



For the Week Ending April 3, 2015

Town Manager's Special Edition

Dawn Francis, Town Manager

This is the time of year that we receive calls about ponding and drainage issues. Our Public Works Department has identified the need to spend approximately \$2.3 million a year to address all of the Town's storm water and drainage issues on the following:

Installation of drainage systems in areas where no system currently exists	\$7,719,995
Repair and replacement of existing storm water systems	\$14,870,573
Capital projects to improve water quality	\$4,672,832
Total	\$27,264,400

We have also identified the need for an additional annual expenditure of \$168,600 for both system maintenance and management. Currently our total annual spending for storm water, (administration, maintenance and capital) is \$486,940. Clearly, we have a need that outstrips our ability to pay.

A Stormwater Advisory Committee (SWAC) has been established consisting of residents, businesses and environmental interests. Their mission is to create a comprehensive storm water management program which will:

- 1) provide an adequate and equitable funding mechanism to allow the Town to shift toward more proactive management of storm water infrastructure in Colchester; and
- 2) address and clean up the Town's most critical sources of sediment and phosphorus to local streams and Lake Champlain; and
- 3) ensure higher quality and better protected surface waters and water resources throughout the Town.

The Town's storm water program is currently managed within the Public Works Department. The level of effort needed to insure adequate maintenance of existing storm water infrastructure and oversee the implementation of capital projects is rising, but there is no staff dedicated to the Town's storm water services. Program funding is currently provided through general fund revenues raised by property taxes. With storm water impacts being more closely correlated to impervious surface areas as opposed to assessed values of property, the current funding system is inequitable and this issue will become more problematic as program costs continue to rise.

An adequately and equitably funded program specifically supporting storm water infrastructure management including capital projects, infrastructure maintenance, regulatory compliance and record-keeping, public engagement and education, and pollution prevention is warranted. This need will only become more pronounced as restoration plans are implemented and existing infrastructure continues to age. Such a program will also be required to support sustainable community growth and development. The creation of a Storm Water Utility will better position the Town to meet these future program needs. We will keep you updated as we embark on this important work.

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

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