Q1 Do you identify as

**ANSWER CHOICES**

- Female
- Male
- Total

**RESPONSES**

- Female: 67.21%
- Male: 32.79%
- Total: 100%

Answered: 430
Skipped: 9
Q2 Which level of income best describes your household income during the last year?

Answered: 424    Skipped: 15
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<th>RESPONSES</th>
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Q3 In what category is your age?

Answered: 433   Skipped: 6
2020-2021 Colchester Budget Survey

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<td>26 - 39</td>
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<td>65 +</td>
<td>38.34%</td>
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Q4 What best describes your situation?

Answered: 431    Skipped: 8

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<tr>
<td>No children</td>
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<tr>
<td>School age children enrolled in Colchester</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>School age children enrolled outside of Colchester</td>
<td>3.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children in college or other post-secondary program</td>
<td>9.05%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children finished with school</td>
<td>37.12%</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
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Q5 How do you rate the quality of life in Colchester?

Answered: 433  Skipped: 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choice</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>Excellent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>11.78%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>0.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7 / 85
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
1. No senior events held at night for those of us who still work during the day.
2. Lovely small town atmosphere with amenities and activities. Moved here to an over-55 community after 35 years in Marlborough. Very satisfied.
3. I would like to see more retail and restaurants (not pizza, Chinese or Dunkin).
4. Lack of central community center prevents the town from really coming together with senior activities, social programs, Fitness classes, health promotion events, and educational opportunities/ workshops. One location for all is badly needed.
5. wish we had better transportation options
6. very happy living in Colchester. Well run town. Would like to see improvements to certain areas of town which appear run-down and neglected.
7. I do wish that the sidewalks between Norwich Ave and Pleasant Street were in better condition. There are a lot of children who use those sidewalks to walk from the Middle School down to the Youth Center as well as people who like to walk or run.
8. Could be better with more stores to compete and some clothing stores. So we don’t have to use up gas every time we need a piece of clothing. And if tolls are added… Much worse for all.
9. Would be nice to have a few more entertainment, restaurant, shopping options
10. We need more recreational activities for senior and teenagers.
11. Highschool needs some help and we could use a little restaurant variety
12. I appreciate being in a town that balances small town agriculture community while being a regional hub with retail and businesses. However, I feel it could strengthen a little more as a regional hub
13. There is no public transportation. I use the Senior Center bus but there is no weekend service. It would be nice to go to church etc.
14. Poor recreational choices - no pool. Senior center is inadequate. Programming is limited and age ist
15. Love we are going to build a new Sr. Center.
16. We need a WALMART in town
17. I would like to see more services for senior citizens.
18. I enjoy living in Colchester.
19. Sidewalks on Rt 85 would mean a lot to all the seniors you invited to buy property on that road in Colchester. We pay a lot of property tax with no kids in school.
20. Lack of public transportation
21. just not a lot available for the taxes we pay.
22. Extremely high taxes for seniors on fixed incomes.
23. Taxes tooo high!!!!!!
24. Blight issues throughout town. Could use some something like a Costco and large shopping complex near highway away from center of town.
I feel that Colchester offers a lot for young people through the volunteerism of parents. Grounds, fields are taken care of and buildings maintained.

We moved to Colchester 35 years ago because it was a convenient location. We still live here because it was a great place to raise our kids and it still meets our needs for a community with small town amenities and good accessibility to cities with additional amenities.

Wish we had more indoor activities, especially open during the day for kids.

From what I see the trajectory of Colchester is flat to down. The town has not changed for the better since the 90s. The town always wants more money for schools when enrollment is declining. This does not add up. Also the addition of the dollar store is not good. The restaurant food is improved (good).

No conveniences are available in this town. Must go out of town to shop and better restaurants. Spending money in Glastonbury, not in Colchester.

Need shopping, better restaurant selection, better plowing. Less residential development and small strip malls that are empty.

Awfully high taxes for senior citizens on Social Security.

would like different shopping and restaurant options.

If I have any complaint, it is that the town is too crowded. It really isn't, but I'm cranky and self-centered.

Taxes are too high.

Taxes to high

All in all it's a good place to live because there are some really good people. Yet, there is a constant attack on our schools every budget season. People are just unnecessarily mean on social media. Never any new business brought in no matter who is selectman. Taxes go up because it falls on the homeowners.

Tax burden on our citizens are disproportionate to services received.

Too expensive. Poor spending. Thank God we have a new selectman.

too many democrats

If taxes keep on being raised, I will have to move.

Colchester needs to reduce spending on things we do not need

I do not expect to be able to retire here as the cost of living is way to high for me to afford. It's sad because I love it here.

Very much lacking physical fitness. No gym in town. Rarely see anyone walking/running on the streets. But no crowds anywhere so easy lifestyle that way.

A better traffic pattern AROUND the common during events would be helpful.

Money is never spent on the greater good or the future of Colchester.

Property taxes are too high. How about some cuts.

We need more police services

Lots of free community activities like concerts and car shows.

I would have rated it excellent, but the lack of a more coverage-effective (improved SE CT coverage) and cost-effective public transportation system detracts from the quality of life in our town.
50  Public safety is not at a peak level like 20 years ago
51  Lacking services like late bussing.
52  The socio-economic status seems to be on the downward. It feels like the town is attracting more low income families,
53  This is very open ended, Comments can't provide value
54  Miss the concerts on the green. Love the farmer's market and other tag sales
Q6 How do you rate Colchester as a place to raise kids?

Answered: 421  Skipped: 18

**Answer Choices**

- **Excellent**: 28.74% (121 responses)
- **Good**: 56.77% (239 responses)
- **Fair**: 10.93% (46 responses)
- **Poor**: 0.71% (3 responses)

**Total Responses**: 421
# ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

1. Very few recreational activities other than sports.
2. My children were grown when I moved here.
3. The town things for children ages 10-16 work related work programs designed at building skills not preparing them for college. Farm work, fire department work, Community policing etc.
4. No children in the school system.
5. We had to send our children to private schools as the town schools did not provide the academic excellence we wanted.
6. It was much better when we moved to town in early 80's.
7. When my kids went through the system in the early 2000. Teachers are pulled from their classrooms. Way too much. I also see teachers leaving because of money, are teachers not paid enough and the superintendent is over paid.
8. It's a good family community with a lot of choices for activities to be involved in.
9. My child had a very difficult time in both the middle and high school. I was frustrated and angry most days that he was in school because of actions of the educators and administration regarding my child and the IEP that was in place rarely being followed.
10. See above. I like the small town feel but we need more businesses to support the tax base. I moved here from another town (Out of state) of similar size, and there's just no comparison to opportunities for children.
11. Teen center, sports complex, new schools, safe. Transportation would be nice.
12. no grandkids in Colchester, but we do have some living in other areas of Ct.
13. I do hope that the playground at the RecPlex will get worked on soon. The metal pieces are rusting and some of the pieces are broken. The fields at the RecPlex also need to be addressed for safety concerns - holes in fields, bent fences, and drainage issues.
15. OUR CHILDREN ARE IN THEIR LATE THIRTIES. WE HAVE NO EXPERIENCE WITH THE COLCHESTER SCHOOL SYSTEM.
16. We haven't lived here long enough to fairly assess this question and we are retired. However, previously involved in teaching. I know Colchester has a very good school system. My sister-in-law’s niece who is a Nurse Practitioner, chose this town to raise her children and loves it.
17. WJ is amazing!
18. N/A
19. Great for kids involved in team sports but lacks other positive activities for kids especially as kids hit their teenage years.
20. The school system is great and there are a lot of recreation opportunities for children.
21. Love our library, parks and Rec events, the families that support eachother. C3 is an amazing program for having kids! Wish we had a community pool!
22. I did it and they got a wonderful education from caring teachers.
23. Did not raise our children here.

DATE

2/2/2020 1:26 PM
2/2/2020 1:13 PM
2/2/2020 7:06 AM
2/1/2020 7:12 PM
2/1/2020 3:48 PM
2/1/2020 10:36 AM
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1/28/2020 8:56 PM
1/28/2020 8:32 PM
1/28/2020 6:42 PM
1/28/2020 5:13 PM

12 / 85
Our grandchildren are here in town and doing well.

No kids. This question doesn't fit here.

I have no interest in kids

N/a

Wouldn't know.

Schools are excellent and after school offerings fine

can't comment...I have no children

Wish there were more places to go in the winter in town.

C3 is amazing and the classes they provided have been instrumental to being a parent. The sports programs are amazing too, but could use more funding for fields and supplies to keep us competitive.

Don't have children

There are nice families here for sure but I would pick another town if I were starting over again. A coworker w a young family moved out fast to E Lyme recently because he did not want his kids to attend the schools

Drugs still remain a big problem in Colchester and crime is on the rise.

Schools are good but are leaning progressive more and more; rec activities are good, missing something for tweens and teens that aren't inclined towards athletics.

The town has gotten better about having more activities and programming for younger children since we moved here.

We do not have kids, never have, never will, so why do we have to pay such high taxes?

Both of our kids did very well in town recreation activities and in the school system. They grew up with friends and support. Both have left CT and will not likely return... nothing to do with Colchester, just better opportunities elsewhere.

It was a good place to raise our children but many things have changed since our kids were in the schools. Our children have no desire to move back here or to the state of CT.

No experience with this

Biggest concern is the socialist agenda fostered on our school children.

No kids raised here. Need n/a answers

Education needs to focus on fundamentals! Drug use in the schools are on the rise.

Was ok 25 years ago. Don't know about now. Grown sons laugh about thinking to live in this town.

School system has gone down in quality in recent years.

I don't think the school system is well supported. Fields falling apart, huge classes 30 plus have occurred at middle and high school. Misplaced priorities...
It was a wonderful place for our children to grow-up, and I believe it remains so.

Need more money for sports

Pleased with school systems at the elementary level. Sports programs are important to our family, there are several programs offered, but concerned about the condition of the fields/maintenance at the Rec Plex.

I would have loved to live in colchester while raising my kids. It's a wonderful community.

This town was appealing because of the amount of activities available by the local rec leagues and the parks and rec department.

Kids are the main focus of everything in town. Which attracts families who raise their kid, leach off the other residents, and then leave.

High school lacking, Commercial resources for kids limited.

Moved here last year. Seems like there are good amount of activities for kids.

The constant educational budget cutting is not a reason for people to move to Colchester.

need more athletic fields and opportunities to do things with families. Need options for things other than sports and something during the dark, winter months
Q7 How do you rate Colchester as a place to retire.

Answered: 426   Skipped: 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>18.54%</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15 / 85
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

1. too hard to get around when your older for shopping. no store such as Walmart for various needs
2. I think
3. its in ct too many taxes
4. Too expensive
5. Connecticut as a whole is a terrible place to retire due to taxes
6. Senior center not available for evening events. I love you
7. less taxes and less liberal leadership were make it better.
8. I can tell you June 2021
9. No opinion
10. It's not as much Colchester as the state of CT is not tax friendly to retirees.
11. It isn't Colchester it's Connecticut
12. Taxes in CT are driving us out of Colchester
13. Transportation too limited for seniors, not enough access to health specialists in town that are needed by the average senior with chronic health conditions. SENIOR CENTER IS BADLY NEEDED, with activities like PT etc to keep seniors independent in their own homes longer.
14. Businesses are centrally located, taxes are too high for many retired people.
15. All of CT is no place to retire. The Democrats are taxing us to death
16. Lack of public transit and walkable sidewalks
17. Nice living but expensive to live in CT, not necessarily a Colchester problem. The state of CT in general is a very expensive place for retirees. I am concerned that more and more people especially retirees will be moving out of state.
18. The cost of living here is too high.
19. Property taxes to high. Upon full retirement leaving colchester and the state for a less taxed state
20. Property taxes too high And not enough stores. We need clothing stores.
21. Taxes are too high in town and state. There are too many liberals.
22. Safer than some but way too expensive
23. We need a senior center desperately.
24. WE HAVE BEEN LIVING IN NORM WOODS SINCE 2014. WE ARE VERY HAPPY HERE.
25. Cost of living too high, taxes. Will move to Florida or South to retire.
I just retired and have been participating in activities at the senior center. This building is very old and small and it's very disappointing that Colchester doesn't have something nicer for the seniors. I used to live in Waterford and they had a very nice community center that included the senior center.

My in-laws are considering moving here as they downsize. Retail and services are strong enough to provide them with their needs and the new developments are offering them some good options.

Though I am not qualified to answer this as I am not retired yet.

I'm not sure yet!

I say this because I have lived here all my life and am familiar with the town. I do think there is a need for more evening opportunities for Seniors - more activities at the Senior Center as well as transportation available. I think this is especially true in the summer months when the daytime light is longer.

Taxes too high. No access to big box store. No steak restaurants. Hard to get on Senior Trips on town buses. Same people always get there first.

Public transportation a problem.

Cost of living in CT in general way too high for retirement.

High taxes.

Everything we need is available in town. As well as recreation. A movie theater, a golf course, and a few different restaurants.

I wish my taxes weren't so high, but otherwise I'm happy here.

Would be excellent if the taxes weren't so high.

Except property taxes are way too high and the schools are overfunded.

The taxes are very high. They don't give any breaks for seniors who are on a reduced income.

Too expensive.

Too far from everything but good sr ctr.

Although it continues to be a struggle with increased taxes and fees, I have to make serious financial choices being on a fixed income. While I have a PC, I don't have a tablet, a phone, or cable (have rabbit ear antennae). My home is over 20 years old and is beginning to require larger, more costly repairs as well as tree work which all need to be planned and budgeted for which may put off needed works for months as save/reallocate money for expenditures. I have not taken a vacation out of state for over 8 years which I thought I would do regularly in my retirement. I have not been able to enjoy leisure activities on a regular basis (golf league, etc) due to large expense of membership and league fees. Further serious consideration of fees/taxes for seniors in comparison to the school budget is critical if we want to retain seniors in the Colchester community which I have read is the fastest growing population in Colchester and is expected to be the largest in the next few years.

Again, taxes way too high.

Not applicable.

Taxes too high.

The senior center is more like an assisted living facility than an active senior center. Activities seem to be older seniors than younger ones.

Not much to offer seniors, and taxes are quite high.
48 Still live in our own home and can drive to get to appointments, etc. At some point, we'll be looking for a community that provides "complete care". That doesn't exist in Colchester, and that is more of a regional need, not a local one. I'm not sure where the closest such community is. Colchester COULD provide that if it made sense.

49 No idea

50 Taxes are too high to stay here forever

51 Although I'm not of retirement age, I feel the liveliness and activities available in the town make it attractive for retired people. The upcoming senior center is something needed and positive. I do feel more local transportation would be a benefit, and keeping taxes stable.

52 taxes high for retirees, not much in return for taxes paid. my driveway is in better shape than my street, has not been repaved in the 23 years I have lived here.

53 The Town is not progressive and lives in the past.

54 Tax burden of living in CT-not a reflection of Colchester

55 Entire state of CT is too expensive to live on retirement income.

56 Needs more shopping, restaurants, and doctors

57 Need a better Senior Center with more programs

58 Affordability is not good in real estate taxes.

59 Taxes for retired population is a little high. We moved to Colchester to retire. Taxes consume a significant percent of our income.

60 Not enough information yet, after only two years being retired, during which I have been very busy.

61 New Senior Center needed ASAP!

62 Services & attractions/activities are minimal or not easy to get to.

63 Much more emphasis must be diverted towards seniors. While raising children, our focus is narrowed towards ourselves but with age comes a wiser and diverse knowledge. The senior population is growing, has no educational costs and add a strong diverse base for local government to tap into. Rather than focus on making Colchester an educational destination, we should focus on the rich, safe and beautiful environment to retire to.

64 Connecticut is too expensive

65 Taxes have become a burden for us.

66 Seniors need help with taxes

67 Real Estate taxes are disproportionate to value received.

68 For Connecticut tax purposes

69 State of CT too expensive to retire in

70 Connecticut is one of the least favorable spots to retire. Even New York doesn't tax Social Security and Pensions

71 Taxes in CT are just too high.
No experience with this
Retirees on fixed incomes are finding it harder to live in Colchester,
Unsure but thought provoking at this time,
Not enough options to downsize in town.
Rating is based on desire to retire outside of the state due to climate
Honesty how can you retire and pay 10K a years for a house you already own. Given our current tax rate a person taking 30 year note on a house will buy the house again in just the taxes they have paid this is insane
Taxes are way too hire to retire here and not enough social outlets, Senior center is VERY outdated.
The Senior Center offers a lot. Looking forward to a better facility. The town needs more places to shop...something other than consignment stores...and a better variety of places to eat.
Taxes in this town/state are not worth living here
Too expensive. No decent shopping. Have to go to Norwich or Lisbon for that
it's a beautiful and quiet down for seniors to retire to. The town needs to start staffing the fire department 24 hours a day 7 days a week with at least 2 Firefighter/EMTS and one Firefighter/Paramedic at all times. This will ensure quick responses with advanced life support which will save a lot of lives. The town needs to take the paramedic program seriously and implement it. Staffing the fire station 24/7 will ensure that calls aren't missed. Please realize that it will also increase the amount of revenue brought in from the ambulance transports which will pay for the staffing and new equipment that is needed. The ambulances bring in over $500,000 a year and will continue to increase if we consistently staff them. The fire chiefs, career staff and volunteers have all asked repeatedly for Firefighter/paramedics and more staffing but have been denied. Please support and encourage them from now on.
Because of Connecticut taxes
Still working.
If we didn't have grandchildren we would move South. This town and state are to blue.
As I approach retirement age, Colchester and CT in general appear to be what I am looking and where I wish to retire assuming that my health and financial circumstances allow. Should my circumstance change, then I might have to change my opinion for myself. Nonetheless, I believe our town makes for an excellent place to retire.
High taxes for retirement (or any kid-less really) so on a fixed income such as retirement I'm only rating us as Good.
The senior center does not receive funding for programs from the town which hinders the ability to have programs of substance which younger senior want and need.
A much richer cultural and arts environment would be most welcome--culture and arts are all around us, but the drive is usually in the half-hour (one-way), and for those of us who do not particularly like to drive long distances at night, this is an unfortunate lack in our town. If the movie theater on Old Hartford Road could show more films like those selected for showing at the CineStudio at Trinity College in Hartford rather than their focus on the big splashy (and often violent) blockbusters that are usually the main fare there, that could help to some degree. Also it would be nice to have a community gathering space that is more upscale than we currently enjoy for special events by community groups.
Will eventually move after retiring
2020-2021 Colchester Budget Survey

91  Too expensive...taxes are too high
92  This town sucks the taxes out of anyone without a child.
93  Taxes high. Resources low
94  Taxes are too high, no services
95  Plan to leave CT
96  Looking forward to the Senior center. Want activities and programs in the evening and weekends for working seniors
Q8 If you have used the services listed below in the last 3 years, please rate your experience and quality of service.

Answered: 436    Skipped: 3
### 2020-2021 Colchester Budget Survey

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<th>Good</th>
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<th>Poor</th>
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<td>0.48%</td>
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<td>School System</td>
<td>13.58%</td>
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<td>Police</td>
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<td>Senior Center</td>
<td>10.80%</td>
<td>19.01%</td>
<td>7.28%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Services [other than food and/or fuel bank(s)]</td>
<td>3.90%</td>
<td>4.15%</td>
<td>2.44%</td>
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<td>89.27%</td>
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<td>Building Department</td>
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<td>Sewer and Water</td>
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<td>59.90%</td>
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<td>23</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
# ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

1. Need to get after town works for using cell phones while using town vehicles. (see it all the time) School sucks glad my kids are done with it. They all talk.
2. Use the library all the time. Love it.
3. I love the library and hope they can continue to expand their programs, services, and hours.
4. Town employees generally are cold and unhelpful.
5. Public works. Snow plowing and transfer station, The senior center, library, and recreational programs are exceptional.
6. Recreation programs are very good but outside fields are just not up to level of other towns.
7. Do not have town water or sewage available in my area.
8. Our water is nasty tasting.
9. The water in town is horrible.
10. Bring different businesses in town! No more pizza or Chinese restaurants! Please attract stores that we need. No more big box dups.
11. I gave Senior Center Fair only because we need a new facility! Which is coming! The staff is wonderful at Senior Center and variety of activities is great!
12. The senior center building is in disrepair. I am waiting for the ceiling to fall down. The room shared with veterans requires buckets to catch rain water. The hand washing water in the bathroom is too cold.
13. Senior Services are great....need larger building. I understand it's under planning.
14. It is a nice town with good services, wish public works were more responsive to obvious items needing attention. Believe direction may be issue, would like to know that if item were sent in to public works it would be corrected, police department is useless wish they were disbanded and use state police or resident troopers they do a great job as private duty jobs just totally disappointed.
15. Colchester water where I live tastes terrible. The zoning and building codes are very broad, pliable and non specific.
16. Do not have either sewer or water service.
17. To not skew the results, I had 1 short interaction with fire dept marshall which was excellent.
18. For the amount of taxes we pay, there should be free trash pick up.
19. Library does amazing events for our community.
20. The youth center programs are impressive however the building is not and is in need of repair/another space.
21. Lack of maintenance of street drainage resulted in substantial damage to my property and cost to repair.
22. The Police Department is in need of equipment, more space, better working conditions, and is under paid compared to surrounding towns.
23. How about prorating taxes for seniors? We are not a burden on the school system, the most expensive part of the budget, have a fixed income and we do not have the increasing income of school aged children's parents.
Town Hall employees are very helpful and friendly: specifically Jay Giolitti and Daphne Sraub.

Town Hall employees lack professionalism, especially in how they dress. They are often confusing and rude.

Library hours too limited.

need to extend hours of library

I have first hand knowledge of the food bank as a volunteer. I have been a food pantry volunteer at various locations for over 20 years and have also been employed as management. Colchester food pantry could and should be run by volunteers. The young women who are social workers in that office pay no attention to the pantry until there is a problem they can't ignore. They have no ability to handle and direct volunteers and they seem to be very ageist. They will say the right things but no action is ever taken when there is a problem. I have no opinion about their work on the teen programs but the food pantry can and should be run by volunteers who care and not by the people in this office. It would also save money to not have their salaries.

Sewer and water needs to have online bill pay with no service fee

Recruitment programs are great, but the facilities are in very poor condition (tennis courts, recplex fields).

Honestly things like senior centers are not something that tax payers should be responsible for.

Would like to see more water mains throughout the town so homeowners don’t have to rely on wells. It would also be nice to extend the hydrant system so our neighborhoods are better protected.

It’s unbelievable that we can have put so much money into expanding our library and keeping it technically current, then not manage to find $5000 that hours need to be cut (reason for the last cut in hours). The value of our jewel in this town is an OPEN LIBRARY. Libraries help even out inequalities for people have fewer resources (example: those who don’t have internet at home, etc.)

Recreation should be better funded.

Senior Center needs a new and improved building and complete facility. Town Hall requires some fundamental physical maintenance to keep it in good repair. Sewer and water require regular maintenance. Public works dept does a good job on the roads and working diligently year in and year out.

Expensive!

When I reported an issue with a storm drain, public works had it fixed within a few days, which was great, I would have liked some type of confirmation or communication with them, but it wasn’t critical. Craigin Library is great, but I would love to see more funding for them so they can provide more programs to the community. They’ve taken a beating the last few years in the budget.

Craigin Library needs to be open until 9:00 at night during the week (M thru Thu) so community groups can use the public meeting rooms for their civic purposes as originally designed and intended. Closing the library before then diminishes the effectiveness of this wonderful community resource and is really a waste of opportunity to use the library to its fullest potential.

Town hall needs a “face lift” The First Selectman’s office is embarassing with old carpet and old furniture.

Town Hall great service, inspection-permits, tax collector, assessor—very poor registrar (R) voting experience. No direct experience with Senior Center or Police, however all I have heard is good things compared to neighboring towns.
Q9 In 2020-2021 Budget, what is your preference for funding the following areas?

Answered: 416   Skipped: 23
### 2020-2021 Colchester Budget Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service/Department</th>
<th>Increase Spending (%)</th>
<th>Maintain Current Spending (%)</th>
<th>Reduce Spending (%)</th>
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</table>
# ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

1. would like a swimming pool

2. The fire dept is falling apart. Each fire truck needs to replace after 20 years and it doesn't put any funds away to replace them.

3. We need to make sure the Fire Department and EMS have equipment that can be counted on when needed. Many emergency programs around the country that rely on volunteers are folding and having to go to district-run or for-profit programs. We cannot let that happen.

4. We need 24 hour police patrol

5. We are not offered sewer or water

6. I'd like to see our tax dollars going to programs that help families and also maintain our parks & public spaces properly. Colchester has a lot to offer and can provide even more opportunities if we utilize our open spaces a little better.

7. schools are very expensive, hope they can live with the new buildings for some time to come. A huge burden is put on schools to be and do everything for the kids. The parents (working) it seems unfair that the tax payers must take up the slack to raise the kids. It takes a village, but it takes a lot of money.

8. Town roads and sidewalks are in terrible condition

9. in need of improved senior facility and offerings. I am currently going to the Hebrew senior center for exercise programs. They offer more exercise programs and have a much nicer facility.

10. A new playground at the recplex is long overdue. It is unsafe in many areas including not even having enough of a base layer of woodchips.

11. Police and Fireservices are completely overemphasized.....sorry.

12. I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH KNOWLEDGE TO COMMENT ON MOST AREAS

13. It is absolutely critical that we start investing funds in our town fields and get a cooperative agreement for line painting for all season sports> The Rec plex greens are embarrassing and some are dangerous

14. I am in favor of increased spreading. I know budgets have been run tight the past few years. I only noted "maintain current spending" where I am less familiar with past spending trends and needs. I support all areas where there is need to run quality services for the community.

15. I cannot recommend raising or lowering the budgets of departments until I saw what was planned by each department. I know the fire department needs a new truck so I would be in favor of that. I know there are plans for a new Senior Center and I am in favor of that, I think we need more service for Seniors (see above) so I am in favor of raising that budget/

16. At least keep up with the cost of living.

17. Remember the new sc, cntr

18. Schools consume way too many tax dollars

19. Improve water quality, more Property tax breaks for Seniors

20. Expenses have to looked at for the entire community in various ways and for benefit different groups I think also considering the size of each group. We have live within our means as individuals and families need to do. If sources of revenue decrease, or critical expense increase then we have to reassess whether we look to other sources (grants or fundraising), reduce services or expense in order to meet. If town raises taxes, for many this paying these increased costs are not coming out of discretionary income but rather being taken from other necessities or needs being reprioritized.
21. quit building schools we do not need and paying teachers for mediocre performance.

22. DOE budget is way too high. The Finance Department is out of touch. More families moving in to this town does not help the tax base. It only puts more pressure on the ancillary services for Police and Fire since their budget does not increase. Shame on you!!!

23. It's really difficult to answer these questions. Of course I don't WANT to pay more for ANYTHING!! But if there is a genuine need, then I will stand behind any necessary budget increases.

24. We live on a well and septic so how about giving us a break from taxes used for water and sewer?

25. Basically, I'm rather neutral on these things. I always vote YES on budget referenda.

26. These questions are unrealistic. Last to first, sewer water is needed and as regulations and needs change, costs are affected. Library services are underutilized; warming/cooling center, weekend availability, modern computerized services, etc are needed. I don't go there because when their limited hours and my schedule have intersected, I feel like I'm walking into the 1960's.

27. Do you mean the 2020/21 budget? If so, I can respond. The 2018/19 budget has come and gone. So, I will assume it's the 2020/21 budget.

28. Have the police do their jobs not just want to work overtime road jobs and hiding behind the Westchester Fire House tapping into the WIFI for hours on end.

29. School enrollment has declined a lot, yet the budgets continue to increase. BOE has failed to explain why. You can't be all things to all people anymore, just don't have the scale. Must decide what you can provide based on the enrollment you have and what the taxpayer can afford.

30. I would really need to know what the current spending is for each to personally accurately rate these.

31. 2018-2019 has passed by so how are these questions relevant??

32. I feel that there could be some 'waste' eliminated in town. Public works....these guys drive by my house a few dozen times a day....more efficiency maybe. Building dept.,....this area needs to learn how to talk to the others and vice versa. You leave a paper with building that needs to go to wetlands and they can't even do that. Let's trim some fat!

33. Some of the questions are not applicable (I think). If I don't use the water/sewer services, why would I want to increase or maintain funding? I use well water.

34. Without knowing the individual needs of each of these departments, it's impossible to vote on increase or reduce. I can only imagine that every department would benefit from an increase.

35. Please address the fields

36. Need more funding for DPW for field maintenance in town for rec fields

37. hard to answer question without knowing if tax increases are needed. For example, to maintain all spending would it be a 2% increase, 5% increase??

38. Taxes are too high. We already overspend on several aspects and they should be reduced. Other programs need to maintain current funding but nothing at all needs a budget increase.

39. We desperately need to replace fire equipment, add police patrols

40. Senior Center needs a new and improved building and complete facility. Town Hall requires some fundamental physical maintenance to keep it in good repair; otherwise, I believe Town Hall provides excellent service and its funding should be maintained; I believe the Library deserves additional funding to make it more effective and provide the necessary resources to properly serve all of Colchester's residents. Sewer and water require regular maintenance and I am unaware of exceptional needs; however, additional testing may be required due to the occurrence of PFAS in supply groundwater. Public works dept does a good job on the roads and working diligently year in and year out.
Also salary freeze for managers and above in town. The mean income in town does change much. Most people don’t get annual raises so can’t pay to watch services decrease but salaries increase.

I’d like to see us shift towards a full time police department, or at least having a 3rd shift on full time, even if we remain under the resident trooper program. The town could better support our rec programs. While they do a great job, there are a lot of things they simply can’t afford to do without raising registration rates dramatically. The library could also use additional funding.

I feel like Colchester wants to be good but doesn’t want to pay for the needed improvements.

I’m not too familiar with senior services but my concern now is the recent car break ins/thefts in the middle of the night. It’s scary. I hope we can get 24/7 police coverage in the near future. I would pay slightly more for that.

We need more police coverage at night.

We are barely keeping up much less growing in services. We are falling behind. Colchester is not living up to its full potential.
Q10 In order to maintain current levels of Town services would you be willing to pay higher taxes to cover any increase in operating costs?

Answered: 417   Skipped: 22

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<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe</td>
<td>27.82%</td>
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TOTAL 417
I don't pay taxes, only car depends on the services town should have been a better job is saving funds. too many taxes already Connecticut taxes are already to high, cannot afford the outrageous taxes we already pay Taxes are to high for a town this size. As a senior citizen I am being taxed for a school tax that I don't use. Quality of living improves with increased services. Increased services are a public good and require greater investment, especially from those who have greater resources. Making things better for those who have needs to meet makes things better for everyone.

Maybe not sure which services would be affected.

Maybe not sure which services would be affected.

taxes for seniors, and everyone, are too high. I live in a senior condo facility and pay about $6000 in property taxes along with the vehicle tax of another $600 or so for two old cars. The vehicle tax in particular is not acceptable.

Taxes are too high now

But I'll have to anyway

WHAT SPECIFIC COSTS? HOW MUCH AND WHY

Don't have anymore money to give you!

Of course.

taxes are prohibitive as they are right now

Absolutely not, the property taxes are too high already.

Except for one year, the mil rate has been going up every year for quite a few years now. Enough is enough.

Again, need to look at full services to all groups across all budgets to be equitable to all groups for what is needed. School budget is exorbitant for the reduction of students over the years. This needs more serious review and adjustment.

Would rather see development come in and add to our tax base.

Taxes are high enough!

If I knew my increased taxes would be allocated to children and creating a more inviting community I would support

Some places will need to be reduced to help defray costs in other areas that prices go up. Balance it out like we do in our homes. We don't get raises but cost of all goods keep going up so we have to reduce spending in another area. Budget shift money from teachers and schools we do not need. get the teachers unions under control of the taxpayers, Only if it goes towards Police and Fire!
Same as above, if there is a need...

Only to those who use them.

I only say no to this because reviewing tax records I feel our taxes in NorthWoods are significantly above the average, of other homes or condos in town. We pay separately for snow and rubbish removal and no children in the schools. I do believe we need to keep a strong viable education system in place to attract potential new younger family population. We do support “Education”. With good schools we will have a vibrant community.

Of course, I’d rather not, but if reality dictates increases, then so be it.

As long as the increase is going toward education and public safety.

Since I am a senior I have a fixed income. I live in a private association, yet my taxes do not reflect that the town does not provide snow removal or road maintenance. I would like my taxes adjusted to reflect that. I don’t mind paying taxes for schools and recreation because that improves the whole community. But I do care that there is no discount in my taxes to reflect that the town does not provide road services in my community. Fair is fair.

The culture at Town Hall needs to change from, “its not in the budget” to “this is how we can get this done”. There is too much, “no, you can’t do that”.

Living with a fixed income is difficult enough without raising taxes.

It would depend on which ‘town services’ you are referring to.

If the cost per student had modest increases, the overall costs should be going down. I recognize that there are fixed costs, but a 30% decrease in student should more than offset increases in these fixed costs as well as the increased costs to maintain town services.

Costs go up but wages never do. Get more businesses in town to help. Can’t have it both ways

My family has had to cut expenses in the current economy. The city should also work on being as efficient as possible.

find unnecessary costs to cut

First as we all know, nobody likes to pay more for anything especially taxes; however I feel small increases are reasonable, and I’m willing to contribute my share to maintain the services that are provided now.

Taxes, taxes, taxes. Other towns don’t raise theirs. Has there ever been a year when we have never got taxed.

What choice do we have everything increases in cost it’s the way of the world.

Make the case

Residents in NorthWoods already pay huge taxes for the services they actually need.

With the gas line coming in let’s use new tax money...let’s stop bringing in Dollar Stores and get some decent restaurants that aren’t pizza or asian fusion so we don’t have to leave town. Industry is great but be careful what you wish for!

It would be nice to know what “Town services” includes? Other than snow removal and the transfer station, I would like to be reminded of the other services this town is performing.

Depends on how would be spent,

We pay enough of taxes!

I will happily pay more in taxes to staff the fire and police departments 24/7.
It's not realistic to think that Colchester can maintain or improve services without funding. Voters need to understand cause and effect.

LOL

We pay a lot in taxes compared to neighboring towns.

Only to increase fire and police services. We live outside town limits and already pay to high a tax for no services!!

not convinced best efforts made to spend money or all efforts exhausted to improve spending efficiencies

Taxes are already too high. Find cuts where you can and leave other levels where they are. No increase.

I think we need to spend wisely. Adding at the top doesn't help what happens in classrooms. Where is the support especially at middle and high school levels. We cut in the wrong places, ask citizens, teachers their thoughts. I bet they would have amazing suggestions if asked.

I am willing to pay for a new Truck for the Fire Department. I see no need for an increase in the Police department, especially a third shift.

I am worried that if there is a chance I could price me out of town with taxes.

I'd be willing to pay a small amount more, but along with that, I'd like to see a big pull to get more businesses in that are going to offset some of the residential taxes.

I was saddened to read the recent edition of the Parks & Rec letter saying they will have to cut down due to the raise in minimum wage. I hope they don't have to cut out a lot of offerings.

Looking to move out of town in the next few years, will be charged for pre-k next year & taxes have increased every year since we've moved here.

Yes, however I would expect more and not pay more to maintain.

Everything gets more expensive. How can we expect to have taxes stay the same??? Just a handful of people complain...they just complain a lot
Q11 As the cost of most things goes up every year, maintaining current services generally requires an increase in the amount budgeted to pay for them. What percent of tax increase would you find acceptable, given the effect on services?

Answered: 397   Skipped: 42

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<th>10&gt;1% TO 2% INCREASE (POSSIBLE REDUCTION IN SOME SERVICES)</th>
<th>&gt;2% INCREASE IF AMOUNT IS NEEDED TO MAINTAIN CURRENT SERVICES OR ADD SERVICES.</th>
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<td>23.68%</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>34.51%</td>
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we don't increase, why should you
Eliminate many of the overpriced socialist programs we have
I'm fairly certain that putting a budget together for this town is like doing one for my home and children. Not every department needs top dollar items. Budgets require shopping around and eliminating waste or going with frivolous items. We need to find those items in the budget that can be eliminated or reduced. The quality of education cannot be reduced. The amount we spend certain things such as overtime and equipment and Christmas lights for example can be,
I believe it is important to work within the budgeted amount. With this logic of always needing to increase, it will become impossible to afford the property taxes to live in Colchester.
Again it depends which services? Sweeping roads before a snowstorm? Painting yellow lines on a rural road? Park maintenance? Town hall hours?
I CAN'T AFFORD IT NOW©
We must invest in our community where it makes sense to do so. It is patently true that cuts in education and other services are very often not true savings long term and in fact can cost us dearly. We must assure we are spending wisely. Our town is worth investing in.
Can hardly afford the taxes now
EACH SERVICE MUST BE REVIEWED SEPARATELY.
Not that important to me as we will be moving out of Colchester after my husband retires in a few years.
I don't like this question. It is written to press for reduction and there should be one more option that reads - maintain current services AND add services. I lean towards this option, only note is to maintain current services that are working for the community and add additional services that have been left out in past years and need to be addressed.
Again, it depends on what is needed.
Education is so important. I do not favor reducing spending for the education budget. We appreciate our town services. Our road is treated promptly and often during storms. Budget what's necessary for us to be safe and proud of Colchester.
Any increase is unacceptable. Our newest school is a monstrosity that caters to the whims of the kids. Let's get them ready for the "real world".
I would like to see the tax base and distribution of funds and expenditures revised.
After working in a corporate setting for almost 30 years, we had annual recurring charges for most of them: Do more with less, process and system improvement initiatives where employees in every department worked in groups to identify and deliver improvements and cost savings to the company. Maybe this work method approach needs to be considered/implemented in Colchester bringing various departments, boards, townspople together to creatively consider how to manage/improve services, maintain/reduce expenses, pursue other sources of revenue, etc.
Add to tax base by growth in town.
We are willing to pay more if we can actually see what it's paying for
Answer same as above comment
Efficiencies also have to be used and not just budget and tax increases
Decrease in DOE and an increase for Police and Fire.

We can't afford higher taxes. Why do you suppose the population of the state is DECREASING?

ditto above

I would be great to have someone critically look at each department and assess what their needs are and how they compare to other area towns. I'd like to see the money was spent differently, rather than always trying to maintain the status quo.

This question could be viewed as misleading. If the changes in property values and the grand list are commensurate with changes to the costs of all services, my answer would be 0% increase. That said, as the lion's share of municipal liability is the cost of public education, enrollment changes will have a proportionally more significant impact on the cost of services than other non-school related expenses.

There is no straight answer, it depends on many factors.

Perhaps make Colchester more attractive to businesses that can share the tax burden. Perception I've noticed is it's not business friendly. Also, Can Colchester fill the empty, recently built, Spaces and keep those businesses thriving?

Enough with the costs in this town, wasted money spent on foolish things

No. Figure out a way to maintain costs. We have to do it our own homes. You should be doing it at the town level. Competitive bids etc.

If school enrollment was stable, I could accept the assumption made in this question. With big drops in enrollment, we should be able to offset increases in non school costs with small decreases in a budget that is 75% of the total

Yes, >2% is reasonable. If my math is correct that would equate to about $180.00 on my $9,000 real estate tax bill. I think my household could handle an extra $15.00 per month.

I don't get an increase in my retirement.

The towns operating raise is supposed to come from property value increases this is why taxes are tied to property value. Unfortunately Connecticut is so mismanaged our property values are decreasing while the rest of the country is increasing. This means our towns and state need to decrease service just a so you would if you pay was cut at your job. Live within your budget suck it up butter cup cup

Is this a question and an effort to prepare us for paying more?

Make the case

again, let's trim up some fat.

mill rate is high enough in this town

Please look at regionalization of certain departments. Reduce the fleet of police cruisers. Look to email taxes instead of postal.

No increase

Add staffing to the fire and police departments. Quicker responses with more manpower from the fire department will saves lives and property. Saving property allows families to stay in their homes and allows businesses to stay open to they continue paying taxes to our town. Increasing the staffing and adding fire hydrants will also improve our insurance ratings called ISO. This will save homeowners money on their insurance.

We need growth

Taxes need to either decrease or stay at the same level for many many years to become reasonable, The town keeps getting built up and I would rather see it
stay the same. Less people, no new roads, no new sub divisions, less to spend money on.

Because Federal and State funding is increasingly stingy and hard to come by, Town residents must step up and properly fund the Town budget. Therefore, I believe that a 2+4% increase may be absolutely necessary.

If enrollment in the schools are decreasing and the senior population is increasing a shift is needed on where we allocate monies in town.

No more than 3%

Since we have almost no services we don't pay for what's the difference?

Find the funds in current budget
Q12 In the future would you support spending for the following?
### 2020-2021 Colchester Budget Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>MAYBE</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land Conservation/Open Space</td>
<td>42.30%</td>
<td>32.03%</td>
<td>25.67%</td>
<td>409</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>173</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>105</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in Police Services and Infrastructure</td>
<td>44.25%</td>
<td>23.96%</td>
<td>31.78%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>181</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>130</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in Fire and Emergency Medical Services and Infrastructure</td>
<td>50.98%</td>
<td>19.12%</td>
<td>29.90%</td>
<td>408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>208</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>122</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation Field Improvements</td>
<td>35.05%</td>
<td>33.58%</td>
<td>31.37%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>143</td>
<td>137</td>
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</table>
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

1. walking paths at the rec fields
2. get people to volunteer
3. People are moving out of town, if they can sell their house, so expenses should go down to reflect this.
4. I think we have improved the 911 system and are training EMS, Happy with that,
5. please only do what is necessary.
6. Our recreation fields are horrible and are an embarrassment compared to many other local towns. With the amount of kids and the programs we offer why are our fields not cared for by more people/departments?
7. need to invest in road improvements
8. Are fields are embarrassing for the quality of competitiveness that our teams are
9. I only say “maybe” to fire because I believe this area has seen more attention than others in the past few budgets,
10. increase fire, emergency medical services and police. Have parents work with their kids as volunteers to handle conservation and rec field improvements,
11. Many of those things can be funded through other sources - grants, federal grants, usage fees, volunteerism. It depends what is basic and essential for the town versus improvements as nice to have which needs very careful assessment and consideration before increasing costs to taxpayers. (NOTE related to #13. Need to balance rural character of open space and farm land preservation with ensuring attraction of other businesses that may also fit same e.g. canoe/kayak rental, other types of recreational businesses that would attract out of town visitors, more restaurants that would be favorable to healthy lifestyle visitors e.g. farm to table restaurants/events, Soup/salad restaurant, organic restaurant/store, outdoor recreation/sports store (e.g. REI outlet/smaller store version) near recreational sites (e.g near Airline Trail, near Airline Trail Spur, rt 149, etc)
12. Would have to decide on case by case. What is the money going for.
13. Park needs wood chips badly
14. Our fields are sad, If your a visiting town and you look at our sports fields one would think why would I want to move to colchester, it looks like they don't care for their kids, which is not true...but perception
15. Too much open space is given up to residential developments. Current residents concerns should be taken into account when a new development is proposed.
16. I only say “maybe” to Police and Fire issues because I do not know enough about those.
17. Park and Recreation needs to increase what the charge private sports organizations to use the fields, Taxpayers should NOT be subsidizing all these private sports leagues,
18. Increases in Police Services and Infrastructure.....to me means a 24-7 Colchester Police Force and likely a stand alone police station. I might support that. However, Town-Police Union-Police Commission relations have been a contentious and political issue in the past. Just looking at the sorted history of the Police Commission with the town’s kangaroo court about 10 years ago regarding a former (and now present) commission member speaks to this. Trust for me was greatly eroded. While I believe the Recreation Department does a good job with programs for kids and adults, I believe the have done a less than satisfactory job with Town sponsored Events. Years ago, The Colchester Arts Commission and Arts Guild began the Summer Concerts on the Green on Sunday nights which were well attended, well run and self-funded. Stewardship of these concerts was passed on to the Colchester Recreation Department when the Arts Commission disbanded, This past year that tradition of having a weekly concert series was effectively eliminated, replaced with a mishmash of events on
scattered dates like a corn hole tournament. In addition, S7 Fest, while certainly something requiring revenue-funding to maintain, was a fiscal failure this year (with actual revenue generated by a car raffle falling woefully short). Due to the EEE situation last fall, an abbreviated event went off without fireworks which were then part of Trick-or-Trunk. Having fireworks at any event will be a welcome draw and so certainly they were welcome at Trick-or-Trunk. But for the Director of Parks and Recreation to interpret that feedback as a reason to have fireworks at Trick-or-Trunk, rather than Colchester’s Annual S7 Fest, to me says that S7 Fest is soon to meet the fate of Colchester’s Annual Summer Concerts on the Green.

Open space is critical to maintaining Colchester’s character, I hope the town will become more active in that regard.

Recreation fields are in dire need of improvements, as are the fields at Bacon Academy!

Have the police do their jobs not just want to work overtime road jobs and hiding behind the Westchester Fire House tapping into the WIFI for hours on end.

With the recent school project that includes new recreation fields, I think it’s important that the town follows through with their “promise” to properly maintain them. It’s important for the safety of the kids who will be playing on them. Let’s be PROUD of what we bought!

Land conservation where it would save the town money we can’t tax people enough to educate there children so stopping residential development is always beneficial. Any public property should always be open to hunting and fishing where applicable Recreational field improvements should be paid for by those using the fields it is called a users fee. I shoot and pay for my ranges why can’t people who play softball and soccer do the same thing. If not you need to start giving the local gun clubs the same amount of money to maintain there facilities.

In addition, I would support the Town spending for sidewalk improvements and maintenance. For example, a large portion of the sidewalks on Norwich Ave in such poor condition that they are difficult to use with a stroller, kids bike, or scooter.

If you charge per player per session for upgrades they should use the money to have the town maintain as dragging fields such as baseball and softball fields to prevent injuries.

So the police don’t come to this area unless there’s an accident. It’s more the state troopers so I’m not sure adding to their budget gets us anywhere. Fire - we need new equipment but again...isn’t that the gas line money?? And open space - the building is ridiculous...there’s no place for the wildlife to go and when they do come out people want to shoot them. This was there home so where do folks expect them to go???

Police have sufficient staffing at 10 to do 24-7 coverage at two person minimums. They need their own autonomy by having their own police chief. That could then begin to change the present culture to be more productive and professional.

Our fields are terrible and a disgrace to the town. We should be embarrassed our children have to play on these fields they are so bad. We also need to plan for a turf field as soon as possible.

Spending more on the fire and police is long overdue. We save millions by having volunteers. Please support them by giving them the staffing they say they need. They already dedicate a huge portion of their lives to helping community members. Now we need to support them.

Please continue to stand firm against the pressure to expand our police services and infrastructure to a full-time staff and standalone building. Reporting of calls to the police is inflated (not necessarily reflective of crime) and there needs to be a hard look at whether crime has truly increased (people yelling that it has isn’t factual) that can’t be handled by current police staffing, support from state police at night, and adjacent town support.

And field at Bacon Academy!

Let parents bear some of the costs to maintain fields

More conservation land that is open to the public but does not require ongoing maintenance expenses like the rec complex.

1/19/2020 6:27 PM
1/19/2020 6:04 PM
1/19/2020 12:57 PM
1/19/2020 8:37 AM
1/19/2020 2:57 AM
1/18/2020 7:14 PM
1/18/2020 4:46 PM
1/18/2020 3:51 PM
1/18/2020 11:30 AM
1/18/2020 11:15 AM
Our school fields are embarrassing compared to any other school we play.

I know the subject of a Town pool as been discussed. I am totally against that idea. The financial burden of maintaining, life guard, and insurance is not worth my taxes going up. And many of the retired community can’t afford that increase.

Town safety is important. Colchester is an easy access town for people from surrounding towns to come in and commit crimes. Increase in police presence should always be a priority. Rec fields need to be improved and maintained. Sports programs is essential for healthy mental and physical development of children. Our fields have been noticed by outsiders as run down.

Yes to all. I’m amazed how much land Hbron is able to conserve every year. I think we can do better as a community, even if its not outright purchases, but tax offsets for farmers, etc. I’d like to see our Paramedic program up and running as well as more police presence. Our fields need a lot of work at the Old Colchester Rd complex, and I’d love to see a community pool there at some point.

Police...I don’t know, infrastructure yes....the roads are in bad shape

All of these increased expenditures could drive business into our town. We want people to come to Colchester
Q13 How important to you is preserving the rural character of Colchester through open space and farmland preservation efforts?

Answered: 416   Skipped: 23
## 2020-2021 Colchester Budget Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extremely important</td>
<td>24.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very important</td>
<td>26.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat important</td>
<td>27.88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not so important</td>
<td>11.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all important</td>
<td>4.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need more information to decide</td>
<td>4.81%</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
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<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>416</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Q14 Would you support an expansion of paramedic services if it meant a significant increase in the mill rate?

Answered: 415  Skipped: 24

ANSWER CHOICES
Yes  29.86%  124
No  27.23%  113
Unsure/need more information  42.89%  178
TOTAL  415

52 / 85
Q15 Currently 57 Fest is unsustainable through its fund raising efforts. The cost of 57 Fest is roughly $20,000-$25,000. Do you feel tax payer dollars should be spent to continue 57 Fest?

Answered: 410  Skipped: 29

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>7.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>51.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale back the cost of 57 fest to meet fundraising</td>
<td>40.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>capabilities without using taxpayer dollars</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>410</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q16 Do you feel the town has properly invested enough money in maintaining our recreational fields?

Answered: 390  Skipped: 49

Yes: 61.03%  (238)
No: 38.97%  (152)

Total: 390
Q17 Did you vote in the last budget referendum?

Answered: 405  Skipped: 34

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>79.51%</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>20.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>405</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q18 If you selected "No" please indicate why.

Answered: 87   Skipped: 352

**Answer Choices**

- Too busy
- Did not have enough information
- Did not know there was a referendum
- I had no transportation
- Other (please specify)

**Responses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choice</th>
<th>Responses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Too busy</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Did not have enough information</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Did not know there was a referendum</td>
<td>28</td>
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<tr>
<td>I had no transportation</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>87</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)</td>
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<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>moved back here after 60 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>forgot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Forgot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Non citizen (Green card)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>No solicitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>did not make it a priority. I don't know enough about the budget to make a responsible decision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Didn't live here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I don't Pay taxes and live in senior facilities. Routine budgets should be controlled by the taxpayers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Not yet registered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I wasn't paying attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Do not own property in Colchester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Don't think I did. Don't remember. I usually vote but not sure if this was a special voting day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Was out of state during voting hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>It was the first one I missed in ages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Did not live in town yet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>A non vote is a yes vote. I had no problem with the budget as first presented. Why waste my time voting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I was traveling for business.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Just moved to Colchester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Voted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>New to town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>I was not home that week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>CD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Not officially a homeowner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Didn't live here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>I was out of town,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DATE
Q19 What can the town do to increase participation in voting?

Answered: 157    Skipped: 282
# RESPONSES

1. I don't know
2. 
3. more advertising
4. 
5. 
6. clean up town hall. looks like a dump outside. Thanks how you increase participation in voting.
7. 
8. get responsible people to run for office
9. Increase social media presence
11. Increase transparency
12. Don't count on the few people that come to a meeting at Town Hall to be your only feedback. Have community conversations at various places such as with the Seniors at the Senior Center. At the school where parents might feel less intimidated to come.
13. Reminders: email, phone
14. More general, public civic education and engagement opportunities for adults (not necessarily or in addition to partisan efforts). Too many people forget or don’t understand how government works, especially locally, how it affects their daily lives, and how they can and should participate. People may be embarrassed to admit this or are anxious about where to start, and we all would benefit from inclusive, judgement-free, low barrier entry points. Sometimes people just need to feel invited into the process,
15. People are either going to vote or not. We vote religiously. Those that don’t vote should not complain!
16. Make proposals that reduce spending, not increases.
17. Get young families involved
18. Don’t know, hold the election on a Saturday.
19. Get more information out there as to where the money is going. More town meeting times so that people can attend.
20. Educate. Posters everywhere. We have SO MANY residents that moved from other systems of town government that have no idea that a board doesn’t make the financial decisions for the town! When someone buys a house in town, educate them. Spend time educating students other than in one class about civics—a population that recognizes what it actually means to vote is more likely to do so when they graduate. So Many people wait until they have kids in the schools and then don’t vote after their kids are out of the schools. When you send out tax bills, educate!
21. Unsure why people are so unwilling to utilize their privilege to vote. Seems as though they take it for granted
22. Ads. I get out there. People need to have you in their face

DATE

2/2/2020 7:51 PM
2/2/2020 7:41 PM
2/2/2020 7:34 PM
2/2/2020 7:31 PM
2/2/2020 7:20 PM
2/2/2020 7:07 PM
2/2/2020 7:00 PM
2/2/2020 6:55 PM
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2/1/2020 6:37 PM
2/1/2020 12:50 PM
2/1/2020 10:42 AM
2/1/2020 10:40 AM
2/1/2020 10:38 AM
2/1/2020 10:28 AM
2/1/2020 10:12 AM
2/1/2020 10:05 AM
2/1/2020 10:04 AM
2/1/2020 9:59 AM
2/1/2020 9:58 AM
Put together a volunteer network to give people rides to the polls. Find a way to advertise and help home bound to use absentee ballots. But that would probably not be what the BOE would want as those are the people who want less spending on school.

Set an example for the kids. The kids need to know that voting is not a privilege, it's their responsibility to participate in this democracy. List the pros and cons of passing or rejecting the budget or the questions on the ballots. Advertise absentee ballots. It's scary that people can't bother to vote.

clearer information

LET SENIORS KNOW BY PUTTING MORE SIGNS UP.

Send out reminders with tax bills.

Allow Early voting. Broadcast upcoming votes in as many ways as possible

lived here for just a year

Try and engage younger generations

Nothing It's up to people to show up

A phone tree to call as many registered voters as possible in order to remind them to vote.

More details

Lower taxes.

More Media effect E-Mail Facebook and Twitter

Advertise more

I don't know.

Vote on Saturday. Make absentee ballots more available

More info to register. More info where to vote.

More info in Rivereast. Meet the candidates at a local school.

Perhaps early voting may allow folks to have a longer block of time to vote.

An email of the town budget would be a great help

People don't traditionally go out for local elections

Don't know

advertise, meet more places

Good question... I don't know...

Better communication
Get the word out.

Great question but I have no answers.

offer ride share, promote absentee ballots

Provide detailed information about the subject being voted on and have public meetings to clarify the issues for the people in town,

More social media outreach

send to a vote the possibility of Lowering taxes

Do a feature news article on the importance of citizen participation in local town affairs - voting, volunteerism in town boards/committees, attending town meetings especially budget, etc. More signage at key locations in town (highway exits, town center, town hall, rec fields, school entrances for parents), email blasts through all town dept public emails as emails lists vary by dept. Notice in all town department newsletters (library, senior center, others?) Put up signage and notices for longer period of time. Include message - Your Vote Matters or Be Part of Colchester's Decision Making - Vote, OR something else that will appeal to individual's desire to be involved.

Advertise more

Prizes by voter lottery.

Post ballot sample in local free paper

advertise more

Good question.

I feel the town should emphasize where people should vote. People are confused as to voting districts and are upset if at wrong polling place

On-line voting? which could also be in advance of the day polls are open.

There seems to be a lack of knowledge about budget referendums in the Westchester area. More signage in that area is necessary.

Public discussion of issues, educating the public about how participation makes a difference,

I feel either your someone who votes and cares or your someone who thinks their vote does not count. Hard to change that person view if they don't care

Maybe p at home system to vote

social media presence

Electronic voting.

have only real property taxpayers vote on budgets

Not much really. Everyone knows when the vote is coming. You just have to do it

Listen to the residents, be more progressive and be less political.

Include large budget impacts as a separate yes/no vote with potential overall budget impact. An example would be separate vote for upgrade in Paramedic program or increase in Police Coverage, If we can't keep our town safe and secure, we are failing our next generation. Let the voters choose and not members of the board of finance. Sometimes personal agendas interfere with the best interests of the town.
Social media, emails, newsletters in mailboxes
The question every town is asking...
Better Candidates
Open polls later. Have online voting options.
Would the town be allowed to send home flyers with school children?
Give a tax break
I really don't have the answer but it is really sad when people don't vote and complain. The last special election I was #131 to vote and with 17,000 registered voters you would think that the number would have been much higher by 2 pm. I did not see the final number of voters that came out but would love to have 100% I know this is unrealistic but people need to participate. Maybe more info/articles in bold in RiverEast or posters around town. Tell people they can have a free coffee if they vote lol
Attract a more intelligent electorate. Educate voters on the importance of Town services and the people who run them.
Advertise more the NEED to VOTE whatever your leanings are,... America is one of the Worst % voting levels of participation.
Put up more signs around town especially in Westchester area.
Nothing, the town can't MAKE people vote. I don't think there is any reason that people don't vote other than lack of interest or ignorance.
I think people don't participate because they don't feel that anything changes. Start thinking outside the box and look at restructuring how we spend so that everyone feels that have a vested interest.
That's a tough one. People seem to increasingly take things for granted. I guess lobby the school system to teach civics K-12,
Reach out to volunteers to assist people to get to polling stations.
See suggestions already entered
Educate early and often
publicize everywhere: town hall, town green, email, RiverEast, town website, social media like facebook
Continue to advertise over multiple mediums
Stop slander campaigns. Spend money properly.
I have no idea why folks do not vote
More information being put out
Voting is either important to you or it's not...keep government out of it.
If it just felt like the vote actually meant something it would help.
The voting signs in front of the green and library are great. How about the Westchester area? How about signs at the Route 2 exits?
Be better about getting the word out,
Stop having the board of finance spreading lies and false info.

Nothing. People do not see it as a responsibility.

Allow the schools to pass out information that says there is a vote. Not how to vote but when and where.

Door to door knocking. Make special and fun events held.

Put more info on the town website.

Extensive use of social media and press.

Nothing more then they are already doing.

It's hopeless which is truly unfortunate. I also don't see it as solely a Colchester issue, it's really a national issue. With all due respect, good luck.

Find the topics that are important to voters, do personal outreach.

Send out postcards.

Social media.

Maybe incentives.

I have no idea.

Change the rules as stated above. We'll have 100% participation. All register voters who do not vote will be considered as a yes vote to the budget. Only those opposed to the budget as presented will have to cast a no vote. Majority rules.

Have voting at one location.

Advertise when voting will be taking place.

Hard to fight apathy. More opportunities for residents to have contact with issues/candidates...Mary and Brian did a good job of meeting people and I am sure thus helped them to victory.

One day isn't enough...for those working its just hard. It would require more volunteers but what if voting could happen over the weekend?

not sure

Better social media strategy.

Listen to the people and get more info out to the busy households who cant make all the meetings.

Signs other than in town

Make sure it's easier to get absentee ballot

Increase information blast.

People live on Facebook, push reminders there.

Not sure
Don't spend money on this. The people who choose not to vote are adults making the choice not to.

Offer a volunteer based service to drive people who don't have transportation or create some sort of mail in ballot that is due before the referendum.

Town green banner, signs

More transparency regarding budget

Advertise, rides to the polls

Better publicity on the exact amounts

Register young people

I work second shift so making voting hours later may help

why bother, past efforts seem to have little impact. Voters turn out increases with changes in taxes too high or severe reduction in services.

Make the issues easier to hear about. I don't have time to go to a meeting but would read about it in the paper etc..

Advertising better

I believe that if you have to pay taxes (Federal, State, and Local), then one must vote. However, our tradition makes voting contingent not mandatory. I believe all we can do is inform the public about the importance of being involved and how to be involved via voting. I think the town should use every avenue to convey information (see #26 below).

I'm not sure there is anything you can do. Maybe have an email reminder with what the referendum entails, I would sign up for email reminders for voting.

Online/mobile voting options, if it’s possible to do so without risking someone voting on both mobile and in person.

More communication with residents. Emails, facebook announcements (not allowing comments), flyers in the mail. People should also be more clearly informed on WHAT they are voting on, not just WHO or what party.

I'm sure the town published sufficient information regarding the budget referendum but I didn't know to search it out

Getting all the candidate information and viewpoints in a single unbiased area would be great. A single web page could be devoted to that and could link to each candidates campaign so people could seek out more information as they see fit,

Schedule referendum so that two votes could take place before the end of the school year,

Would like to see more information on social media

Give people a reason to vote beyond the fear of taxes or the fear of budget cuts

Text reminders,

Good question!

Not sure why most of the population doesn't vote, so hard to say

Need to capture the college age students.

Advertise what the budget will pay for specific examples of ideas that will help the town.
Put signs up in advance. Email population
Do a better job at advertising what people are voting on
Bigger presence on Facebook

Every time I go to vote the person standing in front of me is at the wrong voting location. Maybe more info on where to vote, prior to voting would help.

Give more notice with more information. I did not see any coverage of details about budget last year.

Marketing budget to explain what people are voting for.

Good question! It is certainly advertised plenty, in my opinion

Get people more involved

Increase notices about budget meetings. Hold meetings on a weekend
Q20 What is the best way for you to receive town information? (check all that apply)

Answered: 402  Skipped: 37

- Newspaper
- E-mail
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Town Website
- Other (please specify)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANSWER CHOICES</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>52.49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>65.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>43.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>6.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Website</td>
<td>47.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>9.45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Respondents: 402
OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)

1. phone call
2. post a town sign, like other towns. electronic sign in front of town hall as a posting.
3. through the senior center
4. Banners on green
5. Other public notices such as on the town green and high visibility areas, MORE IMPORTANTLY (not for me specifically but I'm general): partnerships within the community to communicate the existence of important conversations and issues by word of mouth through trusted relationships.
6. With any town mailing, include info
7. Use everything you got!
8. I do not think I should have to open a Facebook account to read what's going on with the police or the town. This should be more easily accessible as the Town website is.
10. Patch
11. Town Hall Bulletins
12. Meetings around the town
13. e mail
14. Text messages
15. East of the River
16. Stevensicard@yahoo.com
17. text message
18. There is no one way to best communicate with all of Colchester townpeople considering differences in age groups, accessibility to various communication vehicles/social media. Also, email lists vary in town, many do not know town email lists exist for different purposes. Maybe do an EMAIL drive to sign people up for various ones. Some people don't have email, may not drive or get out much, may be very busy. Consider a full post card mailing to individual mail boxes for key critical information related to important voting or other areas needing citizen involvement or improvement (e.g. many people do not register their dogs...that may be another thing to put on a postcard doing out....could have multiple bulleted-messages. If you want to reach ALL registered voters, than a mailing/post card mailing would be the only true best communication approach. Also, list left off signage.
19. Multiple ways is best because our population uses various methods of news/info gathering.
20. Local free newspaper
21. internet as I never got original survey
22. Right now, I only get town info when I am seeking it. I hear that the Town Website has recently been beefed up (or at least kept more current) which, if true, would be an improvement. I'm not on a town email list, but it might be useful for me, especially if I can tailor the emails to be sent on certain subjects. I would
hope that fewer and fewer people rely on Facebook for anything.

23

Signs on town green that I see driving by

24

river east news bulletin

25

Flyers in local businesses if not too expensive. Maybe at farmers market during summer, presentations at local communities. At North Woods I think if you approached the board/mgt company they would welcome business items/political issues/opportunities/stuff happening in town that will impact all residents.

26

public meetings

27

Town website is bulky and hard to navigate towards desired information.

28

Phone messages.

29

The only town news that we received is the River East. The Norwich Bulletin carries Colchester news once in awhile and the Hartford Courant none.

30

When I select Newspaper I mean the River East News Bulletin.

31

Texting

32

Through the schools systems Digital Backpack program. Other tech products used for parents to see via their children.

33

Share messages to inform everyone

34

Letter

35

Why do I need to comment?

36

Texts

37

I LOVE the emails from the First Selectman’s office that come regularly to inform us of local happenings and issues.

38

Not everyone has social media. How about local TV
Q21 Do you have any budget related comments or questions not covered in your responses above?

Answered: 135  Skipped: 304
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>RESPONSES</th>
<th>DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>2/3/2020 7:34 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2/3/2020 7:20 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>what happened to town halls paving last year?</td>
<td>2/3/2020 7:08 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>time to get going on the new senior center</td>
<td>2/3/2020 7:01 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Fed, state and town taxes are all out of control. At the town level you can do something. Cut and eliminate unneeded programs. Allow the people to keep some of their money</td>
<td>2/2/2020 1:25 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>***On 57 Fest - I would be ok with funding the fireworks portion out of the Town Budget as that seems to be the part all ages enjoy the most. I feel Public Works needs more people available to mow and maintain during the summer. There are several locations where weeds have grown so high they are sticking out on the road and block visibility. In the last few years, my neighbors and I have mowed the sides of the roads because the town only gets to it once a year.</td>
<td>2/1/2020 6:42 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Not right now</td>
<td>2/1/2020 2:04 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>2/1/2020 12:52 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Give breaks to Seniors like the SALT that is available in New York State.</td>
<td>2/1/2020 10:41 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Need to come up with a plan to keep food teachers in colchester</td>
<td>2/1/2020 10:29 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I'd like to see the town focus on filling the empty storefronts in Colchester and be more &quot;budget &quot; friendly to small business owners. Colchester has the advantage of location and can bring revenue in from surrounding towns by offering amenities here such as retail, restaurants and other services. Growth is ok if it's done properly.</td>
<td>2/1/2020 10:10 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>People don't come out and vote. You need to come up with a way to make people vote. Amount of money being spent on a senior center compared to the amount of money that's been taken away from the school system is ridiculous. The youth should come first. Does anybody actually care about the fact that our high school is ranked quite poorly?</td>
<td>2/1/2020 10:01 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2/1/2020 10:00 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Be nice for senior citizens who have paid taxes forever, to get a break,...</td>
<td>2/1/2020 9:58 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Reduce costs. Families are continuing to leave. The new school was not needed and is such an eyesore to our town's charm!</td>
<td>2/1/2020 9:00 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Please be more specific re: town services. We live in different parts of town. Big difference between the Borough, the lake, Westchester etc...</td>
<td>1/31/2020 11:42 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>The proposed new senior center building will enrich so many lives in town. Please support this very important project.</td>
<td>1/31/2020 5:17 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1/31/2020 4:40 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>1/30/2020 5:05 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>not</td>
<td>1/30/2020 9:58 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Construction of new senior center</td>
<td>1/30/2020 6:40 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Realistically, when will the proposed new Senior Center be in full operation</td>
<td>1/29/2020 8:34 PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

71 / 85
2020-2021 Colchester Budget Survey

public works employees are underpaid and the health insurance premium share is too expensive. The town has a dedicated crew and should pay them accordingly and compare what other surrounding towns pay.

no

Rec Plex Fields need to be maintained better, address safety issues, spend money that tax payers have been paying to use facilities. Public works had an increase of one last budget and services have not improved and gotten worse.

Would like to see more emphasis on the plans for a new senior center

WE need to pay attention to improving our fields and the Rec plex and the line painting by the town

no

No

Are we looking into green fuels? Like the wind, solar and Hydrogen? Do we have solar on all city buildings?

Scaled property taxes for older 55 communities. These citizens support town schools but do not have children utilizing the services from schools, teachers, etc. Our communities also do not utilize snow removal, trash pick up, road maintenance from the town as well.

No

Would love to see concert on the green back- would choose that over 57 fest!

no

Non

Not really. A good survey

Wish senior center had a better vibe, is difficult.

Not sure

I did not see any mention of the Senior Center Building.

No

We need a Walmart or something similar for convenience. Have to drive to far for things u need!

Colchester Senior Center is long overdue and needs to be built not only to accommodate our seniors but also other segments of the community. There needs to be more free community meeting space for the many non profit organizations and volunteer groups in town. Those locations need to be available, during the day in the evening (some meetings to go 9pm) and Saturdays. Library only has Monday nights until 8pm for community groups in evening, due to budget cuts shortening their hours years ago (close at 5pm on Tues. Wed-movie night, Thurs - library public programming). Any new spaces need built in projection system like library for meetings as well as more public programming. Would be nice to have a town inventory of public spaces available in town buildings, schools, with services/equipment, who to contact to use, requirements (fee, insurance, etc) to make this easier for groups needing space. Youth Center move from existing building to other town space OR consider to further economize use of school buildings after hours since citizens are already paying for their use and upkeep, getting more use after hours to benefit Colchester students make perfect sense. Why is a separate building only to be used after school on weekdays for the same students what we are doing or do in the future. The existing Youth Center on Norwich Avenue could be sold to return it to the tax roles and encourage...
restaurant (over commercial/retail) to keep more people enjoying the center of town and unique character. Some access in the evening for senior programs. More educational/stimulating learning for Seniors either through high school resources OR setting up Colchester as a Senior Learning satellite for one of area universities or colleges. In many retirement articles people say want to move to college town for access to continuing higher educational, arts, and sports. Why not create a hub like this in Colchester for growing Colchester Sr population as well as surrounding towns. Jeff Burt mentioned something like this was done in Fairfield County (Westport) “Lifelong Learners?” Lifetime learning could be something Colchester becomes known for if developed.. another reason to move to Colchester, along with open space/preservation of farmlands, excellent schools, many sources of recreation - nature and organized, lifelong learning (what else is being considered by current town administration for citizen’s input?). I would like the town to develop/share VISION for town of Colchester to share for feedback/input which would be one that all citizens could identify with. The Motto of “where tradition meets future” is one thing, developing a common vision of various components ensuring representation/ applicability to all age groups that can be used as citizens/town guidepost for planning, development, priority setting and budgeting setting is critical for meaningful future. Transfer stations hours/days have been cut with budget over the years. This creates hardship for many. There was once talk of restoring some hours or sharing days with Hebron off colchester days since near by as alternative. I’ve noticed where Windshield stickers were once required to use the transfer station for only town residents, most cars/trucks going in do not have town sticker. Also, often have to request receipt where sign says not to continue without getting receipt. Portland had an excellent transfer station in the past.. They had a drive-on scale, where if have bulky weight, drive on scale, get weight, and when empty, come back and weigh again to pay for what dropped off. Maybe consider this for more equitable and fair payment of bulky waste fees. The transfer station allows residents: BRUSH / TREE TRUNK / LIMBS / LEAVES / CHRISTMAS TREES Residential disposal only - no commercial disposal Wood Waste - $5 per cu.yd Unbagged leaves only Leaves - No Charge. The material being dropped off includes a tremendous amount of invasive plant material/seed which is ground up and then used as free mulch for town people to take.(and I’ve noticed commercial landscapers also) to take and it is used abundantly on town properties. The invasives include: Japanese Knotweed, Multiflora Rose, Oriental Bittersweet, and others, which were evidenced at Town Hall medians after transfer station mulch was spread on Spring Clean up Day months later, hundreds of seedlings came up. Could there be a designated section of Transfer station for invasive plant debris to be placed and maybe burned by the town periodically to help homeowners and our environment not to further spread invasive plants on town, private properties with possibility of further spreading to open spaces. This could be an educational initiative to identify invasives on home properties and how to safely remove (mechanical vs. chemical) and what may be done with debris.

I would like to see the funding increased for our library.

I would love to see Colchester have a modern senior center.

Money is well spent when provided for safety and social services for those folks who require them.

Na

Good luck!

No

LOWER TAXES

Would support new senior center building

No

Replace senior center building.

No

No.

Please find a way to help retirees with their high taxes. We can’t work overtime to pay for the increasing amount of taxes. Our incomes are fixed.
Seniors shouldn't be paying educational costs in taxes. We have been paying all our lives. Most are on a fix income now.

What is 57 Fest??!!
The senior center is long overdue.
No
Sports fields need to be ore cared for. We also need someone to line our fields like every other towns recreation department does.
No
The school system is largely underfunded for what I would consider maintaining expected programming and basic structures.
Show us you are a good steward of our money. Stop the games with the school budget. It's over protected from change. I have no idea how a town this size continues to get new big buildings with declining enrollment.
no
Are residents that do NOT own $1000 in property allowed to vote on the budget? Are the property rolls or are the voting rolls used? Please see the Charter and the CT statutes.
Town recreation fields are not well maintained. Sports programs are important and fields need to be upkeep more, including new signage.
Senior center, post office both need attention
High taxes, Low Services, Over Populated town. Schools continue to fail with lower standards producing poorly educated kids
No
Tax assessments & educating everyone of town issues/opportunities/economic development
I believe that people should pay personally for services that they want, the ones that do not apply to everyone. one example is Rec fields should be pay-to-play. Residents should pay taxes for safety issues, not for everyone’s pleasure.
no
The town needs the paramedic program. The senior population is increasing and we have many overdoses. Review the individual number of people who use Rec services. They don’t offer programs that students want to go to.
No
We have a great park and rec department. It's the best service we have in town.
No
No
hoping construction of the new senior center gets going!
Felt the manner in which the paramedic question was worded (adding significant) was misleading and written to elicit a particular response. This is not an objective or fair question.
No

They continue to increase taxes and look at the condition of the roads in town, and cut these education budgets, the qty of kids has decrease,

No

To maintain the quality of life that we currently enjoy, taxpayers will have a rate increase. We cannot let our roads and general maintenance of the town deteriorate. Since we have come to a point in our education that technology drives our school curriculum that is constantly in need of upgrading and improving and that will cost money. To do less is inadequate and we fail our students who will need those technological skills for jobs and security.

No

cut spending...if enrollment is down,...cut staff

Is there an active effort to increase business investment in Colchester to reduce the burden on homeowners?

I wish the Board of Finance the best of luck with developing and gaining approval for a reasonable 2020 budget. I know it's not easy to make everyone happy!

I can’t imagine why listing it here would any sense, it's the same thing each year.

Just that we need to do more for the future of kids and our town

no

Telling us that we must accept a greater than 2% increase in taxes each year or risk losing services isn't really a question is it? I think the average taxpayer understands how money flows we don't need the education on a survey.

Where has the town repeatedly indicated that an indoor recreational facility similar to a YMCA with indoor pool is desired, budget is allocated, and nothing has been built??

Transparency is key. Make all of the budget information easily available, make town leaders available in multiple forums for questions regarding the budget.

When will senior center be built?

I have faith in the new folks to take a good hard look at what is done today, where the money is going and clean up the waste,

no

Just look at where Department's can be more efficient. Look to improve performance through active change. No more status quo.

What about investment in economic development? Survey does not make distinction between costs and investments.

No

No

Funding to help maintain Colchester's architectural heritage.

We need more business tax base

No

Why is the revenue from the ambulance service not used to replace the fire apparatus?
While I answered that the town has not spent enough $ to maintain our fields. I am unwilling to see an increase in taxes to do anything other than bring the fields up (and maintain) to consistent playability. Some of the youth sports organizations (for example, Colchester Baseball) are quite flush with $. Let the groups kick in more. Groups that cause the most wear to fields should also have to pay more to assist with maintenance and/or create more fields (Football and lacrosse share, but even individually, these sports wear fields to a high degree.)

The rec fields are a safety issue. More funding needs to be dedicated

Personally I don’t believe that the police department should receive more funding. They don’t do a great job solving the recent crime that has occurred in colchester such as stolen vehicles.

No

Will we be recovering the money that was embezzled $23,000.00 +/- from the town clerks office. Are charges being filed

I believe it is important to prevent future costs by ensuring adequate funding for programming for children and youth through the schools and outside programs and services such as YSS and C3,

No

Provide advanced notice of budget hearings open to the public and what agenda items will be discussed. Maybe live stream the meeting for those that are unable to attend.

I see that we are adding positions but losing positions where it matters, in classrooms. Why do we always add full positions instead of adding part time help which saves the insurance cost, I see Human Relations at Town Hall added, Financial officer added, another facilities person? Where will this money come from? Huge classes, lack of student support...

While I think the RecPlex is a wonderful facility, I believe that it is in need to some improved drainage in certain areas of the fields and the walking/running path the goes around the facility, I think allowing excessive overland flow that scour sand and soil and causes heavy erosion or wet spots distracts from the usefulness and enjoyment of the complex. Therefore, I argue that some investment be made to correct these conditions.

Increase the support to the memorial day parade.

Other towns have a lower mill rate, less annual per household income but better services. Why? Where is the money going?

why are inside lights on in the middle of the night in the schools? if S7test requires town funds GET RID OF IT

Why is S7 Test free? Charge admission or parking fee to raise money. The type of crowd that “free” attracts may not be desirable. Sports fields need to be more well-kept. New signage at the RecPlex and signs to mark each individual field is necessary.

Paramedic program is not needed. Shired service (Medic 3) is more cost effective. Also the CHFD has serious issues with BLS coverage at nights and on weekends. Volunteer incentive program needs to be enhanced or consider EMS only per diem staffing

Capitol improvement plans need to be better managed, the current situation of the fire department fleet of apparatus is in distress due to poor fund management

Not sure that entire tax payers money should go to school system. We spend too much on school not enough anywhere else. Let’s make sure we have properly townsed emergency services in town.

The town owns 42 plots at Linwood cemetery. They do not have perpetual care. The town was supposed to take care of them and they have not.

We need a realistic economic development budget

With the investment in the middle school the high school technology is very out of date and needs to be updated.
Great education system in Colchester. Would be ok with a tax increase to sustain/continue to improve upon the school system.

Schools continue to get too much and still not perform

Would like to see more police coverage during the latenight shifts

I hope to see better information about the budget process in the future.

Why will the families who get into the pre-k program through the lottery be discriminated against & have to pay $250/mo. while the other students do not need to pay this? Isn’t my child without a disability providing a service to the other children by being a role model?

The questions seem to be inappropriate. For instance there is a specific question about paramedic program and if it had a significant impact to the mill rate. That is unfairly worded. There were not questions specific to education budget programs and how they impact mill rate

We need economic development

Move the police to 24/7

N/a

Increase fire dept spending to take care of aging and better support your volunteers
Q22 Do you have any comments that can help us better serve Colchester? Are there any services that Colchester does not provide and you wish it did?

Answered: 144    Skipped: 295
RESPONSES

see comment separately due to length

comment on 57b fest: ask the vendors to chip in. Build the Senior center

Kentucky fried chicken

submit separately due to length of content.

Cut unneeded "Nice to have" programs

Senior center to be opened later during the week and possibly for weekend events.

The main reason we are planning on moving out of town is that the taxes keep going up, education spending keeps going up (we have no kids) and we have to pay to bring garbage to the transfer station. Honestly, we aren't getting anything for our over 7 thousand per year in taxes.

Allow more commercial business into town, specific areas. Trash pickup or free transfer station access for regular household trash!

variety of small businesses

I have a few small ideas I'd love to share (working in conjunction with the public library or services like the food bank), but as referred to in a previous comment, I'm looking for where to start to be a part of the process myself.

Speed bumps in highly residential areas.

Retail or a small department store so that residents don't have to travel so far to meet those needs. Also the town should look into more field space as our recreation programs are a big draw for families.

Community center, including senior center in the building.

No

would love to have an indoor pool somewhere in town

Trash pickup, street lights in our neighborhood.

Need a Walmart or target type store

I think services are good. I think people need to realize that if you want to live in a small town, you can't expect big town services without paying for it. I look at the big houses being built and I ask myself how will they relate to me as a senior? One thing that really bothers me is the cars speeding down these small streets. Elm Street got speed bumps, can we get some cars to slow down?

Please clean up areas of town that look neglected, especially areas along Broadway. Corner of rt 85 and Broadway looks particularly bad.

Business development?

Go back to trash pick up. Or at least CHRISTMAS TREES. Us seniors can't get the ground up and can't afford to pay

No

There are many programs that other schools offer that Colchester has not had the resources to offer until now or have lost in recent years such as some of the gifted and talented programs. We must aim high and set stretch goals for bringing our schools to the next level. This has ramifications beyond our students and
staff. Quality of schools are by far the most listed reason when people are deciding where to live.

swimming pool facility

No

no

Construction of new senior center

An New senior center

I BELIEVE THERE CAN BE BETTER LANDSCAPING MAINTENANCE OF THE TOWN HALL, LIBRARY AND SENIOR CENTER

More Concerts on the Green

not at this time

town wide trash pickup included in the tax bill

At one time in your budget you had an allotment of $100,000 to have police coverage 24/7 by Colchester police and you decided to take it out of the budget.

Not that I can think of.

Our senior center is not adequate, extremely outdated. Our surrounding towns have much better facilities.

Maintain rec plex fields for all sports, to include field lining, and turf maintenance, irrigation,

We need a proper senior center with an exercise room.

no

Senior center activities in evening to serve 55+ who still work. Make the center more active for the younger seniors

Please we have to be investing in the green new deal.

Please, please, please concentrate on a new Senior Center for the increasing older population in order to hold more services/classes. We need a cleaner, modern environment.

See previous answers. Also, I would like a CPR course provided free to residents.

No

Swimming pool or access to Hemlocks pool More diverse Senior Center programs

no - I live close to center of town and am pleased with services here

No

Better transportaion.

Perhaps rec activities where people pay a bit to participate and other such rec programs. tai chi in the park. There are schools in other places where older children help younger children with schoolwork, providing positive experiences for both children at no cost. A dance company or performances open to the public of local theater and dance companies
I don't think we can justify the paramedic program.

No

A new Senior center and more programs.

No

Update Senior Center

Due to our 43 square mile size, very wooded areas, differences in service areas for internet companies and age of their equipment, is there anything that can be done by/through town, to research and offer an option of internet service to citizens through a town contract OR a collaborative/assoc contract for better service throughout town. This is often source of series of comments on Colchester social media sites where service down often (Comcast/Frontier), or in my case My Frontier service for phone and internet is over $80.00 with only 1MB of service where advertise in our area for 6MB. (Due to fixed income in retirement do not have cable tv/ economize) Aren't there other town(s) that has own electricity service provider. Why not something else to benefit citizens where there are problems in service?

public transportation, better exercise facilities for those cut of school (ex: swimming pool)--fund it with $$$ from school cutbacks.

Na

no

section 8 housing and or housing authority

no

No

new senior center

n/c

No

No.

We need to build the new senior center and make the town more walkable with sidewalk upgrades, especially on Lebanon Avenue. What happened to the Grant applied for new sidewalks on Lebanon Ave, from the Hideaway Bar and up the hill to the new Apartments being built?

We desperately need 24 hour Police Protection.

More open hours on town dump. Lower costs for dumping bulk items such as furniture, etc.

Sr financial counseling

Yes, there was a once a year bulky item pick-up many years ago. I would like to see that again even with a slight fee attached

No

I wish our town was more open to having additional business come here, I feel I end up leaving our town so much to get better prices and selection on stuff I need for my household b/c it's too expensive here or we just don't have it for sale. Please let more business come here!! Also PLEASE put money towards are
fields, its an embarrassment how bad they are, especially our playground.
Lining fields.

No

Again, an improved Police and Fire.
Keep us rural

More emphasis on culture and the arts
Leaf Pick-up, Snowplow Operators that do NOT destroy the curbing

24/7 police coverage. On a budget vote years back they said if budget passed 1st time we would get 24/7 police coverage. Budget passed and we didn’t get the 24/7 police coverage

Change dump hours to better fit residents schedules. It is difficult to get to with current hours

New Senior Center

Town swimming pool - in conjunction with future improvements to Senior Center??

I like living in Colchester and have enjoyed the last 5 years

We need businesses to pay the taxes instead of increasing the personal mill rate. We need to get new businesses in Colchester. Stop and Shop needs a major competitor like Aldi or Whole Foods. We need a vegan restaurant like ION in Middletown. Thank you.

Provide more information regarding proposed developments of all kinds. The public notices are rather obscure and minimalist. If people know more about a new business or housing being proposed near their residence, they might more actively follow and comment on it.

No

new senior ctr.

NFA

I think the high school needs a turf field. It can’t withstand all the sports played throughout the year. Not saying town needs to pay all of it. Major fundraising would be needed but it would increase the flexibility of use.

No

Freeze in taxes for seniors

No

For the amount of taxes we pay trash pick up should be included, as a bare minimum. You put so much money in education and ignore everything else.

Sunday Library Hours

24 hour policing

Not that I can think of.
2020-2021 Colchester Budget Survey

We need to find a way to attract more businesses to Colchester to increase our tax base, while at the same time maintain the sense of small town with open space that is a big part of what makes Colchester a great place to live.  

I think we need to spend money to get money. This town has so much potential but money needs to be invested in the town. I am ok with a tax increase to have better services within town hall and throughout town.  

Old car dealer across from post office: indoor skate, swimming, something to add to growing population  

there are services I wish they didn’t  

I’d like to see the town pick up the trash instead of this current system. Secondly I honestly don’t see the need for a police department but if were going to have one please get them safe vehicles someone is going to get hurt in those old pieces of junk one of these days and it’s going to be our fault for not providing them the proper equipment.  

Police dept after midnight  

Listen to the top 3 desires,  

i have been wishing for years that the Town would build a public pool. The closest public pool we can access is in Glastonbury.  

can’t think of anything at the moment  

not without increasing or adding more to the budget  

Ride services from private homes to local businesses; grocery stores, doctors offices. Taxis/Uber/Lyft Seniors relying on Senior transportation is limiting.  

How to address demographic trends that will impact budget, services and quality of life. No questions about regional or shared services.  

No  

No  

The town needs to start providing firefighter paramedics on duty 24/7.  

Unsure  

Unsure  

Provide a larger variety of stores and restaurants,  

Weekly concerts on the Green - we missed those. We wish there had been more last summer. Town rec center with an indoor pool? It would be great to have a local open swim area.  

No  

Colchester needs to be smart about its planning and growth to avoid an increase in housing that requires services and reduces open space which requires little to no services. We have plenty of small retail space and businesses should be sought to fill the vacancies in them,  

Improve schools  

I just think we have our priorities mixed up. Look at how other district’s budget, how can we most effectively use our tax dollars? How can we make it easier to open and maintain a business in town?
Already mentioned. Money for sports and after school bussing.

I wish we had a town pool and swim teams.

have a maintenance plan vs replacement plan for public buildings ie schools

Would love to see business development that is more up-scale: ie - no more fast food establishments and drive-thrus. Try to maintain a small town feel.

Marlborough Parks and rec. have connected with Hemlocks for aquacise classes can this become available for Colchester residents?

Please invest in public safety. Take a look at Hebron, they take care of their first responders and equipment despite having a much smaller tax base. The fact that we’re borrowing fire trucks from other towns should be a big indicator that we haven’t properly funded them. Colchester used to be the shining star for other agencies, now our aging fleet and lack of investment in our volunteers makes us a joke.

A paramedic program would greatly help the town

Safer main roads at night. We need to make sure town considers installing LED lights on main roads. Let’s not wait until we get more accidents. There is no excuse to have route 16 as dark as it is now. It’s so hard to drive on 16 at night. It’s 2020 you know.

Better sidewalks for walkability downtown, and more investment in economic development

Taxes need to stay at the current rate in lieu of all the CT state taxe increases on its residents. Our school budget should also not increase with the decline in student population. However I would like to see a refurbished or new senior center for our aging population!

Cleaning your plots at Linwood cemetery

Fire apparatus might need replacing. But effort should be made to properly staff the firehouses! There is a severe shortage of consistent competent emergency responders.

24/7 police force. The crime at night while we sleep is very much a concern.

See other comments I made in this survey: all apply to this question.

Instead of focusing on a “senior center”, we should be thinking of all ages and focus on a structure that would serve all ages

Provides way too much already. I should not be paying for some of the services that are 100% the responsibility of parents.

I’m not sure what the zoning allows as of now but I do wish Colchester promoted a denser and more walkable town center and surrounding areas. The reality is no one wants a tax increase but still wants more services and the same rural environment. Well I believe an avenue to consider is a denser town center and surrounding areas so we may have an increase in consumers and small business that will lead to more tax revenue. If people live near their needs and source of income, having a car becomes an option not a necessity. That means money that would be spent on the vehicle, gas, insurance, upkeep, would go to other things in our local economy.

Without monies to support no reason to ask

Garbage and how about the dump be open more than two days a week. When there is a little bit of snow or heavy rain, they don’t open. What is up with that? I showed up there once at 3pm and they locked the gate on me and wouldnt let me in. It was 3PM. That is very frustrating especially when I was there early just had to wait my turn.

24/7 police shifts.

I have lived here for over 22 years and this is the first time I’ve seen a survey like this. I think it’s a good tool. I’d like to see more transparency in local
None. No.

I believe that it is important to consider prioritizing spending and cutting we have neglected to spend money over the past several years that needs to be spent to provide safety security and infrastructure for residents while allowing overspending in other areas. We need to be more fiscally responsible and need to be more responsible and spend more effectively.

N/a

Increase fire dept spending to better your volunteers

Wish we had an indoor pool.
21. Do you have any budget related comments or questions not covered in your responses above?

22. Do you have any comments that can help us better serve Colchester? Are there any services that Colchester does not provide and you wish it did?

A new Senior Center. What we have is too small and doesn't provide enough parking. People from other towns are joining our center which is proof that we have wonderful services. We also need more help to run this organization since it has grown so big. Our bus service for medical and social living is wonderful. And that goes for the staff as well. It is the reason I moved to Colchester and was the first place I stopped in at to see what it had to offer.
21. Do you have any budget related comments or questions not covered in your responses above?

[Handwritten text]

22. Do you have any comments that can help us better serve Colchester? Are there any services that Colchester does not provide and you wish it did?

[Handwritten text]

Town Needs a Town Center.

with a pool. A place to use if we need to put people in if power out. Summer and winter a place where people can get food, in need, when Town wide Emery

A place to be used for town meeting, town plays.

Standing for 500 people with a play stand.

We could move in Youth Center, Senior Center, Town Severs

It could have town showers.

It could be used as an area EOC, for area towns.

walk in Coolers and Freezers. Big kitchen, storage areas to hold males round to eat.

Why Don't town Do.

Get ready ahead of time when we all know that we could get hit with bad weather.

F.D. Called out for tree down. F.D calls T.P.W. and the show up and have to go back and get a saw. Why didn't they put cones signs and rope, and saw with gas can in pick up. Before leaving at 3 p.m. to get called back at 5:30 p.m. That this to get P.W.C. then Drive out to other side of town to drive back to to get saw, and the back to cut tree and remove the tree.

That's to me is how you want money and F.D. time.