



Memo

From the Office of the Town Manager

To: Colchester Selectboard
 From: Aaron Frank, Town Manager; Renae Marshall, Deputy Town Manager; and Lara Aley, Finance Director
 Date: November 12, 2023
 Re: FY 2025 Draft Town Municipal Services Budget – Expense Overview

This memo and the attached spreadsheets show departmental municipal services budget changes to aid the Selectboard in their consideration of the budget request by the Town administration. Three of the twenty-five areas were reduced, one remained the same and four increased by \$5,000 or less.

Town Municipal Services Budget	Proposed FY 25	FY 24	% Change from FY 24	\$ change from FY 24
Total	\$ 15,937,217	\$ 15,028,384	6.0%	\$ 908,834

This proposed budget represents an increase of \$908,834 (6.0%). We have not budgeted for additional services but have added resources to maintain the current level of services to the community. The budget increase reflects increased costs for equipment, contracted services, labor, employer paid taxes and benefits, as well as materials consumed in providing municipal services to the community. The new VT Childcare Tax (Child Care Contribution) requires the employer's share to be a minimum 0.33% payroll tax on all employee wages resulting in an increase in the FY25 budget of \$27,681.

In order to maintain the current level of services to the public, while responding to increased community needs, we are proposing the following changes to the budget:

- **2 Police Officers:** We are proposing to add two additional full-time patrol officers, in order to increase from 29 officers to 31 officers in the Colchester Police Department due to the high rate of calls for police services and the need to better distribute our call volume among the staff.
- **Civilian Police Support Services Manager:** This position will be in place of one of the four police leadership positions in the Colchester Police Department and will oversee and manage the Records Clerks and Public Safety Communications Specialists (Dispatch) and assist with other functions not requiring a sworn officer. This role was previously filled by a police lieutenant.
- **Information Technology Manager:** Due to expanding responsibilities in public safety, as well as other Town departments, to address increasing cyber-security risks, departmental specific software and internet connectivity needs.
- **Human Resources Coordinator:** Due to a sustained increase in employee turnover that has resulted from societal changes, the Human Resources Director is not able to keep up with the volume of recruiting, hiring, and onboarding employees, in addition to the other HR responsibilities. This position will provide the opportunity for more focused efforts to fill open Police Officer positions, which will be an ongoing need for at least a few years. The coordinator will also help with a transition of HR recordkeeping responsibilities from the Colchester public safety departments to Town Hall.
- **Firefighter:** This is the fourth career firefighter, and the sixth full-time member of the department. The position was added in June 2023 but was not budgeted for in the FY24 budget.
- **Assistant Fire Chief:** We have increased the assistant fire chief from a half-time to a full-time position in the department.
- **Rescue Paramedic:** We have increased the number of career Paramedics from four to five, to provide the Assistant Rescue Chief more time to oversee the department now that Fire and Rescue have a single chief.

The budget increase would have been higher had the Selectboard not directed the Town Manager to find additional savings that can be realized without reducing services to the community. Significant savings and efficiencies were realized by hiring the new Fire Chief that now oversees both Fire and Rescue departments. This was accomplished by a staff person in the Manager’s office being provided to the Fire Department to serve as assistant chief and an additional full-time rescue member hired to allow the assistant rescue chief to assume more of the day-to-day management responsibilities in Rescue.

Importantly, these changes allowed Colchester Rescue, which is operated much like a business, to continue to provide the high quality of service to the community despite the sustained increase in calls. The revenue received by Colchester Rescue has resulted in a decrease of \$97,696 in municipal service tax dollars required to support the operations of this service.

With retirements and leadership changes in the Colchester Police Department, we took this opportunity to reassess the current and future needs of the community and the department, and, as a result, have included changes in the FY 25 proposed budget that allow for a more efficient and effective way to manage staff while maximizing the time spent by sworn officers to actively engage in proactive community policing efforts and reduce the calls per officer in support of retaining and attracting police officers in the Colchester Police Department.

The Town departments could better meet residents and taxpayer needs with additional resources. However, the residents, businesses and voters also wish to keep the tax rate affordable and this budget represents a balance of those competing goals, understanding there are economic pressures outside of our control and increased resource needs. Finally, we have tried to resource services in new, different, and more cost-effective ways, as exemplified by the reduction of expenses in three of the Town’s 25 cost centers.

Departmental Summaries:

	Proposed FY 25	FY 24	% Change from FY 24	\$ change from FY 24
Selectboard	\$ 76,678	\$ 76,650	0.0%	\$28.00

The Town’s elected, non-party based, Selectboard serves as both the judicial and legislative branch of town government, usually meeting over 30 times a year to consider policy as well as significant legal and operational issues. The Selectboard is a representative form of government that also hires and provides input and guidance to the Town Manager. This service area includes Selectboard Contingency, Selectboard stipends, printing of the annual Town report and binding a dozen paper copies of the Town ordinances. We have reduced the size and number of printed annual reports and ordinances now that they are published on our website.

The majority of the funds, \$66,000, is for “Selectboard Contingency” and could fund budget over-runs or items not budgeted. The funding for Selectboard Contingency does not come from FY 25 tax revenues, but rather from the fund balance. If the Selectboard Contingency is spent, future tax dollars would be needed to replace the amount expended, if the Town desired to maintain the fund balance. The Selectboard and Town Management are protective of these funds and would generally spend them only after other sources of revenue are exhausted.

	Proposed FY 25	FY 24	% Change from FY 24	\$ change from FY 24
Transfers	\$ 226,033	\$ 226,033	0.0%	\$ 0

This cost center includes transfers among various funds, some of which are funded with property taxes and others from other sources. Other funds have special designated purposes, whereas the general fund does not, other than to support the Town's general municipal services.

Notable expenses in this cost center include: Transfer of \$226,003 to the fire capital fund for long-term capital needs. We will be adjusting this over the next few years as we determine the funds needed to maintain our equipment and what we can save towards future high-cost items like fire trucks. Ultimately, we are likely to recommend a multi-year Fire Capital Plan funded by a voter-approved amount or tax rate.

	Proposed FY 25	FY 24	% Change from FY 24	\$ change from FY 24
Civil Board	\$ 38,818	\$ 40,359	-3.8%	\$ (1,541)

The Civil Board is overseen by the Town Clerk and provides support for running elections, including registering voters; drafting and ordering ballots; mailing and storage of absentee ballots; overseeing and certifying voting results. Expenses primarily include partial support of one Town Clerk staff member who performs these functions, as well as wages for the elected Justices of the Peace who perform these mandated election related functions, should they wish to be paid.

Notable changes to this cost center include: a \$1,812 or 7% increase for Salaries and Wages for full- and part-time staff and a \$3,600 decrease due to reduction in payments to Civil Board volunteers, many of whom are no longer requesting payment for their time.

	Proposed FY 25	FY 24	% Change from FY 24	\$ change from FY 24
Manager	\$ 1,006,403	\$ 883,366	13.9%	\$ 123,037

This cost center provides for: general management of the Town's thirteen external service groups and three internal service groups; municipal service and capital budget development and implementation; tax rate setting; collection of about \$7M in Town fees and grants; collection of \$34M in taxes and fees, including the State Education taxes on behalf of the Colchester School District; identification, procurement, application and compliance with grants; negotiation and implementation of three labor agreements; negotiation and drafting of benefits and vendor contracts on behalf of all Town departments; emergency planning and management; coordination of work by 86 elected and appointed officials serving on 12 boards and commissions so that they operate in concert with each other, the Town management and the Selectboard; coordination with three water entities so that water service complements overall development plans; resourcing the project and construction management and oversight for the construction of the Colchester Recreation Center; coordination and contract management of regional entities such as Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission, Winooski Valley Park District, Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce, Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation, Green Mountain Transit, Special Services Transportation Agency, and Chittenden Solid Waste District; coordination with the Colchester School District on fiscal and operational issues; oversight of contracted Town attorneys in the areas of labor law, development law, general municipal law, and finance law; reporting to and implementing recommendations of the independent external auditor who is overseen by the Selectboard;

drafting, organizing and managing the flow of information and processes of the Selectboard; drafting, implementing and overseeing 39 Selectboard Policies; drafting charter changes and related ballot language; transportation options evaluation and prioritization; drafting legal documents; recruiting, hiring, and, if needed, concluding employee relationships; leading the information technology, emergency management, and human resources departments; insurance and risk management for property casualty and employee liability, workers compensation and disability; oversight of Town-wide safety; ongoing employee meetings; development and presentation of training on safety, technology, and business analysis and improvement for all Town departments; resetting and analysis of all fees and user services; Town-wide communications coordination and document drafting; constituent concerns and complaints; review, analysis and testimony on Vermont legislation affecting the Town; review, interpretation and implementation of federal and state laws as they relate to our employees and diverse areas of operations; resourcing economic development planning and implementation; engaging with businesses for retention and development; engaging, planning and implementing improvements to Town facilities and services; engagement with our State legislators; and assisting the departments to manage the ongoing day-to-day business of the Town.

Notable changes to this cost center include:

- 1) \$88,654 (17.7%) increase to Salary & Wages primarily to hire a Human Resources Coordinator to help keep up with advertising, recruiting, hiring, and onboarding due to sustained higher rates of employee turnover based on societal changes and HR record-keeping responsibilities transferring from public safety departments;
- 2) \$30,884 (14.4%) increase to Employer Taxes & Benefits primarily for increased costs for health, dental, life/disability, property & casualty insurance, as well as social security, partially due to the addition of HR Coordinator position, which will provide services that support all Town departments;
- 3) \$500 (-0.4%) decrease to Services and Utilities, primarily due to an increase in professional services that is offset by a reduction in the expense necessary for legal, based on actuals;
- 4) \$4,000 (15.4%) increase to Miscellaneous due to increased printing costs and supplies for community outreach, employee and volunteer recognition and events.

	Proposed FY 25	FY 24	% Change from FY 24	\$ change from FY 24
Economic Development	\$153,715	\$ 147,541	4.2%	\$ 6,174

The Economic Development Department facilitates the effective management of the growth and development of our community while preserving our natural assets. The departmental goals include facilitating Colchester’s planned growth; efforts to create, recruit, and retain high quality jobs while protecting and building upon the community characteristics most valued by residents; and developing alternative funding opportunities. Economic Development has been active in making businesses aware of state and federal funding opportunities and in providing public information to the community.

Notable changes to this cost center include: a \$10,674 (12.3%) Salary and Wage increase; and a \$4,500 (-9.8%) decrease in Employer Taxes & Benefits primarily due to reduced health insurance costs due to change in employee health care plan type that offset increased costs for social security, retirement and the new VT Childcare Tax.

	Proposed FY 25	FY 24	% Change from FY 24	\$ change from FY 24
Finance	\$ 540,621	\$ 486,970	11.0%	\$ 53,650

The Finance Department provides for accounts payable, payroll, retirement, debt management, financial reporting to the department heads and Selectboard, purchasing for 25 general fund cost centers, wastewater, dispatch, and recreation enterprise funds and six capital funds. It also manages accounts receivable, special assessment billings, wastewater loan management and billing, loans to housing entities, budget modeling, federal grant tracking and compliance, ongoing inventories of fixed assets,

drafting and maintaining oversight of Town-wide financial policies and procedures; and maintains financial records and adheres to policies and procedures in a manner that results in few audit findings. The department's outside services include the Town Charter-required annual external audit, federal grant audits, as well as upkeep of the Town's financial software and hardware. The finance department substantially contributes to the Town-wide budget development.

Notable changes to this cost center include:

- 1) \$27,397 (9.8%) increase in Salaries & Wages;
- 2) \$24,053 (20.2%) increase in Employer Taxes and Benefits primarily due to increased costs for health insurance, retirement, social security, new VT Childcare Tax and changes in employee health care plan type;
- 3) \$2,200 (2.6%) increase in Services and Utilities comprised primarily of increased costs for external audit fees and software maintenance.

	Proposed FY 25	FY 24	% Change from FY 24	\$ change from FY 24
Assessor	\$ 243,677	\$ 224,944	8.3%	\$ 18,733

The Assessor's office assesses property in a manner such that no property owner pays more than their fair share in property taxes. This is accomplished through developing up-to-date, fair, and accurate assessments that are based on detailed information and research.

Notable changes to this cost center include:

- 1) \$6,185 (5.0%) increase in Salaries & Wages;
- 2) \$5,949 (10.1%) increase in Employer Taxes & Benefits primarily for increased costs for health insurance, life & disability insurance, social security, retirement and new VT Childcare Tax that were partially offset by reductions in unemployment and worker's comp insurance;
- 3) \$6,600 (15.9%) increase for Services & Utilities increase in professional services for annually recurring fees for mapping software and computer-assisted mass appraisal.

	Proposed FY 25	FY 24	% Change from FY 24	\$ change from FY 24
Town Clerk	\$433,723	\$401,980	7.9%	\$31,743

The Town Clerk's office provides tax billing and collections, including tax sales when necessary and receipt of cash and checks from billed services. The Clerk's office also records all documents related to land, vital records, elections, issues a variety of licenses and passports; and are responsible for cemetery lot sales and records.

Notable changes to this cost center include:

- 1) \$30,749 (12.0%) increase in Salaries & Wages;
- 2) \$406 (-0.3%) decrease in Employer Taxes & Benefits primarily due to increased costs for retirement, social security and new VT Childcare Tax that were offset by changes in employee plan type that resulted in decreased costs for health, dental and unemployment insurance;
- 3) \$1,000 (7.1%) increase for Supplies & Parts primarily for higher costs for operating supplies and postage.

	Proposed FY 25	FY 24	% Change from FY 24	\$ change from FY 24
Planning & Zoning & DRB	\$518,807	\$526,097	-1.4%	(\$7,290)

The Department of Planning and Zoning provides regulatory oversight to construction and development within the community as well as quality of life and environmental concerns. The department's activities include planning and drafting of development regulations with the support of an appointed Planning Commission and administration of development regulations with the support of the Development Review Board.

This department was recently restructured following a request by your Selectboard during the summer 2020 to see what we could stop doing in order to reduce expenses and taxes to the community. The Planning and Zoning Department had not seen the dynamic changes that other departments had over the last decade, so it was clear it was ripe for a review.

Beyond the public policy changes that were made, we had to untangle and reassign duties. We restructured the department from six staff to four staff with broader and more shared responsibilities. We were able to maintain the key permitting functions of the department despite a 100% staffing turnover in a nine-month period with staff assigned from the Manager's office and Public Works to help during this transition. The current staffing consists of a Planning & Zoning Director, Development Manager, Development Planner and an Associate Planner. In addition, we have utilized a staff member from the Manager's office to assist with health inspections and the associated work involved with that process.

Notable changes to this cost center include:

- 1) \$338 (0.1%) increase in Salaries & Wages due to transitioning the responsibilities of building inspector back to the Planning & Zoning staff while maintaining additional assistance for the role of Town Health Officer;
- 2) \$17,177 (-11.6%) decrease of Employer Taxes & Benefits primarily due to increased costs for life & disability, social security, retirement and the new VT Childcare Tax that were offset by changes made to employee plan type that resulted in reductions to health, dental, unemployment and worker's comp insurance and the transition of the building inspector role back to the department;
- 3) \$9,550 (12.5%) increase in Services & Utilities primarily due to increasing costs for legal to more accurately reflect actuals.

	Proposed FY 25	FY 24	% Change from FY 24	\$ change from FY 25
Information Tech	\$428,951	\$311,525	37.7%	\$117,426

Information Technology provides central hardware, networking IT and telecom services for all Town departments. Purchases of equipment are planned centrally and made through a multi-year capital plan. Departments are responsible for maintaining special purpose software although its hardware requirements are met by the IT department. The department maintains servers, switches, firewalls, back up devices which provide access for four public use software systems, departmental software systems and seven police software systems. IT also provides user support for 201 PC's/laptops/readers/terminals/iPads used by about as many users who include staff, rescue volunteers, board members, and the public (readers are loaned out from the library). The Town Manager's office oversees this area given its important link to all departments. IT staff set up servers, firewalls, and backup systems.

Notable changes to this cost center include:

- 1) \$129,768 (99.6%) increase in Salaries & Wages primarily due to the need to hire a manager to oversee and evaluate expanding needs in public safety and throughout the Town departments and for managing, prioritizing and planning for increased and changing cybersecurity threats and departmental specific software needs. This oversight was previously provided by the Town

Manager's office, augmented by contracted consultants, but will benefit from a designated IT Manager for this purpose. This increase will be significantly offset by a decrease of \$68,200 in professional services which is a component of the below noted Services and Utilities line item;

- 2) \$33,925 (65.4%) increase in Employer Taxes & Benefits due primarily to cost of associated employer-paid tax and benefit costs for the addition of a full-time IT Manager;
- 3) \$46,267 (-37.2%) reduction in Services & Utilities primarily due to a decrease in professional services to offset by the increased costs of software which is now costlier as a service vs. an ownership model.

	Proposed FY 25	FY 24	% Change from FY 24	\$ change from FY 24
Police	\$4,980,509	\$4,757,919	4.7%	\$222,590

The Colchester Police Department provides 24/7/365 police services to the Colchester community. CPD provides emergency and non-emergency response to a broad variety of citizen and officer-initiated calls for service. CPD strives to work collaboratively with citizens, other Town departments and all stakeholders in public safety.

Services include: response to emergencies; proactive community contacts, patrols, public engagement; problem solving, crime prevention; investigation of crimes, crashes, reported incidents; provision of community services such as car seat inspections, fingerprinting and personal safety classes; traffic safety through enforcement and education; and special units, programs and activities. The Colchester Police budget includes funding for Community Outreach workers from Howard Center and restorative justice services from Essex Community Justice Center. These services are under contract with the Town so are not shown as direct allocations.

Notable changes to this cost center include:

- 1) \$153,422 (5.5%) increase to Salaries & Wages primarily for funding for the Civilian Support Services Manager to provide oversight of Records and Public Safety Communications (Dispatch) and two additional patrol officers to better distribute the increasing calls per officer and provide the ability to do more proactive community policing. This increase is largely offset by reduced salaries due to retirements within the department;
- 2) \$58,810 (4.2%) increase for Employer Taxes & Benefits is primarily comprised of increases in employer-paid tax and benefit costs associated with addition of Civilian Support Services Manager and two additional patrol officers, offset by savings as noted above;
- 3) \$9,357 (2.2%) increase to Services & Utilities primary due to increased costs for training, vehicle fuel and vendor contracts;
- 4) \$1,000 (9.1%) increase to Supplies & Parts primarily for increased costs for office supplies.

	Proposed FY 25	FY 24	% Change from FY 24	\$ change from FY 24
Dispatch	\$588,491	\$558,072	5.5%	\$30,419

Colchester's Public Safety Dispatch is managed by the Colchester Police Department, and dispatches for four Colchester entities, including the Colchester Fire Department (which include the Saint Michael's Fire, a connected unit), Colchester Police, Colchester Rescue, and Colchester Technical Rescue. This department moved from an enterprise (revenue) department to a general fund department in FY 25 due to the Town no longer providing contracted dispatch services.

Notable changes to this cost center include: \$30,419 (5.5%) which was primarily due to increased costs for health, life & disability, unemployment and workers comp insurance, social security, retirement and the new VT Childcare Tax.

	Proposed FY 25	FY 24	% Change from FY 24	\$ change from FY 24
Fire Department	\$1,133,942	\$1,045,883	8.4%	\$88,059

The Colchester Fire Department is a combined volunteer and career department, which is augmented by Saint Michael's College Fire. About 47 Volunteers, including six cadets (youth volunteers), are supplemented by a chief, assistant chief and four career firefighters who work weekday day-time when volunteers are not as available. We have added an assistant chief whom we have increased from half-time to almost full-time or 90% of their time dedicated to the fire department. In addition, we hired a full-time firefighter in June of 2023 that was not budgeted for in the FY 24 budget, bringing the total number of full-time staff members in the Town fire department to six. For comparison, in FY 20, we had zero full-time staff members. The FY 25 budget reflects the addition of this unbudgeted full-time firefighter position as well as the increased hours for the assistant chief. The FY 25 budget for fire represents a or \$413,324 or 44% increase in funding to this department since FY 20.

The services the department provides include, Fire Suppression, Emergency Medical First Response, Heavy Rescue, Water and Cold-Water Rescue, Hazmat and Marine First Response. The department responds to emergency calls for service, conducts training, public education on fire prevention and fire safety, permit/plan review, and fire prevention activities. The Town supports Saint Michael's Fire from a financial perspective and has incorporated them into the Town-wide command structure.

Notable changes to this cost center include:

- 1) \$41,170 (9.9%) increase in Salaries & Wages including overtime, per-diem and volunteer pay, which includes an additional full-time firefighter that was added in June 2023, but not previously budgeted, as well as increasing the assistant chief to full-time from half-time. This increase was offset by hiring a Chief that oversees both fire and rescue services in Colchester;
- 2) \$14,986 (-7.0%) decrease in Employer Taxes & Benefits primarily due to decreased costs for health, dental, life/disability, property & liability and unemployment insurance, social security that are a result in changes in employee plan type and sharing a chief between fire and rescue services;
- 3) \$5,900 (4.3%) increase to Services & Utilities primarily due to an increase in vehicle maintenance and fuel costs that were offset by a decrease in dues and publications expenses to better reflect actuals;
- 4) \$12,109 (-7.4%) decrease in Equipment primarily due to increased costs for utilities and gradual replacement of aging portable radios;
- 5) \$22,200 (20.7%) increase in Supplies & Parts primarily due to increased costs to replace personal protective equipment/ turn-out gear that is required by OSHA to be replaced every 10-years, as well as hose and special operations equipment;
- 6) \$2,000 (-27.0%) decrease in Miscellaneous office supplies to better reflect actuals.

	Proposed FY 25	FY 24	% Change from FY 24	\$ change from FY 24
Rescue	\$11,215	\$108,911	-89.7%	\$(97,696)

Rescue services are provided to Colchester through Saint Michael's Fire and Rescue in the Route 15 area of Town and the Colchester Rescue squad elsewhere. The Colchester Rescue squad is both a Town department and a volunteer organization. We provide ambulance service with a squad of 40 volunteers, a few "per-diem" staff, five career staff, an Assistant Chief and a Chief.

The Town has been diligently working for the last ten FY years to operate Town services which can produce their own revenues more like a business. In the case of Colchester Rescue, it is projected to generate 99% or \$935,901 of its estimated operating costs of \$947,116 for FY 25, leaving the Town's share of the costs at \$11,215.

Rescue is growing pretty rapidly with calls for service as follows: FY 23 – 2,219; FY 22 – 1,990; FY 21 – 1,914; FY 20 – 1,607 (COVID caused reduction in people addressing other emergent and non-emergent medical issues); FY 19 – 1,672; FY 18 – 1,458; FY 17 – 1,469, and FY 16 – 1,246. Operating

Colchester Rescue more like a business allows us to adjust staffing up and down as service needs grow and contract with the market. This is more effectively done outside of the government funding model and allows for opportunities to earn more revenues to float with demand. In contrast, with tax-funded services, expenses are fixed by a budget that is drafted nine to 21 months in advance of the time of service delivery. In recognition of the success of running rescue more like a business, but one which still needs some municipal services tax support, this budget includes transferring \$11,215 to a Rescue Enterprise Fund, with the remainder of the funding coming from earned rescue revenues.

Notable changes to this cost center include:

- 1) \$97,696 (-89.7%) reduction for FY25 is needed from the municipal services budget to support the rescue service due to a continued increase in calls for service, which result in higher ambulance revenues and the Rescue Chief now being shared with Fire. (The Town pays, outside of this budget, for replacement of rescue vehicles, maintenance labor, capital rescue building improvements, as well as overhead and management costs.)

	Proposed FY 25	FY 24	% Change from FY 24	\$ change from FY 24
Tech Rescue	\$43,372	\$42,625	1.8%	\$747

Colchester Technical Rescue (CTR) provides search and rescue services for the Town of Colchester, and other communities in the county, state, and sometimes, across the country. These services include water, dive, rope, trench, confined space and structural collapse rescue and recovery. CTR performs 30-40 activations per year, some of which are local, state and national responses. National deployments, which can last for weeks at a time, are reimbursed by Vermont Emergency Management through agreements with other states.

Like Colchester’s other public safety services, CTR is also supported from other sources. They are noted here just for CTR, as it is a unique service comprised solely of volunteers and include: a) \$25,000 annually in the Capital Equipment Plan to replace a \$375,000+ 2013 dive truck in 2033, a \$98,000+ 2019 model utility body 4x4 truck in 2034, and a \$49,000+ 2008 4x4 pickup in 2026; b) \$20,000 in vehicle maintenance labor not charged to CTR; c) \$8,000 a year from the Public Safety Capital Plan, which provides for CTR capital equipment replacement at the discretion of the Chief; d) subsidy of workers compensation insurance charged to the department—which are high for the number of volunteer workers, but not necessarily for the type of work—through Town-wide increases, which are higher than average; e) grant management and managerial support.

Notable changes in Tech Rescue are:

- 1) \$253 (-10.9%) decrease to Employer Taxes & Benefits primarily due to decreases in property & liability and workers comp insurance;
- 2) \$1,000 (3.7%) increase to Services & Utilities primarily for purchase or replacement of uniforms.

	Proposed FY 25	FY 24	% Change from FY 24	\$ change from FY 24
Public Works-Admin	\$917,860	\$747,751	22.7%	\$170,109

The Public Works Administrative Division consists of the Director, Town Engineer, Senior Operations Manager, Operations Manager, Assistant Town Engineer, Technical Services Manager, Environmental Engineer, and DPW Coordinator. This division is responsible for the management of the Public Works Department, which provides all planning, policy development, program development, finance, engineering, construction and maintenance relative to the Town’s critical infrastructure. The Administrative Division manages five maintenance divisions and one capital plan. The overall service objectives are to preserve capital investments; protect and preserve the community’s environmental resources; improve the quality of life for citizens; ensure public safety; and preserve and promote economic vitality within the community. DPW Administration supports the enterprise funds of Stormwater and Wastewater. The Technical Services Manager is entirely funded by the Stormwater Fund. The

municipal services budget is reimbursed by these enterprise funds for time spent in these areas by other staff. As stormwater moves toward implementation of capital projects, more staff time is being used in that area.

Notable changes in DPW Administration are:

- 1) \$112,407 (22.2%) increase in Salaries & Wages primarily due to moving the funding for the highway and stormwater working foreperson previously included in the DPW highway and buildings division budgets to an operations manager in the DPW administrative budget;
- 2) \$57,102 (29.5%) increase in Employer Taxes & Benefits, primarily due to increased costs for health insurance, retirement, social security, property & liability and worker's comp and the movement of a staff member from highway to administration.

	Proposed FY 25	FY 24	% Change from FY 24	\$ change from FY 24
Highway	\$1,585,693	\$1,570,370	1.0%	\$15,323

The Highway Division is responsible for the management, maintenance, repair, and inspection of the Town's transportation system consisting of 90 miles of public roadways and 37 miles of bike paths and sidewalks. The mission of this division is to improve the overall quality of life of the community through the development of a superior infrastructure; by providing safety improvements and services to the transportation system; preserving the community's investment through preventative maintenance programs; and protecting and preserving the Town's natural resources through sensible maintenance programs.

Notable changes to this cost center include:

- 1) \$15,496 (-2.6%) decrease to Salary & Wages of primarily due to moving the majority of the funding for the operations manager (previously a working foreperson) to DPW Administration;
- 2) \$17,599 (-4.6%) decrease to Employer Taxes & Benefits primarily due to decreased costs for health, dental, life & disability, unemployment and workers comp insurance due to changes in employee plan type and associated decreases in converting the above referenced position to DPW-Administration;
- 3) \$20,064 (10.5%) increase to Services & Utilities for increased costs of utilities, including streetlights and tree maintenance costs for hazardous tree removal throughout the Town's right-of-way;
- 4) \$28,354 (7.0%) Supplies and Parts increase primarily for winter salt and sand, and asphalt for repairs and gravel.

	Proposed FY 25	FY 24	% Change from FY 24	\$ change from FY 24
Maintenance Facility	\$489,851	\$473,788	3.4%	\$16,064

The Maintenance Division is responsible for the management, maintenance, repair, and inspection of the Town's equipment fleet consisting of 110 pieces of rolling stock equipment and 89 other smaller pieces of equipment. The mission of the Equipment Maintenance Division is to provide safe and efficient equipment to Town departments; preserve the capital investment made in the Town's equipment fleet; provide a safe working environment for the equipment maintenance personnel; and protect and preserve the natural resources within the area of the maintenance facility. Significantly, the Maintenance Division of Public Works took on maintenance of our eight fire engines and multiple fire support vehicles in June 2020.

Notable changes to this cost center include:

- 1) \$7,601 (2.9%) increase in Salaries & Wages;
- 2) \$4,404 (3.8%) increase in Employer Taxes & Benefits primarily due to increased costs for health insurance, property & liability insurance, retirement, social security and the new VT Childcare Tax, which are all partially offset by decreases in dental, workers comp and unemployment insurance;
- 3) \$2,808 (5.7%) increase of for Services & Utilities primarily to adjust for usage costs based on

actuals over past few years;

- 4) \$1,000 (20%) increase in Equipment for the replacement of tools and maintenance equipment, including a new pneumatic floor jack in FY 25, as the current one will have reached the end of its useful life.

	Proposed FY 25	FY 24	% Change from FY 24	\$ change from FY 24
Stormwater	\$156,000	\$151,940	2.7%	\$4,060

The Stormwater Division is responsible for the overall management, maintenance, repair, and inspection of the Town's stormwater system consisting of 2,500 structures and associated piping, street sweeping, drainage ditches, water quality sampling and the compliance requirements associated with the Town's Phase II MS4 Stormwater Permit. The mission of the Stormwater Division is to improve the quality of life within the community through the development of a superior infrastructure and preserving and protecting the community's environmental and natural resources. Funding is provided through the Town's Stormwater Utility, plus the above noted fee for services from the General Fund.

Notable changes to this cost center include: An increase in the estimated fee to be paid by the general fund of \$4,060.

	Proposed FY 25	FY 24	% Change from FY 24	\$ change from FY 24
Buildings	\$198,164	\$209,316	-5.3%	\$(11,152)

The Buildings Division is responsible for the management and care of 15 Town buildings. This division consists of one full-time employee equivalent whose tasks are fulfilled by DPW highway staff and whose assignments are managed by the department's Operations Manager. The service objectives are to improve the quality of life within the community through the development of a superior infrastructure by providing maintenance and improvements to Town facilities used for the delivery of Town services and programs and the overall management of the community. We have been assertive in rebidding contracts for cleaning, rubbish, elevator maintenance, copier leases, etc. which have allowed us to reduce expenses in these labor-intensive functions. The Parks Department provides winter snow removal around Town buildings and parking lots, allowing the Public Works staff to focus more on winter road and path maintenance.

Notable changes to this cost center include:

- 1) \$23,391 (-29.2%) Salaries & Wages decrease due to moving a portion of the funding for a working foreperson for the DPW highway and building sand stormwater divisions to an Operations Manager in DPW administration;
- 2) \$7,038 (18.1%) Employer Taxes & Benefits increase primarily due increased costs for health and dental insurance and social security that were partially offset by decreases in life & disability, property & liability, unemployment and workers comp insurance, as well as retirement;
- 3) \$5,400 (6.3%) increase in Services & Utilities primarily due to increased costs for contractors, boiler maintenance, parts and supplies necessary to adequately maintain the building.

	Proposed FY 25	FY 24	% Change from FY 24	\$ change from FY 24
Health Services	\$67,253	\$65,940	2.0%	\$1,313

Health Services includes funding to external entities that assist with protecting and improving the health and welfare of the community. The proposed FY 24 budget for health services includes:

- 1) \$36,000 for the University of Vermont Health Network Home Health and Hospice (formerly Visiting Nurses Association);
- 2) \$23,203 for the contracted animal control officer (which is a proposed increase of \$1,313);
- 3) \$6,500 for kennel fees;

- 4) \$1,000 for Age Well (formerly CVAA);
- 5) \$550 for Steps to End Domestic Violence (formerly Women Helping Battered Women), which is the FY24 budgeted expense, although it should be noted that they requested \$4,000, an increase of \$3,450. It should be noted that the Town forgoes a little more than \$6,327 in municipal service tax revenue since their acquisition of a property in Colchester for the purpose of providing a shelter to those folks fleeing domestic violence.

Additionally, the Town has received requests from: Vermont Family Network in the Amount of \$2,500, Local Motion in the amount of \$2,500, Howard Center in the amount of \$5,000 and American Red Cross in the amount of \$500; as well as a non-specified request from the Northern Chapter Great Dane Rescue of New England. We have shared these requests with the Selectboard for their consideration but have not budgeted for them.

	Proposed FY 25	FY 23	% Change from FY 24	\$ change from FY 24
Parks	\$519,341	\$494,327	5.1%	\$25,014

The Colchester Parks Division staff maintain 13 parks with amenities that include: nine tennis courts, three basketball courts, six play structures, four sand volleyball courts, four soccer fields, four baseball fields, one softball field, one lacrosse/football field, two pavilions, three bathhouses, two shuffleboard courts, four dedicated pickleball courts, one skateboard park, six cemeteries, two beaches and swim areas, one dingy dock, seven bike/pedestrian paths, one seasonal ice rink, three miles of Nordic trails, four pump stations, four and a half miles of green belts and all Municipal building grounds (Bayside Activity Center, Burnham Library, Town Hall, Police, Rescue, Public Works, Park Maintenance Fire Stations and Historical Society). This covers approximately 388 acres of land and 10.8 miles of bike/pedestrian paths. This division provides snow removal around all municipal buildings and parks, which covers approximately 7.5 acres of land.

Notable changes to this cost center include:

- 1) \$15,741 (6.5%) Salary & Wage increase;
- 2) \$10,844 (-12.0%) decrease in Employer Taxes and Benefits primarily due to decreases in health, dental, unemployment and workers comp insurance that offset increased costs for life & disability, property & liability insurance, social security, retirement and the new VT Childcare Tax;
- 3) \$17,866 (12.8%) Services & Utilities increase primarily due to increases in contractual services, repairs/maintenance and fuel costs;
- 4) \$2,000 (40%) Equipment increase due to a likely need to rebuild the leaf-collection trailer in FY 25.

	Proposed FY 25	FY 24	% Change from FY 24	\$ change from FY 24
Recreation	\$297,441	\$283,522	4.9%	\$13,919

The Recreation cost center provides management and administration for the Parks and Recreation Department and the Recreation Program Fund; manages the Parks Capital Plan; the recreation impact fees on new residential properties; develops, plans and oversees Park maintenance, and pavilion, athletic field and park rentals; plans and implements special events and activities throughout the year; and pays for non-fee generating activities of recreation. The recreation program fund operates services and programs for fees and does not require general fund municipal services tax funds.

Notable changes to this cost center include:

- 1) \$3,547 (2.2%) increase for Salary & Wages;
- 2) \$4,972 (8.5%) increase in Employer Taxes and Benefits due to increased costs for health, dental, property & liability insurance, social security, retirement and the new VT Childcare Tax,

- which is partially offset by decreases in worker's comp and unemployment insurance;
- 3) \$5,400 (9.2%) increase for Services & Utilities primarily due to an increased cost for utilities and maintenance costs of the Activity Center, as well as an increase in costs for fireworks.

	Proposed FY 25	FY 24	% Change from FY 24	\$ change from FY 24
Library	\$892,966	\$837,142	6.7%	\$55,823

The Burnham Memorial Library welcomes people of all ages and economic backgrounds to enrich their lives through books, audio-visual materials, and programs. The Library provides materials for life-long learning and assistance in using information resources, with an emphasis on early childhood literacy. Colchester residents look to the Library as a place that is attractive and welcoming, with an atmosphere that inspires them to learn, grow, and become better citizens. Library staff manage the Library Meeting House on Main Street where a plethora of programming is typically available for all ages, as well as space for community events and meetings.

Notable changes to this cost center include:

- 1) \$35,768 (7.9%) increase for Salary & Wages;
- 2) \$11,811 (5.4%) increase for Employer Taxes and Benefits due to increases in health, life & disability, property & casualty and unemployment insurance, social security, retirement and the new VT Childcare Tax, which is partially offset by decreases in worker's comp and unemployment insurance;
- 3) \$8,245 (5.1%) increase for Services & Utilities as a result of increased costs for janitorial services for the Meeting House due to increased public use and general building and maintenance needs.

	Proposed FY 25	FY 24	% Change from FY 24	\$ change from FY 24
Intergovernmental	\$387,694	\$335,414	9.1%	\$32,280

This cost center provides for the Town of Colchester's support of regional entities including: the Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Vermont Council on World Affairs, Greater Burlington Industrial Corporation, Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission, Winooski Valley Park District, Vermont League of Cities and Towns, Green Mountain Transit fixed route and services for persons with disabilities, Special Services Transportation Agency (services for Elders and Persons with Disabilities), Chittenden County (funding for the Chittenden Superior Court and Probate Court operated by the State of Vermont), and the Colchester Conservation Commission.

Proposed changes to this cost center include:

- 1) \$10,000 (20.8%) increase in GMT ADA fees due to increased usage. This amount would be higher if we had not negotiated a multi-year contract;
- 2) \$2,956 (5.4%) increase for Winooski Valley Park District;
- 3) \$736 (3.0%) increase for Vermont League of Cities and Towns dues;
- 4) \$7,120 (6.4%) estimated State operated county court tax increase;
- 5) \$11,000 (37.9%) increase for the GMT services contracted to SSTA for Elders and Persons with Disabilities;
- 6) \$468 (1.7%) increase of CCRPC member dues;
- 7) We have budgeted the same as last year for the Lake Champlain Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Vermont Council on World Affairs and the Greater Burlington Industrial Commission and the Conservation Commission.