have outgrown the current building. More square footage and especially additional parking are critical needs, even by current standards. I have had the pleasure of working for a municipality which has a state-of-the art senior center, and I can say without a doubt that our current building limits the size and scope of the programs which we can offer. I have heard many times that the new senior center project has the support of both the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Finance. Today we need your help and support to move that project forward. Passing the motion before you today is the best means of seeing a passed referendum, a critical step to realizing Colchester's dream of a new and modern senior center.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia A. Watts

Director of Senior Services  
Municipal Agent for the Elderly

## COA Meeting-September 14, 2020

Though our building is still not open to the public, we continue to provide the following services:

- Transportation for in-town and medical rides, both are picking back up in volume
- Meals: MOW deliveries (Tuesday-Friday) and Community Café (5 frozen meals delivered every Tuesday)
- Wellness Check outreach calls-these are now happening once per month, unless otherwise requested
- Virtual Programming with at least 1 in-person safely distanced special event per month i.e. Picnic Parade, Drive-In Movie, etc.
- Weekly communications through email blasts and robo-calls to all members
- Management of the office: volume of phone calls have remained steady. Paying bills, grant reports, management of social media, etc.

All trips from March onward this calendar year were cancelled or postponed. I have been in touch with all of our travel partners to reschedule popular trips for 2021. Refunds have been issued to all people registered for 2020 cancelled trips.

Kudos to our Senior Center Building Committee, who are doing an incredible job. I am very excited for the new senior center design, which I shared with senior center staff at our last staff meeting. The interior spaces have been finalized and approved by the committee and include everything that was in our Strategic Plan from 2017, except for a Café—which would have been nice, but wasn't essential. It is going to be phenomenal and offer many incredible programming opportunities in the future. I expect we will see our membership grow exponentially with the excitement around a new facility.

State guidance for a Phase 2 reopening of senior centers was released in late August. It is confusing, because although it allows for reopening as early as September 1<sup>st</sup>, the recommendations of the guidance remains that anyone ages 65+ "Stay Home. Stay Safe." I've been involved in many Zoom sessions with CASC, Senior Resources and the Chatham Health District discussing this subject. Many municipalities have decided to wait until Phase 3 or January 1<sup>st</sup> for their reopening. Chatham Health District is recommending a "wait and see" approach with special focus on whether the cases will increase with the openings of school. Senior Center Directors in the CHD region, which includes Colchester, Hebron, Marlborough, East Haddam, East Hampton and Portland have decided to work together to develop a regional reopening plan. We have a meeting scheduled for September 21<sup>st</sup>. Our tentative reopening date is scheduled for October 13<sup>th</sup>, but will be adjusted if needed based on any increased cases in the region. In addition to COVID-19 precautions, we are also considering the impact of loneliness and social isolation caused by the pandemic.

Results of the COVID-19 Response & Reopening Survey which went out are tabulated and have been reported to the First Selectman and our members, posted on the senior center webpage on the Town website. We sent it out both digitally and mailed paper copies to any members without email. We received 185 responses (approximately a 15% rate of return) and the findings were interesting and will prove helpful to inform our reopening plans. The thing I am most proud of it is we asked (Q 2) How would you rate the Colchester Senior Center's response to COVID-19? We received nearly 98% of responses being excellent or good (78.26% of respondents rated us excellent) and 2.17% Fair, with 0% Poor ratings. This tells us that our response strategies were on target and well received.

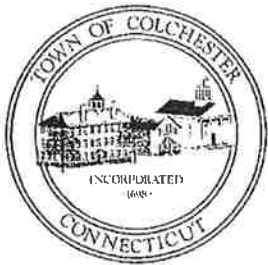
Our Program Coordinator position is currently vacant. The position has been posted on the Town website and will remain active until September 25<sup>th</sup>, at which time we will be seeking to hire. In the interim, I am covering and planning all programs, developing the monthly newsletter and keeping all activity statistics, in addition to my usual workload. I've successfully recruited new volunteers to assist me by leading several programs.

Today is a fundraiser at Mel's Downtown Creamery from 12-9 p.m. A portion of the sales from today will be donated to the Colchester Senior Center's Programs. Also, in celebration of National Senior Center Month, we will be hosting a Drive-In Movie Night at St. Andrew's Church parking lot on Wednesday, September 30<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. (rain date will be October 7<sup>th</sup>, if needed).

### Attendance & Meals Served:

- Meals served/delivered in June: 526 MOW: 274
- Meals served/delivered in July: 498 MOW: 277
- Monthly transports in June: 498

- Monthly transports in July: 577
- Monthly attendance in June: 956 (growth in transportation and program participation)
- Monthly attendance in July: 950
- Total Membership: 1284\* (Throughout the course of the pandemic, we have archived approximately 100 members who we discovered had moved away or passed away, without our knowing)



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Patricia A. Watts, Director of Senior Services/Municipal Agent

## **Transportation Itemization for August 2020**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Daily Transportation	8/31/2020	\$0.00    Total

Trips	8/31/2020	\$0.00    Total
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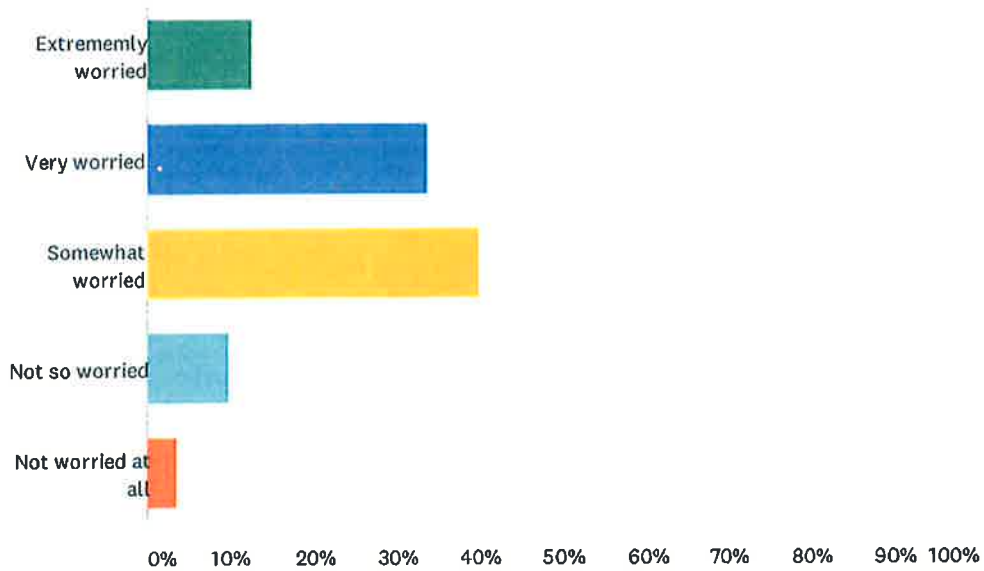
Combined Total		\$0.00
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Year to Date Total		\$2623.11
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\*No Deposits made at this time.

## Q1 How worried are you about the impact of coronavirus on you personally?

Answered: 184 Skipped: 1



### ANSWER CHOICES

Extrememly worried

Very worried

Somewhat worried

Not so worried

Not worried at all

TOTAL

### RESPONSES

12.50%

33.70%

40.22%

9.78%

3.80%

23

62

74

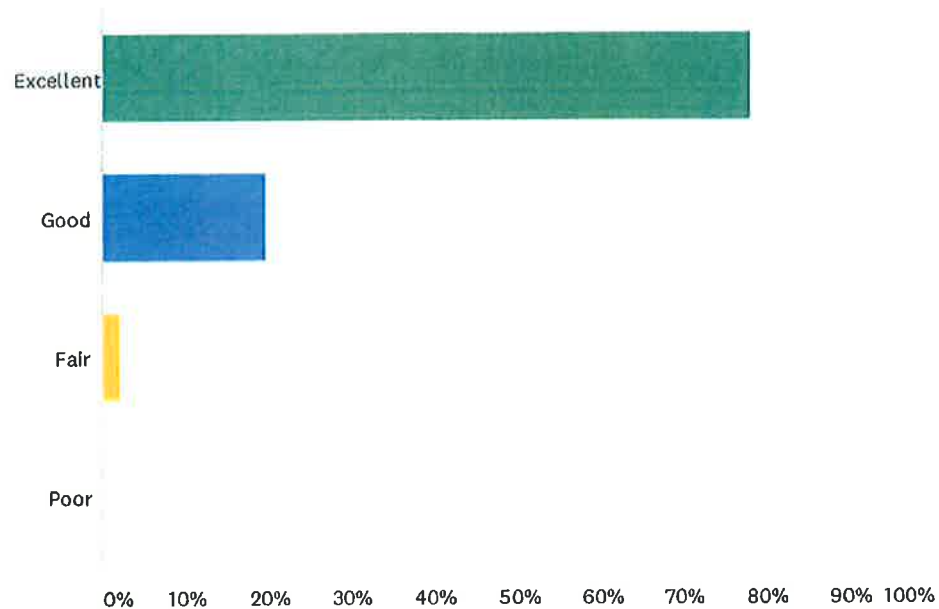
18

7

184

## Q2 How would you rate the Colchester Senior Center's response to COVID-19?

Answered: 184 Skipped: 1



### ANSWER CHOICES

Excellent

Good

Fair

Poor

TOTAL

### RESPONSES

78.26%

19.57%

2.17%

0.00%

144

36

4

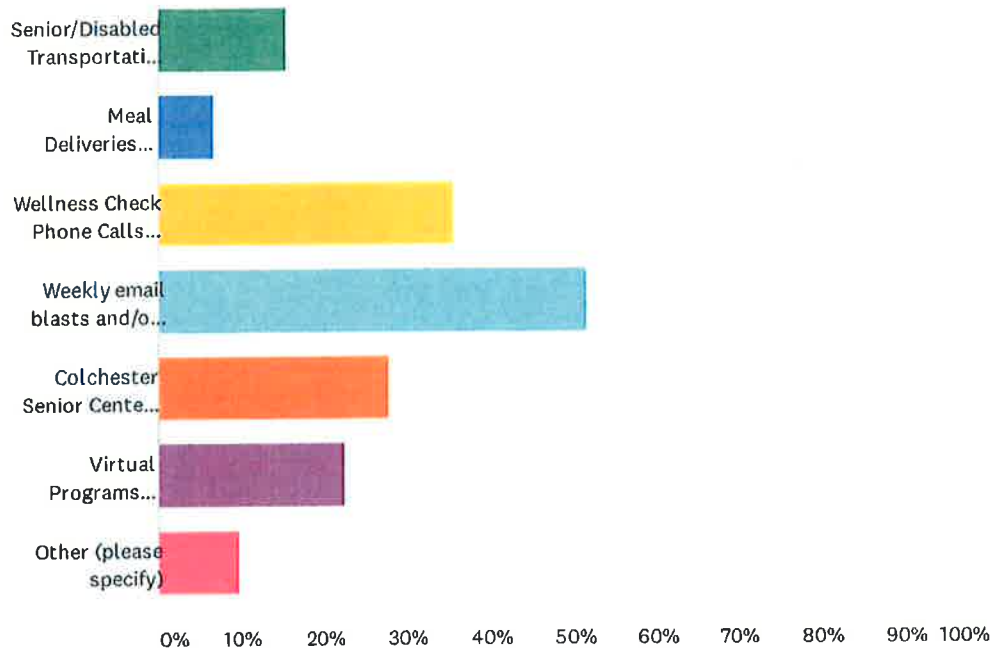
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184



### Q3 Select the services which you have found to be the most helpful during this time. Select all that apply.

Answered: 182 Skipped: 3



#### ANSWER CHOICES

Senior/Disabled Transportation Services

Meal Deliveries (Meals on Wheels or Community Cafe)

Wellness Check Phone Calls from CSC Staff

Weekly email blasts and/or robocalls from CSC Director

Colchester Senior Center Monthly Newsletter

Virtual Programs through Zoom or Conference Call

Other (please specify)

Total Respondents: 182

#### RESPONSES

15.38% 28

6.59% 12

35.71% 65

51.65% 94

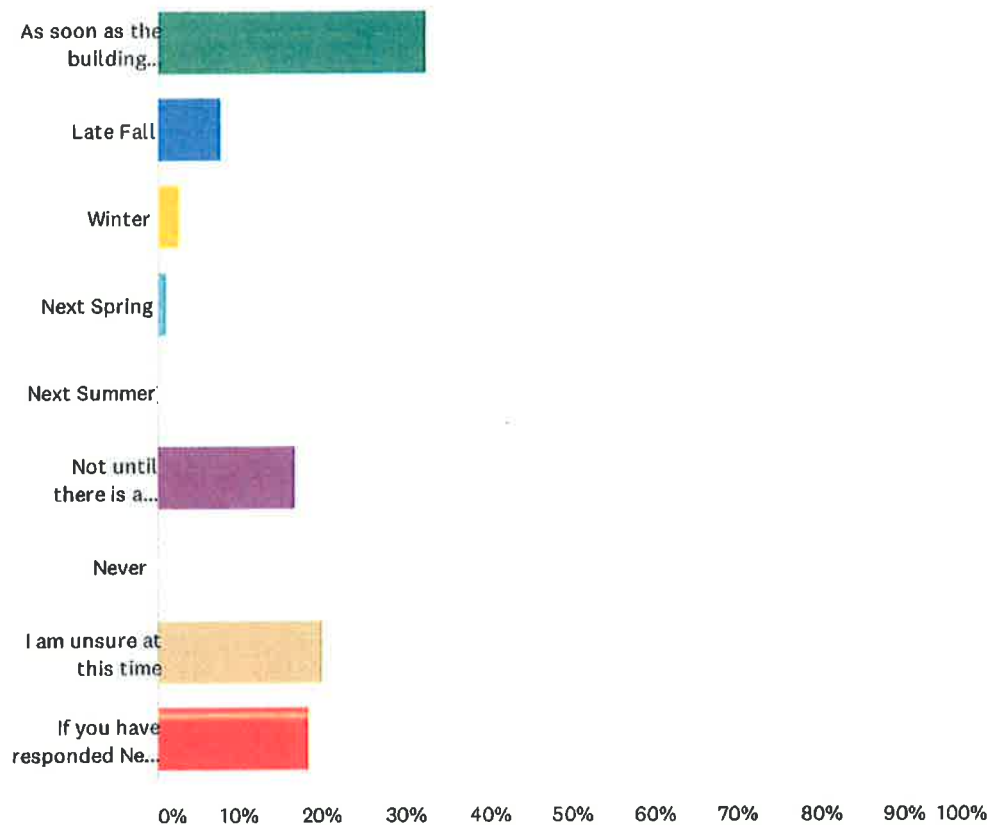
28.02% 51

22.53% 41

9.89% 18

## Q4 When do you plan on returning to the Colchester Senior Center?

Answered: 182 Skipped: 3



### ANSWER CHOICES

As soon as the building reopens to the public

Late Fall

Winter

Next Spring

Next Summer

Not until there is a vaccine widely available

Never

I am unsure at this time

If you have responded Never or Unsure, please tell us your concerns:

TOTAL

### RESPONSES

32.42% 59

7.69% 14

2.75% 5

1.10% 2

0.00% 0

17.03% 31

0.00% 0

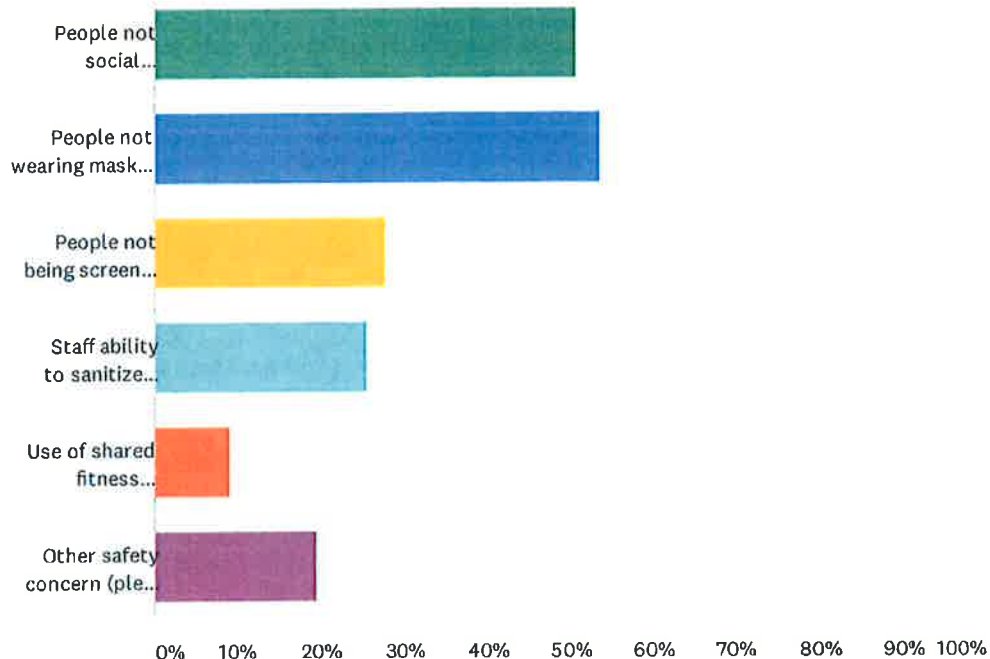
20.33% 37

18.68% 34

182

## Q5 What safety concerns do you have about returning? Please select top three answers.

Answered: 173 Skipped: 12



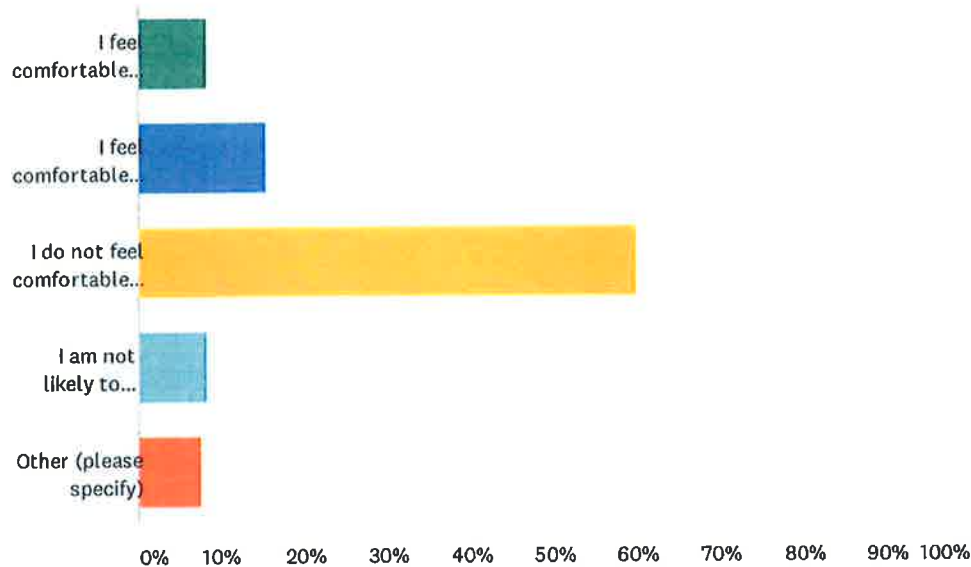
### ANSWER CHOICES

### RESPONSES

People not social distancing	50.87%	88
People not wearing masks while in public	53.76%	93
People not being screened at the door	27.75%	48
Staff ability to sanitize building adequately	25.43%	44
Use of shared fitness equipment	9.25%	16
Other safety concern (please specify)	19.65%	34
Total Respondents: 173		

## Q6 Knowing that our travel vendors have put protocols in place for your safety, what is your level of comfort with participating in a senior center sponsored trip?

Answered: 181 Skipped: 4



### ANSWER CHOICES

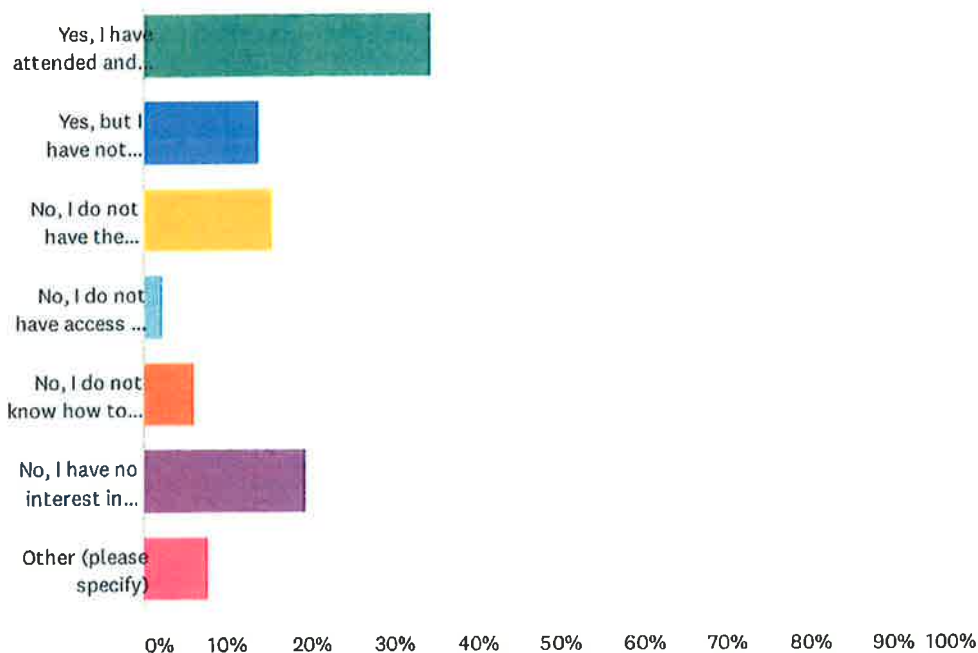
I feel comfortable with any trip that is offered  
 I feel comfortable only with local travel (day trips)  
 I do not feel comfortable with any travel at this time  
 I am not likely to travel again  
 Other (please specify)  
 TOTAL

### RESPONSES

8.29% 15  
 15.47% 28  
 60.22% 109  
 8.29% 15  
 7.73% 14  
 181

## Q7 Are you able to participate in the Colchester Senior Center's Virtual Programs?

Answered: 174 Skipped: 11



### ANSWER CHOICES

Yes, I have attended and I enjoy them

Yes, but I have not attended any programs because they are not appealing to me

No, I do not have the necessary technology at home (computer, tablet, smart phone)

No, I do not have access to the internet at home

No, I do not know how to sign in to the Virtual Programs, but would be interested to learn

No, I have no interest in participating in Virtual Programs

Other (please specify)

TOTAL

### RESPONSES

34.48% 60

13.79% 24

15.52% 27

2.30% 4

6.32% 11

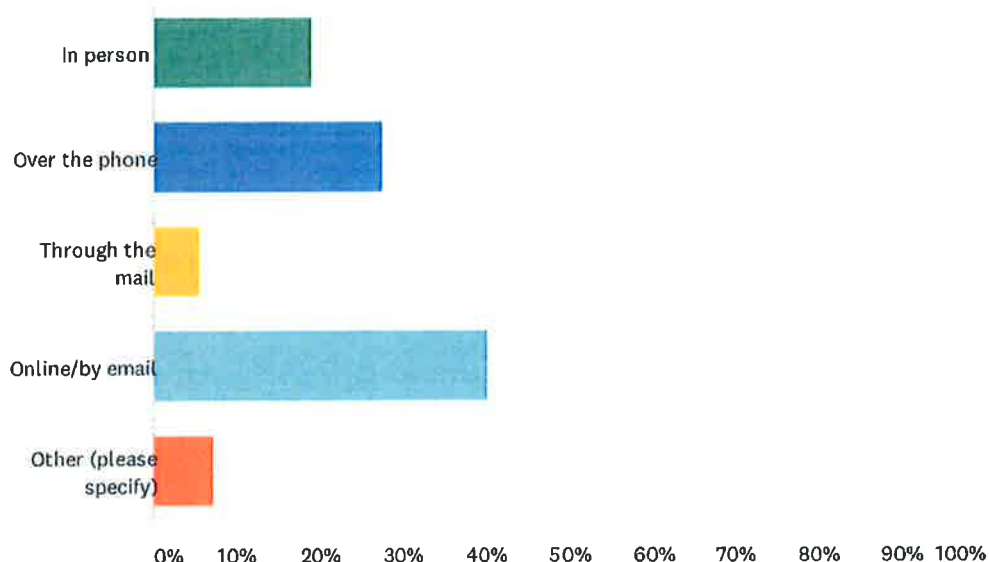
19.54% 34

8.05% 14

174

## Q8 Registration will be required for all of our programs when we reopen. How would you prefer to register for programs?

Answered: 178 Skipped: 7



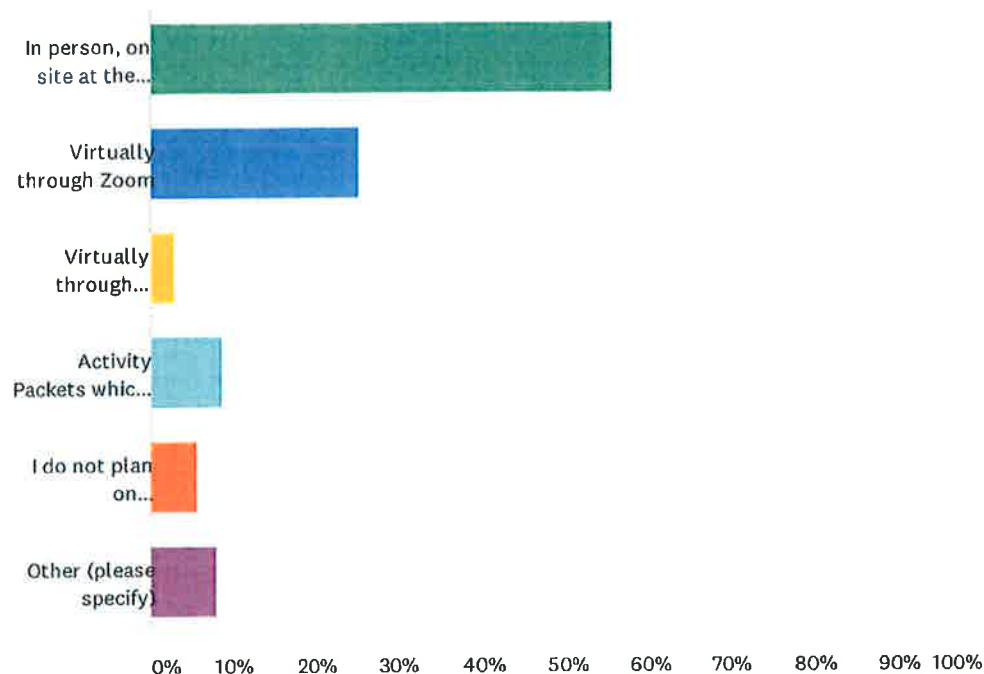
### ANSWER CHOICES

### RESPONSES

In person	19.10%	34
Over the phone	27.53%	49
Through the mail	5.62%	10
Online/by email	40.45%	72
Other (please specify)	7.30%	13
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>178</b>

## Q9 Upon reopening, which way would you prefer to participate in selected programs? (check all that apply)

Answered: 174 Skipped: 11



### ANSWER CHOICES

### RESPONSES

In person, on site at the senior center	55.75%	97
Virtually through Zoom	25.29%	44
Virtually through Conference Call	2.87%	5
Activity Packets which I can complete by myself at home	8.62%	15
I do not plan on participating in anything once the senior center reopens	5.75%	10
Other (please specify)	8.05%	14
Total Respondents: 174		

**Q10 Please leave any final comments, thoughts, concerns or questions you have for us:**

Answered: 64   Skipped: 121