

**While by no means a total representation of all the work performed by the Town, the following information highlights some activities which occurred:**

**Town Manager's Office—Dawn Francis, Town Manager**

**In advance of the re-vote on the Town and Municipal Budgets on May 6, I will be providing information in the coming weeks in my weekly report so as to respond to questions raised by our citizen budget survey.**

**Where do my tax dollars go?**

The General Fund budget pays for the following functions:

Selectboard, Board of Civil Authority, town manager, human resources, economic development, finance, assessor, town clerk/treasurer, planning and zoning, information technology, police, public safety dispatch, our two volunteer fire departments, our mostly volunteer rescue department, our volunteer technical rescue department, our public works (which provides street and highway maintenance, stormwater maintenance, equipment maintenance, buildings maintenance, and capital project development), parks and recreation, library, cemetery maintenance, Visiting Nurse Association (VNA), and intergovernmental expenditures, such as the county court, regional planning and Winooski Valley Park District.

**How much of the budget is raised by non-property tax income, and what is it used for?**

Two million of our 11.7 million-dollar operating **budget is generated by fees and grants as follows:**

- Town clerk/Civil Board, Planning and Zoning—\$472,000, or 49 percent of expenses
- Public Works—\$386,016, or 16 percent of expenses plus much more in capital grants
- Public safety dispatch, rescue, and technical rescue—\$541,257, or 49 percent of expenses
- General government (the Selectboard, manager, human resources, information technology, cemetery, health services, assessor, economic development, finance, and intergovernmental expenses) are funded with non-property tax revenues of \$583,085, or 32 percent of expenses

**What about our capital programs and plans?**

The Town of Colchester's citizens have also authorized debt and multiyear capital programs to maintain our public infrastructure. In FY '15, these obligations total \$1,798,571. Our annual debt service for drainage improvements, the Bayside property, and the municipal and police buildings, is \$626,961. Our capital programs for transportation, vehicles and equipment, computer servers, public safety dispatch, and parks total \$1,171,610.

**Overall Summary**

The amount to be raised by property taxes is \$9,624,986 for the operating budget, \$18,000 in additional VNA funding, and \$1,798,571 for the capital budget, for a total of \$11,441,557, which is an increase of 2.90 percent. The Town projects \$22,586,000 in increased property valuation. This is primarily driven by \$19,000,000 in new construction (investments) in our community. This increases the grand list growth to 1.15 percent over 2013. The FY '15 municipal tax affiliated with this proposed budget, based on a \$300,000 home, would be \$1,721—an annual increase of \$29.25, or 1.73 percent.

For more information about the Town Manager's Office, please visit <http://colchestervt.gov/Manager/index.shtml>, or call (802) 264-5509.

## Town Clerk's Office—Karen Richard, Town Clerk

- **Delinquent Dogs**—The deadline to register your dogs was April 1 pursuant to 20 V.S.A., section 3581 (c). State statute requires that the dogs be licensed and a that copy of the rabies certificate be filed in the Town Clerk's Office. Last year, we licensed 950 dogs. As of April 1 this year, we have licensed 703 dogs. A few years ago, we licensed more than 1,100 dogs. Fines can be imposed for unlicensed dogs. Please make sure that your dog is up to date on its vaccinations and that a copy of the rabies certificate is on file in the Town Clerk's Office.
- **Homestead Filing**—*The law has changed*; if you own and occupy a home on April 1, you are required to file your homestead *each year*. Last year, 4,422 homesteads were filed in Colchester. To date, 2,541 homesteads have been filed. *The deadline to file the homestead without penalty is April 15*. To file your homestead, you need [Form HS-122, Homestead Declaration and Property Tax Adjustment Claim](#). The HS-122 includes the form to file a property tax adjustment, and you will also need a separate form, [Schedule HI-144, Household Income](#). Both the paper forms and electronic filing can be found online at the Vermont Department of Taxes website at [www.state.vt.us/tax/index.shtml](http://www.state.vt.us/tax/index.shtml). Please verify that you have filed your homestead and applied for the credit to your tax bill.

For more information about the Town Clerk's Office, please visit <http://colchestervt.gov/TownClerk/townClerkHome.shtml>, or call (802) 264-5520.

## Public Works Department—Bryan Osborne, Director

What to expect this spring:

Motorists, motorcyclists, and bicyclists are all asked to use extreme caution for the next 30–45 days while using Colchester's roads. While localized street flooding, potholes, frost heaves, and mud season are all common springtime conditions in Vermont, including Colchester, the potential is high for these conditions to be unusually severe this year. Frost levels are still very deep, and snow cover remains significant for this time of year. Therefore, there is a high likelihood for a rapid thaw this spring, which may significantly worsen springtime conditions.

- **Street Flooding**—Much of the town was constructed with insufficient consideration to proper drainage. Many of the town's roads and developments do not have drainage systems and rely upon the water infiltrating into the ground around the roadways. With the ground frozen, this cannot occur, resulting in standing water. Short of constructing expensive drainage systems within these areas, there is little that can be done to correct this problem. Travelers should use extreme caution and proceed slowly through flooded areas.
- **Potholes**—The severe winter weather has caused considerable damage to the transportation system all over the state, including in Colchester. Potholes are difficult to deal with in the winter, as asphalt plants do not open until late spring. Instead, a specialized cold mix is used, which is unfortunately very expensive and nowhere near as effective as hot mix. Patching potholes with any type of material is almost impossible, however, when potholes are filled with water as a result of drainage problems as noted above. Travelers should use extreme caution and proceed slowly through damaged areas until they can be properly repaired.
- **Frost Heaves**—Frost heaves occur within areas where poorly drained soils and high groundwater tables exist. They are created as the ground thaws in the spring. In some cases, they can be severe with ground movement of several inches. Short of complete reconstruction of the roadways, there is little than can be done to correct this problem. Travelers should use extreme caution and proceed slowly along roadways affected by frost heaves.
- **Mud Season**—The town has thirteen miles of public gravel roads. These are generally old roadways that were never constructed to modern-day standards. Poorly draining soils and high groundwater tables are common throughout areas served by gravel roads. As the ground thaws during the spring, these roadways experience periods of instability where mud can be several feet deep. The rapid thaw that may likely occur this year will greatly worsen these conditions. Short of complete reconstruction of these roadways, there is very little that can be done to completely avoid these conditions.

The Public Works Department will continue to do everything it can to address these issues within its available resources. We would encourage you to report any roadway problems to us by calling (802) 264-5620. Please free to contact us anytime with any questions or to learn more about these and other roadway issues.

For more information about the Public Works Department, please visit <http://colchestervt.gov/PublicWorks/Home.shtml> or call (802) 264-5620.