

Correspondence – received through 8:30 am for tonight's meeting (05/06)

**From:** Joan Cahill <jcahillrn@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 5, 2020 5:08 PM  
**To:** Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>  
**Subject:**

I support the 1.4 percent increase in the educational budget. To decrease more would be harmful to Colchester students. Thanks, Joan Cahill, 122 Prospect Hill Road.

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From: Karen Romero <krersr@comcast.net>  
Sent: Tuesday, May 5, 2020 5:09 PM  
To: Robert Tarlov  
Subject: Budget

Keep to a 0% mill increase!  
Support our first responders!  
Support our teachers and kids!

Thanks,

Ed Romero

From: Karen Romero <krersr@comcast.net>  
Sent: Tuesday, May 5, 2020 5:03 PM  
To: Robert Tarlov  
Subject: Budget

Do No Harm!  
No more cuts in Education!  
Keep FD & EMT positions!  
Hold at 0% Mill increase!

Thanks,  
Karen Romero

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**From:** Tricia Heldmann <theldmann@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 5, 2020 4:54 PM  
**To:** Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>; theldmann@comcast.net <theldmann@comcast.net>; First Selectman <selectman@colchesterct.gov>; brian.t.smith199@gmail.com <brian.t.smith199@gmail.com>  
**Subject:** Colchester Budget Meetings

Hello All,

I have voted Democratic most of my life, indeed, I worked last fall to get all the wonderful people elected to the Colchester town positions. I was in favor of all the great things proposed.

Then along came the pandemic COVID-19. Back in the fall we had no warning that this thing was coming and it has slammed us all. We have all had to experience some belt tightening.

Being a retiree with no income but SS and some investments, I need to budget pretty tightly. As a Senior Citizen on a limited budget and past the age of 70-1/2 I am required to take a minimum disbursement from my investments, which decreases the basis of the investments. As we all have learned, the investment markets have plunged and my investments are now 20-40% less. My required minimum disbursement is what I use to pay real estate and motor vehicle taxes in Colchester. With that much less income I will have a tough time paying the amount of taxes I owed LAST year, never mind any increases.

Along with my situation consider those who no longer have a job/ income, or who are on reduced hours/income. How do you expect them to pay any increase, let alone just the taxes as they stood in the past?

To increase taxes beyond what was the previous budget in not just rude, it is mean and cruel.

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**From:** Sheila Horvitz <sshesq@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 5, 2020 4:54 PM  
**To:** Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>  
**Subject:** Fw: Budget

Dear Board of Finance and Board of Selectman,

As a resident of Colchester for over 50 years, i have seen Colchester grow and progress when administrations were forward-looking, progressive yet prudent about how to prioritize spending.

We want to keep Colchester as a progressive town, improving our services, not just maintaining them - so we can enhance the quality of life - attract businesses and keep people here who will contribute to the vitality of the community.

Our First Selectman has the right idea. Yes - we are in a crisis - yes - we want fiscal responsibility - but not at the expense of our town going backwards. We cannot fall behind in education and town services.

So I implore you: Please do not cut the Board of Education budget any more because the result will devastate our schools - and the excellence of our schools is paramount - our parents and children count on Colchester moving toward excellence - not backwards.

The health and safety of our citizens is paramount - and please keep the two firefighter/EMT positions in our town budget.

Fear and negativity must never drown out courage, positivity and the power to spend prudently and wisely to make Colchester a better place which will in turn - bring quality of life and financial rewards.

Sincerely,

Sheila S. Horvitz  
108 Jaffe Terrace  
Colchester, CT 06415

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**From:** Meaghan Kehoegreen <meaghanerin@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 5, 2020 3:44 PM  
**To:** Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>; boechair@colchesterct.gov <boechair@colchesterct.gov>  
**Subject:** Budget

Hello,

I am not sure that I will be able to attend tonight's meeting and wanted to let you know that I am in support of a small budget increase. We need to make sure that our town is able to get through this crisis and come out strong the other side. Our taxes pay for services that we depend on. A small increase will allow for us to continue to support everyone in town town as we get through this.

Meaghan Kehoegreen  
111 Park Ave  
Colchester CT

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**From:** John Malsbenden <malsbendenjohn336@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 5, 2020 12:57 PM  
**To:** Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>  
**Subject:** Budget

Rob,

Thanks for all of your works and time.

I frankly do not believe that there should be any more cuts to the Education. Such cuts will only put the future of our town in jeopardy. it is a bad bargain to mortgage the future for a short term gain in the present. I believe that the changes proposed last week (minus the items relating to the Old Bacon Acdy) as presented by the Superintendent of Schools should be adopted as proposed. There should be no "give backs" by any town employee and the budget should not be balanced on their backs.

John Malsbenden

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**From:** jmcnair3@comcast.net <jmcnair3@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 5, 2020 12:34 PM  
**To:** Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>  
**Subject:** A word of caution

Rob,

My recollection is:

2007 the voter drove the 2007-2008 budget to a zero mill rate increase after a long and hard fought series of referendum. Interestingly enough even with a no tax increase, over \$500K went into the general fund. About half was revenue and half was spending. This was in spite of the tax collections estimate being under stated by \$243K.

In 2008, the FS decided to have a no tax increase budget. The proposed 2008-2009 budget passed with a zero mill rate increase. Unfortunately, that fiscal year was one of the few where money had to come back from the GFB to cover a \$200K short fall. Like always, the spending side was favorable to the tune of \$177K. The issue was the revenues being over estimated across the board. There was a \$373K short fall. I kept hearing rumors the First Selectman put pressure on the tax collector and department heads to make the revenue numbers as rosey as possible. The speculation was rosey revenue numbers avoided spending cuts. I have no proof beyond hearsay and that being one of the few years where revenue estimates were rosey as opposed to conservative.

I know the BoF has little say over the revenue numbers. I'd hate to think this year our First Selectman and our CFO would pressure our department heads and tax collector to offer rosey numbers and use the GFB to cover shortfalls later. Not saying it is happening just offering taking into consideration the possibility when deciding on approving spending for the next fiscal year.

Be well to all,

James D. McNair III  
Colchester, CT

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**From:** jmcnair3@comcast.net <jmcnair3@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 5, 2020 12:14 PM  
**To:** Robert Tarlov <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>  
**Cc:** First Selectman <selectman@colchesterct.gov>  
**Subject:** Rob: time for a change?

Rob,

It seem ludicrous to me that the BoF spends so much time reviewing line items for Town spending in detail yet gets no feedback about multi-million contracts. I know some people agree with me. Does the BoF have the authority to at least require being debriefed on the costs change impact?

Thanks,

James

**From:** First Selectman <selectman@colchesterct.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 5, 2020 9:08 AM  
**To:** jmcnair3@comcast.net  
**Subject:** RE: Are old contracts on our website?

Hi James

Moving forward, HR will be the primary lead. I did the Police and I am co-leading the Library. But the Public Works contract, I will participate when needed, although I will be active in the pre and post meeting discussions.

The money in the NR section is set aside for the Library and the Public Works contract and we based it on some guestimates, but it should be close. I cannot go into further detail than that at this time.

Police contract was voted on and approved unanimously at the BOS. I was not instructed or requested to bring it to the BOF. I will check to see what the past practice is. It is my understanding that BOF does not get involved in the operations, only the annual budget process. I am under the impression that only the current contracts are posted. I will check on that as well. There are disadvantages to being newly elected...and some advantages. I plan to have a very detailed transition to the person who follows me, most of it in writing. We are missing some infrastructure that really would have helped around processes and practice. But we will get there. I have been keeping notes...

Mary

**From:** [jmcnair3@comcast.net](mailto:jmcnair3@comcast.net) <[jmcnair3@comcast.net](mailto:jmcnair3@comcast.net)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, May 5, 2020 8:49 AM

**To:** First Selectman <[selectman@colchesterct.gov](mailto:selectman@colchesterct.gov)>

**Cc:** Robert Tarlov <[BOFChair@colchesterct.gov](mailto:BOFChair@colchesterct.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: Are old contracts on our website?

Mary,

Never mind looking for old contracts. I forgot I have them.

Curious about a few things however.

Who is the primary lead in negotiations, you or the new HR position? Both sections listed accomplishments.

For pending contracts, I guess that the \$32K in the HR section is for public works and library. How confident are you that the number is not too high or low.

Did the BoF get debriefed on the police contract for the financial impact for the duration of the contract? If so, was a summary document created for them?

When will the police contract be posted now that you have finished negotiations?

Thanks,

James

**From:** First Selectman <[selectman@colchesterct.gov](mailto:selectman@colchesterct.gov)>

**Sent:** Monday, May 4, 2020 5:57 PM

**To:** James McNair <[jdmac3ct@gmail.com](mailto:jdmac3ct@gmail.com)>

**Subject:** Re: Are old contracts on our website?

Hi James

I believe only the current contract is online. I would think we have them, should be keeping them. Let me look. I have not had a reason to look in the past, but I would think it would be required that they be kept. Can you give me a couple of days if necessary? Might be sooner if I have some time to look.

Mary

Mary Bylone

First Selectman, Colchester

127 Norwich Avenue

Colchester, CT 06415  
860-537-7220 office  
860-861-2727 cell

**From:** James McNair <[jdmac3ct@gmail.com](mailto:jdmac3ct@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 4, 2020 5:52 PM  
**To:** First Selectman <[selectman@colchesterct.gov](mailto:selectman@colchesterct.gov)>  
**Subject:** Are old contracts on our website?

Mary,

I have some ideas to elevate awareness about town contracts and negotiations.

Are previous town contracts (police, fire, et. Al) in pdf format available in website archives?

If not is it possible to get emailed preferably without foi red tape?

Thx and be well

James

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**From:** VINCENT ROMANO <[vinromano@comcast.net](mailto:vinromano@comcast.net)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 5, 2020 10:31 AM  
**To:** Robert Tarlov <[BOFChair@colchesterct.gov](mailto:BOFChair@colchesterct.gov)>  
**Cc:** colchestervoter@gmail.com <[colchestervoter@gmail.com](mailto:colchestervoter@gmail.com)>  
**Subject:** Decisions that Concern this Town's Budgets and Spending

Gentlemen and Ladies,

Governor Lamont has given you the power to by-pass this Town's Charter and approve the budgets as presented to you. All in the name of safety, but to me this by passes the process and supersedes the last line of power limitation, the voter.

When this all started, I mean the pandemic and limitations on our lives, I thought that everyone involved in developing the budgets would simply leave them at the current levels, no changes, until things returned to normal. I would have been agreeable with that. You would have plenty of time to draft budgets, and diligently with how we come out of this financially. But you all went ahead with increases and confronted opposition. What did you expect?

After two revisions, the budgets are reduced. My sense is that we maintain last year's budgets as is until the voters can decide. I think that with the revisions you would get voter approval, but if you don't even that small increase without a vote will linger in the minds of many voters in this town. I doubt Mary Blyone will prevail.

Thank you and hoping you make the wise decision.

Regards,

*Vincent Romano*

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