

First Selectman

From: Michael Dubreuil <dubreuil@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, August 4, 2023 12:18 PM
To: First Selectman; Rosemary Coyle; Deborah Bates; Denise Turner; Jason LaChapelle
Subject: ARPA Correspondence

Selectmen,
Please read the below message and include it in correspondence for the August 7, 2023 meeting.

For transparency and accountability, Selectman LaChapelle's ARPA direct cash assistance plan deserves a direct up or down vote from the Board of Selectmen. This is the best option for Colchester and has been implemented by many municipalities across the United States. From the city of Cambridge, Massachusetts: **"Direct cash assistance is an effective anti-poverty strategy and empowers residents to decide how to best meet their financial needs and goals."**

There's approximately \$300k of ARPA dollars left and no other defined plan on the table. For the past two years any citizen, selectman, or representative from Social Services could have presented a plan before the Board of Selectmen. No one came forward other than Selectman LaChapelle... it's time to act on his proposal. It's not the time for obfuscation with other imagined plans or opportunities. It's a straightforward question: do you want to help the citizens with direct cash assistance or not?

Selectman LaChapelle's proposed program would give households up to \$1,000 in direct cash assistance. We know the dollar amount could be reduced if there is significant interest. The reality is that any amount, however small, could help a family. Maybe they haven't been out to eat in years. They could use \$100 and take their family out to eat at a local restaurant. How does a program through social services achieve that?

I have reviewed the emails in correspondence between Selectmen LaChapelle and UHY. There seems to be a lot of fear mongering over direct cash assistance. There's vague mention to reports which can be found on a Pandemic Oversight website. I reviewed the website and was unable to find a report pertinent to the dollar amounts we're discussing (\$1,000 or less in direct cash assistance to a household). UHY indicated they couldn't speak to the Springfield direct cash assistance program because they were not a client. Does UHY have experience with any clients providing direct cash assistance through ARPA?

I do not support a program that is so narrowly tailored that a person must actually be delinquent on a service to get assistance. I also do not support a program where a person is required to reveal detailed personal private information to social services. Many citizens may avoid this ARPA program if required to seek assistance from social services. Part of the intent of ARPA's direct cash assistance is to avoid involving public social service agencies. We should aim for collecting the least amount of information required by ARPA. We shouldn't make citizens jump through hoops that we didn't make businesses.

We know the governing documents of ARPA have enumerated direct cash assistance as an allowable use of ARPA dollars. To be clear, we know a direct cash assistance plan is viable because other municipalities have implemented it.

The city of [Springfield, Massachusetts has implemented a direct cash assistance plan](#). Citizens of Springfield submit their cash assistance applications to a third party, Public Partnerships, LLC (PPL), for review. On 7/23/2023 [the city put out a news article](#) indicating they are still processing applications. In other words, the need never stopped and continues to this day.

The city of [Cambridge, Massachusetts has implemented a groundbreaking program called Rise Up](#). Households are receiving \$500 per month for 18 months.

The city of [St. Louis, Missouri has implemented a direct cash assistance plan](#). Their program is administered by the United Way.

The city of [Takoma Park, Maryland has implemented a direct cash assistance program](#). Their program will “provide a one-time, lump-sum payment per eligible household in the amount of \$1,000.”

The city of [Kenmore, Washington has implemented a direct cash assistance program](#). Their program provided each head of household with \$2,000.

I could continue Googling and provide many more municipalities who have chosen to help struggling residents through direct cash assistance. The question is, are you willing to?

Sincerely,
Michael Dubreuil
Woodbine Road

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First Selectman

From: Rybacki, Glenn G. <GRybacki@pullcom.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 26, 2023 12:10 PM
To: Rosemary Coyle
Cc: First Selectman; Denise Turner; Deborah Bates; Jason LaChapelle; Andrea Migliaccio; Art Shilosky; Tony Tarnowski; Mary Williamson; Barry Bernabe; Gayle Furman; Julie Shilosky; Jayme LaGrega
Subject: RE: Senior Center Referendum for additional appropriation

Rosemary:

See my answers below. I hope this helps.

Regards,

Glenn

Glenn G. Rybacki, Esq
Pullman & Comley LLC
T 860 424 4391 • grybacki@pullcom.com

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From: Rosemary Coyle <rcoyle@colchesterct.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, July 26, 2023 10:53 AM
To: Rybacki, Glenn G. <GRybacki@pullcom.com>
Cc: First Selectman <selectman@colchesterct.gov>; Denise Turner <dturner@colchesterct.gov>; Deborah Bates <dBates@colchesterct.gov>; Jason LaChapelle <jLaChapelle@colchesterct.gov>; Andrea Migliaccio <BOFChair@colchesterct.gov>; Art Shilosky <aShilosky@colchesterct.gov>; Tony Tarnowski <tar51214@att.net>; Mary Williamson <mwilliamson@colchesterct.gov>; Barry Bernabe <bbernabe@muniadvisors.com>; Gayle Furman <townclerk@colchesterct.gov>; Julie Shilosky <jshilosky@colchesterct.gov>; Jayme LaGrega <jlagrega@colchesterCT.gov>
Subject: Senior Center Referendum for additional appropriation
Importance: High

Good morning, Glenn,

A meeting has been proposed for August 14th or 15th to address the SC. I think it's important that we all understand the facts.

Due to escalating costs, as we discussed in October of 2022, the SC project must go out for approval of an additional supplemental appropriation by the Town. We all agree on this.

That amount of that supplemental appropriation is \$1.5 million. Of that \$1.5 million, \$575,000 will come from the Bendas memorial gift to the senior center, \$32,691 will come from State SC ARPA funds, and the balance of \$892,309 shortfall to be funded by bonding or whatever mechanism the Town chooses. For the purposes of clarification of the bonding process and information, let's consider the \$892,309 shortfall to be additional bonding.

When we went to referendum on November 16, 2021, the question asked was to appropriate \$9.5 million for costs related to the SC Building Project and issue bonds or notes not to exceed \$9.5 million dollars. (All original referendum information is in the attached document.)

The following are my questions for clarification:

1. When we passed the referendum on November 16, 2021, did the Town of Colchester approve bonding up to \$9.5 million?

The resolution that was approved authorized the issuance of \$9,500,000 bonds or notes.

2. In December of 2021, when we received the state bonding grant of \$2.5 million, did that modify the approval of the referendum to only bonding up to \$7 million (\$9.5 million - \$2.5 million) without additional approval?

Per the resolution that was approved, the amount of bonds or notes issued is reduced by the amount of grants received for the project. In this instance, the amount of bonds or notes that the Town could issue would be reduced from \$9,500,000 to \$7,000,000 by the grant received for the project.

3. In order for the additional \$892,309 shortfall to be bonded, would we continue to follow the same basic timeline or are there different steps to be taken? (Original timeline in the attached document)

Amendments, additions or other changes to the original authorization must follow the same approval steps as the original authorization.

4. Are there any steps that we don't need to do this second time around?

While the same approval steps are taken, Planning and Zoning may be omitted if there are no changes to the project scope..

5. What does it mean for 30 clear days, i.e.. What type of days are excluded?

Thirty clear days is period between the date the notice for the referendum is published and posted, and the date the referendum is held. You count all calendar days and exclude the publication/posting date and the date of the referendum.

Thank you for your assistance in clarifying all of these questions.

Sincerely,
Rosemary Coyle
Selectwoman

I have included the Town Clerk and Registrars in this email so they may assist us in planning a timeline to schedule a special Town Meeting and Referendum on the Senior Center.

6.

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First Selectman

From: Justin Ford <justinmford81@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, July 22, 2023 2:26 PM
To: First Selectman; Rosemary Coyle; Denise Turner; Deborah Bates; Jason LaChapelle
Subject: Fwd: [Colchester CT] FOI Requests (Sent by Justin Ford, JustinMFord81@gmail.com)

Since I emailed my concerns to each of you, I wanted to be transparent that I have had further dialogue with Andreas. I appreciate the responses from our FS, but believe my overarching concern is still valid. I would like you to address it at the next Board meeting and ensure processes, procedures, and accountability is iron clad for future citizen requests and communication. I don't know what the authority of the board is itself or if this process is owned by our FS office exclusively. Either way, I am tired of Colchester Tax dollars going to legal fees for items that are avoidable. To me, this is an example of a process that could be improved to prevent this from happening in the future.

Thank you all for your time, energy and understanding. Not excluding Andreas in that statement, but I want to provide extra thanks to the 4 who represent us as unpaid officials. I can see the amount of time you invest to represent all of Colchester as civic volunteers. It is recognized and appreciated even if we may disagree at times.

Enjoy this wonderful weekend as its the best weather we've had yet this summer. To that end, please don't feel like I'm expecting an immediate response from any of you. Furthermore, thank you Andreas for your prompt response.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Justin Ford** <justinmford81@gmail.com>
Date: Sat, Jul 22, 2023, 1:44 PM
Subject: Re: [Colchester CT] FOI Requests (Sent by Justin Ford, JustinMFord81@gmail.com)
To: First Selectman <selectman@colchesterct.gov>
Cc: Franchesca Brown <fbrown@colchesterct.gov>, Mary Jane Slade <mjslade@colchesterct.gov>

Thank you for the follow up.

I understand shit happens and that my request is dependent upon other parties who work for our government and potentially our legal counsel.

What you wrote here was a perfect response. You set an expectation on delivery, provided context on the potential timeline for reason and responded. If items are going to spam and it's known to happen for the FOI request mailbox, then I would suggest we update our process to search for valid emails in the spam folder every 3 business days(or IT security system that makes these decisions amd puts them in quarantine). As stated, we have 4 days to respond legally. My request was for legal expenses incurred by out town government for the purpose of understanding how we reduce them moving forward. As such, I do not believe knowing that emails go into spam and not fixing the process would be a valid response legally. This suggestion is to not only ensure I get a response, but that we don't spend friviously for legal expenses that are avoidable. I have worked in IT for over 20 years, including the technology around email, IT security around email systems, and legal requirements for Fortune 100 companies. I know how these systems work at basic and complex levels, how to adjust rules on said systems to ensure there is no false quarantining and how archival rules/etc work on the back and front ends. I would be willing to help your IT staff to produce a process that ensures this doesn't happen again on the front, backend of the system and/or at the people level.

I hope this response is well received and you understand my intent on the suggestions laid out.

Thanks again,

Justin

On Sat, Jul 22, 2023, 1:20 PM First Selectman <selectman@colchesterct.gov> wrote:

Hi Justin,

The office has an obligation to acknowledge requests within 4 business days of such requests. I don't know if the office missed your initial request or it went into spam, which has happened in the past with other requests, but it was formally acknowledged when you came that one day to the office. Updates on requests come from the office when the package is ready. I can tell you that I was waiting for some information to be sent my way to close out your request. I hope to have your FOI request completed earliest end of next week with latest by the beginning of August. Please recognize that some of the information you are looking for is dependent on other parties.

Sincerely,

Andreas

From: Justin Ford <justinmford81@gmail.com>

Sent: Saturday, July 22, 2023 12:56 PM

To: First Selectman <selectman@colchesterct.gov>

Cc: Franchesca Brown <fbrown@colchesterct.gov>; Mary Jane Slade <mjslade@colchesterct.gov>

Subject: Re: [Colchester CT] FOI Requests (Sent by Justin Ford, JustinMFord81@gmail.com)

Andreas, I sent another email on June 28th asking for an update. No response.

My question to you is what is acceptable for responses from your office?

I haven't received a single response from any of my emails. I had drive to your office to even gain recognition of my request.

Since you're the town CEO, I'm assuming you have set some expectation on communication from your office and the government officials that work on behalf of citizens like myself. This is outside even the FOI formal process.

Do you think NO response to any of my emails is acceptable, what is your expectation and what will you be doing to ensure this doesn't happen again to any citizen?

By the way, I appreciate the prompt response and wish I didn't need to correspond directly with strong(er) language directly to you and board members to get a response.

Regards,

Justin

On Sat, Jul 22, 2023, 12:39 PM First Selectman <selectman@colchesterct.gov> wrote:

Hi Justin,

The request related to Mr. McNair was related to the registrar of voter's office, not the FS office. You came in person over your request, and it was documented in our system by Mary Jane Slade. Our office asked you if you wanted a receipt or anything in writing related to your request and you declined it. Your request has not been forgotten, and we hope to get it to you soon. We appreciate your patience.

Sincerely,

Andreas Bisbikos
First Selectman

Board of Selectmen,

I am writing this correspondence as a concerned citizen around FOI requests. I have witnessed that FOI requests and correspondence with our FS office is turned around quickly for certain individuals. However, I have submitted 4 emails to the FOI mailbox without any response beginning June 1st with subsequent followups June 8th, June 12th, and June 25th. I have screenshots of my gmail account filtered as evidence of this(attached). Unfortunately, I don't have all email addresses of our Board, so I am using the form to submit this concern. I will submit it to each of you individually since I don't know how they are received.

Let me also note that I physically walked into the FS office a couple weeks after my initial request. Our FS's assistant and the FS seemed surprised that it was overlooked. It was so hard to find my email that it took them about 30 seconds to find it and print it out. Andreas took that printout on his desk and stated "This is a good request, we'll get on it". To this date, I have still not received any formal response in email communication.

I know that you were previously keeping track of FOI requests as part of the Agenda, but that seems to have gone by the wayside unless I missed it on a couple meetings I haven't been able to attend. Please put this back on the agenda and question why a citizen can't get even a response that's required by CT statutes when others in town (like James McNair) receive responses immediately. Not only a response of receipt, but actual output and information regarding his requests. I use him as an example because there's a mountain of evidence that he gets his requests and responses

done almost immediately.

For an office that states transparency is king, it seems like this type of non response is a clear indication of favoritism by our FS office for purpose.

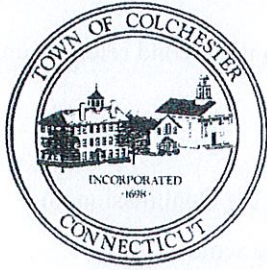
Best Regards,

Justin Ford

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Town of Colchester, Connecticut

127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

2023 JUL 24 PM 4: 06

Andreas Bisbikos, First Selectman

Board of Selectmen Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday, July 20th, 2023, at 7 PM

Hybrid: Town Hall - Meeting Room 1 & Via Zoom

Members Present: A. Bisbikos (First Selectman), D. Bates, R. Coyle, D. Turner, and J. LaChapelle
Also Present: J. Leone (Public Works Director)

1. Call to Order – Meeting called to order at 7:01 PM
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Correspondence
4. Citizens Comments
5. Consent Agenda
 - R. Coyle made a motion to remove the minutes of 7/6/23 and make them item 5.1 and re-letter as appropriate. 2nd by D. Bates. **Motion carried unanimously 5-0**
 - R. Coyle made a motion to move as Item E on the Consent Agenda to charge the Water & Sewer Commission with preparing a list of sites (ex. Splash pad) in which rate payers are subsidizing the use of water for town usage and make a recommendation to the BOS (Water Pollution Control Authority) on how to address these issues. 2nd by D. Turner. **Motion carried unanimously 5-0**
 - R. Coyle moved the Consent Agenda. 2nd by D. Bates. **Motion carried unanimously 5-0**
- 5.1 M
 - R. Coyle made a motion to amend the minutes of 7/6/23 to state R. Silberman spoke about his concern with connecting the field irrigation to the water supply. 2nd by D. Turner. **Motion carried unanimously 5-0**
6. Commission/Committee Interviews
 - Bruce Hayn was interviewed for the Colchester Blight Hearing Officer
 - Jeffrey Mastrianni was interviewed for the Fair Rent Commission
7. ARPA
 - J. Leone provided an update on various ARPA projects such as the Town Hall Roof, HVAC, the Police Station Expansion, Field Irrigation, the Fire Department paving, the Youth Center Roof, and the Water Towers.
8. Town and Board of Education Budgets
 - D. Turner made a motion to move the proposed Town budget of \$15,660,140 and the proposed Board of Education budget of \$43,979,351 to a Town Meeting to be held on Wednesday, August 2nd for 6:30 PM at Town Hall, 127 Norwich Avenue in Colchester, CT, and a Referendum to be held on Wednesday, August 9th from 6 AM to 8 PM at Town Hall, 127 Norwich Avenue in Colchester, CT. 2nd by R. Coyle. **Motion carried unanimously 5-0**

9. Citizens Comments

- M. Dubreuil commented on the interview process. M. Egan praised the work leading up to the second referendum

10. First Selectman's Report

11. Liaison Reports

- R. Coyle stated that the Agriculture Commission is working on a tax relief ordinance, that the Commission on Aging finished their resource guide, numbers were reported on meals on wheels and on the senior center membership, and that the Open Space is reviewing the town's open space plan.

12. Adjourn – D. Turner motioned to adjourn. 2nd by D. Bates. Meeting adjourned at 7:57 PM.

Minutes submitted by F. Brown

First Selectman

From: Carol Szymanski
Sent: Friday, July 28, 2023 10:13 AM
To: First Selectman
Cc: Gayle Furman; Demian Sorrentino
Subject: FW: Certified Resolution For Brown's Mill
Attachments: Brown's Mill Supplemental Funding Certified Resolution.docx

The CT DECD has approved an additional \$13,750 in supplemental funding for the Browns Mill Phase II project to assist the Hageman family and the consultant in covering overages as required by CT DEEP regulations to address pollution findings at the site. This new attached resolution must be approved by the Board of Selectman to accept the additional \$13,750 in funding. Please place this item on the next Board of Selectman agenda.

After the resolution has been passed, we send the town clerk's certification of its passing to Gregory Ambrose at CT DECD.

Gregory Ambros
Department of Economic and Community Development
450 Columbus Boulevard
South Tower (4th Floor); Suite #5
Hartford, CT 06103
Phone (Office): (860) 500-2363
Phone (Cell): (860) 713-1975
Email: gregory.ambros@ct.gov

The logo for the state of Connecticut, featuring the word "Connecticut" in a blue, serif font with a small red flag icon above the letter "t".

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
STATE OF CONNECTICUT
(AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER)
CERTIFIED RESOLUTION OF THE GOVERNING BODY

I, _____, _____, certify that below is a true and correct copy of a
(Name of Official) (Title of Official)

resolution duly adopted by the Town of Colchester at a meeting of its Board of Selectmen

duly convened on _____ and which has not been rescinded or modified in
(Meeting Date)
any way whatsoever and is at present in full force and effect.

(Date)

(Signature and Title of Official)

SEAL

WHEREAS, pursuant to CGS 32-763, the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development is authorized to extend financial assistance for economic development projects; and

WHEREAS, it is desirable and in the public interest that the Town of Colchester make an application to the State for \$41,250 in order to undertake the Brown's Mill Environmental Assessment and to execute an Assistance Agreement.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE
Colchester Board of Selectmen

1. That it is cognizant of the conditions and prerequisites for the state financial assistance imposed by CGS 32-763
2. That the filing of an application for State financial assistance by the Town of Colchester in an amount not to exceed \$41,250 is hereby approved and that Andreas Bisbikos, First Selectman is directed to execute and file such application with the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, to provide such additional information, to execute such other documents as may be required, to execute an Assistance Agreement with the State of Connecticut for State financial assistance if such an agreement is offered, to execute any amendments, decisions, and revisions thereto, and to act as the authorized representative of the Town of Colchester.

CERTIFICATE OF ADOPTION
TOWN OF COLCHESTER BOARD OF SELECTMEN

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE HAZARD MITIGATION AND CLIMATE ADAPTATION PLAN UPDATE, 2023-2028

WHEREAS, the Town of Colchester has historically experienced severe damage from natural hazards and it continues to be vulnerable to the effects of those natural hazards profiled in the plan (e.g. flooding, extreme heat, droughts, severe storms such as thunderstorms and winter storms, dam failures, wildfires, and earthquakes) resulting in loss of property and life, economic hardship, and threats to public health and safety; and

WHEREAS, the Colchester Board of Selectmen approved the previous versions of the Hazard Mitigation Plan in 2005, 2012, and 2018; and

WHEREAS, Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments, of whom the Town of Colchester is a member, has determined that climate change is affecting the frequency and severity of some hazards and therefore elected to expand the Hazard Mitigation Plan Update to become a Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan Update; and

WHEREAS, committee meetings were held and public input was sought in 2022 regarding the development and review of the Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan Update; and

WHEREAS, the Plan specifically addresses hazard mitigation and climate adaptation strategies and Plan maintenance procedures for the Town of Colchester; and

WHEREAS, the Plan recommends several hazard mitigation actions that will provide mitigation for specific natural hazards that impact the Town of Colchester, with the effect of protecting people and property from loss associated with those hazards while adapting to the effects of climate change; and

WHEREAS, Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments has developed and received conditional approval from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for its Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan Update under the requirements of 44 CFR 201.6; and

WHEREAS, adoption of this Plan will make the Town of Colchester eligible for funding to alleviate the impacts of future hazards; now therefore be it

RESOLVED by the Board of Selectmen:

1. The Plan is hereby adopted as an official plan of the Town of Colchester;
2. The respective officials identified in the mitigation strategy of the Plan are hereby directed to pursue implementation of the recommended actions assigned to them;
3. Future revisions and Plan maintenance required by 44 CFR 201.6 and FEMA are hereby adopted as a part of this resolution for a period of five (5) years from the date of this resolution.
4. An annual report on the progress of the implementation elements of the Plan shall be presented to the Board of Selectmen.

Adopted this _____ day of _____, 2023 by the Board of Selectmen of Colchester, Connecticut

First Selectman

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned has affixed his/her signature and the corporate seal of the Town of Colchester this _____ day of _____, 2023.

Town Clerk