

COLUMBIA



UPDATE JANUARY 2021



TOWN OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE FIRST SELECTMAN

Happy New Year! Hopefully 2021 will be a much better year. With the new year comes the great news of a vaccine. We still need to be diligent and wear a mask, practice safe social distancing, and limit our social circle.

The Town of Columbia's departments are open by appointment only; however, we continue to encourage residents to use on-line services and the drop-boxes at Yeoman's Hall and Town Hall. We have installed a lock box by Yeoman's Hall for payments, correspondence, permits, Transfer Station Applications, Dog License, etc. Tax Payments can be dropped off at the lock-box in front of Town Hall's front door. For a staff directory to schedule an appointment please click [here](#). 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 Beckish Senior Center provides a local MOBILE Foodshare EVERY OTHER THURSDAY from 1:00 PM to 1:30 PM. The dates for January are the 14th and 28th.

THE TOWN OF COLUMBIA IS ACCEPTING ONLINE DONATIONS through the [Recreation Departments Programs page](#). The donations are 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.

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.

We encourage the public to visit the Town website at www.columbiact.org for up to date information, the Town of Columbia [YouTube](#) channel and on our [Facebook](#) page.

Thank you and please be safe.

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

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. Residents can also subscribe to text message alerts from the state by texting the keyword **COVIDCT** to **888-777**.



UCFS HEALTHCARE TESTING TIMES AND LOCATIONS

The Edward & Mary Lord Family Health Center - 47 Town Street, Norwich

9 am - 11 am

Testing conducted Monday - Friday

NO APPOINTMENT NECESSARY

Griswold Health Center - 226 East Main Street , Griswold

9 am - 11 am

Testing conducted on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday

NO APPOINTMENT NECESSARY

Testing is based on a first come first serve basis. Testing may conclude earlier than advertised based on supplies and resources.

- Everyone in vehicle must wear a mask
- Please limit talking with the COVID -19 tester
- Please keep window rolled up until instructed to roll down

Help Stop the Spread. Get Tested.

Getting tested for COVID-19



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

WHEN:

Every Wednesday, 3pm-7pm
through January 27, 2021

WHERE:

Mansfield Middle School
205 Spring Hill Road
Storrs-Mansfield

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

*PCR testing conducted by [sema4](#)



Visit ct.gov/coronavirus for more information about
COVID-19 in Connecticut

Updated 12/15/2020

Get tested for COVID-19



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

Vernon Rockville High School

70 Loveland Hill Rd, Vernon

Sunday 12/20 12pm-3pm

Sunday 1/3 12pm-3pm

Sunday 1/17 12pm-3pm

Sunday 1/31 12pm-3pm

Tolland High School

1 Eagle Hill, Tolland

Sunday 12/27 12pm-3pm

Sunday 1/10 12pm-3pm

Sunday 1/24 12pm-3pm

*PRC testing conducted by Sema4

For additional Testing sites in CT for COVID-19 Visit 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 for more information
about COVID-19 in Connecticut

Updated 12/17/2020



TOWN OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

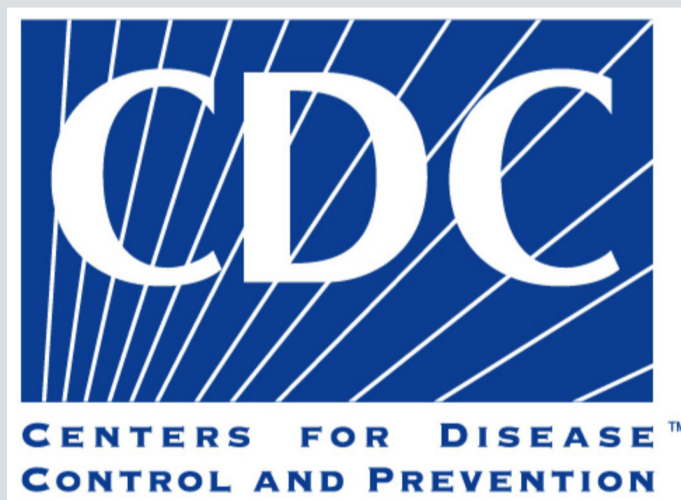
2020 has certainly been a challenging year! I would like to thank all our employees, committee and commission members, and town residents for continued support and the abundance of patience demonstrated during this extraordinary year!

Learning new and creative ways to continue to provide all the essential town services was a constant moving target. With an abundance of unrest throughout our country and globally we had our work cut out for ourselves.

We have been able to keep our schools and town facilities functioning and holding tight while we prepare for our vaccines and testing procedures.

A big thanks goes out to our health district, State and local emergency management and volunteer fire and ambulance personnel.

IMPORTANT LINKS AND INFORMATION RELATED TO COVID-19: Eastern Highland Health District (EHHD) has real-time information on their website www.ehhd.org with an embedded link to COVID-19 information from the CDC. If you have specific questions please contact EHHD directly at (860) 429-3325.



For the most up-to-date information from the State of Connecticut on COVID-19, including an FAQ and other guidance and resources, residents are encouraged to visit ct.gov/coronavirus.

For several additional graphs and tables containing more data, including a list of cases in every municipality, visit ct.gov/coronavirus and click the link that is labeled, "COVID-19 Data Tracker."

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 10 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
- 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
- Dial 860-856-4321

Food Pantries, SNAP & More:

- Dial 2-1-1
- Or dial 1-800-203-1234
- Visit www.ct211.org

FOODSHARE

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
- Marque 860-856-4321

Despensas de alimentos, SNAP y más:

- Marque 2-1-1
- O marque 1-800-203-1234
- Visite www.ct211.org

FOODSHARE

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.

With the New Year I am very excited to see our lives having the hope of a new normal. I know we will find a way to come out of this stronger and in better shape. 2020 has been a year that has redefined us and in so many ways made us better.

All my best to you and yours for a Happy New Year!

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 14th, Jan 28th, Feb 11th, Feb 25th,
Mar 11th, Mar 25th

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 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).

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

Pickle Ball - If you are interested in learning and playing Pickle ball please contact Linda Reynold at 860-806-0054 for more information. We have a small group of players that get together weekly to play pickle ball in Willimantic and Columbia's Rec Park. Pickle ball is basically tennis for seniors. The paddles are smaller, the ball is similar to a whiffle ball and the net is lower. This is a great exercise for seniors at a slower pace than tennis.

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. 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.

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

SNOW REMOVAL RULES:

- 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 plowing and blowing snow into or across roadways or onto town rights-of-way. Doing so creates unsafe conditions for drivers and vehicles.
- 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.

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.

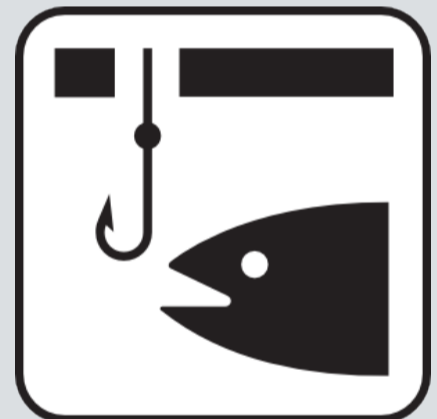
Please check your mailbox and post to make sure both are secure. You may also want to install a secured protective shield to deflect the snow from the mailbox and post.

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. 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 (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

860.228.0110 x128

(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: Tuesdays 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. Walk-ins will be accepted if the class is not already at capacity.

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 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.

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.

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.

Pay Taxes Online



TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

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: As of January 1, 2021, 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) or Gail (atownclerk@columbiact.org).

Happy New Year!!

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

SAXTON B. LITTLE LIBRARY: As the cold seeps in and we wait for Covid issues to settle, what better time than to curl up with a book or movie. We can help with that!

We will continue with curbside service only through the month of January, but remain responsive to current condition. Please remember that materials are available for pick up 6 days a week during this time. Curbside pick up hours are as follows:

Monday 2-4

Tuesday 1-3 / 5-7

Wednesday 11-2 / 4-7

Thursday 12-2/2-4/6-7

Friday 10-2

Saturday 11-4

If you cannot make these times, please contact the Library for alternative timing arrangements. Electronic materials are available 24/7.

Don't Forget! We also offer grab bags, Tailored Titles (a selection chosen with your likes/dislikes in mind), and Personal Section via Zoom. Instructions for searching the catalog, how to browse library shelves from home, and more are available on our website under catalog tutorials (<https://www.columbiactlibrary.org/catalog-tutorials/>).

The Library also continues to offer a variety of programs. Baby Bees meets via Zoom every Friday. Story times are available virtually online any time. Our 4 adult book groups continue to meet and welcome new members as does our weekly Stitcher group and monthly Writer's Group.

In January we will offer two unique programs, an informational program on our White Tail Dear neighbors on Tuesday 1/19 7 pm and an open virtual drop in – Monday 1/11 7:00 pm. Come ask a Library question, or just say hello and chat!

Contact the Library for Zoom code and remember, you can also call in via your telephone to listen and participate!

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

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

COLUMBIA CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH: The Columbia Congregational Church is pleased to announce the call of a new settled pastor, MaryAnn Purtill. Pastor MaryAnn has a Masters of Divinity degree from Andover Newton Theological School and was ordained as a UCC minister in 2013. She begins her service in Columbia in mid-February.

The search committee worked long and hard to present MaryAnn as the selected candidate. A search for a new Pastor is never an easy task but this search was more challenging due to the Covid19 pandemic. Members of the search committee, led by David Coley, are to be commended for their perseverance and diligence in seeking our settled pastor.

MaryAnn grew up on the east end of Long Island, married and moved to Connecticut. She has one son who currently resides in Puerto Rico. Prior to coming to her call to the ministry, she worked in technology in the finance industry and eventually co-owned a small service business.

After coming to Connecticut, MaryAnn became actively involved with the United Church of Christ. She served as an administrator and participated as an active lay member in many aspects of the church. She particularly enjoyed and grew in her spiritual journey after leading a three-week adult mission program in Malawi, Africa working at St. Mary's Orphanage.

While attending seminary, she was a student intern at Windsor Congregational Church, a chaplain at Hartford Hospital, and Director of Christian Edition at St. James Episcopal Church in Glastonbury. Prior to coming to Columbia, Pastor MaryAnn was the sole Pastor of the First Congregational Church of Marian, Massachusetts.

The search committee and congregation members were very impressed with MaryAnn's enthusiasm and commitment to being an active member of the community, bringing together those of different backgrounds, and providing services to those in need.

We welcome MaryAnn to her new pastorship and encourage community members to get to know her. Do not hesitate to seek her assistance and/or guidance or to just say hello. MaryAnn looks forward to being an active member of the Columbia family.

Carmen L. Vance, President: Church Council Columbia Congregational Church

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

COLUMBIA CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH: COLUMBIA CARDLESS HOLIDAY FUND 2020:

The following people made donations to the Columbia Cardless Holiday Fund 2020 in lieu of sending holiday greeting cards. We thank them for their generosity in helping their neighbors in need. This fund is sponsored by the Columbia Congregational Church and is used year round to help Columbia residents.

- Ralph J. Noli
- Richard and Marjorie Ranger
- Audrey M. Tuttle
- Carmen L. Vance
- Donna Vose
- The Narkawicz Family
- Lou and Karen Scotti
- Velvet Welch
- Eric Christiana and Dawne Termini
- Debby and Mark Smith
- Mahlon and Cathy Gilbert
- The Pearce and Maheu Family
- Andrea Stannard
- Diana, Andrew and Emil Sadlon
- Sally and Richard Ruef
- Millie and Paul Ramsey
- Belle Robinson
- Rick and Elaine Carone
- George and Gerry Williams

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

COLUMBIA VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT: As of December 28, Columbia Volunteer Fire Department members have responded to 753 calls, an increase from 642 calls in 2019. Members attend training drills/departments meetings on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings. Individuals commit a great deal of time and energy to answer all emergency calls, provide mutual aid to surrounding towns, maintain the department, enhance and practice skills and participate in community outreach programs.

In past years, and hopefully to resume, the CVFD has offered its own community events and partnered with local agencies to provide or sponsor:

- Red Cross Blood Drives
- Touch-A-Truck Event
- Child car seat clinics
- Holiday Open House
- Annual toy drive
- Annual holiday donations of gift cards to residents in need
- Free smoke detector batteries
- Reflective house number signs

The members in the CVFD are all volunteer and respond to calls from their homes. Members are not assigned duty shifts which means that those available to respond when a call comes in are dedicating their personal time – and that is at the heart of why people join the CVFD; helping the community members is at the core of all the work members do.

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

THE COLUMBIA VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT HAS THREE NEWLY ELECTED/APPOINTED OFFICERS.

Chief Stephen Postemsky, born and raised in Columbia, is a career firefighter in Hamden and joined the CVFD in 2000. He has held the ranks of Lieutenant, Captain and Deputy Chief before being voted in as Chief this past fall. Stephen holds a bachelor's degree from the University of New Haven, majoring in fire administration and arson investigation and minoring in criminal justice. Stephen is Deputy Fire Marshal in Columbia and Andover and teaches at the Eastern Fire School.

Deputy Chief Scott Haddad, EMT and firefighter, has lived in Columbia since 1996 and joined the CVFD the same year. Scott became a Lieutenant in 2001, a Captain in 2007 and held the position of Assistant Chief from 2009-2020, until being voted in as Deputy Chief this past fall. In 2017, Scott established the Cadet Program for young members aged 16 and over. Scott's son, Nick, is currently a Cadet and his son, Jon is a CVFD member. Scott is the manager of the Public Safety Emergency Communications Center at UConn. Scott is very grateful to his wife, Becky, for her understanding and support of his time dedicated to the CVFD over the years.

Assistant Chief Jeff Lewis was born and raised in Columbia and has held all officer positions up to Chief over the 28 years he has been a member. Jeff is a firefighter and EMT and is also Secretary of the CVFD. The responsibility for training falls under Jeff's purview, planning skills training for firefighters and emergency medical service providers. Jeff works as a network designer for Cox Communications.

REFLECTIVE ADDRESS MARKERS: If there is an emergency, help our Fire Department find you! 911 reflective address signs ensure a quick response. To order the Reflective Address Markers please go to the Columbia Volunteer Fire Department's web-page at 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.

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

AHM YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES: With winter upon us, the AHM Board extends best New Year wishes to Columbia residents. The past year brought many challenges to our communities. Hopefully better days are coming soon. AHM Executive Director Tressa Giordano, summed it up best: "2020 impacted so many people locally. I am proud of our community partners that worked with AHM this past year making sure that the needs of the residents we help remains our highest priority."

The last twelve months brought many volunteers and staff together working on projects that benefited the communities. One project was the front line hero's lawn sign fundraiser that raised \$6000 for Columbia, Andover, Hebron, and Marlborough food pantries. A Cigna Foundation grant funded a new AHM initiative called Health Matters, which provides residents of all ages with access to physical and positive mental health activities. AHM's counselor at the Horace Porter School and our AHM community counselors helped children, teens and families coping with anxiety, depression, and isolation during the pandemic. AHM teen workers supported local seniors with household projects, which in Columbia is called TASKs. The Family Resource Center provided childcare and family development services for children and families living in the four town region. The CHEC Coalition drug task force held its most successful drug Take Back event in partnership with the CT. State Police and local schools. During the year AHM conducted a virtual youth theater workshop series in partnership with Playhouse on Park. For Columbia families please watch for details on future theater programs for your children. Of special note, AHM staff member, Brendan Grimm, continues to assist Columbia Residents through your food bank on a weekly basis.

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 at www.ahmyouth.org

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

EARLY CHILDHOOD TEAM - HORACE W. PORTER SCHOOL: The Early Childhood



Team of Horace W. Porter School is pleased to announce that we will conduct Preschool Screenings for Columbia 3-year-old (turning 3 by December 31, 2020) and any 4-year-old not previously screened (and not turning 5 by December 31, 2020). Please call Deborah Dupuis at (860) 228-0585 if you would like your child to be screened.

All public-school systems in Connecticut are responsible for the identification of children

who may be eligible to receive special education services. The early childhood team in Columbia offers preschool developmental screenings for current resident children. The purpose of this screening is to collect information about each preschooler's early development in the areas of cognition, communication, motor functioning, and social interaction. This will help us to determine whether your child needs any special services in order to prepare for school success.

If you have concerns about a child that has not yet turned 3, please contact the CT Birth-to-Three program at (800) 505-7000.

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 go to www.columbiapublicschools.org and click on Student Services. Under the Student Services tab, please click on Pre-School Porter Pals. There will be a link to register your child. We will be holding the Lottery on Tuesday, March 30. If your child will be turning 5 prior to Dec. 31, 2021, then your child is eligible for Kindergarten and not Preschool. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Deborah Dupuis at (860) 228-0585.

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

COLUMBIA LAKE ASSOCIATION: CLA Welcomes All Town Residents.

Do you have an interest in learning about, protecting and preserving one of our town's beautiful natural assets, Columbia Lake in addition to enjoying it recreationally? Consider joining the CLA, the Columbia Lake Association. Participation is open to all town residents.

The CLA came about in the 1940's primarily as a social and recreational organization. It evolved from the 1970's through 2020 to become an integral partner with the Town of Columbia to protect and preserve the lake. In the last five years the CLA expanded its mission and broadened its charter to allow all town residents to be a part of the association. Since 2015 the CLA updated its bylaws in meaningful ways including:

1. Recognizing in its mission the need to protect and preserve Columbia Lake and its watershed area. The watershed is the area of land surrounding Columbia Lake where water drains into the lake. The CLA mission now includes preserving the ecological, environmental and property interests and values of Columbia Lake and its watershed area.
2. Understanding the importance of Columbia Lake to our town, the CLA created participation opportunities for watershed property owners and other town residents interested in being involved in the CLA and supporting its mission.
3. Passing an amendment on November 19, 2020 allowing broader representation on the CLA board of directors.

These changes enable the CLA to better protect our lake and watershed area and to build collaborations with the entire town community to ensure we all enjoy the lake today and well into the future. To learn more about and/or join the CLA contact us at columbialakeassociation@gmail.com.

S.A.I.L with the CLA~ Socialize, Advocate, Influence and Learn!

Mary Roickle, CLA President

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



FIND US ON



Horace W Porter PTO and
Parent Community



Horaceporterpto@gmail.com



https://www.columbiapublicschools.org/horace_w_porter.php



Join us by sending an email



Paypal for payments only:
porterptotreas@gmail.com

NON-MUNICIPAL SERVICES PROVIDERS AND
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A poster for a "Free PTO Online Event" titled "ARTS AND CRAFTS Green Slime". The event is scheduled for "January 29th @ 6pm". Registration information includes emailing "horaceporterpto@gmail.com" and joining a Facebook group: "Horace W Porter PTO and Parent Community". The poster features a row of colorful pencils at the top and a watercolor palette at the bottom left. A small watermark "Made with PosterMyWall.com" is visible at the bottom left of the poster.

Free PTO Online Event

ARTS AND CRAFTS

Green Slime

January 29th @ 6pm

Register by emailing
horaceporterpto@gmail.com

Join us on Facebook: Horace W
Porter PTO and Parent Community

Made with PosterMyWall.com

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

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.

RESTAURANT & BUSINESS RECOVERY GRANT PROGRAM: Restaurant & Business Recovery Grant Program - An update from materials provided by State Representative Joe Verrengia on 12/22/2020:

- A new federally-funded grant program – a helping hand to bars and restaurants and other local businesses – will start cutting checks right around New Year’s Eve.
- The \$10,000 to \$30,000 grants are funded by the second federal stimulus package. The State will provide grants to approximately 1,500 to 2,000 small and mid-size businesses that have been hurt by the pandemic. The amount will be based on business size and pandemic-based need (including payroll and gross receipts). There is no application needed for the grants. Checks will be sent out starting on Friday, December 31, 2020.

Learn more at ct.gov/coronavirus

SCHOOL MEALS DURING WINTER BREAK: Many school districts will be providing meals during the 2020-21 winter break. Links from the [State Department of Education website](#) below:

- **Link to a list of:** [School Districts offering Meals during Winter Break](#)
- Note other districts may also provide meals during the winter break, for districts not included above, please **search online for “School Meals during COVID-19 in [insert City/Town, CT] during Winter Break.”**

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

- After the Winter Break check out this Link to a list of: [School Districts offering Meals for ALL Children ages 18 or younger \(includes Students & Nonstudents\)](#)
- Local details can be found at each School District website – **please search online for “School Meals during COVID-19 in [insert City/Town, CT].”**

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](#).

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

Access Health CT Open Enrollment EXTENDED Until January 15th!

- Access Health CT (AHCT) is Connecticut's official health insurance marketplace. AHCT offers Connecticut residents and employers a range of quality, affordable health and dental insurance options from several health insurance partners.
 - As a result of the current health crisis, Access Health CT has extended the 2021 Annual Open Enrollment period until January 15, 2021.
 - If you choose a plan during the extension, your coverage will begin on February 1, 2021.
- **HELP/Questions** - Click [HERE for Free Help](#) (access virtual or in-person help from enrollment specialists and certified brokers).
- Access Health CT will continue to offer free enrollment help to all Connecticut residents during the extension.
- ENROLL - Click [HERE to enroll today!](#)
- Questions can be directed to HAT Member – Ellyn Laramie at Ellyn.Laramie@ct.gov

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

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY: Hello and Happy New Year Fellow Columbia Residents!

We at Friends of the Library hope you all are staying healthy and that your holidays were joyful even if they were different than usual. After much discussion and deliberation, we have unfortunately decided to cancel our February sale. At this point, we are hoping and planning on a May sale.

We are missing all of you and each other terribly and hope that you will join us when we are finally up and running again. Hopefully some of you had the chance to utilize the Book Nook and our Christmas collection in the Library before they had to go back to curbside pickup in November.

As of this writing, I'm not sure when the Library will re-open to patrons but be assured that if they do before we can re-open our book sale, we will once again update the Book Nook and make it available for your use.

Here's hoping for a wonderful Spring and the ability to get back to some normalcy!

Until then, stay safe and healthy.

Laurie Rogers - Secretary of Friends of the Library

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

COLUMBIA LEO'S: Happy New Year from the Columbia Leos! We extend best wishes to all for a safe and healthy 2021 as we continue to deal with the pandemic. And in spite of the pandemic, the Columbia Leos are trying their best to stay active! The Leos meet via Zoom on the first and third Monday's of the month. Please email Advisor Jim Blair at jbland15@earthlink.net if you would like to participate. We are always looking for new members. Our requirements are ages 12-18, and Columbia residents.

This past fall we had our most successful coat drive to date! We were out in front of the old firehouse and the town's response was incredible! All the coats were given to WAIM in Willimantic with an assist from Shirley King, a volunteer at WAIM. Thanks Shirley!

We also collected food which was given to our Columbia Food Pantry. The Food Pantry is located at the Senior Center and is managed by Senior Center Director, Bernadette Derring. Bernadette and her crew of volunteers have been doing an outstanding job since the start of the shut downs back in March of 2020. Many thanks to her!

This year we will continue with our food collection. The need has not eased, and for the time being, Bernadette could really use our help! We are also trying to help the Town's Fuel Assistance Program. We will accept any donations, cash or check, large or small, to pass along to this extremely important program. Look for us to be at the Senior Center starting on January 9th. We'll post dates on the Town Board and Facebook on the Everything Columbia page.

The Columbia Leos wish to thank all who have stepped up and helped us with our causes. If not for the incredible generosity of Columbia residents, we would not be able to do so much. We will continue to do our best as we lift each other up through these difficult times.

Contact Information:

Lion Jim Blair, Advisor

860-428-2916

Jbland15@earthlink.net

BOARDS & COMMISSIONS NEWS AND INFORMATION

COLUMBIA CONSERVATION COMMITTEE:

NEW LIFE FOR AN OLD FARM

The new owner of 448 Route 87 is a commercial vegetable farmer. Susan Mitchell owns and operates Cloverleigh Farm, a certified organic farm that markets its produce through a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. Area residents can invest in the farm by purchasing a farmshare in advance of the growing season, and then receive weekly fresh produce from June through November. She also supplies several restaurants and the Willimantic Food Co-op with vegetables.



Ms. Mitchell began Cloverleigh Farm in 2014. She most recently farmed on a few acres in Mansfield she rented from another farmer. First generation farmers like Susan have difficulty finding and affording good agricultural land to purchase. With a grant from The American Farmland Trust, she was able to hire a financial consultant, specializing in farms, to develop a business plan that helped her to take the next step and purchase her own farm in Columbia.

Susan is passionate about providing healthy nutrition and education, connecting people to the source of their food. She is a member of the [New CT Farmer Alliance](#) (and co-founder), CT Northeast Organic Farmers Association (NOFA) and [Connecticut Farm Bureau Association](#).

Columbia welcomes Susan Mitchell to our community, and we wish her well in in her well in this chapter of her business.

Please visit www.cloverleighfarm.com to read all the details about joining the CSA.

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 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. 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

BOARDS & COMMISSION NEWS AND INFORMATION

OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE:

NEW NAMES FOR OPEN SPACE PARCELS

What's in a name? Names can honor people, can invoke historical events, or call attention to natural features.

The Board of Selectmen recently named two open space parcels acquired by the Town. The first one is a parcel on Route 66 which connects to Rec Park, purchased in 2014 by the Town, utilizing funds from the Brand Bequeath. Henrietta Brand left a sum of money to the Town in her will, which specified that the funds be used for recreation. The Town utilized some of the money to purchase the parcel of land which they have now named, "Brand Woods."

In 2018 The Town of Columbia acquired a 56-acre parcel of land in Wells Woods. This land is part of the Salmon River Watershed and it has high ecological value for its pristine wetland, fed by Mint Brook, and surrounded by forest. It has historical value with mill ruins on Mint Brook, and foundations of barns and homes from the 18th and 19th century. The new name chosen for this land is "Mint Brook Preserve."