



# 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 23, 2022 (UPDATED for 12-13-2022)  
 Re: FY 2024 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. Four of the twenty-five areas were reduced.

Town Municipal Services Budget	Proposed FY 24	FY 23	% Change from FY 23	\$ change from FY 23
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 15,028,386</b>	<b>\$ 13,880,217</b>	<b>8.3%</b>	<b>\$ 1,148,170</b>

This proposed budget represents an increase of \$1,148,170 (8.3%). Except for the below changes, we have not budgeted for additional services. The budget increase reflects increased costs for health care, equipment, contracted services, labor, and materials, consumed in providing municipal services to the community.

In order to maintain the current level of services to the public, while responding to increased costs and resource needs, more significant increases include: Information Technology (IT) Services & Utilities - \$95,417 to address additional resource needs in IT due to expanding cybersecurity risks and increased service fees for departmental specific software and internet connectivity; Civilian Evidence Technician in the Colchester Police Department - \$102,000 salary, benefit and associated employment costs. This role was previously filled by a rotating assignment of a police detective. Due to the increasing responsibilities and time commitment to this role, it was determined that we would be better served hiring a civilian to oversee collection, logging, storing and as appropriate, disposing of evidence and property that come into our possession. We funded this position temporarily by holding one of our 29 police officer positions open, but our long-term plan was to obtain funding for this position so we could maintain 29 officers due to the high rate of calls for police services and the need to better distribute our call volume among the staff; Police Department Technology - \$20,000 in additional funding for data storage required for Body Worn Cameras.

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. With the passing of the Malletts Bay Sewer Project, town staff performed a cost-benefit analysis associated with retaining Delegation of the State's Wastewater Program. Under the delegation agreement in December of 2005, the Town assumed the administration of the State Wastewater Program. At that time, while the associated permit fees were not expected to fully cover the cost of the program, there were a number of benefits whereby the Town and its Selectboard believed that it was warranted to assume this responsibility. The reasons at the time included: 1) strong local knowledge of the properties, soil conditions and environmental

challenges in Colchester; 2) the ability to provide property owners with information about the performance of certain technologies or disposal design options given those factors, and most notably; 3) the ability to not recognize the “Clean Slate” allowance in the State’s wastewater rules, which provides grandfathering of certain aspects of septic systems built before 2007. By not recognizing this clause, the Town can require that older systems be brought up to current technical standards prior to issuance of new permits which improves water quality. This was particularly important to Colchester given the significant number of non-compliant and failing septic systems within inner Malletts Bay where septic failure rates were 3-4 times higher than any other area within the community.

Since that time, the Malletts Bay Sewer Project was approved by voters in March of 2022, which will bring municipal sewer service to 289 properties along West Lakeshore Drive, East Lakeshore Drive, and Goodsell Point. The project will eliminate the pollution caused by non-compliant and failing septic systems in Malletts Bay, as well as eliminate the most significant reason the Town originally assumed responsibility for the administration of the State Wastewater Program and the ability to not recognize Clean Slate. In addition, the cost-benefit analysis indicated that the continuation of the program would cost taxpayers approximately \$58,000 in FY24 and likely more would need to be funded by taxpayers in future years in order to support the program. For these reasons, the Colchester Selectboard voted at their November 8, 2022 meeting to authorize the Town Manager to provide formal notice of the Town’s intent to discontinue administration of the State Wastewater Program on or around April 1, 2023, saving taxpayers \$58,000 in FY24.

The town departments could better meet residents and taxpayer needs with more 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. Finally, we have tried to resource services in new, different, and more cost-effective ways, as exemplified by the reduction of expenses in four of the town’s twenty-five cost centers.

**Departmental Summaries:**

	Proposed FY 24	FY 23	% Change from FY 23	\$ change from FY 23
<b>Selectboard</b>	\$ 76,650	\$ 75,574	1.4%	\$1,077

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 24 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 24	FY 23	% Change from FY 23	\$ change from FY 23
<b>Transfers</b>	\$ 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:

- 1) Transfer of \$226,003 to the fire capital fund for long term capital items. 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 24	FY 23	% Change from FY 23	\$ change from FY 23
<b>Civil Board</b>	\$ 40,359	\$ 45,298	-10.9%	\$ (4,939)

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:

- 1) \$1,708 (-6.2%) decrease for part time Civil Board Salaries & Wages since we have two elections in FY24 vs. three held in FY23.
- 2) Increased health care costs are offset by the reduced expense that result from two elections vs. three, including a reduction in associated postage fees and other related labor costs.

	Proposed FY 24	FY 23	% Change from FY 23	\$ change from FY 23
<b>Manager</b>	\$ 883,367	\$ 831,826	6.2%	\$ 51,541

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 eighty-six elected and appointed officials serving on twelve 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 development of the Community 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; serving a leadership role in regionalization efforts for dispatch 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) \$296 (-0.1%) decrease to Salary & Wages as a result of savings related to restructuring a position in the Manager's office that responds to ongoing needs but results in a decreased cost;
- 2) \$1,737 (0.8%) increase to Employer Taxes & Benefits primarily for increased costs for retirement, social security, property & liability insurance as well as worker's comp.
- 3) \$41,600 (44.6%) increase to Services and Utilities, primarily due to an increase in town-wide training and increased costs for legal expenses.
- 4) \$4,500 (180%) increase to Supplies & Parts due to cost & usage increases for office supplies.

	Proposed FY 24	FY 23	% Change from FY 23	\$ change from FY 23
<b>Economic Development</b>	\$147,540	\$ 137,074	7.6%	\$ 10,466

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:

- 1) \$4,147 (5%) Salary and Wage increase;
- 2) \$4,318 (10.4%) Employer Taxes & Benefits increased primarily due to increased costs

for health insurance and retirement;

- 3) \$2,000 increase to Services and Utilities to account for costs for training. Please note this amount was temporarily removed in FY23 due to decreased opportunities for offsite training.

	Proposed FY 24	FY 23	% Change from FY 23	\$ change from FY 23
<b>Finance</b>	\$ 486,971	\$ 458,097	6.3%	\$ 28,874

The Finance Department provides for accounts payable, payroll, retirement, debt management, financial reporting to the department heads and Selectboard, purchasing for twenty-five 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) \$16,178 (6.1%) increase in Salaries & Wages;
- 2) \$11,497 (10.7%) increase in Employer Taxes and Benefits primarily due to increased costs for health insurance, retirement, social security, property & liability insurance and worker's comp;
- 3) \$1,200 (1.4%) increase in Services and Utilities comprised primarily of increased costs for external audit fees and postage.

	Proposed FY 24	FY 23	% Change from FY 23	\$ change from FY 23
<b>Assessor</b>	\$ 224,944	\$ 233,831	-3.8%	\$ (8,886)

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) \$6,723 (5.7%) increase in Salaries & Wages;
- 2) \$4,890 (9.1%) increase in Employer Taxes & Benefits primarily for increased costs for health insurance, property & liability insurance, social security, retirement and worker's comp;
- 3) \$20,500 (-33.1%) decrease for Services & Utilities due to a decreased need in FY24 for professional services and legal expenses since reappraisal will not occur during that fiscal year.

	Proposed FY 24	FY 23	% Change from FY 23	\$ change from FY 23
<b>Town Clerk</b>	\$401,982	\$369,083	8.9%	\$32,899

The Town Clerk's office provides for 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) \$7,854 (3.3%) increase in Salaries & Wages;
- 2) \$21,045 (21.2%) increase in Employer Taxes & Benefits primarily due to increased costs for health insurance, property & liability insurance, social security and worker's comp;
- 3) \$2,000 (9.9%) increase for Services & Utilities primarily for higher costs for legal, operating supplies and postage.

	Proposed FY 24	FY 23	% Change from FY 23	\$ change from FY 23
<b>Planning &amp; Zoning &amp; DRB</b>	\$526,097	\$469,585	12.0%	\$56,512

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 Associate Planner. During this transition period and while we were still working to fill all four positions, we have utilized a staff member from the Manager's office to assist with building and health inspections. Recognizing it takes time to build an entirely new department and fully train staff, we have budgeted for this assistance to continue in FY24.

Notable changes to this cost center include:

- 1) \$49,585 (20%) increase in Salaries & Wages. This reflects an additional 37.4% of one employee from the Manager's office for building and health inspections while the new Planning & Zoning staff is training in these areas;
- 2) \$20,777 (16.2%) increase of Employer Taxes & Benefits primarily due to increased costs for health insurance, social security, retirement and worker's comp;
- 3) \$13,850 (-15.4%) reduction in Services & Utilities primarily due to a planned decrease in professional services to offset increased costs associated with ongoing support from the Manager's office in FY24. The professional services will likely be right-sized in future budgets once the department is fully staffed.

	Proposed FY 24	FY 23	% Change from FY 23	\$ change from FY 23
<b>Information Tech</b>	\$311,523	\$203,669	53.0%	\$107,854

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 six servers, seven switches, three firewalls, three back up devices which provide access for four public use software systems, seven departmental software systems and seven police software systems. IT also provides user support for 166 PC's/laptops/readers/terminals 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) \$6,996 (5.7%) increase in Salaries & Wages;
- 2) \$5,341 (11.5%) increase in Employer Taxes & Benefits due primarily to increased costs for health insurance, property and liability insurance, worker's comp and retirement;
- 3) \$95,417 (330.7%) increase for Services & Utilities due to a need for additional resources to address cybersecurity threats, departmental specific software and internet connectivity.

	Proposed FY 24	FY 23	% Change from FY 23	\$ change from FY 23
<b>Police</b>	\$4,757,920	\$4,145,007	14.8%	\$612,913

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) \$308,098 (12.3%) increase to Salaries & Wages of which about 1/3 or \$102,000 is funding for the civilian evidence position;
- 2) \$210,167 (17.5%) increase to Employer Taxes & Benefits which is primarily comprised of increases in: health insurance, retirement, general and auto liability, worker's comp and social security.
- 3) \$135,649 (47.9%) increase to Services & Utilities primarily due to increases for training due to higher costs for travel and tuition and moving annual service contract expenditures to this line item.
- 4) \$20,000 (36.4%) increase to Equipment primarily for increased costs for uniforms & associated equipment.
- 5) \$62,000 (-67.4%) decrease to Miscellaneous due to contract related expenses like body worn camera data storage, digital evidence processing software, Howard Center Community Outreach and Essex Community Justice Center funding now moved to the Services & Utilities line item.

	Proposed FY 24	FY 23	% Change from FY 23	\$ change from FY 23
<b>Dispatch</b>	\$558,071	\$543,908	2.6%	\$14,163

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.

Notable changes to this cost center include:

- 1) \$14,163 (2.6%) which was primarily due to increased costs for health insurance, social security, retirement and training.

	Proposed FY 24	FY 23	% Change from FY 23	\$ change from FY 23
<b>Fire Department</b>	\$1,045,884	\$945,478	10.6%	\$100,406

The Colchester Fire Department is a combined volunteer and career department. About 47 Volunteers including six cadets (youth volunteers) are augmented by a chief and four career firefighters who work weekday day-time when volunteers are not as available. We also have a half time assistant chief who works half time fulfilling responsibilities in other Town departments but is available to the Fire Department during emergencies. 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) \$49,011 (13.3%) increase in Salaries & Wages including overtime, per-diem and volunteer pay which includes a half time assistant fire chief;
- 2) \$40,286 (23.3%) increase in Employer Taxes & Benefits primarily due to increased costs for health insurance, worker's comp, social security and retirement including half the cost of benefits of the assistant chief, who is a full-time employee but budgeted half-time to other town departments fulfilling other municipal responsibilities.
- 3) \$11,109 (7.2%) increase to Equipment primarily due to increased costs for utilities and telephone.

	Proposed FY 24	FY 23	% Change from FY 23	\$ change from FY 23
<b>Rescue</b>	\$108,911	\$230,193	-52.7%	\$(121,282)

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, four career staff, an Assistant Chief and a Chief.

The Town has been diligently working for the last nine 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 88% or \$798,717 of its estimated operating costs of \$907,629 for FY 24, leaving the Town's share of the costs at \$108,911.

Rescue is growing pretty rapidly with calls for service as follows: FY22 – 1,990; FY 21 – 1,914; FY20 – 1,607 (COVID caused reduction in people addressing other emergent and non-emergent medical issues); FY19 – 1,672; FY18 – 1,458; FY17 – 1,469, and FY16 – 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 9-21 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 \$108,911 to a Rescue Enterprise Fund, with the remainder of the funding coming from earned rescue revenues.

Notable changes to this cost center include:

- 1) \$121,282 (-52.7%) reduction for FY24 is needed from the municipal services budget to support the rescue service due to continued increases in calls for service which result in higher ambulance revenues.



	Proposed FY 24	FY 23	% Change from FY 23	\$ change from FY 23
<b>Tech Rescue</b>	\$42,625	\$42,063	1.3%	\$562

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 \$95,000 2019 model utility body 4x4 truck in 2034, 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.

	Proposed FY 24	FY 23	% Change from FY 23	\$ change from FY 23
<b>Public Works-Admin</b>	\$747,751	\$707,240	5.7%	\$40,510

The Public Works Administrative Division consists of the Director, Town Engineer, Senior 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) increase in Salaries & Wages of \$28,289 (5.9%);
- 2) increase of \$8,050 (4.3%) in Employer Taxes & Benefits, primarily due to increased costs for health insurance, retirement, social security, property & liability and worker's comp;
- 3) increase of \$4,172 (10.1%) in Services and Utilities due to a transfer of costs for GIS mapping related to specific software, currently utilized for the town's underground infrastructure, that was previously paid out of the Planning & Zoning budget.

	Proposed FY 24	FY 23	% Change from FY 23	\$ change from FY 23
<b>Highway</b>	\$1,570,368	\$1,436,999	9.3%	\$133,369

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) \$34,915 (6.3%) increase to Salary & Wages of which the most significant portion is partial funding of a full-time position to be shared with Parks. This replaces a part time position in the DPW maintenance facility budget
- 2) \$57,239 (17.5%) increase to Employer Taxes & Benefits primarily due to increased costs for health insurance, worker's comp and property & liability insurance; social security and retirement, which is also impacted by the above positional change.
- 3) \$19,114 (11.1%) increase to Services & Utilities for increased costs of utilities, including streetlights, streetlight maintenance and tree maintenance.
- 4) \$22,102 (5.8%) Supplies and Parts increase primarily for winter sand, asphalt for repair and gravel.

	Proposed FY 24	FY 23	% Change from FY 23	\$ change from FY 23
<b>Maintenance Facility</b>	\$473,788	\$487,381	-2.8%	\$(13,593)

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) \$25,153 (-8.9%) decrease in Salaries & Wages primarily due to no longer utilizing seasonal labor for vehicle maintenance needs;
- 2) \$8,353 (7.8%) increase in Employer Taxes & Benefits primarily due to increased costs for health insurance, property & liability insurance, retirement and worker's comp which are all offset by decreases in social security and unemployment tax;
- 3) \$3,793 (-7.1%) decrease of for Services & Utilities primarily due to solar credits to general fund applied to the maintenance facility to offset electrical costs as well as decreased vehicle inspection fees,
- 4) \$7,000 (17.9%) increase in Supplies & Parts due to increases in petroleum-based products from 20-38%, depending on the product and supply chain issues that are expected to continue into FY24.

	Proposed FY 24	FY 23	% Change from FY 23	\$ change from FY 23
<b>Stormwater</b>	\$151,940	\$142,000	7.0%	\$9,940

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.

The change to this cost center is an increase in the estimated fee to be paid by the general fund of \$9,940.

	Proposed FY 24	FY 23	% Change from FY 23	\$ change from FY 23
<b>Buildings</b>	\$209,316	\$197,062	6.2%	\$12,254

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, assisted by the Working Foreperson. 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) \$17,905 (31%) Salaries & Wages increase due to a change in operational needs related to a function previously served by a year-round working foreperson that was on call 1/3 of the time with services benefitting the highway, stormwater and wastewater divisions. However, due to increasing regulatory and oversight needs, aspects of this role are now included in a management level position funded by this division. The stormwater and wastewater divisions reimburse through a user fee funded cost allocation, but the expense remains in the DPW Building Division;
- 2) \$14,499 (59.3%) Employer Taxes & Benefits increase primarily due increased costs for health insurance, retirement, worker's comp and property & liability insurance.
- 3) \$20,150 (-19%) decrease in Services & Utilities primarily due to solar credits applied to general fund that offset electrical charges for Town Hall;

	Proposed FY 24	FY 23	% Change from FY 23	\$ change from FY 23
<b>Health Services</b>	\$65,940	\$64,897	1.6%	\$1,042

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), which is the FY23 budgeted expense, although it should be noted that they requested \$40,000.

- 2) \$21,890 for the contracted animal control officer (which is a proposed increase of \$1,042)
- 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 FY23 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 \$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 a request from: Vermont Family Network in the Amount of \$2,500; We have shared this request with the Selectboard for their consideration but have not budgeted for it.*

	Proposed FY 24	FY 23	% Change from FY 23	\$ change from FY 23
<b>Parks</b>	\$494,327	\$479,811	3.0%	\$14,517

The Colchester Parks Division staff maintain 13 parks with amenities that include: 9 tennis courts, 3 basketball courts, 6 play structures, 4 sand volleyball courts, 4 soccer fields, 4 baseball fields, 1 softball field, 1 lacrosse/football field, 2 pavilions, 3 bathhouses, 2 shuffleboard courts, 4 dedicated pickleball courts, a skateboard park, 6 cemeteries, 2 beaches and swim areas, 1 dingy dock, 7 bike/pedestrian paths, 1 seasonal ice rink, 3 miles of Nordic trails, 4 pump stations, 4.5 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) \$14,966 (6.6%) Salary & Wage increase;
- 2) \$4,169 (4.8%) Employer Taxes and Benefits increase primarily due to increases for social security, retirement and worker's comp;
- 3) \$5,000 (-50%) Equipment decrease to offset the increased costs for benefits required by state and federal law for year-round staff in order to combine a part-time position from Parks & Rec with another part-time position within DPW, for retention and consistency purposes. It may be necessary to reinstate this funding in FY 25.

	Proposed FY 24	FY 23	% Change from FY 23	\$ change from FY 23
<b>Recreation</b>	\$283,523	\$265,252	6.9%	\$18,271

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, 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) \$7,749 (5%) for Salary & Wage increases;
- 2) \$5,722 (10.9%) increase in Employer Taxes and Benefits due to increased costs for health insurance, property & liability insurance, social security, retirement and worker's comp;
- 3) \$4,800 (8.9%) increase to 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 and technology needs.

	Proposed FY 24	FY 23	% Change from FY 23	\$ change from FY 23
<b>Library</b>	\$837,142	\$807,652	3.7%	\$29,490

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 will provide 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) \$5,153 (1.2%) increase for wages;
- 2) \$8,761 (4.2%) increase for Employer Taxes and Benefits due to increases in health insurance, property & casualty insurance, and worker's comp which is partially offset by a retirement decrease;
- 3) \$15,577 (10.8%) increase for Services & Utilities as a result of increased costs for janitorial services and building and general maintenance needs.

	Proposed FY 24	FY 23	% Change from FY 23	\$ change from FY 23
<b>Intergovernmental</b>	\$355,414	\$335,203	6.0%	\$20,211

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, Probate Court and the County Sheriff), and the Colchester Conservation Commission.

Proposed changes to this cost center include

- 1) \$15,000 (45.5%) increase in GMT ADA fees due to increased usage. This amount would be higher if we had not negotiated a multi-year contract;
- 2) \$2,070 (3.9%) increase for Winooski Valley Park District;
- 3) \$227 (0.9%) increase for Vermont League of Cities and Towns dues;
- 4) \$2,000 (1.8%); an estimated County tax increase;
- 5) \$1,000 (-3.3%) decrease for the GMT services contracted to SSTA for Elders and Persons with Disabilities.
- 6) \$1,114 (5.3%) increase of CCRPC member dues;
- 7) \$500 (20%) increase for the Colchester Conservation Commission, primarily to cover costs related to ongoing assistance with watering and weeding of flower beds throughout summer season;
- 8) 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.