

Colchester's Weekly Town News
For the Week Ending April 18, 2014

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

The budget revote will be on May 6, and absentee ballots are now available at the Town Clerk's Office between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

Budget Cut Summary by the Numbers:

- \$129,822 was cut in expenses, of which 99 percent was staff wages and benefits.
- The revised budget represents a 1.73 percent property tax increase, rather than 3.06 percent as previously proposed (with additional \$18,000 for VNA).
- It will represent an increase of 56 cents per week for the average household in Colchester if the expected 0.5738 tax rate is enacted in August. The annual increase would be \$29.25 at 0.98 cents (less than one cent) per hundred dollars of property value.
- The \$11,697,172 total operating budget increase is to be raised by property taxes.
- The \$321,966 overall budget increase is inclusive of capital plans and the VNA increase approved by voters.

Proposed Budget Cuts:

The cuts are primarily a rescission of additions to the budget we felt were needed to address staffing shortages in police, public safety dispatch, facilities, snow removal/parks maintenance, and to add back more hours of operation to the library which had been cut two years ago to meet state standards. These original budget requests proposed **more overtime hours and part-time positions rather than adding positions and** added four more months to a seasonal employee's position. However, given the vote and public input, the proposed reductions are 99 percent personnel and benefit related. The rest of the reductions relate to fuel expenses.

Longer-Term Reductions:

Some of the budget reduction measures we are considering will take some time to implement given union contract considerations and staff resources. However, given the budget defeat, the management team understands the need to change course on our spending trends and will be implementing a number of cost-containment measures.

We hope our taxpayers will vote on May 6, and we appreciate your input as we work hard to make our budget more sustainable over the long term.

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

Parks and Recreation Department—Glen Cuttitta, Director

The following is a small sampling of tasks completed by our department.

- Summer program registrations are being accepted online, by mail, and in person. Many summer camps are already full, so do not delay in registering.
- We have completed the hiring for summer day camp counselors and waterfront staff.
- Seasonal park staff began work on April 4. They have lots of cleanup and fields to prepare for spring sports with the late start to spring.
- We conducted new seasonal park staff orientation and safety program training.
- Youth lacrosse has started practicing in the school gyms due to fields not being ready. Games will start the weekend of May 3–4.
- We met with the LIFE Program Advisory Committee to discuss the program and to identify potential instructors. For more information about the LIFE program, visit our website at colchestervt.gov/Recreation/LIFE.html.
- We are accepting registration for the Colchester Causeway 5/15K race in June and the 30th Colchester Triathlon.
- The logistical work on the Muck it Up Adventure race is almost completed. We are working with Niquette Bay State Park on this race.
- The Colchester Pride volunteer program website is completed. Visit our webpage at colchestervt.gov/Recreation/ColchesterPride.html for more information.
- Athletic field scheduling is currently taking place.
- Pavilion rentals requests are currently taking place.
- Colchester Village Park Phase 1b construction will start back up May 1 with anticipated completion around June 15.
- We are assisting the Colchester Lions Club with marketing for the Easter egg hunt at Bayside Park on April 19.
- We are preparing and conducting the monthly Parks and Recreation Advisory Board meeting on April 16.
- We dismantled the ice skating rink at Airport Park.
- We are making preparations for the Touch a Truck event that takes place on May 3 in the Colchester High School parking lot.

For more information about the Parks and Recreation Department, please visit <http://colchestervt.gov/Recreation/parksNRec.shtml> or call (802) 264-5640.