

Colchester's Weekly Town News
For the Week Ending May 2, 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

We worked with Town departments to establish policies and procedures that will maintain the Town's cost to pay for expenses in the case of a federally declared disaster from 25 percent to at least 12.5 percent. For a disaster such as the 2011 flooding and Hurricane Irene, which caused damage to Town infrastructure of about \$2,000,000, the difference in reimbursements (and lower expense to the Town) is about \$258,000.

We recently held a "community coffee" for citizens to discuss the budget with Town staff and Colchester Selectboard members in an informal setting. Based on our budget survey and comments from citizens, it is fairly clear that citizens do not wish for reduced services. Along with the selectboard and Town staff, I am embracing the opportunity to do more with less and to make cost control an ongoing priority. Based on the survey responses, we will also be exploring increased use of non-property tax revenues. Ideas on how to do things better and for less are always welcome.

Here is a table of cumulative Town and school taxes we have compiled in collaboration with the Colchester School District:

FY 15 Colchester Estimated Town and School Tax Rates Based on Proposed Budgets for May 6 Vote				
300,000 Home without income adjustment				
	2014	2015 change	% change	
School *	\$4,088	\$4,239	\$151	3.7%
Town	\$1,692	\$1,721	\$29	1.7%
Total	\$5,780	\$5,960	\$180	3.1%
* 59% of Colchester residents received a property tax adjustment in 2012.				
300,000 Home with income of \$45,000				
	2014	2015 change	% change	
School	\$1,161	\$1,154	(\$7)	-0.6%
Town	\$1,692	\$1,721	\$29	1.7%
Total	\$2,853	\$2,875	\$22	0.8%
300,000 Home with income of \$65,000				
	2014	2015 change	% change	
School	\$1,677	\$1,667	(\$10)	-0.6%
Town	\$1,692	\$1,721	\$29	1.7%
Total	\$3,369	\$3,388	\$19	0.6%
300,000 Home with income of \$85,000				
	2014	2015 change	% change	
School	\$2,193	\$2,180	(\$13)	-0.6%
Town	\$1,692	\$1,721	\$29	1.7%
Total	\$3,885	\$3,901	\$16	0.4%

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

Finance Department—Aaron Frank, Assistant Town Manager and CFO

Recent activities included:

Monthly financial report summary: after eight months, we are 3 percent under budget on expenses and almost 1 percent over budget on revenues.

Many Town functions generate significant portions of their expenses from non-property tax revenues. Year-to-date non-property tax revenue recover is as follows:

- The Town Clerk and Civil Board have covered 63 percent of expenses with non-property tax revenues
- Planning and Zoning has covered 59 percent of expenses with non-property tax revenues.
- Colchester Rescue and Colchester Technical Rescue have covered 72 percent of expenses with non-property tax revenues.
- The Parks and Recreation Department, which includes the activities listed in the brochures sent to Colchester households, has covered 101 percent of expenses with non-property tax revenues.
- Public Safety Dispatch, which provides dispatch services to Colchester's police, fire, rescue, and technical rescue as well as service under contract to Milton's police, fire, and rescue, has generated 40 percent of its expenses through our contract with Milton.
- The Sewer Fund, which provides for public sewers along Route 15, in the Exit 16 area, Severance Corners, and Creek Farm Plaza and adjacent neighborhood, has generated 93 percent of its expenses through non-tax revenues. On an annual basis, the sewer fund generates 100 percent of its expenses through non-tax revenues.
 - Public Works has covered 11 percent of its operating expenses with non-property tax revenues. Additionally, our Public Works staff secures significant state and federal grant funding to maintain and improve public infrastructure, which significantly leverages our Town capital plans.
 - The Windemere Estates Mobile Home Park water and wastewater system is out to bid. The Town is facilitating a federal grant for this project with a voter-approved \$500,000 loan at 2 percent. The loan will be repaid by the Town through revenues from the owner of the park, the Housing Foundation, Inc. We have worked with the bond bank and the Housing Foundation, Inc. to reduce the payoff period from nine years to seven years, reducing interest fees for the project.

For more information about the Finance Department, please visit <http://colchestervt.gov/Finance/financeHome.shtml>, or call (802) 264-5650.

Town Clerk's Office—Karen Richard, Town Clerk

Homestead Reminder—Have you filed your homestead yet? Remember that you must file each and every year, even if you do not qualify for a tax credit. There are two forms associated with your property. The HS-122 is the homestead declaration; every homeowner must file the HS-122. If you believe that you qualify for a tax credit, you also file the HI-144. The HI-144 is the income form that is used to calculate the amount of the tax credit. The HS-122 and HI-144 are state forms that are filed along with your Vermont income tax forms. If you fail to file your homestead declaration, you will receive a tax bill with the nonresidential rate for the education taxes. In Colchester, the nonresidential rate is higher than the residential rate. At this time, it appears that approximately 500 homeowners who filed their homestead declarations last year have not yet

filed this year. The Vermont Tax Department sends us the information electronically each week. As it is a state program for the education taxes, we are unable to assist you once you have missed the deadline.

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

Town Assessor—Robert Vickery

The Assessor's Office is finalizing the 2014/2015 Grand List.

- The Abstract Grand List will be lodged with the Town Clerk's Office at the end of May.
- The Abstract Grand List will be available for the public to review on the day that the Grand List is lodged.
- Notice of the Abstract Grand List will be posted in the *Colchester Sun* as well as at the Burnham Memorial Library, Colchester Town Office, Mazza's General Store, Shaw's Supermarket, and the United States Post Office.
- The Town will be mailing "Change of Assessment Notices" on the day that the Abstract Grand List is lodged to the property owners of any parcel that had a change of the assessed value.
- Any property owner who wishes to grieve his or her assessed value must have a written grievance delivered to the Assessor's Office no later than fourteen (14) days after the Abstract Grand List is lodged.

For more information about Assessor's Office, please visit <http://colchestervt.gov/Assessor/assessorHome.shtml>, or call (802) 264-5670.