



Town of Colchester, Connecticut

127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

Gregg Schuster, First Selectman

Board of Selectmen Minutes
Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday, August 1, 2013
Colchester Town Hall – 7:00 PM
Meeting Room 1

RECEIVED
COLCHESTER, CT
2013 AUG -5 AM 11:19
NANCY A. BRAY
TOWN CLERK
Nancy A. Bray

MEMBERS PRESENT: First Selectman Gregg Schuster, Selectman Stan Soby, Selectman James Ford, and Selectman Rosemary Coyle.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Selectman Greg Cordova

OTHERS PRESENT: D. Giles, S. Tassone, Jim Paggioli, Maggie Cosgrove, Rob Tarlov, Dorothy Mrowka, Nancy Bray, Gail Therian, and other citizens.

1. **Call to Order**
First Selectman G. Schuster called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. **Additions to the Agenda -**
R. Coyle moved to add to the agenda, "Discussion and Possible Action on Resolution for Emergency Contingency Plan for Elections" as Item 9 and to renumber the agenda accordingly, seconded by S. Soby. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.
3. **Approve Minutes of the July 18, 2013 Commission Chairman Meeting**
S. Soby moved to approve the Commission Chairman Meeting minutes of July 18, 2013 as presented, seconded by R. Coyle. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.
4. **Approve Minutes of the July 18, 2013 Regular Board of Selectmen Meeting**
A memo with corrections to the July 18, 2013 Regular Board of Selectmen was submitted by Gail Therian, clerk. (Copy attached). R. Coyle noted the following corrections to the Minutes: under Item #9, the first sentence, the word "covering" should be "coverage" and in the second to the last sentence the word "prevents" should be "preventing. Under #10, under the motion, the word to in the phrase "moved to", should be eliminated; and under Item #14 in the third sentence the word "to" should be changed to the word "the".
R. Coyle moved to approve the Minutes as amended, seconded by J. Ford. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED
5. **Citizen's Comments-**
G. Schuster said that a letter was received by Board members and the letter was given to the clerk to attach to the Minutes.

John Malsbenden said he received a copy of the letter given to the clerk and commented on it. .
6. **Boards and Commissions – Interviews and/or Possible Appointments and Resignations**
 - a. **Agricultural Commission – Resignation of Joanne Becker**
S. Soby moved to accept the resignation of Joanne Becker, seconded by J. Ford. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.
 - b. **Economic Development Commission – Resignation of Steven Cohn**
R. Coyle moved to accept the resignation of Steven Cohn, seconded by S. Soby. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.
 - c. **Agricultural Commission – Appoint Allen Zimmerman to Member for a Two year Term to expire 11/30/2014**
R. Coyle suggested that the other two applicants for this Commission be interviewed at the next meeting.

S. Soby moved to appoint Allen Zimmerman to Member for a Two year Term to expire 11/30/2014, seconded by J. Ford. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.
7. **Budget Transfers**
J. Ford moved to approve budget transfer in the amount of \$140 from "Registrars – Elections – Professional Services (11601-44208)" to \$140 "Mileage, Training & Meetings (11601-43213)"; \$947 from "Assessor – Data Processing (11304 -

44205)" to \$947 "Overtime (11304-40103)"; and \$2,030 "Assessor – Data Processing (11304 -44205)" to "Professional Services (11304-44208)", seconded by S. Soby. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.

8. Tax Refunds & Rebates – None

9. Discussion and Possible Action on Resolution for Emergency Contingency Plan for Elections

D. Mrowka said that the Emergency Contingency Plan for Elections must include addressing "in the event of a storm" situation.

R. Coyle moved to adopt the amended Resolution for Emergency Contingency Plan for Elections as stated in this document, seconded by S. Soby. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED

10. Discussion and Possible Action on Fire Truck Rescue Bid Award

Paul Giudice, Committee member of the Heavy Equipment Committee, reported on the bid process for the replacement or refurbishing of Rescue 1-28. He said that two bids were received and the Committee's recommendation is to award the contract to Marion Body Works, Inc. Marion Body Works will provide a new apparatus built to exceed specs with no downtime. The recommended alternates were for a safety rollover airbags at \$5,000 and hydraulic hose reels at \$5,600.

G. Schuster told the Board members that he had just received the contract on July 31, 2013, and recommended the Board take no action on this until the contract could be reviewed. No action taken.

11. Discussion and Possible Action on WJJMS-Community/Senior Center Project

R. Coyle moved the resolution "RESOLVED, that the Board of Selectmen recommends that the Town of Colchester appropriate \$57,260,000 and authorize borrowing in the same amount for costs related to the William J. Johnston Middle School, Community Center and Senior Center Project at the site of the existing William J. Johnston Middle School at 360 Norwich Avenue, including renovations and additions to the middle school and relocation of the Senior Center, the Youth Center, Social Services facilities and Parks and Recreation facilities, substantially as shown on the plans titled "Conceptual Study for the WJJ Middle School, Community Center and Senior Center" prepared by Tecton Architects, Inc. dated 8/9/12, revised to 6/26/13, and substantially as described in the detailed estimate prepared by Tecton Architects, Inc. dated 4/3/13, as modified 6/19/13. The building committee established for the project shall be authorized to determine the scope and particulars of the project and to reduce or modify the scope of the project, and the entire appropriation may be expended on the project as so modified or reduced. The appropriation may be spent for design and construction costs, testing and permitting costs, relocation costs, demolition and installation costs, equipment, furnishings and fixtures, materials, land and easement acquisition, site improvements, utilities, engineering fees, management costs and fees, legal fees, net interest on borrowings and other financing costs, and other expenses related to the project or its financing.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That such recommendation, if approved by the Board of Finance, be presented to a Special Town Meeting to be held at Town Hall, 127 Norwich Avenue in the town of Colchester on Wednesday, September 18, 2013, at 7:00 p.m. and acted upon at referendum to be held on Tuesday, October 1, 2013 between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m.

FURTHER RESOLVED, That the aforesaid resolution shall be placed upon the paper ballots or voting machines under the following heading:

"SHALL THE TOWN OF COLCHESTER APPROPRIATE AND AUTHORIZE THE BOARD OF SELECTMENT TO EXPEND A SUM NOT TO EXCEED \$57,260,000 FOR COSTS RELATED TO THE WILLIAM J. JOHNSTON MIDDLE SCHOOL, COMMUNITY CENTER AND SENIOR CENTER PROJECT AND AUTHORIZE THE ISSUANCE OF BONDS AND NOTES TO FINANCE THE PORTION OF THE APPROPRIATION NOT DEFRAIDED FROM GRANTS?"

Voters approving said resolution will vote "Yes" and those opposing said resolution shall vote "No". Electors and persons qualified to vote in town meetings who are not electors will vote at the following polling place: Colchester Town Hall, 127 Norwich Avenue in Colchester. Absentee ballots will be available from the Town Clerk's office, seconded by J. Ford. In favor: J. Ford, R. Coyle and S. Soby Opposed: G. Schuster MOTION CARRIED.

12. Discussion and Possible Action on White Oak Farm conservation Subdivision, Lebanon Ave. (Route 16) and Goldberg Road

1. Cancellation of his Active Road Permit for Phase B-Sherman Brook Road and
2. Release of surety Bond for Phase A-2 and Release of Surety Bond for Phases B-G & Lebanon Ave.

S. Soby moved that the Town of Colchester cancel the road permit issued for Phase B, White Oak Farm Conservation Subdivision, Sherman's Brook Road and Release Subdivision Surety Bond No. 5023479 from "Bond Safeguard Insurance Company" in the amount of \$534,699.15 for phase A-2 White Oak Farm Conservation Subdivision and Subdivision Surety Bond No. 5023480 from "Bond Safeguard Insurance Company" in the amount of \$2,543,997.20 for

Phase B-G White Oak Farm Conservation Subdivision, seconded by R. Coyle . Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.

13. Discussion and Possible Action on Personnel Policies

J. Ford and S. Soby have developed the language on the Hiring and Dismissal policy and will present it at the next meeting.

14. Discussion and Possible Action on Setting Town Meeting to Discuss Blight Ordinance

The Board members reviewed the Memo with a Resolution from G. Schuster. Discussion followed on the formation of a Task Force to develop a final report. G. Schuster said that the State Legislature is presently forming a task force to review the Blight Ordinances within the cities and towns and develop model ordinances. This work should be completed in February 2014.

S. Soby moved that in response to the petition filed with the Town Clerk and pursuant to section C-1001 (C) of the Town Charter, a Town Meeting is hereby called at 7:00 P.M. on August 15, 2013 to discuss a blight ordinance, seconded by J. Ford. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED

J. Ford moved the resolution "Be it resolved that the Board of Selectmen recognizes that blighted properties have become an issue in Colchester that requires careful review. We agree with the petitioner that the time has come to have a community discussion on this subject and, if necessary, enact ordinances to address the impact blighted properties have on neighboring properties.

Be it further resolved that the Board of Selectmen expresses concern over adopting any ordinance at the Town Meeting without the necessary review, thoughtful contemplation, and legal oversight normally given to proposed ordinances. In order to properly address the issue of blight, the Board of Selectmen intends to form a task force to develop an ordinance that fits the needs of the community.", seconded by S. Soby. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED

15. Citizen's Comments

John Knapp, in the Chief's absence, gave a status report and an update of the Colchester Hayward Fire Department's coverage schedule for August.

Michael Ryan had a concern about the actual "lights on" cost of the WJMS-Community/Senior Center Project.

16. First Selectman's Report

G. Schuster reported that the STEAP Grant jointly applied for with the Town of East Hampton for the Rotary Drum Thickeners for the Joint Facilities Waste Water Treatment Plant would not be funded. He attended a meeting at Company 1 hosted by the State Police regarding their Dispatch consolidation efforts. Colchester will be in the Tolland dispatch area. He said that the Board members may have seen an article about the Tribal Recognition Process. There has been a draft set of Regulations put out by the Bureau of Indian Affairs that could potentially lead to the State's recognition of the Golden Hill Paugasset Indians. He reported that the International Food Festival, which was canceled again because of rain, would most likely be scheduled to Thursday, August 8, 2013.

R. Coyle if the two letters from the Historical Society would be on the next meeting agenda. G. Schuster said that he has responded to one, but this could be discussed at a Board of Selectmen meeting.

16. Liaison Report

S. Soby said that the Police Commission is still working to address concerns about crosswalk safety in the area of the Youth Services building. They approved the Weapon Light Policy/Use. They would like to sell the DARE car as they are now using a different drug prevention plan. J. Paggioli is working on the purchase of a new police vehicle.

18. Executive Session to Discuss Town Hall and School Facility Security

S. Soby moved to enter into executive session to discuss Town Hall and School Facility Security, seconded by J. Ford. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED

Entered into executive session at 7:43 p.m.

Exited from executive session at 7:44 p.m.

19. Executive Session to Discuss Negotiations with Colchester Firefighters Union UPPFA, IAFF, Local #3831 Contract

R. Coyle moved to enter into executive session to discuss negotiations with Colchester Firefighters Union UPPFA, IAFF, Local 3831 contract, seconded by S. Soby. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.

Entered into executive session at 7:45 p.m.

Exited from executive session at 7:48 p.m.

20. Adjourn

R. Coyle moved to adjourn at 7:49 p.m., seconded by S. Soby. Unanimously approved. MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Therian, Clerk

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO **G. SCHUSTER**
 BOARD OF SELECTMEN

CC:

FROM: **GAIL N. THERIAN**

SUBJECT: **ERRORS IN MINUTES OF 7/18/2013**

DATE: **8/2/2013**

On the minutes of the July 18, 2013, I made three errors that I found.

1. The date of the meeting on the first page should read : **JULY 18, 2013**
2. On Page 2, # 16, the motion should read:

S. Soby moved that the Board of Selectmen enter into a contract with Simplex-Grinnell for the supplying of Fire Sprinkler Service; Inspection, Testing, Maintenance and Repair in Town and School buildings as detailed in the Town of Colchester RFP #2013-15, for a period of from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2016; and hereby authorize the First Selectman, with consultation of the Superintendent of Schools to sign and deliver said agreement and necessary documents required, **SECONDED BY G. CORDOVA**. Unanimously approved. **MOTION CARRIED.**

3. **Discussion and Possible Action on Elevator/Chair Lift Maintenance, Service & Repair Bid Award**

J. Paggioli, Director of Public Works presented his award recommendation for the Elevator – chair Lift Maintenance, Service and Repair. J. Ford moved that the Board of Selectmen enter into a contract with The Independent Elevator Company for the supplying of Elevator & Chair Life maintenance, Service and Repair in Town and School buildings as detailed in the Town of Colchester RFP #2013-11, for a period of from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2016, subject to a non-appropriation clause, and hereby authorize the First Selectman, with consultation of the Superintendent of Schools to sign and deliver said agreement and necessary documents required. **SECONDED BY G. CORDOVA**. Unanimously approved. **MOTION CARRIED**

I apologize for these errors.

REGISTRARS OF VOTERS
127 Norwich Avenue
Colchester, CT 06415

Dorothy A. Mrowka

Diana Norton Giles

Resolution for Emergency Contingency Plan for Elections:

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Selectmen of the Town of Colchester that:

1. The Plan is hereby adopted as an official document by the Board of Selectman *as amended by the Registrars of Voters.*
2. The plan covers ballot shortages, shortage of absence of poll workers, loss of power, fire or the sounding of an alarm within a polling place, voting machine malfunctions, weather or other natural disasters, need to remove a poll worker or moderator and to replace such worker or moderator, disorder in and around the polling place, *severe weather forecasted, opening of polls on time in case of severe weather, moving of polling places and access to announcements by state officials .*
3. Upon approval by the legislative body, such plan shall remain on file with the municipal clerk until such plan is amended and approved by the legislative body of the Town of Colchester.
4. A file of this emergency plan together with evidence of legislative body approval shall be filed with the Secretary of the State.

TOWN OF COLCHESTER
EMERGENCY
ELECTION PROCEDURES

PREPARED BY:

DOROTHY A. MROWKA

DIANA NORTON GILES

**ASSESSMENT OF THE POLLING PLACE
BY THE MODERATOR
BEFORE THE OPENING OF THE POLLS**

**THE REGISTRARS OF VOTERS FULLY UNDERSTAND THAT THE ELECTION MUST BE HELD
NO MATTER WHAT THE CIRCUMSTANCES.**

- USE THE MAP PROVIDED BY THE REGISTRARS TO LOCATE FIRE EXTINGUISHERS, FIRE ALARMS AND DEFIBRILLATORS.
- POINT OUT TO POLL WORKERS THE EMERGENCY ESCAPE ROUTES/EXITS
- POINT OUT TEMPORARY INDOOR SAFETY LOCATIONS FOR WEATHER EMERGENCIES, SUCH AS IMPENDING TORNADOES OR HURRICANES
- POINT OUT TO POLL WORKERS A PRE-DETERMINED OUTDOOR ASSEMBLY POINT TO BE USED IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY EVACUATION. IF POSSIBLE IT SHOULD BE AT LEAST 300 FEET AWAY FROM THE BUILDING AND OUTSIDE OF PARKING AREAS.
- ASSIGN DUTIES TO ASSISTANT REGISTRARS, CHECKERS AND BALLOT CLERKS IN THE EVENT OF AN EVACUATION OF THE POLLING PLACE.

POLLING PLACE EVACUATION AND EMERGENCY RELOCATION

FOR SAFETY EMERGENCIES SUCH AS FIRE, BOMB SCARES, AND ACTS OF VIOLENCE THE MODERATOR SHOULD IMMEDIATELY CALL 911 FOLLOWED BY A CALL TO THE REGISTRARS OF VOTERS. 860 537-7204

- THE MODERATOR AND ASSISTANT REGISTRAR SHOULD GET A HEADCOUNT OF WORKERS AND VOTERS IN THE POLLING PLACE.
- ALERT ALL INDIVIDUALS OF THE EMERGENCY CIRCUMSTANCES AND REMIND THEM OF THE PRE-DETERMINED ASSEMBLY AREA.
- ALL POLL WORKERS AND VOTERS SHOULD PROCEED TO THE ASSEMBLY AREA.
- THE ASSISTANT REGISTRARS SHOULD TAKE A HEAD COUNT TO ASSURE THAT ALL POLL WORKERS AND VOTERS HAVE MOVED TO THE SAFE AREA.

EVACUATION OF EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS FROM THE POLLING PLACE

- THE MODERATOR SHOULD READ THE PUBLIC COUNTER NUMBER FROM THE VOTING MACHINE AND RECORD ON THE MODERATOR RETURN; TURN OFF THE MACHINE; AND UNPLUG AND SEAL THE MACHINE IN ITS TRANSFER CASE.
- IN THE CASE OF A TEMPORARY EVACUATION THE MODERATOR SHOULD RECORD THE PUBLIC COUNTER NUMBER ON THE MODERATOR RETURN; TURN OFF THE VOTING MACHINE; UNPLUG, AND ROLL THE BALLOT BOX WITH THE VOTING MACHINE TO A SAFE AREA.
- THE ASSISTANT REGISTRARS, WITH THE HELP OF THE CHECKERS AND BALLOT CLERKS SHOULD SECURE THE CHECKER LISTS, UNVOTED BALLOTS, AND SPOILED BALLOTS, AND PLACE THEM IN THE ROLLER CABINET FOR SAFE-KEEPING.
- THE MODERATOR SHOULD MOVE THE ROLLER CABINET TO A PRE-DETERMINED SAFE AREA BY THE CHECKERS.

- THE ASSISTANT REGISTRAR SHOULD LIST THE NAMES OF THE PEOPLE WHO CHECKED IN BEFORE THE EVACUATION BUT WERE UNABLE TO VOTE. ALL BALLOTS OF SUCH VOTERS SHOULD BE COLLECTED AND MARKED “SPOILED.” IF SUCH VOTERS RETURN TO VOTE THEY SHOULD BE ISSUED NEW BALLOTS AND CHECKED OFF THE ELECTION OFFICER’S (EVACUATION) LIST.
- ELECTION OFFICIALS SHOULD ADVISE VOTERS THAT THEY MAY, DEPENDING ON THE CIRCUMSTANCES, DO ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:
 - a. WAIT UNTIL THE BUILDING CAN BE RE-ENTERED.
 - b. PROCEED TO THE ALTERNATE POLLING PLACE TO VOTE.
- AN ASSISTANT REGISTRAR SHOULD STAY WITH THE EVACUATED VOTERS WHO HAVE BEEN CHECKED IN BUT WHO HAVE NOT YET VOTED AND VOTING SHOULD BEGIN (EITHER INSIDE THE POLLING PLACE OR AT AN *ALTERNATE LOCATION) AS SOON AS SAFELY POSSIBLE.

• NOT LATER THAN ONE DAY BEFORE EACH ELECTION, PRIMARY OR REFERENDUM THE REGISTRARS AND MODERATORS SHALL REVIEW THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE REPORTS. IF SEVERE WEATHER IS LIKELY TO BE PRESENT IN THE MUNICIPALITY ON ELECTION, PRIMARY OR REFERENDA DAY, THE REGISTRARS OF VOTERS SHALL DETERMINE A

PLAN OF ACTION TO ENSURE POLL WORKERS ARE ABLE TO ARRIVE AT
AND ACCESS THEIR ASSIGNED POLLING LOCATIONS. THE REGISTRARS OF
VOTERS SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR OVERSEEING THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN. BATTERY OPERATED RADIOS WILL BE
AVAILABLE AT EACH POLLING PLACE IN CASE THERE IS NO ELECTRICITY,
PHONE OR CELL SERVICE.

*VOTERS WILL USE THEIR OWN MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO REACH THE
ALTERNATIVE POLLING PLACE.

FINAL CHECKLIST OF ITEMS TO BE SECURED:

- VOTING MACHINE: TURNED OFF (NO ENDER CARD) SEALED, SECURED, AND GUARDED.
- CHECKER BOOKS
- PUBLIC COUNTER NUMBER RECORDED FROM THE VOTING MACHINE.
- LIST OF VOTERS WHO CHECKED IN BUT HAD NOT VOTED
- UNUSED BALLOTS
- VOTED BALLOTS
- BALLOT BOX
- PERSONAL BELONGINGS
- MODERATOR BAG

SPECIFIC EMERGENCIES - EMERGENCY REPRODUCTION OF BALLOTS DUE TO BALLOT SHORTAGE

- REGISTRARS WILL MAKE COPIES OF THE OFFICIAL BALLOTS AND DELIVER TO THE POLLS.
- MODERATOR SHOULD DOUBLE CHECK THAT THEY ARE RECEIVING THE CORRECT FORM OF THE BALLOT FOR THEIR DISTRICT/POLLING PLACE.
- MODERATORS SHOULD INSTRUCT MACHINE TENDER TO HAVE VOTERS PUT THE XEROXED COPIES OF THE BALLOTS IN THE AUXILIARY BIN AS THEY CANNOT BE READ BY THE TABULATOR.

SHORTAGE OF ELECTION OFFICIALS:

- NOTIFY THE REGISTRARS IMMEDIATELY.
- ### **POWER OUTAGE:**
- NOTIFY THE REGISTRARS IMMEDIATELY.
 - THE VOTING MACHINES HAVE 2 HOURS OF EMERGENCY POWER.
 - THE BATTERY BACK-UPS HAVE APPROXIMATELY 6 HOURS OF EMERGENCY POWER.

- PROVIDE ALTERNATE LIGHTING FOR EACH POLLING PLACE.

FIRE AND BOMB THREATS:

- FOR VOTING EMERGENCIES FOR FIRE AND BOMB THREATS CALL 911 AND REFER TO THIS EMERGENCY MANUAL.

MACHINE MALFUNCTIONS:

- FOR MACHINE MALFUNCTIONS REFER TO THE MODERATOR'S MANUAL.

DISORDER, VIOLENCE OR INTIMIDATION:

- EVICT ANY PERSON FROM THE POLLING PLACE WHO INTERFERES WITH THE ORDERLY PROCESS OF VOTING.
- PREVENT UNIDENTIFIED PERSON FROM LOITERING IN AND WITHIN 75 FEET OF THE POLLING PLACE..
- PROTECT THE RIGHT OF VOTERS TO CAST A BALLOT IN PRIVATE.
- REQUEST ANY DISORDERLY PERSON TO LEAVE THE PREMISES. IF NEEDED CALL 911.

ILLNESS, INJURY, OR DEATH:

- FOR ILLNESS, INJURY, OR DEATH REFER TO THE EMERGENCY MANUAL IN MODERATOR'S BAG.

POLL WORKER REMOVAL:

- FOR REMOVAL OF POLL WORKERS REFER TO THE EMERGENCY MANUAL IN MODERATOR'S BAG.

**WHEN IN DOUBT YOU MAY ALWAYS CALL THE
REGISTRAR OF VOTERS**

(860) 537-7204

Please read the following aloud at and into the minutes of the Thursday, August 1, 2013 Board of Selectmen meeting and distribute to all members of the Board of Selectmen.

I speak on behalf of the newly formed Colchester Independent Party and its members. Unfortunately, most of us are out-of-town this evening and cannot attend this meeting in person.

Having reviewed the Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance minutes for the past two years, listened to applicable taped Board meetings, and attended the tri-Board meeting pertaining to the proposed building project for the William J Johnston Middle School, we are happy to see discussion of school security on this evening's agenda. We understand and thoroughly support taking measures to keep our children and school's safe. Based on Colchester's long standing tradition of doing what's best for all of Colchester's citizens, it is within this tradition that we pose the following:

In our review of previous Board of Selectmen, Board of Education, and Board of Finance discussions regarding the new building project, we have seen little discussion of the security issues that this project will pose to our school children and personnel. Located on the school campus directly between William J. Johnston Middle School and Colchester Elementary School is not the best location for services directed at the general public, such as Social Services, the Food Bank, and Senior Services. These programs must serve the needs of ALL of Colchester's residents, including those who may be legally banned from school properties. Using this location for these services will put numerous individuals into close proximity with our schools and children. As the three boards continue to unanimously pass motions moving this project forward, these issues have neither been raised nor addressed.

Additionally, firearms will have to be allowed onto the property or this location will not meet the needs of our very active veterans groups who use the Senior Center for their ceremonial equipment, including guns and munitions. With the outpouring of support for our military men and women, we cannot imagine not providing needed space for our veterans to practice their drills and store their equipment.

We have also reviewed minutes, surveys and other documents pertaining to the Senior Center as part of the project. Over and over again, seniors indicate a desire for a stand-alone center. In fact, we have plans for a stand-alone center whose cost to the town four years ago was in the vicinity of \$250,000. When talking to seniors who do not currently use our center but instead go to centers in surrounding towns, they repeatedly emphasize the need for a stand-alone center designed for seniors and in an area that is easily accessible. Seniors who use our center have told us that they were told "it's either this or nothing." We were also informed that when several members of the Board of Selectmen recently attended a meeting with seniors at our center, they were told "we will do whatever you want". Seniors again made it clear they want a stand-alone center. Yet, all three boards continue to move forward with the project. This is not a "new" plan. The bones of this plan have been in existence for more than 8 years. We are 100% in

favor of education and educational needs. Our seniors have supported our schools for years. Our 50+ population continues to rise. Taxes have risen significantly each of the past four years. Our residents cannot afford a \$50+ million project at this time. We need to put our seniors first AND address our school issues.

The building committee that developed this plan did an outstanding job – they did as directed by the Board of Selectmen that appointed them. The Board of Selectmen then unanimously approved their plan. Have any of the boards looked at alternatives? The location of and space for the food bank needs to be addressed. Perhaps the Board of Education could move to the empty space at WJJMS, putting them in the middle of their school campus, providing space for teachers from multiple schools to collaborate, and many other creative uses. This would free up a significant portion of Town Hall for other uses, such as the Food Bank.

A stand-alone Senior Center could also serve as the optimal emergency shelter. In speaking with Red Cross volunteers who have operated emergency shelters at our current location, Bacon Academy, the list of deficiencies are long. This list was provided to the Colchester Director of Facilities in the past and includes only one entrance and exit to the property, lack of electrical connections for individuals connected to medical equipment, inadequate emergency generator power and connections for medical equipment, accessibility issues for the handicapped and elderly, and facility layout (food services at the top of the stairs from sleeping area). With the changes in our weather, the aging of our population, and the needs of our community, we anticipate that this shelter will be used more often in the future than it has been. A well-designed senior center also used as an emergency shelter will meet the needs of our most vulnerable population during these stressful times and will not interrupt school operations.

As you know, only recently have we come together as the Colchester Independent Party. Although, we are still awaiting a response from the First Selectman's office regarding an FOI request sent in over a month ago, as a group, we have discussed these issues, gathered input from a broad group of Colchester's citizens, collected in-depth data, and arrived at our position. Thank you for this opportunity to address the Board.

Sincerely,
Linda Hodge on behalf of the Colchester Independent Party