



For the Week Ending December 4, 2015

Town Manager's Special Edition

Dawn H. Francis, Town Manager

It seems early, but the Selectboard and Department Heads have been hard at work preparing a budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2016-2017 which will be voted upon by our taxpayers on Monday, March 1, 2016. We expect the Selectboard to warn a public hearing for January 12, 2016 at 6:45 p.m. at the Colchester Town Hall on Main Street, which provides you the opportunity to give us feedback on the proposal at that time.

We are proposing a 1.2% budget increase to maintain our same level of services. Additionally, another 1.2% increase will provide an additional public safety dispatcher (funded in part by the Town of Milton); additional police overtime of \$25,653; an increase of \$45,648 to support our volunteer fire departments; and \$23,684 in mandated State stormwater costs. These proposed additions result in a 2.4% budget increase overall; however, we will be continuing a three year trend of lower tax rate increases for another year.

Our preliminary conservative estimate is that a 2.4% budget increase will increase the tax rate by about $\frac{3}{4}$ of 1 cent per hundred dollars of property valuation, or 1.3%. For a home valued at \$300,000, this translates into an annual increase of \$21.30 per year. If we see increased grand list growth over the next five months, this amount may be even lower. The local option tax, which began to be assessed in October, is being used to pay for our debt service which is \$643,136 and also contributes to the lower tax rate.

What have we done to contain costs?

- Conducted an energy audit of all facilities and reduced energy consumption.
- In process of restructuring police vehicle fleet with more fuel efficient vehicles and to reduce fit-up costs.
- Focused on non-tax revenues for support of operating expenses. Budgeted non-tax revenues are projected to increase 5.1% by our increasing building permit fees and ambulance service fees.
- Obtained grants for critical infrastructure improvements.
- Shared equipment and services with other municipalities.
- Emphasized employee safety and wellness.
- Renegotiated bond interest rates and terms as well as various service contracts.

We hope you will take time in the next few months to review our proposed FY 2017 Budget and FY 2016-21 Capital Plan on our website at www.colchestervt.gov. Let us know if you have questions or suggestions about the use of your taxes which provide

For further information or comment, please call Linda Kingston at 802.264.5509



Colchester Town News

VERMONT

Colchester-What do you want to do today?

you with roads, paths, storm drainage, public safety, recreation, library services, and more.

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

For further information or comment, please call Linda Kingston at 802.264.5509