

Colchester's Weekly Town News

For the Week Ending February 28, 2014

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

Town Manager's Office—Dawn Francis, Town Manager

We have been busy preparing for Town Meeting this week but have also been engaging in a number of other areas:

- Met with Community College of Vermont students who are assisting with finalizing our Town logo, which will be used in economic development
- Held monthly department head meeting focusing on an updated employee evaluation process
- Met with Father McLaughlin and Jerry Flanagan of Colchester Fire District #1, which provides drinking water to a large area of Colchester. The Town is currently operating a wastewater system, part of which once belonged to the fire district.
- Attended a Chittenden Unit for Special Investigations Board meeting. The Town of Colchester provides an officer to help staff this countywide group that investigates crimes against vulnerable populations.
- Working with staff to consider the draft Colchester Energy Plan completed by a volunteer committee and how we can work to implement cost and energy-saving measures in Town government.

All Colchester residents are invited to a free community dinner. School officials, town officials, and your legislators will be available for informal discussions. Get your questions answered while enjoying lasagna, salad, and garlic bread. Please bring dessert to share.

When? March 3 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Where? Colchester High School cafeteria, 125 Laker Lane.

Cost? Free

If you are a registered voter, you may also attend the annual Town Meeting following the dinner at 7:30 p.m. in the community theater at Colchester High School.

The Official Ballot, Warning for Town Meeting, and budget information is available at <http://colchestervt.gov/Manager/TownMeeting.shtml>.

The town election is Tuesday, March 4. Voters in 9-1 will vote at the Colchester Meeting House, and voters from 9-2 will vote at Colchester High School from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

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

Finance Department—Aaron Frank, Assistant Town Manager and CFO

Recent activities included:

- Monthly financial report summary—after seven months, we are 1 percent under budget on expenses and 1 percent over budget on revenues.
- Implemented monthly departmental budget reporting system.

- Changed future revolving septic loans to require the Town's loan to become primary to other debt, improving the likelihood of payment.
- Continued to work with Vermont Municipal Bond Bank on our application for a 2 percent loan for a replacement wastewater system in Windemere Estates Mobile Home Park. This bond of up to \$500,000 was authorized by public vote last summer and will be repaid through revenues from the owner of the park, the Housing Foundation, Inc.
- Updated the Colchester Sewer Debt schedule for sewer budget, reducing debt in rates by \$45,000.
- Worked with the rescue chief on ambulance billing rates. Thanks to help from volunteers, our rescue and technical rescue services are covering 77 percent of their costs this year.

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

Town Clerk's Office—Karen Richard, Town Clerk

- We are gearing up for Town Meeting Day on Tuesday, March 4. More than four hundred people have cast their ballots early. We expect more early voters in the next few days. Residents can vote at the Town Clerk's Office until 4:00 p.m. on Monday, March 3. Voters in 9-1 will vote at the Colchester Meeting House, and voters from 9-2 will vote at Colchester High School, from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 4.
- The third installment of taxes is due March 15.
- A friendly reminder that it is time to license your dogs. It is the law that dogs be licensed and that their rabies vaccinations remain up to date. If your dog was licensed last year and the rabies certificate is current, you can mail the fee to the Town Clerk's Office, and we will send the tag to you. For more information, call (802) 264-5520.
- If you need a copy of your tax bill and/or a receipt for taxes paid in 2013 in order to file your taxes, please call (802) 264-5520, and we can provide the information by e-mail or mailing.

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

Town Assessor—Robert Vickery

The Assessor's Office will be conducting a field review of the entire town and checking on all permits from now until the end of April.

- The field review will consist of a "drive by" inspection of all properties in town to verify some of the Town's data, such as description, quality, and condition of the property that can be observed from the street.
- If you have been issued a permit(s) within the last year or were under construction as of April 1, 2013, a person from the Assessor's Office will be stopping by to verify any physical changes to your property as a result of the permit(s).
- If the permit(s) is/are for interior renovation, such as finishing a basement, the Assessor's Office will be attempting to contact you for an interior inspection to verify the renovations. If we are unable to conduct an interior inspection of the property, the Certificate of Occupancy will be used to verify completion.
- The purpose of these inspections is to assess all properties in town to the Fair Market Value using the most up-to-date and accurate data possible; this will ensure that no property owners pay more than their fair share of the tax burden.

- If you would like to set up an appointment to have the assessor inspect your property, please call Donna at (802) 264-5670.

The Assessor's Office will be rolling out a new interactive map and assessor data accessed from the Town's website.

- The map is GIS based, and assessment data will be linked to the map so that residents will be able to view parcel maps and corresponding assessment information at the same time.
- Residents will be able to search for parcel information by owner name, street address, or parcel ID #, and the map will automatically zoom in to that parcel. If you know where the parcel is, you could simply click on the parcel on the map, and the assessment data will come up on the left of the screen.
- Residents will be able to print the property record cards, abutter lists, and a copy of the map from home.
- The map will have the Town's zoning information and other map layers, such as flood plains, wet lands, contour lines, and so on.
- Residents will be able to see the aerial view and Bing maps view.
- This new GIS/assessment website will save the Town \$900 per year for web hosting the online mapping and assessment data.
- A link to the GIS/assessment website will be available on the Town's website as soon as all of the data has been updated.

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