

Town of Colchester, Connecticut

127 Norwich Avenue, Colchester, Connecticut 06415

Board of Finance Special Meeting
Minutes

Wednesday, May 14, 2014 @ 6:30
PM

Town Hall Meeting Room 1

Members Present: Chairman Rob Tarlov, Rob Esteve, James McNair, Tom Kane, Art Schilosky

Members Absent: John Ringo

Others Present: First Selectman Gregg Schuster, Selectman Rosemary Coyle, Selectman Denise Mizla, Selectman Stan Soby, Chief Financial Officer Maggie Cosgrove, Fire Department Chief Walter Cox, Don Lee, Board of Education Chair Ron Goldstein, Don Kennedy, Public Works Director Jim Paggioli, Treasurer Greg Cordova, Superintendent Jeffry Mathieu, Assessor John Chaponis, Gary Siddell, Gayle Furman and other citizens.

1. **Call to Order:** Chairman Tarlov called the meeting of the Board of Finance Special Meeting of Wednesday, May 14, 2014 to order at 6:31PM.
2. **Citizen's Comments:** -None
3. **Department Reports**
 - a. **Finance Department:** None
4. **First Selectmen's Report**
 - a. **Transfer Requests:** None
 - b. **First Selectman's Update:** None
5. **Budget- Discussion:**
 - Superintendent J. Mathieu went over the Colchester Public Schools Proposed Budget Reductions (see attached) for a total reduction of \$247,000 and the Next Tier Budget Reductions if there is a need to go forward. (See attached) for a total reduction of \$56,595.
 - A Board of Finance member asked for clarification on what a .2 position meant.
 - G. Schuster stated that he previously sent the Town of Colchester's Proposed Budget to the BOF. (See attached).

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NANCY BRAY
TOWN CLERK

- The Board of Finance members agreed that the road maintenance and equipment for the EOC should not be cut as they had instructed Mr. Schuster at the previous meeting not to include capital improvements and maintenance as cuts.
- The Board of Finance members previously reinstated the Substance Abuse Counselor from a list of cuts and still felt it should not be cut. Chairman Tarlov stated he received several letters from the Youth Director and a teacher at Bacon Academy concerning the cuts to the substance abuse program. He also stated that the Substance abuse program is funded for three to four months by a grant and they have the ability to re-evaluate then.
- The Board discussed eliminating ½ of a position for Assessor's office. John Chaponis stated that with that cut he could continue to service the public, but some of the work that they do to bring in additional tax revenue and to save cost for revaluation could not be done.
- There was discussion on how to reach more voters with the date of the next referendum. Sign placement was discussed.

6. **Citizens Comments:** None

7. **Regular Meeting- May 21 -Discussion and Possible Action:**

8. **Budget-Discussion and Possible Action:** M. Cosgrove inputted the revised line items agreed upon during the discussion. See attached FY 2014-2015 Proposed Budget Summary and Mill Rate Calculation.

A motion was made by James McNair that the Board of Finance recommends that the Board of Selectman schedules a town meeting for the purposes of approving the Board of Education budget at \$39,933,795.00 Seconded by Ron Esteve. **Motion Carried 5/0.**

A motion was made by Art Shilosky that the Board of Finance recommends that the Board of Selectman set a town meeting for the purposes of considering the town budget at \$13,439,082.00 Seconded by Tom Kane. **Motion Carried 4/1 with Rob Esteve voting no.**

A motion was made by James McNair to rescind the original motion regarding the Town Budget. Seconded by Art Schilosky. **Motion Carried 5/0.**

A motion was made by James McNair that the Board of Finance recommends that the Board of Selectman schedules a meeting for the purposes of approving the town budget with the expense reductions and the expense additions from the list dated May 14,

2014 (attached) for a net of \$13,439,082. Seconded by Tom Kane. **Motion Carried 4/1 with Rob Esteve voting no.**

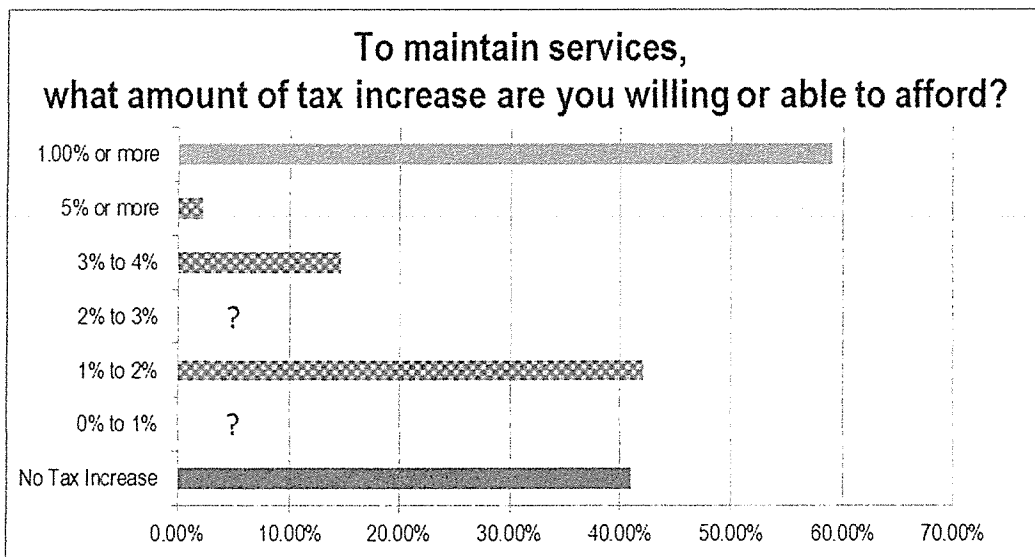
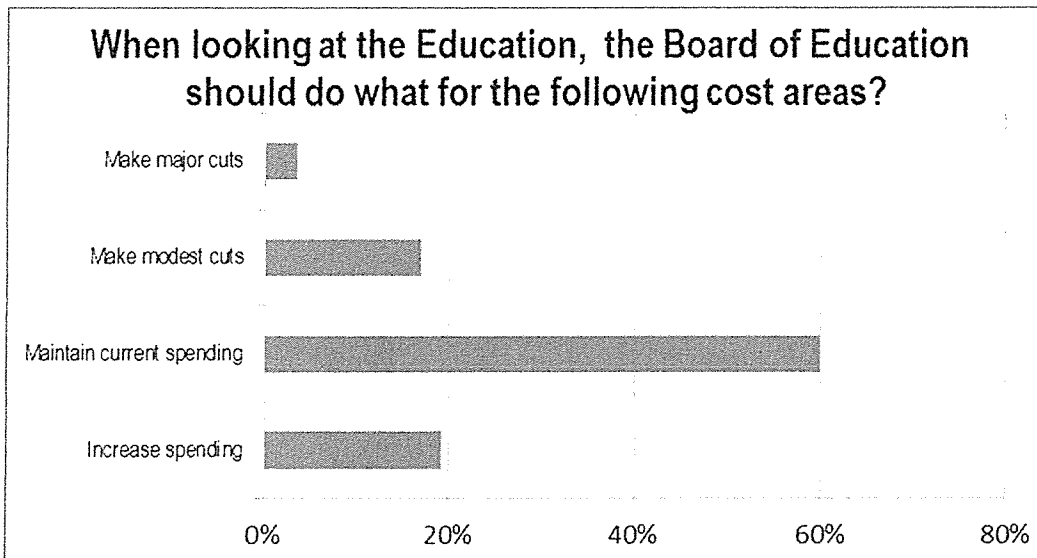
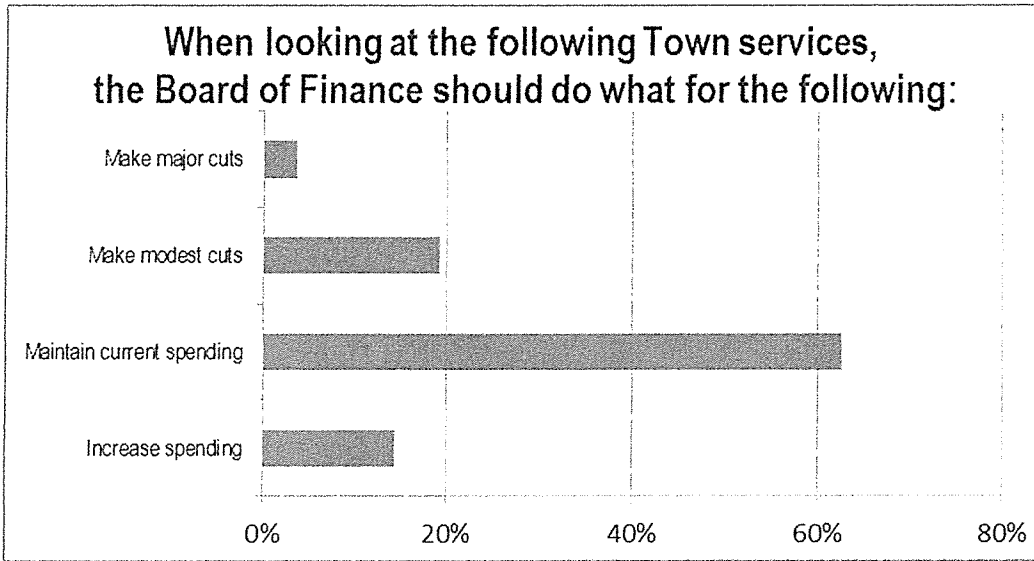
A motion was made by James McNair that the Board of Finance approves the addition of revenue to address the revenue item of the budget by \$60,057 due to the notification of additional revenues from the state. Seconded by Tom Kane. **Motion Carried 5/0.**

9. **Adjournment:** A motion was made by James McNair and seconded by Tom Kane to adjourn at 8:54 PM. **MOTION CARRIED Unanimously.**

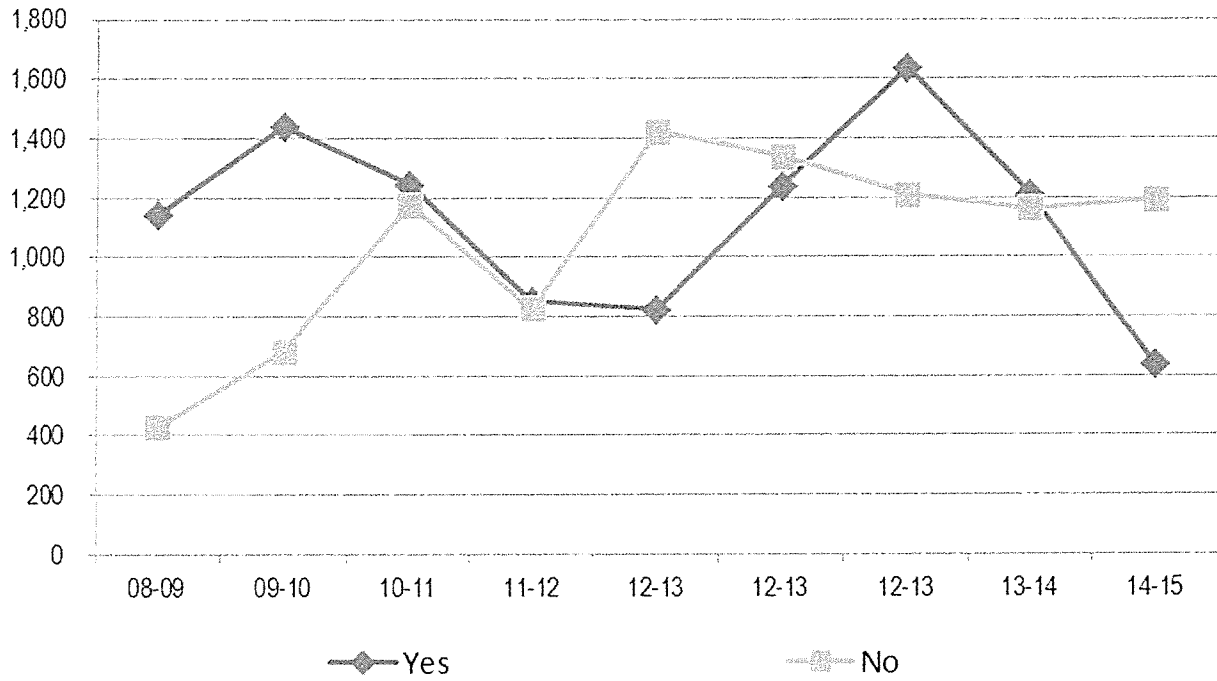
Respectfully submitted,

Gayle Furman
Clerk

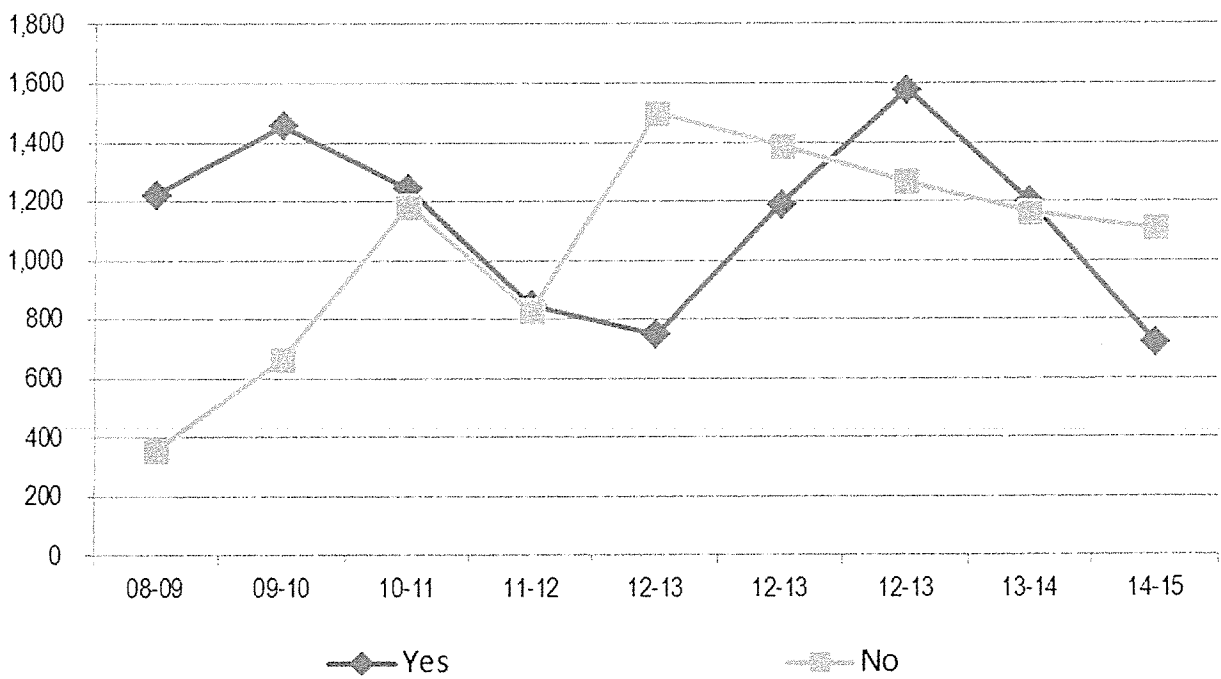
SURVEY QUESTION RESULTS



BOE Referendums



Town Referendums



Colchester Public Schools			
Proposed Staffing Changes for 2014-2015 - Revised 5/13/14			
Certified (Teacher) Reductions			
CES	0.2	FTE	Music Teacher
WJJMS	0.2	FTE	PE Teacher
BA	0.2	FTE	PE Teacher
JJIS	1.0	FTE	Third Grade Teacher
BA	0.4	FTE	Math Teacher
BA	0.4	FTE	English Teacher
BA	0.4	FTE	Social Studies Teacher
BA	1.0	FTE	Guidance Counselor
CES	1.0	FTE	Kindergarten Teacher
WJJMS/JJIS/CES	0.6	FTE	Psychologist
WJJMS	0.55	FTE	Art Teacher
BA	0.4	FTE	Business Teacher
BA	0.2	FTE	FCS Teacher
WJJMS	0.2	FTE	PE/Heath Teacher
WJJMS	0.5	FTE	School Counselor
WJJMS	0.15	FTE	FCS Teacher
WJJMS	0.1	FTE	Music Teacher
WJJMS	0.3	FTE	Technology
Total	7.8	FTE	District
Classified (Non-teacher) Reductions			
WJJMS	1.0	FTE	Paraprofessional
BA	1.0	FTE	Paraprofessional
District	1.0	FTE	IT Technician
Total	3.0	FTE	District
New Positions			
District	1.0	FTE	IT Network Engineer
District	1.0	FTE	IT Technology Integration Specialist
Total	2.0	FTE	District
Positions No Longer Funded by Grants			
JJIS	1.0	FTE	Paraprofessional
BA	1.0	FTE	Paraprofessional
District	0.25	FTE	Early Childhood Coordinator
Total	2.25	FTE	District

Colchester Public Schools

FY 2014-2015 Proposed Budget

Proposed Budget Reductions for BOE Review 5/13/14

Item	Location	Amount	Impact on Learning
iPads	CES (LMC)	3,790	Innovations for research eliminated
iPads	JJIS (LMC)	3,790	Innovations for research eliminated
iPads	WJMS (LMC)	6,299	Innovations for research eliminated
iPads	BA (LMC)	10,089	Innovations for research eliminated
Dues/ Fees	Curriculum	219	Memberships reduced
Headphones	Curriculum	1,750	Students provide headphones
iPads	Curriculum	1,000	Teacher Leadership tools reduced
Total Curriculum		26,937	
Projector bulbs	District wide	7,000	Replacement may not meet demand
PowerSchool upgrade	District wide	17,000	Ineffective parent online system
Total Technology		24,000	
Psychologist - 0.6 FTE	WJMS/ CES/ JJIS	29,191	Reduced mental health services
AP testing	BA	2,223	Reduced # of students taking AP test
NWEA Universal Screening	BA	5,400	Eliminate MAP testing Grade 9-10
NWEA Universal Screening	WJMS	1,344	Eliminate MAP testing Grade 8
Stipend - WJMS Athletic Director	WJMS	2,875	Eliminate Athletic Director
WJMS Sports	WJMS	26,431	Cut out ALL middle school sports
Replace keyboards	WJMS	2,033	No new keyboards
Art - 0.55 FTE	WJMS	26,681	No Art in 8th GRADE
Business - 0.4 FTE	BA	19,489	Reduced technology classes in business
Positive Behavior Support	WJMS	2,150	Reduced instructional supplies
FCS - 0.2 FTE	BA	9,702	Reduced elective options
Stipends - Clubs	BA	3,544	Elimination of two clubs
Physical Education/Health - 0.2 FTE	WJMS	9,702	Increased class size
School Guidance Counselor - 0.5 FTE	WJMS	24,255	Reduced services for students & increased case load
School Guidance Counselor - Extra 10 days	WJMS	4,363	Counselors not paid for summer scheduling time
FCS - 0.15 FTE	WJMS	7,277	Increased class size
Music - 0.1 FTE	WJMS	4,850	Increased class size
Technology - 0.3 FTE	WJMS	14,553	Provided by current Design & Engineering teacher
Staffing and Other Items		196,063	
Total		247,000	

TOTAL FTE REDUCTIONS 5/13/14: 3.0 FTE

GRAND TOTAL FTE REDUCTIONS FOR 2014-2015: 7.8 FTE

May 14, 2014

Dear Members of the Boards of Finance and Selectman:

I am writing today to ask you to reconsider eliminating the funding for our substance abuse counseling program. This program is currently funded through our Right Response Grant and funding will end on September 30, 2014. Although this program got off to a very late start, I am pleasantly surprised about how quickly relationships have formed between the counselor and our youth. In fact I had a young man at the FWSN Review Board last week who lit up when he spoke of his "new drug counselor" and this young man has been drug free for 2 and half weeks! He is spending much of his time working with kids who are already using (especially marijuana) and hopefully will be able intervene and help counsel our kids so they don't end up addicted to prescription drugs, heroin, etc.

The counselor is hired through a contract with Rushford Center and is currently contracted for 18 hours a week. The funding in next year's budget would reduce those hours to 10. I have asked some school personnel to comment on the impact the counselor has made in just a few weeks. Cindi Gillette is the School Social Worker in the SOAR Program at Bacon Academy and says:

"In the short period of time that Biff has been coming to the Soar Program, he has made personal connections with many of the students. Several of the students have sought him out for further discussions about the effects of drugs and alcohol. He has a way about him that is nonthreatening and nonjudgmental. He is a "safe" person for teenagers to talk to about this sensitive topic. I believe personal connections are imperative for prevention of potential substance abuse. In today's climate, having an Alcohol and Drug Counselor available to high school students is vital to developing an understanding of the damage that drugs can do."

As a community we offer quite a few primary prevention programs (youth services, police programs, health class, after school activities, etc) for the general population of youth and we believe it impacts many kids and their decisions regarding drug and alcohol abuse. But little resources are put to kids and families who are already struggling and are at greatest risk of becoming drug and alcohol dependent. This is one of those services and I hope we can keep the funding intact.

Sincerely,

Valerie Geato
Youth & Social Services Director

Rob Tarlov

From: Rob Tarlov <ctparagon@comcast.net>
Sent: Wednesday, May 14, 2014 5:32 AM
To: Stan Soby (soby@sbcglobal.net)
Subject: Budget Cuts

Hi Stan,

When BOF met last week, our members stated that they wanted the reductions to be real cuts. We told Gregg and Ron, no capital, no maintenance, no long list of small cuts. It needed to be cuts that the taxpayer could easily understand what services were being cut. No use of "newly discovered" revenue or expense changes as those would have occurred anyway if the budget had passed.

For me, the reduction in highway is problematic. These cuts defer these expenses to a future year, so not a cut. Despite the need to increase these expenditures each year we have held them constant. Now we are going to move backwards? On the road maintenance studies by two PW Directors have shown how deferring maintenance will geometrically increase our cost in future years.

The removal of the Substance Abuse Counsellor, this is the second time Gregg has removed this, and this after he held a Community Meeting and posted Facebook notes and wrote in his weekly e-mail how this was a community problem and that citizens needed to recognize that we all had a responsibility to . . . Twice in the last month, BOF discussed that we should evaluate this expenditure in September, which is hourly based on it being used by the kids and their families, and being funded for several months by a grant. Val sent out a letter last week reporting on the early success of the program. At this point Youth and Social Services is up by \$6600 or about 2% while other budgets are up 15%.

The reduction in Fire are not cuts. Chief already informed BOF in April, when we asked him to attend our meeting to review Q1 results for the Ambulance Incentive Program, that he had overestimated the cost of this program. We proposed that this savings could be used for the Strategic Plan. I have this program problematic from the start. I believe that they have identified several problems. In one, volunteers not responding to calls, I believe they identified the wrong cause. With another we warranted the addition of officers funded by the SAFR Grant, because of the increase in calls and later the same reason with the Ambulance Incentive program. With this program, charts showed how calls were increase and how we were losing revenue due to mutual aid calls as other Towns needed to respond to our calls. My research showed that the data presented over the last decade for increased calls was inconsistent and that the increase in mutual aid calls had occurred primarily when paid staff was on. When questioned at a meeting in January when I questioned the data on Mutual Aide calls in, I was told that what I didn't understand was that mutual aide calls often result from our ambulances being serviced or lack of certification to make certain calls. So when I asked, "So if I understand what you are saying, is that there are other reasons for the increase in MA calls other than volunteers not responding?" Answer: "Absolutely!" We also respond to far more call to other Towns than other Towns respond to Colchester

With all this increase in calls, I keep asking, "Why has the ambulance revenue not gone up over the last 5 years?" I have asked this question at BOF meetings and I asked again at a meeting that James and I had with the FD. The answer I always get: "Do you realize how much money this program has given to the Town over the last 10 years?" or "Do you realize that the Town has profited from this program in getting over XX million in revenue over the last XX years, name me one other department that . . ." So increased calls, increase expenses of 250K, and no increase in revenue.

When James and I met with the department, I noted that on Saturday and Sunday nights we had 2 volunteers committed to each shift from 11 to 5, no paid staff. On Monday to Friday, we had paid staff on from 11 to 5 plus two volunteers being compensated. The 11 to 5 shift has, by a wide margin, the fewest number of calls. When I asked why M-F night and not Saturday or Sunday, we received responses that were easily challenged. Why is it OK to have only 2 volunteers committed on Saturday and Sunday nights, and not OK to have 2 paid staff sitting at the firehouse with no incentivized volunteers on Monday to Friday. Also on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, we

Town of Colchester
 FY 2014-2015 Proposed Budget
 BOF Budget Adjustments 5-14-14

<u>Department</u>	<u>Line Item</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Education Budget Reductions			
BOE budget	See BOE detail list	See BOE detail list	<u>247,000</u>
Town Budget Reductions			
Fire	Contractual Temp Payroll	Reduce funding for Ambulance incentive program	24,000
Fire	FICA & Retirement	Reduce funding for Ambulance incentive program	1,836
Fire	Overtime		2,500
Fire	FICA & Retirement		191
Fire	Protective Clothing & Safety Equip		7,000
Fire	Fire Equipment Supplies		1,000
Fire	Mileage, Training & Meetings		5,000
Fire	Water		1,000
Fire	Buildings & Grounds Improvements		2,500
Boards & Commissions	Professional Services	Reduce audit fees (RFP results)	1,595
Boards & Commissions	Mileage, Training & Meetings	Police Retirement Board - reduce training seminar from 2 to 1	50
Boards & Commissions	Contractual Temp Payroll	Historic District Commission - reduce from 6 to 4 meetings	163
Highway	Equipment rental	Eliminate funding for Holiday bucket truck rental	2,400
Grounds Maintenance	Overtime	Eliminate overtime for Community Events	3,000
Grounds Maintenance	FICA & Retirement	Eliminate overtime for Community Events	229
Grounds Maintenance	Contractual Temp Payroll	Reduce Temporary Seasonal payroll (reduces by 2 weeks)	2,500
Grounds Maintenance	FICA & Retirement	Reduce Temporary Seasonal payroll (reduces by 2 weeks)	191
Grounds Maintenance	Grounds Maintenance Supplies	Eliminate overseeding program	2,000
Library	Professional Services	Eliminate pesticide/weed control/fertilizer treatment plan - R1 thru R8 fields	6,400
Library	Regular Payroll	Eliminate Summer Saturdays	1,638
Library	FICA & Retirement	Eliminate Summer Saturdays	125
Library	Regular Payroll	Eliminate 2 hrs/Saturday Sept-June	2,697
Library	FICA & Retirement	Eliminate 2 hrs/Saturday Sept-June	206
Town Clerk	Regular Payroll	2% pay increase for Town Clerk	1,213
Town Clerk	FICA & Retirement	2% pay increase for Town Clerk	166
Contingency	Contingency	Impact of reductions	348
Total Town budget reductions			<u><u>69,948</u></u>

Town of Colchester
 FY 2014-2015 Proposed Budget
 Budget Summary & Mill Rate Calculation

BUDGET SUMMARY

	EDUCATION	TOWN	DEBT SERVICE	TRANSFERS/ CAPITAL	TOTAL
Appropriations	39,933,795	10,694,563	1,972,866	771,653	53,372,877
Estimated Revenue	14,402,833	2,216,390	0	0	16,619,223
Amount to be Raised by Taxation	25,530,962	8,478,173	1,972,866	771,653	36,753,654
MILLS	21.11	7.01	1.63	0.64	30.39

MILL RATE CALCULATION

	DOLLARS	MILLS
Amount to be Raised by Taxation	36,753,654	30.39
Reserve for Uncollected Revenue (estimated 98.4% collection rate)	588,058	0.49
TOTAL TAX WARRANT	37,341,712	30.88

Grand List	1,194,674,800	2014-15 Proposed Mill Rate	30.88
Estimated Prorates	1,900,000	2013-14 Mill Rate	30.28
M. V. Supplement	15,100,000	Increase in Mill Rate	0.60
Less Estimated BAA and adjustments	<u>(2,500,000)</u>		
List Net	1,209,174,800		

Draft: May 14, 2014