

# COLUMBIA



UPDATE FEBRUARY 2021



# TOWN OF COLUMBIA

## OFFICE OF THE FIRST SELECTMAN

The beginning of February will be bringing some snowy weather and I'd like to remind residents to be prepared for travel difficulties and possible power outages. See the Department of Public Works page in the newsletter for important winter safety tips.

We encourage anyone with a medical condition or a disability that may require additional help during a power outage to notify us. Please contact the Senior Center Director, Bernadette Derring at 860-228-0759.

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON COVID-19 VACCINES:** At the time of this publication the State of CT is currently in Phase 1b of our statewide rollout plan and scheduling is now for Individuals 75 and older.

Scheduling a COVID-19 Vaccination Appointment in Vaccine Administration Management System (VAMS): Please go to the [VAMS website](#) . Seniors who need assistance can contact the Beckish Senior Center at 860-228-0759.

If you are not a VAMS user, but interested in learning more, or if you have questions about the availability of COVID-19 vaccine in your area and if you can receive the COVID-19 vaccine, please see the [Eastern Highland Health District \(EHHD\) website](#) for more information.

Scheduling a COVID-19 Vaccine with Hartford Healthcare: Please go to the [Hartford Healthcare website](#) for more information on the COVID-19 vaccine and to schedule your vaccination.

Call the CT COVID Vaccine Appointment Assist Line at 877-918-2224, Monday to Friday, 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. Needless to say this line is handling a large volume. There is a call back option for long wait times.

**2021 FRED GIFFORD MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP:** The Fred Gifford Memorial Scholarship is made possible by the generosity of the people and businesses throughout our area and is administered by the Columbia Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. The individual awards of \$1,000 are given to given to two (2) young men and two (2) young women. All applicants must be legal residents of Columbia, CT, seniors attending secondary school or homeschooled, with plans to continue their education at an accredited postsecondary school or institution.

For more information please see page 30 in the Newsletter and/or the [Columbia Volunteer Fire Department's website](#).

I would also like to thank all of our volunteer fire and emergency services personnel for their service.

**COVID-19 TESTING SITES:** On the following pages you will find important information on COVID Testing sites. You can also get the most up-to-date information from the State of Connecticut on COVID-19, residents are encouraged to visit [ct.gov/coronavirus](https://ct.gov/coronavirus). Residents can also subscribe to text message alerts from the state by texting the keyword **COVIDCT** to **888-777**.

Thank you and please be safe.

Steven M. Everett, First Selectman  
severett@columbiact.org  
860-228-0110



# Get tested for COVID-19



Town of Tolland & Town of Vernon  
No Cost, No Appointment  
Drive-Thru COVID-19 Testing\*

## NOTE SCHEDULE CHANGE

### **Vernon Rockville High School**

70 Loveland Hill Rd, Vernon

SUNDAY 01/31 12PM - 3PM

SUNDAY 2/14 12PM - 3PM

SUNDAY 2/28 12PM - 3PM

### **Tolland High School**

1 Eagle Hill, Tolland

SUNDAY 2/7 12PM - 3PM

SUNDAY 2/21 12PM - 3PM

\*PRC testing conducted by Sema4

For additional Testing sites in CT for COVID-19 Visit [ct.gov/prioritytesting](https://ct.gov/prioritytesting) to find a free testing site near you.

### COVID-19 Contact Tracing

If you test positive, you can expect a call from a contact tracer, and to have a detailed conversation with them about who you have been in contact with. Conversations with contact tracers can save lives, and stop the spread of COVID-19. Calls from a contact tracer will show up on your phone as CTCOVIDTRACE, or may be from your local health department. You should know that your personal health information will be protected in this process.

Contact tracers will not ask you to call a "1-900" or "900" number, will not contact you via social media, and will not ask you for financial information.

Visit [ct.gov/coronavirus](https://ct.gov/coronavirus) for more information about  
COVID-19 in Connecticut

# Getting tested for COVID-19



## No-Cost, No Appointment Drive-Thru Testing\* in Mansfield

### WHEN:

Every Wednesday, 3pm-7pm  
through February 24, 2021

### WHERE:

Mansfield Middle School  
205 Spring Hill Road  
Storrs-Mansfield

For additional Testing sites in CT for COVID-19  
Visit [ct.gov/prioritytesting](https://ct.gov/prioritytesting) to find a free testing site near you.

\*PCR testing conducted by [sema4](#)

Visit [ct.gov/coronavirus](https://ct.gov/coronavirus) for more information about  
COVID-19 in Connecticut

Updated 1/25/2021



**COVID-19 TESTING:** Testing is done both on-site and inside CVS locations. When you arrive at your testing site, please follow all instructions about where to go for your test.

Important: Availability in some states is limited due to extreme demand. Check daily for available times.

## More than 4,500 testing locations. No cost to you.<sup>2</sup>

\$

\$0

out-of-pocket cost with insurance  
or federal program for uninsured<sup>2</sup>

### Lab testing (drive-thru)

Results typically take

2-3 days.<sup>3</sup>

Must be 10 years of age or older.

### Rapid-result testing

Get results within hours.<sup>4</sup>

Availability is limited.

Must be 5 years of age or older.

**Hartford HealthCare's** COVID-19 testing capabilities.

- Drive-up testing centers at nine convenient locations throughout the state.
- Online appointment scheduling which reduces wait times at our testing locations.
- Same-day, on-site evaluation and testing at our urgent care centers throughout Connecticut.
- Tests for adults and children of all ages, when accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.
- Mobile testing at areas around the state.

NOTE: COVID testing sites are NOT administering vaccines. Click [here for vaccine location](#)



Generations is here to help whether you have symptoms or NOT. We offer safe curbside COVID-19 testing for anyone. You DO NOT need to be a Generations patient. Testing available in a vehicle or on foot at our: Willimantic Site, Danielson Site, and Putnam Site

For current updates, please call our COVID-19 Info Line (860) 450-5508.

TESTING HOURS: The below schedules are subject to change depending on weather and other impacting factors. We apologize in advance for any inconvenience this may cause and we appreciate your understanding as we remain committed to making testing accessible in the communities we serve.

ADDRESSES:

Willimantic – 40 Mansfield Avenue

Putnam – 202 Pomfret Street

Danielson – 42 Reynolds Street

For more information please go to the [Generations website](#).



# Get Tested for COVID-19



## FREE DRIVE-THRU TESTING SITE

NO APPOINTMENT NECESSARY - RESULTS IN 24 HOURS

OPEN MONDAYS AND FRIDAYS 11-5PM  
Rec Park - 79 Main Street, Willimantic, CT



Visit [ct.gov/coronavirus](https://ct.gov/coronavirus) for more information about COVID-19 in Connecticut

# More Information about Testing



## Testing for COVID-19

Getting tested for COVID-19, and getting next steps if you test positive can save lives. It can protect your health and the health of your family, friends, neighbors, and many others.

Guidance from health care experts suggest you get tested regularly, even without symptoms, if you're living in some of our most populated cities and towns, especially if you live in close proximity to others.

Visit [ct.gov/prioritytesting](https://ct.gov/prioritytesting) to find a free testing site near you.

## COVID-19 Contact Tracing

If you test positive, you can expect a call from a contact tracer, and to have a detailed conversation with them about who you have been in contact with. Conversations with contact tracers can save lives, and stop the spread of COVID-19. Calls from a contact tracer will show up on your phone as CT COVIDTRACE, or may be from your local health department. You should know that your personal health information will be protected in this process.

Contact tracers will not ask you to call a "1-900" or "900" number, will not contact you via **social media, and will not ask you for financial information.**

## For support

If you need support finding resources for you and your family during the COVID-19 pandemic, dial 2-1-1, or visit [211ct.org](https://211ct.org).

Visit [ct.gov/coronavirus](https://ct.gov/coronavirus) for more information about COVID-19 in Connecticut



# TOWN OF COLUMBIA

## OFFICE OF THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

First Selectman Steven Everett, Public Works Director Beth Lunt and I have been working hard on ways to improve the safety of our town's roads and intersections. We have sought the help from the Connecticut Safety Circuit Rider (SCR) program. The Speed Display/Driver Feedback Sign Program will provide the town with two speed display signs each, at no cost to the town, over the course of the next two years. The new program will assist the Town of Columbia at reducing fatal and serious-injury speed-related crashes.



From left to right: Beth Lunt, DPW Director, Melissa Evans, Safety Circuit Rider; Greg DeCarli, Resident State Trooper.

The Town of Columbia's departments are open by appointment only; however, we continue to encourage residents to use on-line services. Online services include [Tax Payments](#), [Transfer Station Stickers](#), and obtaining [Building Permits](#). We also encourage resident to use the drop-boxes at Yeoman's Hall and Town Hall for tax payments, correspondence, permits, Transfer Station stickers, Dog License, etc. For a staff directory to schedule an appointment please go to the [Town of Columbia's website](#). Please respect our safety guidelines by wearing a mask when entering the building, use hand sanitizer at the entrance, and observe social distancing guidelines.

**THE TOWN OF COLUMBIA IS ACCEPTING ONLINE DONATIONS:** The Town of Columbia is accepting donations to assist those in need during the COVID-19 pandemic. Donations may be used for food supply, fuel assistance, protective equipment and other social services that will benefit those affected by COVID-19. Donations can be made by check, payable to the Town of Columbia or [online](#).

The Beckish Senior Center provides a local MOBILE Foodshare EVERY OTHER THURSDAY from 1:00 PM to 1:30 PM. The dates for February are the 11th and 25th.

**FOODSHARE'S FOOD DISTRIBUTION IS LOCAL and AT RENTSCHLER FIELD:** The Local MOBILE Foodshare location will be at the Beckish Senior Center EVERY OTHER THURSDAY from 1:00 PM to 1:30 PM.. For more information call 860-286-999 or visit the [FoodShare website](#). Please see the flyer on Page 12 for more information.

Anyone and Everyone can participate no questions asked. Simply drive up with your car and they will put the food in your trunk.

**FOOD DISTRIBUTION AT RENTSCHLER FIELD, 615 SILVER LANE, EAST HARTFORD, CT.**

Rentschler Field Food Distribution Schedule

Rentschler Field • 615 Silver Lane, East Hartford, CT 06118 8:30 AM - 12:00 PM

**OPEN:** Tuesdays & Thursdays

**CLOSED:** Every Monday, Wednesday, Friday

**Important information:**

- More Food Resources: [www.foodshare.org/coronavirus](http://www.foodshare.org/coronavirus)
- One allocation of food per car to ensure that there is enough food for everyone.



# Need help with food?

FIND A LOCATION NEAR YOU

## Mobile Foodshare:

*Pantry on Wheels*

- Text "FOODSHARE" to 85511
- Visit [www.foodshare.org/mobile](http://www.foodshare.org/mobile)
- Dial 860-856-4321

## Food Pantries, SNAP & More:

- Dial 2-1-1
- Or dial 1-800-203-1234
- Visit [www.ct211.org](http://www.ct211.org)

**FOODSHARE**

[www.foodshare.org](http://www.foodshare.org)  
860-288-9999



# ¿Necesitas ayuda con alimentos?

ENCUENTRA UNA LOCACIÓN CERCA DE TI

## Mobile Foodshare:

*Despensa de Alimentos Móvil*

- Textea "FOODSHARE" al 85511
- Visite [www.foodshare.org/mobile](http://www.foodshare.org/mobile)
- Marque 860-856-4321

## Despensas de alimentos, SNAP y más:

- Marque 2-1-1
- O marque 1-800-203-1234
- Visite [www.ct211.org](http://www.ct211.org)

**FOODSHARE**

[www.foodshare.org](http://www.foodshare.org)  
860-288-9999





**EVERBRIDGE NOTIFICATIONS:** We will from time to time issue an Everbridge Notification with a message from the First Selectman, Steven M. Everett to help keep you informed. If you would like to sign up for Everbridge Notifications please go to the Town's website and on the [Everbridge Notifications](#) tab.

**EMAIL NOTIFICATIONS:** To receive Town news please go to the Town's website and click on the [Email Notifications](#) tab.

If you need assistance please do not hesitate to call the Town Administrative Office or the First Selectman at 860-228-0110 or email us at [townadministrator@columbiact.org](mailto:townadministrator@columbiact.org).

Mark B. Walter, Town Administrator  
323 Route 87  
Columbia, CT 06237  
860-228-0110

Find us on 



Image by Pixabay

# **COLUMBIA'S**

# **MOBILE FOODSHARE**

**Beckish Senior Center**  
**188 Route 66, Columbia**

**EVERY OTHER THURSDAY**

**Jan 14<sup>th</sup>, Jan 28<sup>th</sup>, Feb 11<sup>th</sup>, Feb 25<sup>th</sup>,  
Mar 11<sup>th</sup>, Mar 25<sup>th</sup>**

**1:00PM TO 1:30 PM**

**DRIVE THROUGH ONLY—NO CONTACT  
OPEN TRUNK OR CAR DOOR AND WE WILL PLACE  
ITEMS IN YOUR CAR AND YOU CAN DRIVE AWAY  
SAFELY. MUST WEAR A MASK IF FOOD IS NOT  
GOING IN TRUNK OF VEHICLE**

**EVERYONE IS WELCOME—NO PERSONAL INFO REQUIRED FOR  
PARTICIPATION –**

# UPCOMING TOWN MEETINGS

**Due to the current COVID-19 Emergency, meetings will be held by utilizing remote access. Each board or committee will provide the information needed to join using an on-line conferencing platform. Please check the Town of Columbia's [website](#) for updates.**

In accordance with Governor Lamont's Executive Order 7B and social distancing guidelines recommended by the CDC to slow community spread of COVID-19, meetings are physically closed to the public. We encourage residents to join via Zoom and to provide your comments and input during the meetings utilizing the "Chat" feature in Zoom, or providing comment during the Audience of Citizens/Public Comment portion of the meeting. Public Comment will be accepted by our dedicated email at [PublicInput@columbiact.org](mailto:PublicInput@columbiact.org) or by USPS mail to 323 Route 87, Columbia, CT 06237 and must be received prior to the meeting (public comment received after the meeting will be shared at the next meeting).

# HOLIDAYS

***MONDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2021***

***PRESIDENTS' DAY***

***TOWN OFFICES WILL BE CLOSED***



<a href="https://www.freepik.com/vectors/celebration">Celebration vector created by freepik - www.freepik.com</a>



# TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

## **ASSESSORS OFFICE:**

### **REMINDER AND NOTICE FROM THE ASSESSOR'S OFFICE**

The Homeowners program will start accepting applications again as of February 1, 2021. If you are already in the program you will receive a letter from us reminding you to file. If you are not already in the program you will need to bring a copy of your 1040 income tax forms for 2020 to our office once they are completed or all your income information if you do not file income taxes. If you have any questions, feel free to call us at 860-228-9555.

**BECKISH SENIOR CENTER:** The Beckish Senior Center is closed to the public until further notice due to the Corona Virus. We ask that you please stay home and stay safe.

WE ARE AVAILABLE BY PHONE AND EMAIL:

Monday—Friday 8am-3pm

Bernadette Derring—Director of Senior Services

Beckish@columbiact.org

860-228-0759 ext. 1

## **ACTIVITIES:**

**Walking Group** - Walkers are at every level of fitness. This is a flat easy walk outside along the various parts of the Airline Trails. During the winter months we have plans to possibly walk indoors at the Eastbrook Mall or the Mansfield Recreation Center. If you are interested in walking **please contact Linda at 860-806-0054.** You are welcome to leave a voicemail or text message and she will get back to you.

**Beckish Walking Group with Linda**

**Every Wednesday at 10:00am**

**Location varies weekly—call Linda**

# TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

**Virtual Bingo** - If you are interested in playing Virtual Bingo, please contact Linda at 860-806-0054 if you are interested in playing. Each player will need to have Internet access and a laptop, iPad or computer. The Beckish Senior Center does have a few iPad's to be loaned-out if you are in need. We will hand deliver bingo cards to you and set a date and time. Prizes will be awarded to all the winners! Once we have enough players, we will set a date and time and get started!

To implement proper safety protocols, and to keep our staff and volunteers safe we ask that you do not enter the building for any reason. If you would like to speak with me or anyone of my staff members, please call the senior center at 860-228-0759. If you are dropping off donations, please call ahead to make sure we are here. Donations can be made Mondays, Tuesday, and Thursdays from 8am to 3pm and Wednesdays from 8am to 1pm. You can leave the donations on the sidewalk and bench outside the front door, and the staff will take them from there. We are very grateful for all the donations we are receiving. Thank you very much for your continued support.

Our Transportation program is up and running, and you can schedule a ride by calling Margaret or Lisa at ext. 2. Our van drivers are Rose Kurcinik, Pat Morris and Tamora Toscano. Our program is running everyday Monday through Friday. We can accommodate, medical rides, various shopping needs, banking errands, trips to the library or just about anywhere you need to go within Connecticut.

Once again, I would like to remind you all that the Beckish Senior Center is closed to the public until further notice. Please do not enter the building at any time without an appointment. Thank you all for your understanding. The Beckish Senior Center staff is doing their best to keep you and all of us safe during this critical time.

Sincerely,

Bernadette Derring  
Director Senior Services & Transportation  
Municipal Agent for the Elderly

# TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

**BUILDING/LAND USE DEPARTMENT:** To make an appointment with the Building Department please call (860) 228-0440 or by email [LandUse@columbiact.org](mailto:LandUse@columbiact.org). Permits or applications for land use can be safely dropped off in the lock box located by the front entrance to Yeoman's Hall. The box is checked every morning. Please make sure that the envelope is clearly marked with the town department name and include your contact information on your envelope placed in the lock-box.

Please click [here](#) for all permit paperwork. Please call or email ahead to verify permit fees (by check only, made out to Town of Columbia), or to address other questions. Work that is to be done by a contractor must include a copy of their State license, and certificate of insurance with workman's comp, and should include a signed authorization from the property owner. Inspections will be carried out by appointment only for exterior inspections as well as inspections of non-occupied structures (new construction/additions) will continue.

Building Department

Terri Lasota, Building Department Administrative Assistant

(860) 228-0440

email [LandUse@columbiact.org](mailto:LandUse@columbiact.org).

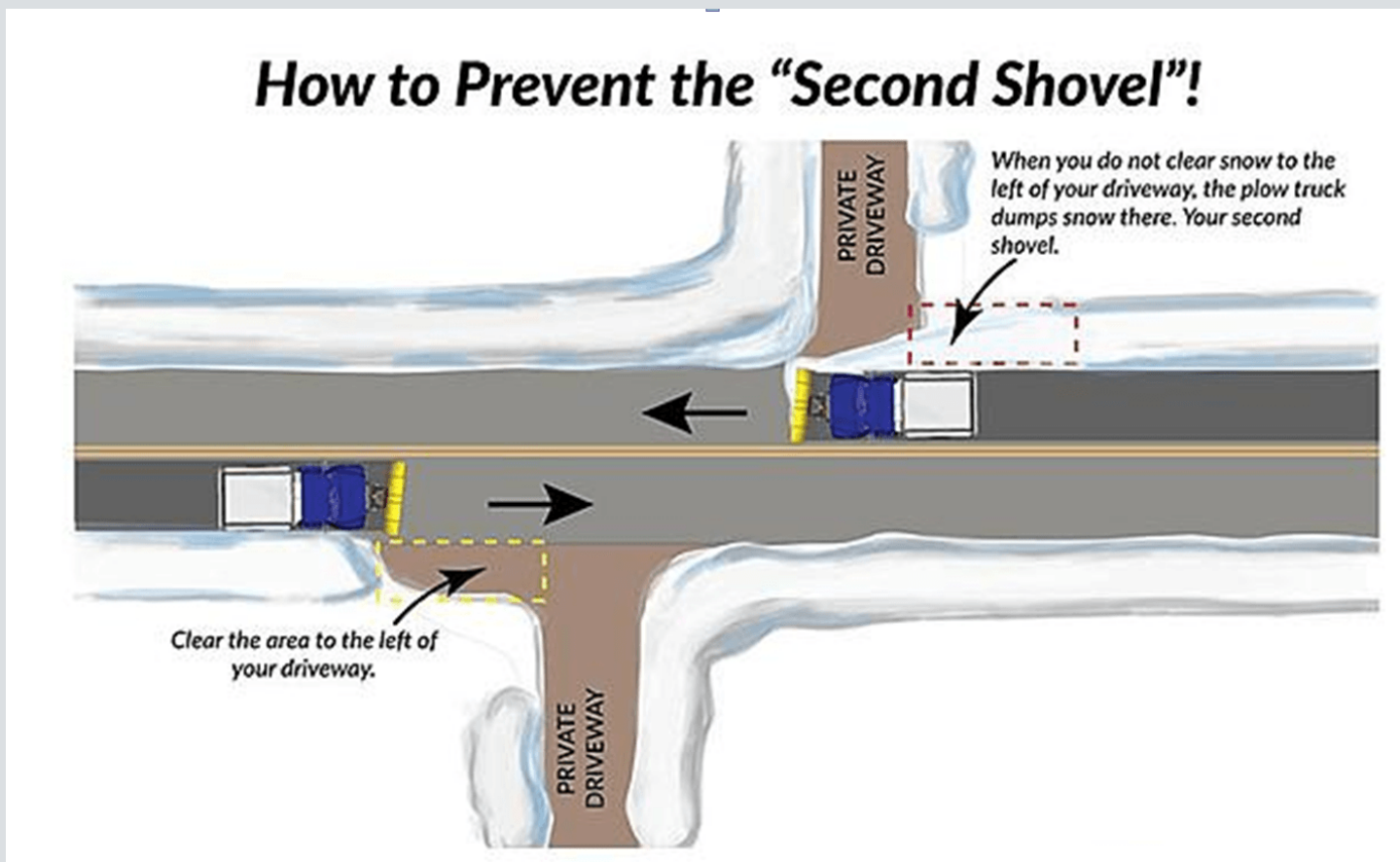
**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS:** Provided below is important information for the winter months.

## **SNOW REMOVAL:**

- Make sure that your roadside trash bins stay on private property and do not venture out into the road. The Town is not liable for any damage as a result of bins that get damaged by passing traffic.
- Refrain from parking in town roadways or in Municipal and School parking lots during snow events.
- Refrain from using snowmobiles, using all-terrain vehicles and engaging in snow skiing on town roadways.
- Do not plow, shovel or blow snow onto the street. Doing so creates a hazard to other motorists and to DPW snow plow operators. The chunks of ice and snow create an uneven road surface that can take drivers by surprise.

# TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

- When driving, **please stay at least 200 feet behind any snow plow** and never pass a plow truck as visibility is limited for the snow plow operator.
- Refrain from traveling during a storm event unless it is absolutely necessary.
- Prior to final clean-up of your driveway, check the road condition. If it does not appear to be completely clear or needs to be widened, chances are the plow may return and may push snow back into the entrance of your driveway. Waiting until the plows have finished making the roadways safe might keep you from clearing your driveway more than once.
- DPW's first responsibility is to clear the roads for safe passage. While snow plow operators try to minimize the amount of snow that is plowed into driveways, it is the owner's responsibility to clear their driveway opening. To avoid extra shovel work, try to shovel after the snow plow has driven by, and shovel the snow to the right side of your driveway as you face the road. Below is a Clearing Your Driveway diagram that recommends how best to clear your driveway.





# TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

**MAILBOXES:** As a courtesy to our taxpayers the Town will replace mailboxes on town roads that have been determined by the Public Works Department to have been rendered unusable by damage from snowplow contact from a town truck. Such box and post must have been in sound condition prior to incident. Replacement will be in accordance with USPS Standard 7B01 and a 4x4 post. Replacement will occur after winter season and subject to DPW work schedule. If resident has an expensive box, the town will either replace as stated above or issue a check for \$25.00.

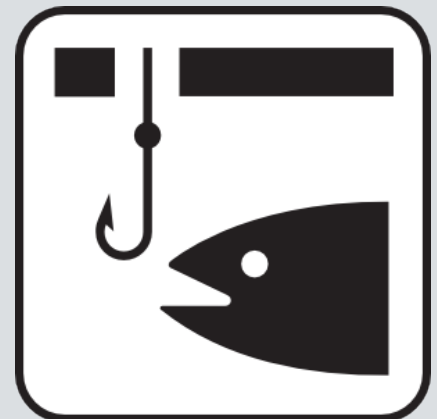
Please check your mailbox and post to make sure both are secure. You may also want to install a secured protective shield to deflect the snow from the mailbox and post.

**SAND:** Free sand (up to 2 five-gallon containers) is available to residents during the winter months located behind the Swap Shop at the Transfer Station. Residents must provide their own container for the sand. The Transfer Station is open on Wednesday's and Saturday's from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.

## **BAIT BUCKET DISPOSAL CATCH BASIN AVAILABLE FOR ICE FISHERMAN:**

Please use the bait bucket disposal catch basin located in the parking lot in of the Murphy House. Please do not throw any bait on the beach or in the lake.

If you have any questions please contact DPW Director, Beth Lunt at 860-228-4270, or [elunt@columbiact.org](mailto:elunt@columbiact.org). The Public Works Garage is located at 89 Route 6, Columbia, CT. 06237



# TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

## **FIRE MARSHAL:**

### **PREPARING FOR A HOUSE FIRE**

Install appropriate smoke alarms throughout your home. Test these alarms once a month and change the batteries at least twice a year. Any devices that are 10+ years old should be completely replaced.

Teach children what smoke alarms sound like and what to do when they hear one.

Have a household exit plan and establish a family meeting spot outside of your home.

Teach household members to STOP, DROP and ROLL if their clothes should catch on fire.

Consider storing copies of your current insurance policies and other important documents in a secure, remote location. Having an extra set of car keys at this location may be helpful as well.

In the unfortunate event of a house fire, get out of your home immediately.

- Priority is you get yourself and your family members out as quickly as possible – do not attempt to collect your valuables.
- Notify all other occupants and account for everyone once outside.
- Call 9-1-1 and give the dispatcher as much information as possible.
- Never re-enter your home for anything.
- When the Fire Department arrives, communicate if everyone is accounted for and if there are any special hazards, e.g., guns, ammunition, propane gas, or lost pets.
- Try to remain calm.

After the fire, there will be an investigation to determine the cause and origin of your house fire. You will need to contact your insurance company. Be mindful when signing any contracts for cleanup services.

Please feel free to contact the Fire Marshal at (860) 228-0440 or the Columbia Volunteer Fire Department at (860) 228-9602 if you ever have any questions or concerns regarding fire prevention and safety.

# TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

**SOCIAL SERVICES:** We have collected an A-Z sampling of support resources that can be accessed on our website at [here](#). You may find something helpful for you, a family member, or a neighbor. Knowledge is power!

This is a not an exhaustive list. For further information on a topic or for information on a topic not listed, visit or call 211, United Way <https://www.211ct.org/> 24/7.

For assistance in navigating programs, or if there is another need, please contact me, Katie Wilt, Town of Columbia Community Social Services Coordinator, at 860-228-1008 or [kwilt@columbiact.org](mailto:kwilt@columbiact.org) (Typical hours Monday & Tuesday 8:30-5:00).

Additionally, contact me to:

- Talk with a social worker
- Receive guidance/advocacy with eligibility/benefits/heating needs
- Learn about what programs you may qualify for
- Get referrals to appropriate programs/services

Katie Wilt | Community Social Services Coordinator

Town of Columbia

323 Route 87

Columbia, CT 06237

[kwilt@columbiact.org](mailto:kwilt@columbiact.org)

860-228-1008

(Typical office hours: Monday & Tuesday, 8:30 am-5:00 pm)



# TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

**RECREATION DEPARTMENT:** Please note that the Parks and Recreation Department is now located at the Murphy House at Columbia Lake. Follow us on [FaceBook](#) and [Instagram](#)!

**UPCOMING EVENTS: REGISTRATION FOR PROGRAMS [ONLINE AT RECDESK](#).**

**EXERCISE PROGRAMS** held at Yeoman's Hall.

**Fit Fusion:** Mon/Weds 4:30-5:30pm, Yeomans Hall

**Yoga:** Thursday 6pm to 7pm, Yeomans Hall

For all exercise classes we have a max capacity of 12 people per a class. Due to this we are asking those who wish to attend to email ahead to reserve a spot [recdirector@columbiact.org](mailto:recdirector@columbiact.org). Walk-ins will be accepted if the class is not already at capacity.

**SLEDDING AT SZEGDA FARM:** The upper parking lot of Szegda Farm is plowed after storms and can be used for sledding.

**COMMUNITY GARDEN:** Happy New Year to All. The holidays are behind us and 2021 brings renewed hope after COVID 19. The thought of gardening seems a bit premature but garden/seed catalogs are reappearing in mailboxes. Visions of flowers and vegetables dance in our heads. Gardeners are beginning to plan for their spring crops and outdoor comradery will once again be possible. If you are looking to expand your horizons Columbia has just the spot.

The Columbia Community Garden located on Szegda Road offers a secure, sun filled, fenced area with water on site for each plot. With the 2019 expansion of the fenced area, there are now new plots of varying sizes for residents and non-residents to rent through the Columbia Recreation Dept. NOW IS THE TIME TO START PLANNING A GARDEN. Contact the Rec. Department at (860) 228-8513 or email to [recreation@columbiact.org](mailto:recreation@columbiact.org) for more information about reserving a plot for to begin your gardening adventure. Make new friends, swap gardening stories, advice and plants with gardeners who have had plots since the garden was created in 2008. Gardening help and advice is never in short supply at the Columbia Community Garden.

Join a team of gardeners who, this past season, planted and donated crops to the Columbia Food Pantry and the Covenant Soup Kitchen.



# TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

**TAX OFFICE:** Due to COVID-19 the Town Hall is currently open by appointment only. Please call the tax office to schedule an appointment at 860-228-0230.

## TAX SALE PROPERTIES

March 16, 2021 -10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Town of Columbia Yeomans Hall

323 Route 87, Columbia, CT.

Public information on the tax sale properties and procedures can be obtained at [www.cttaxsales.com](http://www.cttaxsales.com).

## Pay Taxes Online



## Important change to tax deadlines:

December 16, 2020, Governor Lamont signed Executive Order (EO) No. 9R. Section 1, Suspension and Modification of Tax Deadlines and Collection Efforts for Tax Bills That Become Due and Payable on January 1, 2021. EO No. 9R extends the grace period for the real estate, personal property and supplemental motor vehicle taxes that become due on January 1, 2021 only. What is "deferred" is not a tax but rather the last day to pay without interest. The deadline is deferred, not the tax. All taxpayers except for Landlords and escrowed accounts are eligible and are entitled to defer their payment deadline until April 1, 2021, instead of the usual 30 days.

Landlords, Financial Institutions and Mortgage Servicers that hold escrow funds will have the usual 30 days. The last day to pay without interest will be February 1, 2021.

EO 9R only applies to the taxes that are due on January 1, 2021. This EO does not cover any delinquent taxes or taxes that are/were due on any other date other than January 1, 2021.

## Landlords must submit their application on or before February 1, 2021.

The Executive Order (EO) 9R states that in order to be eligible for the extended grace period/ deferral program, a "landlord," or "any taxpayer that rents or leases to any commercial, residential, or institutional tenant or lessee" shall "provide documentation to the municipality that the parcel has or will suffer a significant income decline or that commensurate forbearance was offered to their tenants or lessees. A taxpayer applicant is a "landlord" if he or she owns property that is rented or leased for any period which includes January 1, 2021 through March 31, 2021.

# TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

Landlords can satisfy the commensurate forbearance and income decline requirements for tax and other relief under EO 9R for residential properties simply by providing documentation confirming the relief offered to the tenant, or by attesting to the relief in writing via written letter or in an e-mail to the tax collector. Landlords of commercial properties may satisfy these requirements with the documentation listed in the application form provided by OPM.

For the Deferment Program, the landlord must provide either 1) documentation that the property will suffer a significant revenue decline related to the COVID-19 emergency, or 2) that commensurate forbearance was offered to tenants or lessees. In either case, correspondence from the landlord confirming compliance will satisfy these prerequisites. Landlords are subject to auditing and may be asked by their municipality to provide their tenants' names and contact information, or other information identified by the municipality to confirm eligibility.

Commensurate forbearance, for purposes of the program, means either a) for residential properties, correspondence from the landlord confirming that forbearance was offered or b) for commercial properties, either (i) a deferral of 25% of rent (approximating the property tax portion of rent) for three months from the due date, (ii) a deferral of one month's rent to be paid over the three-month period; or (iii) forbearance substantially similar to (a) or (b) as determined by the tax collector.

Click [here](#) for fillable application.

Please call the tax office at 860-228-0230 with questions.

Carol Price, Tax Collector

**TOWN CLERKS OFFICE:** Admittance to the Town Clerk's office remains by appointment only. Please call our office at 860-228-3284 to set up an appointment.

Otherwise, it is business as usual for those services that you might need – Recording and Searching of Land Records, Fishing and Hunting licenses, Notary Services, Certified copies of Vital Records, Marriage Licenses, Dog Licenses, Transfer Station stickers, etc.

For your convenience, a large white drop box has been installed outside the doors to Yeoman's Hall. This box can be used to drop off items for the Town Clerk and is shared with other offices in Town Hall.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call us or reach out to us by email – Robin ([townclerk@columbiact.org](mailto:townclerk@columbiact.org)) or Gail ([atownclerk@columbiact.org](mailto:atownclerk@columbiact.org)).

# NON-MUNICIPAL SERVICES PROVIDERS AND NON-PROFIT NEWS AND INFORMATION

## **SAXTON B. LITTLE LIBRARY:** Acorns?

Emerson is credited as saying, 'the creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn.' It's been a tough year, a tough winter, and we are not done yet. But maybe this year has actually been a basket of acorns from which a great wealth of forests can grow? It's been hard at the Library and still is, but we have also had many acorns sprout!

We would like to thank all who participated in our annual giving campaign. The list is too lengthy to include here, but your generosity and support was immeasurable. All have struggled (and the Library no different), but as we accepted donations - many from names we did not recognize - it not only gave us comfort in being able to continue our mission, but also the reassurance that we were not alone. An acorn was planted.

We would also like to thank those who have continued to participate in our virtual programs. From Arts & Crafts Take and Make Kits to Zoom book groups, we have appreciated the contact. For the past year we have continued to offer a minimum of three programs a week and for all but about a month, we have provided access to materials

6 days a week. As we continue to do this, we would like to remind everyone: you can still get a library card and you may participate in our Zoom programs either by telephone only or video if you choose! More acorns planted!

The unique challenges of the past year have also encouraged us to get our creative juices flowing. Who could have imagined the Library would be providing patrons bags of materials in a garden shed? And since we've started exploring new ideas - more have come. Contact the Library to check out our new and improved Adult Winter Reading program, with more options and opportunities to win a prize! We've also created a new initiative we've named Discover, where we will encourage exploration, engagement and new experiences! Still more acorns planted!

Visit our website at: [www.columbiactlibrary.org](http://www.columbiactlibrary.org). Call us: (860) 228-0350 or email: [SBL@columbiactlibrary.org](mailto:SBL@columbiactlibrary.org)

Sue Epstein, Library Director

# NON-MUNICIPAL SERVICES PROVIDERS AND NON-PROFIT NEWS AND INFORMATION

**COLUMBIA VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT:** The Columbia Volunteer Fire Department had a busy start to 2021 with volunteers responding to 50 calls over the course of the month. We continue our regular drills, trainings and meetings on Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings.

Our safety protocols, for ourselves and our community members, meet the highest standards with updates to training as new information is received. Our members are receiving the vaccinations and some have attended training to be certified as vaccinators and/or vaccine clinic volunteers when the need arises in our eastern region.

Community members can help the volunteers who respond to calls by clearly marking your house number in a visible manner on the street. The CVFD makes and sells reflective house number signs that help us quickly and easily identify your house; this often saves precious time. To order the Reflective Address Markers please go to the Columbia Volunteer Fire Department's web-page at [www.columbiafire5.org](http://www.columbiafire5.org) and download the printable form or you can fill out the electronic form online. The price is \$10.00 per sign or \$12.00 with mounting brackets.

The CVFD encourages everyone to complete and post personal medical information on a File of Life card. We carry extra cards with us, but one is printed below for you to cut out, complete and post on your refrigerator. The information should be updated as any medical information changes (i.e., illness or medication). In the case of an emergency, the information is readily accessible for first responders.





# NON-MUNICIPAL SERVICES PROVIDERS AND NON-PROFIT NEWS AND INFORMATION

**2021 FRED GIFFORD MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP:** The Scholarship consists of four (4) individual awards of \$1,000.00, given to two (2) young men and two (2) young women. All applicants must be legal residents of Columbia, CT, seniors attending secondary school or homeschooled, with plans to continue their education at an accredited postsecondary school or institution. The Scholarship Committee will be looking for students with a good balance of strong grades, involvement in school activities and outside of school activities, community service and family values.

Applications must be submitted to the address above or email (mlester@columbiafire5.org) **no later than April 2, 2021.**

**[Click Here to Download 2021 Application](#)**

Print "Attention Mike Lester" on all correspondence. Winners may be asked to attend a membership meeting of the Columbia Volunteer Fire Department, Inc.

QUESTIONS? PLEASE CONTACT MIKE LESTER @ 860-465-6162 OR MLESTER@COLUMBIAFIRE5.ORG

These Scholarships are made possible by the generosity of the people and businesses throughout our area.

This Scholarship is administered by the Columbia Volunteer Fire Department, Inc.

COLUMBIA VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT INC.

167 ROUTE 66/P.O. BOX 26, COLUMBIA, CT 06237

860-228-9602

# NON-MUNICIPAL SERVICES PROVIDERS AND NON-PROFIT NEWS AND INFORMATION

**PORTER PALS PRESCHOOL LOTTERY REGISTRATION:** If you have a child that will be turning 3 or 4 years old by Dec. 31, 2021 and would like them to be considered for the lottery, please click [here](#). To Complete the Preschool Lottery Applications for the 2021 - 2022 School Year please click [here](#). Your child needs to be 3 or 4 years old by Dec. 31, 2021. If your child turns 5 prior to Dec. 31, 2021, then your child is eligible for Kindergarten and not eligible for the preschool program.



We will be holding the Lottery on Tuesday, March 31, 2021. You do not need to attend for your child to be considered for the Lottery. All families will be contacted on March 31st. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Deborah Dupuis at (860) 228-0585.

**AHM YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES:** Please remember AHM staff are just a phone call away at 860-228-9488, whether you need help finding a family resource, are a young adult or family member interested in SMART recovery groups or family counseling, or are a senior looking for help through the TASKs program and many other activities. These services and more can be found on the [AHM website](#).

AHM Youth and Family Services is a 501C-3 public charity serving Andover, Columbia, Hebron and Marlborough.

# NON-MUNICIPAL SERVICES PROVIDERS AND NON-PROFIT NEWS AND INFORMATION

**COLUMBIA LITTLE LEAGUE:** Columbia Little League registration is now open.

The 2021 baseball/softball season is upon us! Registration opens on February 1st. There are a few exciting changes this year. First, we will be combining with Lebanon Little League to have combined teams. This will help our teams be more age-appropriate (more fun for the kids) and will ensure players are competing at the correct skill level (safer for our players). It will allow us to play more games as well. Second, there will be COVID guidelines that all parents, players, and coaches will have to follow. The guidelines will be sent at a later date. Third, this year all parents will be required to volunteer in some capacity. Volunteering will assist in providing a wonderful experience for all players. Some examples of volunteer jobs are raking a field between games, helping to organize a fundraiser or special event, or volunteering an hour or two in the snack shack. There will be a list of opportunities available shortly for sign up. If you have any questions, comments or concerns please do not hesitate to reach out.

We look forward to seeing you all on the field again! Play Ball!! Please visit [www.columbialittleleague.org](http://www.columbialittleleague.org) for more information and to register.

COLUMBIA LITTLE LEAGUE

P.O. Box 93

Columbia, Connecticut 06237

Phone: 860-391-3219

Email: ColumbiaLLPresident@gmail.com



# NON-MUNICIPAL SERVICES PROVIDERS AND NON-PROFIT NEWS AND INFORMATION



HORACE W. PORTER PTO  
PRESENTS  
*Virtual*  
**BINGO**  
*Night*

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19TH  
6:30PM  
via Zoom

FUN FOR ALL AND GREAT PRIZES

\$5 per person | \$20 family max  
\$3 per extra ticket

RSVP by emailing  
horaceporterpto@gmail.com

Join us on facebook at  
Horace W. Porter PTO and Parent Community



The Horace W Porter PTO is selling

## Flower Kits

Grow your own flower

Pick up or drop off options available | Just **\$7** | Follow us on Facebook at Horace W Porter PTO and Parent Community

To make a purchase email  
horaceporterpto@gmail.com



SUPPORT THE HORACE W. PORTER PTO WITH.....

## TIE DYE YOUR OWN MASK KITS!

Tie dye your own masks in the comfort of your own home with all the supplies and instructions provided to you in one convenient kit.

**MADE TO ORDER KITS - \$7.00 PER KIT**

We supply the mask and tie dye supplies! Order ahead, pick up, and get creative at home. Sign up paperless via email by sending names and number of participants or kits desired to: Horaceporterpto@gmail.com. We will respond with instructions for payment via Paypal. Pick up and delivery options available.

# NON-MUNICIPAL SERVICES PROVIDERS AND NON-PROFIT NEWS AND INFORMATION

**The Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP)** – An update from CT United Way

- Text CTWARM to 898211
- The Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP) is designed to help offset the winter heating costs of Connecticut's lower income households, specifically those households whose income falls at or below 60 percent of the state median income.
- To access energy assistance through CEAP you must make an appointment with the CEAP application site in your area. If you need help paying for your primary source of heat text CTWARM to 898211 to find a CEAP application site near you.
- To learn more about the Connecticut Energy Assistance program download [211 CT's eLibrary paper](#).

**UCONN EXTENSION - TOLLAND COUNTY OFFICE LOCAL FARM GUIDE:** Check out the recent [guide](#) put together by the UConn Extension – Tolland County office promoting local small family farm businesses that are important to our communities and economies.

The guide is intended to be used as a gift guide, but is also a place where people can reference where to get local food throughout the winter months.



# BOARDS & COMMISSION NEWS AND INFORMATION

**COLUMBIA BOARD OF ASSESSMENT APPEALS:** In accordance with Section 12-110 of the Connecticut General Statutes, the Columbia Board of Assessment Appeals will hold a public meeting on Thursday, March 4, 2021 starting at 7:00 p.m. by appointment only via Zoom virtual platform for the purpose of hearing appeals related to the assessment of real estate, personal property and motor vehicles on the Grand List of October 1, 2020 and the Supplemental Grand List of October 1, 2019 in the Town of Columbia.

Appellants are encouraged to provide any documentation they believe support their appeal. Examples include, but are not limited to, real estate appraisal, bill of sale for real estate purchase, vehicle bill of sale and/or repair bills, photos showing condition of vehicle, and photo of odometer reading.

Complete applications and supporting documentation must be filed in writing and received no later than February 20, 2021.

The meeting agenda with appointment confirmation will be emailed prior to the meeting to applicants who have filed applications in a timely manner. Please contact the Assessor at 860-228-9555 or email the Board Clerk at [boardclerk@columbiact.org](mailto:boardclerk@columbiact.org) prior to the meeting for the link to join the virtual zoom meeting.

Applications are available in the Tax Assessor's Office or at [www.columbiact.org](http://www.columbiact.org). Completed applications may be put in the Town Hall drop box (write "BAA application" on application envelope) or mailed to: Board of Assessment Appeals, Assessor's Office, 323 Route 87, Columbia, CT 06237.

Dated at Columbia, Connecticut this 4th day of January 2021.

Linda McDonald, Chairman