

Commission on Aging
September 14, 2020 – Regular Meeting
ZOOM Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Marjorie Mlodzinski, Treasurer Roberta Avery, Nan Wasniewski, Linda Pasternak, Jean Stawicki,

MEMBERS ABSENT: Gerrie Transue, Sandy Gaetano.

OTHERS PRESENT: Board of Education Liaison Mary Tomasi, Board of Selectmen Liaison Rosemary Coyle, Senior Center Director Patty Watts.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Marjorie Mlodzinski called the Regular Meeting to order at 8:31 am.

2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Mlodzinski led the members in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. CITIZENS' COMMENTS

No comments were received.

4. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

No additions were requested.

5. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF JULY 13, 2020 MINUTES

Motion by: R. Avery

to approve the July 13, 2020, minutes with corrections to Item 9.1 Election results – G. Transue was elected Corresponding Secretary and to Item 10 - The Commission Membership is seven members and two alternates.

Second by: N. Wasniewski.

Vote: Unanimous to approve with corrections.

6. FIANCIAL REPORTS

6.1 CoA

Treasurer R. Avery reported \$416.26 in the CoA and \$300.00 In the Printing & Publications Line Item.

6.2. Senior Center

Director of Senior Services Patti Watts presented the following report. Due to the Center being closed, no revenue was received.

Transportation Report for August 2020

Daily Transportation	\$0.00	\$0.00 Total
Trips	\$0.00	\$0.00
Combined Total		\$0.00

Year to Date \$2623.11
No deposits made at this time

RECEIVED
09/15/2020
2020 SEP 15 AM 8:47
TOWN CLERK
CARY E. FURMAN

7. CHAIR REPORT

Chair Mlodzinski is a member of the Long-Term Recovery Committee and noted that 1009 responses were received from the Resident Survey and 20 responses from the Business Survey to date. The results will be on the Town Website soon as the committee is still processing how to analyze this information. This week's meeting is on Zoom at 5:00 pm.

A Diversity Committee has recently been formed chaired by Selectman Denise Turner. R. Avery is a member. The Committee is expected to make a recommendation to the First Selectmen on wants and/or needs of the community.

Mel's Creamery is sponsoring a fundraiser where a portion of the proceeds from the sale of ice cream on September 14, 2020, will go to the Senior Center.

The Russell Mercer Senior Center and Healthy Living Collective in Hebron is hosting a five week Virtual Living Mastery Program beginning October 13, from 9am – 10am at no charge.

The Town Clerk is requesting an updated member list. Any changes please notify the committee clerk.

The October CoA meeting will be on Tuesday, October 13, 2020.

8. DIRECTOR OF SENIOR SERVICES REPORT

See attached report.

9. OLD BUSINESS

9.1 Senior Center Building Committee

Chair Mlodzinski said the Committee is working on the exterior design for the 14,500 square foot, one-story building. There are several multi-purpose rooms in the design that will also be available for community use. The design plans are on the Town website. There is a Special Board of Selectmen meeting on September 15, 2020, at 6:30 pm to discuss hiring a company to present the information to the community prior to the referendum. At this time, no groups are meeting and it would be difficult to present the project to the public.

9.2 Norton Park Committee

N. Wasniewski, Vice Chair of the Norton Park Committee, reported that the bridge near the site is in place but work on the bridge has not been completed to date. When the bridge is finished, work will be started at the park site. It is hoped that the park site will be landscaped well enough to be used by the public and amenities will be added in a second phase.

Fundraising flyers are being distributed and are available on the Town website. A public forum is being planned for a Sunday afternoon in October at the Fish & Game Club on Amston Road. A Power Point presentation will be followed with a question and answer period.

9.3 Senior Center Resource Guide

Chair Mlodzinski said J. Stawicki, R. Avery and L. Paternak met on August 12 to update the guide and R. Avery has completed input of the information. M. Mlodzinski is reviewing the updates and the Resource Guide should be ready for printing in October.

9.4 Reopening of Senior Center

Director Watts is following State of Connecticut guidelines for reopening the Senior Center. There will be limitations to the programs, and the State is still advising 65+ to stay home. The tentative opening date is October 13. Some centers are not opening until January.

10. COMMISSION MEMBERSHIP

The Commission has a full membership of seven but has two alternat positions open.

11. CITIZENS' COMMENTS

No comments received.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by: R. Avery
to adjourn the meeting.

Second by: N. Wasniewski.

Vote: Unanimous to adjourn.

Chair Mlodzinski adjourned this meeting at 9:28 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Jane Slade
Clerk

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 1st, 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 1st 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 21st. Our tentative reopening date is scheduled for October 13th, 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.

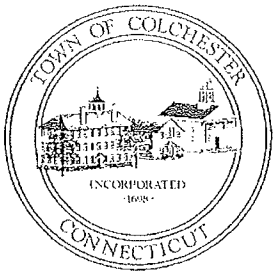
Our Program Coordinator position is currently vacant. The position has been posted on the Town website and will remain active until September 25th, at which time we will be seeking to hire. In the interim, I am covering and planning all programs, developing the monthly newsletter and keeping all activity 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 30th at 6:30 p.m. (rain date will be October 7th, 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)



Town of Colchester, Connecticut

95 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

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

Transportation Itemization for August 2020

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

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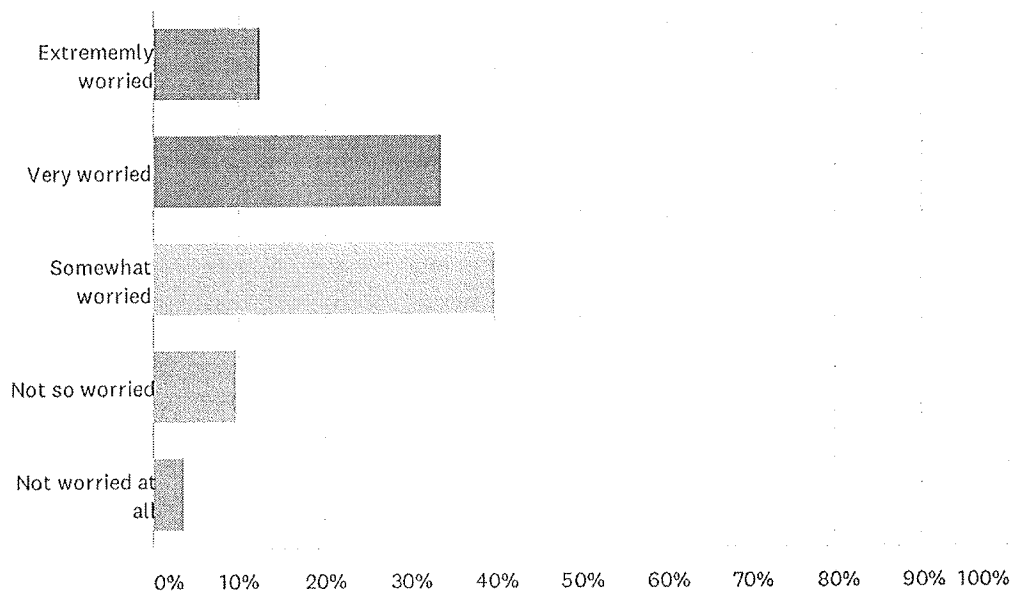
Combined Total		\$0.00
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Year to Date Total		\$2623.11
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*No Deposits made at this time.

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

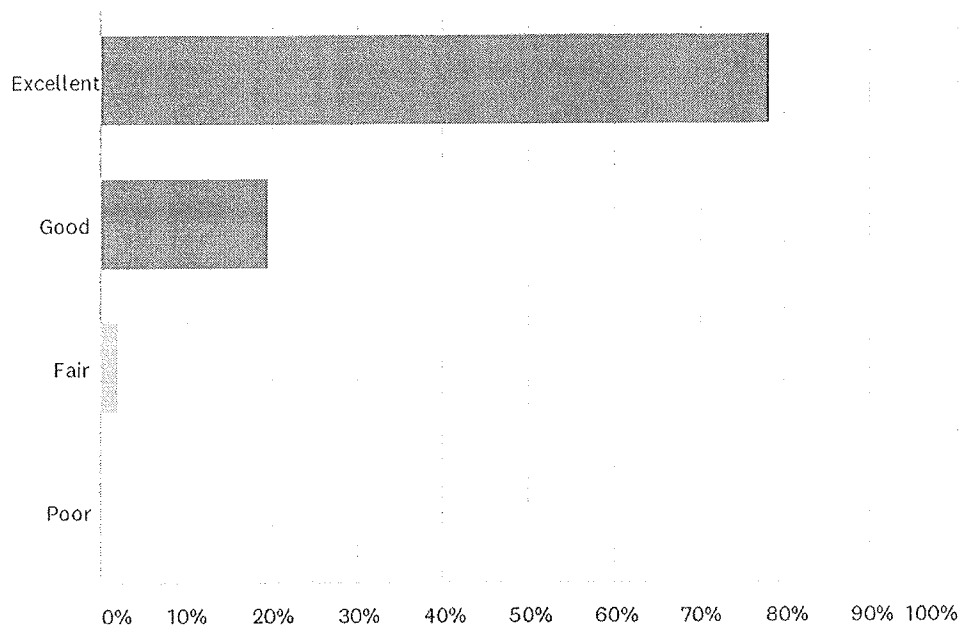
Answered: 184 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Extremely worried	12.50%	23
Very worried	33.70%	62
Somewhat worried	40.22%	74
Not so worried	9.78%	18
Not worried at all	3.80%	7
TOTAL		184

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

Answered: 184 Skipped: 1



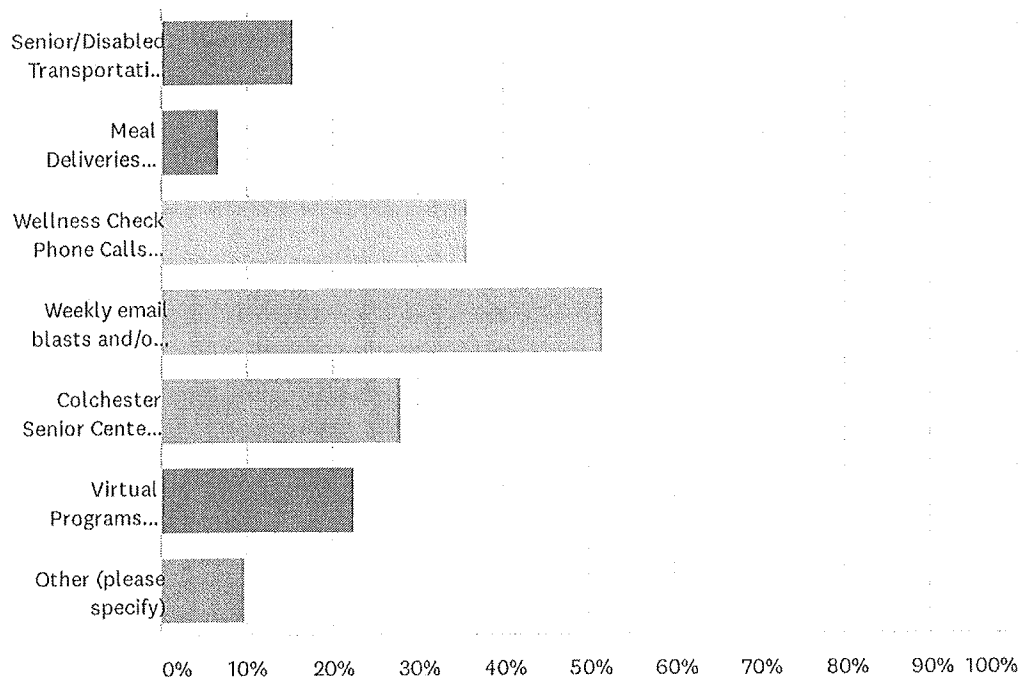
ANSWER CHOICES

RESPONSES

Excellent	78.26%	144
Good	19.57%	36
Fair	2.17%	4
Poor	0.00%	0
TOTAL		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

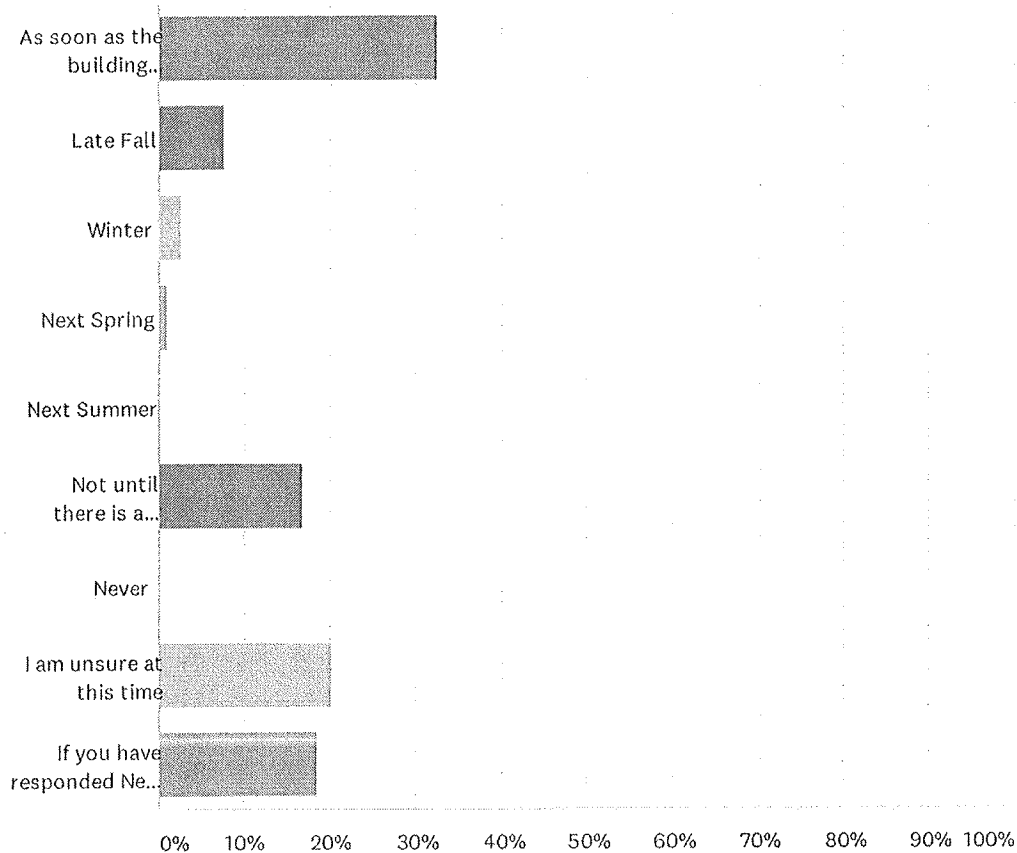
RESPONSES

Senior/Disabled Transportation Services	15.38%	28
Meal Deliveries (Meals on Wheels or Community Cafe)	6.59%	12
Wellness Check Phone Calls from CSC Staff	35.71%	65
Weekly email blasts and/or robocalls from CSC Director	51.65%	94
Colchester Senior Center Monthly Newsletter	28.02%	51
Virtual Programs through Zoom or Conference Call	22.53%	41
Other (please specify)	9.89%	18

Total Respondents: 182

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

Answered: 182 Skipped: 3



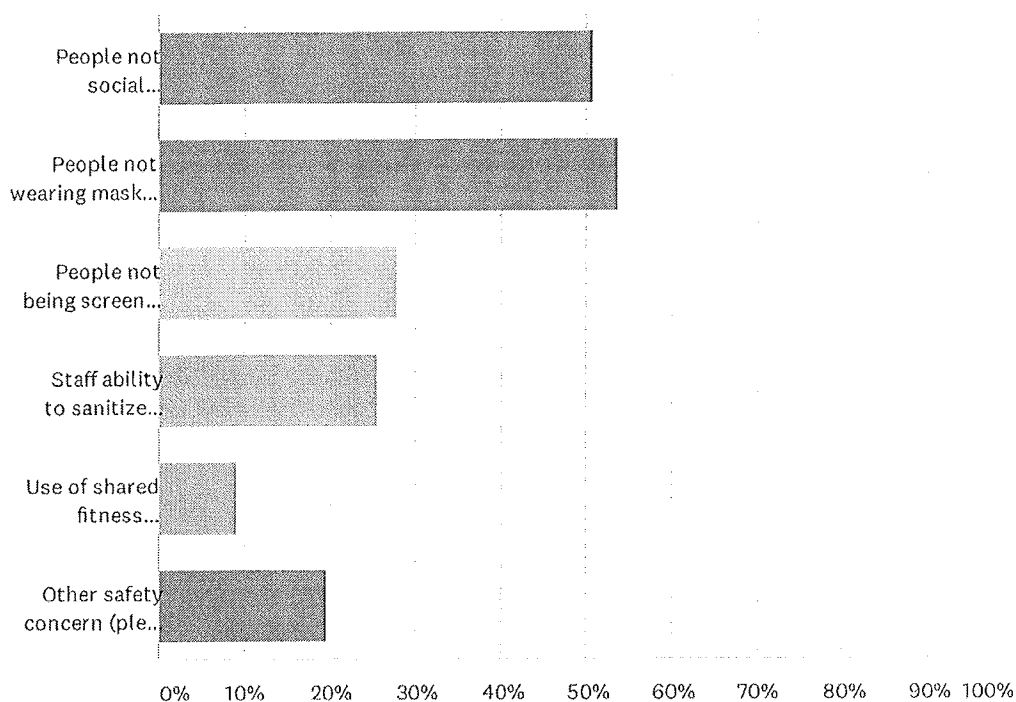
ANSWER CHOICES

RESPONSES

As soon as the building reopens to the public	32.42%	59
Late Fall	7.69%	14
Winter	2.75%	5
Next Spring	1.10%	2
Next Summer	0.00%	0
Not until there is a vaccine widely available	17.03%	31
Never	0.00%	0
I am unsure at this time	20.33%	37
If you have responded Never or Unsure, please tell us your concerns:	18.68%	34
TOTAL		182

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

Answered: 173 Skipped: 12



ANSWER CHOICES

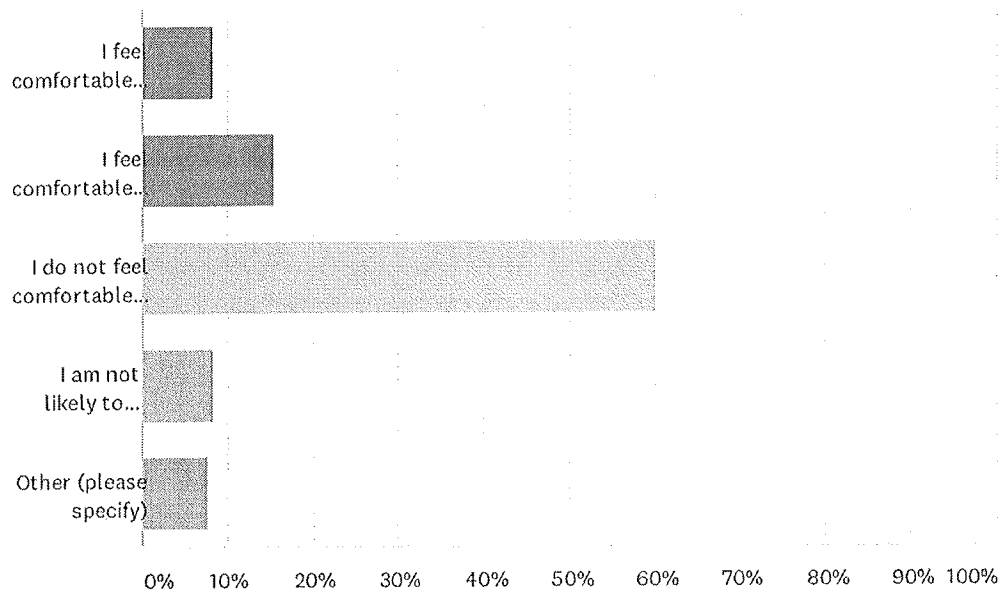
RESPONSES

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



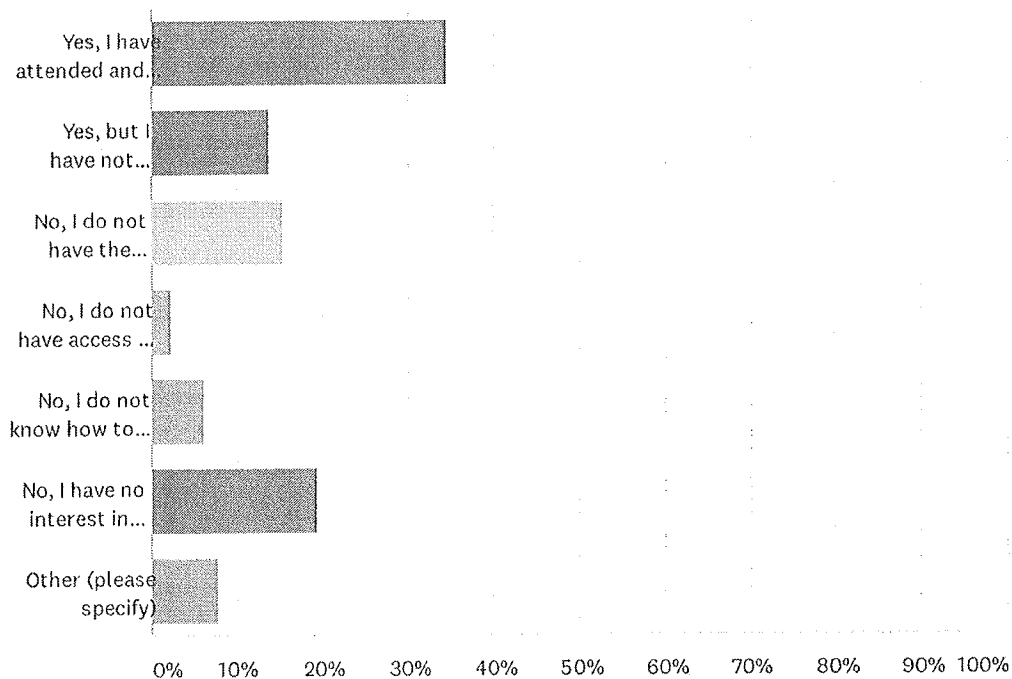
ANSWER CHOICES

RESPONSES

I feel comfortable with any trip that is offered	8.29%	15
I feel comfortable only with local travel (day trips)	15.47%	28
I do not feel comfortable with any travel at this time	60.22%	109
I am not likely to travel again	8.29%	15
Other (please specify)	7.73%	14
TOTAL		181

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

Answered: 174 Skipped: 11



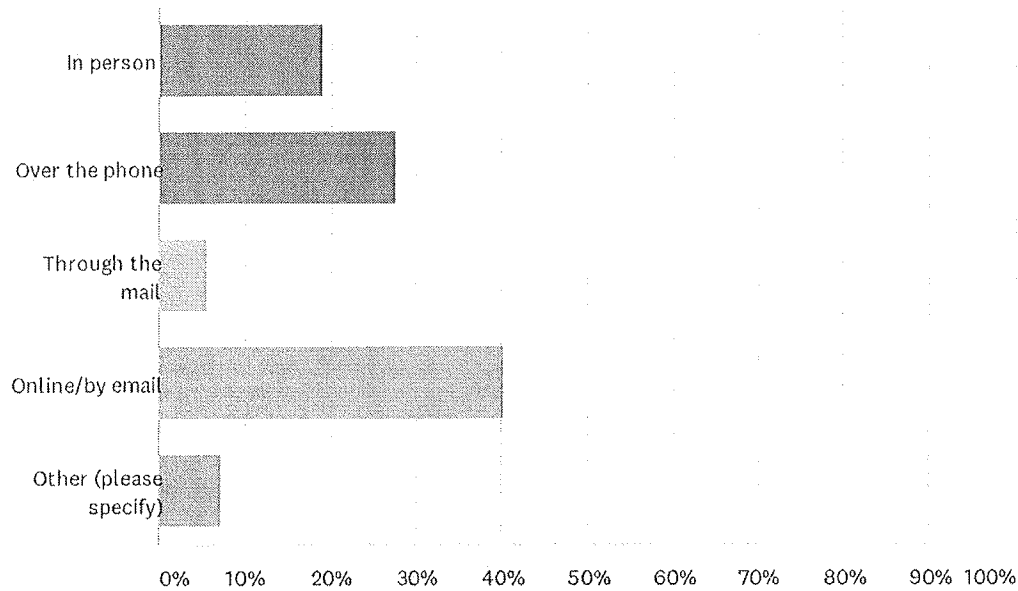
ANSWER CHOICES

RESPONSES

Yes, I have attended and I enjoy them	34.48%	60
Yes, but I have not attended any programs because they are not appealing to me	13.79%	24
No, I do not have the necessary technology at home (computer, tablet, smart phone)	15.52%	27
No, I do not have access to the internet at home	2.30%	4
No, I do not know how to sign in to the Virtual Programs, but would be interested to learn	6.32%	11
No, I have no interest in participating in Virtual Programs	19.54%	34
Other (please specify)	8.05%	14
TOTAL		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



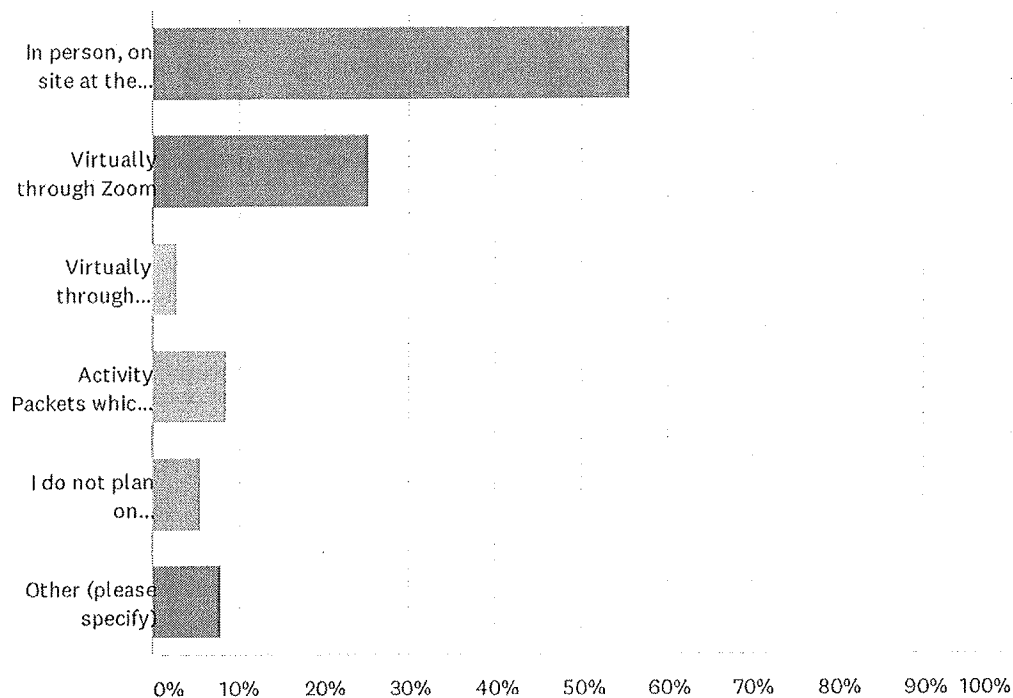
ANSWER CHOICES

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
TOTAL		178

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