

Notice – Under Vermont's Public Records Act, all e-mail, e-mail attachments as well as paper copies of documents received or prepared for use in matters concerning Town business, concerning a Town official or staff, or containing information relating to town business are likely to be regarded as public records which may be inspected by any person upon request, unless otherwise made confidential by law. If you have received this message in error, please notify us immediately by return email. Thank you for your cooperation.

From: VTCDco@aol.com [<mailto:VTCDco@aol.com>]
Sent: Thursday, December 10, 2015 3:06 PM
To: Bryan Osborne
Cc: Dawn Francis; Aaron Frank; vtcdco@aol.com
Subject: Re: Town Budget

Bryan - thank you for the response. I appreciate the dichotomy that you have facing this issue. For me, it now becomes a matter of my paying for the plowing of other private roads and I have to personally pay for the plowing of my road. It is double jeopardy. As I noted to the Town Manager, this is discriminatory treatment that really cannot be justified given the fact that a private road is a private road. To me the choices are:

1. Plow all private roads and avoid the exclusion of some that presently are not plowed. As a tax payer, we should all benefit from the plowing provided to other tax payers. To preclude the need to hire additional permanent staff, the plowing could be outsourced to a private contractor. I should point out that the Water District owns the water system in our area and, as such, they provide the service year round so there is some quasi ownership that the Town already has of our private roads.
2. Abandon the plowing of all private roads. This still begs the issue of some taxpayers not getting the same benefit that others do by virtue of where they live.

Perhaps I am oversimplifying the issue, but I am quite sincere in my belief that I am not being treated equitably and I would like to see the Town take a stand that will treat me similarly to others.

Thank you again for your response and I look forward to hearing from you with the projected resolution of this.

message dated 12/10/2015 12:57:06 P.M. Eastern Standard Time, bosborne@colchestervt.gov writes:

Hi David,

Thank you for your question regarding the plowing of private roads. It is an issue that has roots back to the early 1970's when the Town's voters approved a non-binding referendum which read; *"Shall the Town road equipment be used when feasible to plow those private roads serving one year-round resident which was plowed prior to 1970"*. Since that time, there has been considerable discussion and study devoted to this issue. From those efforts a number of findings have been generated. Two of the more significant findings have been that the Town's practice is highly unusual in comparison to surrounding communities within the county, and the Town's Attorney and Insurance carriers have advised against the practice.

To address some of your specific questions;

The annual cost of the Town's winter operations is approximately \$471,221. The Town is currently providing snow removal services to 114 miles of roadways, of which approximately 22 miles are privately owned. We estimate that there are probably another 25 miles +/- that are not plowed. While we have accurate data on the mileage of public roads, we do not track private roadway mileage and therefore these numbers represent our best estimates. Estimating the costs of plowing private roadways is also quite difficult. For example, many of the cost centers within our winter operations are not affected by whether or not we plow private roads. For example, while there may be some reduction in overtime expenses, our base salary and benefit costs would not change. Material costs are also very difficult to correlate to private roads. Most of these are secondary roads that do not receive the same priority as our arterial and collector roads where both traffic volumes and speeds are much higher. The majority of them are also gravel roads where only sand is used versus salt which is considerably more expensive per ton. Our best guess at this time is that the total cost savings associated with the discontinuance of plowing private roads may be between \$20,000-\$25,000 per year. However, the cost of plowing all private roads would add considerable expense to our budget, as we would need to hire additional staff and purchase additional equipment. Our existing Highway Division is already being asked to provide services beyond their capacity, and the Vermont League of Cities and Town's has determined that the Colchester Highway Division is one of the smallest forces in the state for communities comparable in size to Colchester. Finally, for a variety of reasons, the Town considers it inadvisable to work within the capacity of a private contractor and make municipal crews available on a fee basis.

In summary, we recognize that at some point in the future we must tackle the fairness and equity issues associated with town maintenance of private roads again and it is an issue that has been recently raised by our Governance Committee. There is a good deal of history that must be weighed, including how we got to where we are today, how the community voted in the past as well as a review of costs, legal advice, and the time available for the staff and Selectboard to deliberate this issue. It is a complex issue that will require the evaluation of cost savings as well as significant community outreach. The community dialogue will be contentious, robust and voluminous for the Selectboard and staff, and therefore, due to our limited resources we have determined it is not a priority to address in the short term.

Thanks, Bryan

Dawn Francis

From: Bryan Osborne
Sent: Thursday, July 21, 2016 6:55 PM
To: Dawn Francis
Subject: Fwd: Discussion of roads

Fyi

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Frank Motter <f.motter@fmotter.com>
Date: July 21, 2016 at 6:52:47 PM EDT
To: "bosborne@colchestervt.gov" <bosborne@colchestervt.gov>
Subject: Discussion of roads

Bryan

Thank you for taking the time to explain the towns position on private roads

I will convey your reasoning to the lost cove home ass.

I fully understand that you are trying too keep the town budgets under control

And fully appreciate your effort to serve the town well.

I am Having difficulty try to understand that 40 % of private roads are serviced by the town
are the rest are not

I am sure the town administration will come up with a fair solution in the future

Regards

Frank

Sent from my iPhone