

For the Week of January 6, 2020

**Manager's** Message

Aaron Frank, Town Manager

**The Proposed FY 21 Budget**

The proposed budget maintains our current level of service and addresses significant needs in emergency services caused by slow, steady growth over past decades. The Operating Budget is comprised of twenty-five service categories. The expenses of eight of these service categories have been reduced and sixteen have increased. Before factoring in non-tax revenues, the operating budget increase is 0.0%.

Major changes include:

- **Fire services:** An increase of \$207,428 to fund four career staff who will provide fire coverage during weekday daytime when we do not have an adequate number of volunteers to protect life and property.
- **Rescue:** Creation of a Rescue enterprise fund that moves all expenses and non-tax revenues out of the property tax based General Fund
  - Recognizes that Rescue generates 74% of its own revenue and is a significant cost center with a total budget of \$760,645.
  - Allows Rescue to better respond to call demand by staffing up or down according to call volume.
- **Public Safety Dispatch:** Increases Colchester's contribution to its public safety dispatch service by \$89,064 to maintain staffing following the departure of a contracted community.

**Estimated 21 Tax Rate**

Considering prior voter approvals for capital items, the use of \$504,312 of the Local Option Tax revenues to pay for debt and an estimated 1.18% growth due to investments in Colchester properties, the estimated municipal tax rate for FY 2021 is \$0.5485. The tax rate is projected to increase by \$0.0056 (a little more than one half of one cent) or a 1.02% increase over the prior year.

The Selectboard will hold a public hearing on the proposed budget at their meeting on January 14, 2020.

**Wastewater Alternatives Presentation**

At the January 14 Selectboard meeting, the Planning Commission will be presenting their findings of an extensive review and public consideration of alternatives to address the human wastewater pollution in Malletts Bay. The wastewater issue is a subset of the larger Malletts Bay Initiative to address water quality, including stormwater, in Malletts Bay. We invite those interested to attend.

The Planning Commission's report is available here:

<http://www.colchestervt.gov/DocumentCenter/View/5721/MBIReportFINAL>

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

Office of the Town Clerk | Treasurer  
Julie Graeter

Happy New Year from the Clerk's Office!

- As this New Year starts we begin preparing for Federal and State income tax filing. Please be sure to file your VT Dept. of Taxes Homestead Declaration filing (HS-122). For more visit: <https://tax.vermont.gov/individuals>.

For more about the Town Clerk's Office visit <http://colchestervt.gov/townclerk> or call 264-5520.

Assessor  
Robert Vickery

- We'll be sending out requests to commercial properties for inventories in January. This request will be for all income and expenses related to real estate only. This data is important to understand market rents, vacancy rates, and typical expenses for commercial real estate to help establish value.
- Continuing ongoing preparations for the 2020 Grand List.
- Continuing inspections of new construction permitted as of April 1, 2019
- Find GIS Map and Assessment Data at <http://www.axisgis.com/ColchesterVT/>

For more about the Assessor's Office visit <http://colchestervt.gov/assessor> or call 264-5671.

Burnham Memorial Library  
Kelly McCagg, Director

2019 has been a memorable year at Burnham Library:

- Over the course of the past 12 months, 68,223 people visited the library, an average of about 1,312 per week; 81,991 items were circulated; and patrons downloaded 4,092 e-books and 4,671 audiobooks.
- We finished the renovations of the lower level of the Meeting House in March.

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

- The Meeting House hosted 305 programs, meetings, and events, including our Summer Concert Series, Fiber Fest, and Annual Tree Lighting and Caroling.
- Burnham Library received the Libraries Lead with Digital Skills Grant sponsored by the American Library Association and the Public Library Association, funded partially by Google. It will allow the library to provide more technology education to our patrons. We are looking forward to more classes in 2020!
- This year, we participated in Vermont Reads as part of the Vermont Humanities Council's initiative for state residents to read selected books and participate in community events related to their themes. For 2019 "March: Book One" by civil rights icon John Lewis, in collaboration with Andrew Aydin and Nate Powell, was selected. Over the course of the year, we hosted several March-related programs, which culminated in a livestream of Congressman Lewis' and Andrew Aydin's speaking event at the Flynn Theater.
- Over 266 children and teens participated in our space-themed Summer Reading program. It's early in the year, but we are already planning next summer's activities!
- We also brought the library to patrons who otherwise would not have been able to enjoy the programs and services we offer. 181 Outreach sessions were provided and 3,878 were served.
- Be sure to check out our newly redesigned website!

For more about Burnham Library events visit <http://colchestervt.gov/library> or call (802) 264-5660.

#### Upcoming Town Meetings:

- **Planning Commission:** 1st & 3rd Tuesdays of the month, 7:00pm. Next meeting: 1/7/20
- **Development Review Board:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month, 7:00pm. Next meeting: 1/8/20
- **Recreation Advisory Board:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month, 7:00am, Champlain Room, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. Next meeting: 1/8/20
- **Conservation Commission:** 3rd Monday of the month, 7:00pm, at the Bayside Activity Center or per agenda. Next meeting: 1/20/20
- **Library Board of Trustees:** 3rd Thursday of the month, 4:30 PM at Burnham Library. Next meeting: 1/16/20
- **Selectboard:** 2nd & 4th Tuesday of the month, 6:30pm. Next meeting: 1/14/20.

(All meetings take place at the Colchester Town Offices, 781 Blakely Road, in the Outer Bay Conference Room on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor unless otherwise noted.)

Upcoming events:

- **Friday, 1/31: Colchester's Got Talent: ALL STARS!** This special, invitation-only show will feature crowd favorites from the past 10 years of Colchester's Got Talent.
- **The 37th Annual Colchester Winter Carnival** is coming up on 1/ 31, 2/1 & 2/2! More details available at: <https://colchestervt.gov/WinterCarnival>.

Notices:

- The Town Offices will be closed on Monday, January 20, 2020, in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.
- The Winter 2020 issue of the Colchester Historical Society's newsletter is now available. Find out what's been going on, what's coming up, and how Colchester students may participate in Vermont History Day.  
<https://colchestervt.gov/DocumentCenter/View/5780/Colchester-Historical-Society-Newsletter-Winter-2020?bidId=>



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