

Colchester's Weekly Town News
For the Week Ending May 30, 2014

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

Town Manager's Office—Dawn Francis, Town Manager

Two of our employees were recognized this week for excellence. Sarah Hadd, our Planning and Zoning director, was awarded the 2014 Mark Blucher Professional Planner of the Year Award. Additionally, both she and Bryan Osborne, our Public Works director, were recognized by the [American Council of Engineering Companies of Vermont](#) with an [Engineering Excellence Award](#) for their efforts on the [Town of Colchester's Integrated Water Resources Management Plan](#) prepared by [Aldrich + Elliott, PC](#).

We are working hard to keep our taxpayers notified of town events, meetings, and activities. The Front Porch Forum is an online communication tool that 2,500 Colchester residents are subscribing to in order to find out more about their local government as well as a wide array of information ranging from babysitter recommendations to items that neighbors have for sale. The Colchester Selectboard recently approved another year of support for Front Porch Forum, which enables us to communicate with community members. Check out <http://frontporchforum.com/> if you aren't a member.

Thanks to the efforts of [Local Motion](#), the Town of Colchester was recently featured on [the Weather Channel](#) (TWC) with a promotional piece on the Island Line! TWC has ties to the [Rails-to-Trails Conservancy](#) and featured three rail trails around the country. It aired last week; here's a link:
www.weather.com/video/the-island-line-trail-49003

Also, the bike ferry across the causeway is now operating, and the schedule is available at www.bikeferry.org. We appreciate the efforts of Local Motion to keep this important service available.

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

Assessor's Department—Bob Vickery, Assessor

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

- The 2014 Abstract Grand List will be lodged with the Town Clerk's Office on May 30.
- 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, Dick Mazza's General Store, Shaw's Supermarket, and the United States Post Office.
- "Change of Assessment Notices" will be mailed only to the property owners who had a change in their assessment on May 30.
- Any property owner who wishes to grieve his or her assessed value must have a written grievance delivered to the Assessor's Department by no later than 4:30 p.m. on June 13, 2014.

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

Town Clerk's Office—Karen Richard, Town Clerk
Cost of Elections

As we approach our third budget vote, I would like to share the cost of elections to the community. The annual March Town/school district budget vote cost close to \$5,000. The ballots and programming of the machines are close to \$1,400. We have two polling locations and man the polls at both locations for a cost of \$1,400. The miscellaneous costs are placing ads in the newspapers (as required by law), postage, labor costs to move and remove the election equipment, and so forth. What the \$5,000 does *not* include is the labor expended for three weeks prior to the election manning the office as a polling location. Early voting is a convenience to the voter but does require a substantial amount of labor to enter voter data, print mailing labels, and prepare the ballots to be delivered to the polls.

This is not a complaint about extra work for the staff. It is just to let you know that there are costs associated with convenience. Each election, there are more early voters. This is a trend that will probably not change.

Please consider voicing your opinions to the appropriate boards during the budget preparation time. If you do not let them know your position, they assume that the information they are presenting for the vote is acceptable to the community.

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

Finance Department—Aaron Frank, Assistant Town Manager/CFO

Monthly financial report summary: after eight months, we are 5 percent under budget on expenses and almost on budget on revenues.

Recent activities included:

- Worked with Town staff to reduce sedans used by Town Hall from four to two, which will result in about \$2,200 in annual savings by switching to mileage reimbursement.
- Worked on a new computer backup system to utilize the Town/school district fiber system for offsite backups rather than \$3,000 annual fees for a contracted service.
- Completed a project to consolidate the Burnham Memorial Library and Colchester Meeting House Wi-Fi that will allow the elimination of a separate cable connection to serve the Colchester Meeting House.
- The Windemere Estates Mobile Home Park water and wastewater system bids are in, and we expect the Housing Foundation, Inc. to award the contract in the next week. We have received our loan approval. 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.

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