

YOUR VOTE COUNTS!



TOWN OF CHARLESTOWN



The Pipeline

May, 2013 Volume 16, No. 1

Celebrating Charlestown's 275th Anniversary

All Day Financial Referendum

June 3, 2013

Charlestown Town Hall

Polls Open 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM



Proposed FY 2013 - 2014 Budget

In a transmittal letter dated March 26, 2013, the Charlestown Budget Commission took the opportunity to inform the Town Council of the many important contributions to the budget effort made by others. The Commission also expressed special thanks to Acting Town Administrator and Treasurer Pat Anderson for her exceptional professional efforts, and to the new Town Administrator Mark Stankiewicz for his insight and assistance. Town Council Liaison Dan Slattery and Administrative Assistant Michele Voislow provided continuing effort, participation and assistance, critically important to the success of the budget development process. The Town's department heads provided professional knowledge and displayed a true understanding of the complexity of the economic issues facing the nation, state and our Town. Thank you to each of them.

The real estate tax rate required to fund the recommended budget is estimated to be \$9.46 per thousand annually. This increase is 1.7% over the current rate of \$9.30. This result will be approximately \$48 additional taxes on a home valued at \$300,000. Charlestown will remain in the lowest tier of tax rates in our state.

This budget recommendation includes a proposal to retire the debt owed to the U.S. Department of Agriculture for the Police facility through the use of the accumulated Unassigned Fund Balance. Although this **recommendation** creates a one-time increase of the annual budget by \$2,807,728, the property tax rate is not increased by this action, and the reduction in Charlestown's interest expense will save over 2.7 million dollars in future costs and should improve the Town's future bond rating.

The recommended operating portion of the budget is \$26,550,437, an increase of \$582,843 or 2.24%. A real property tax levy increase of 1.93% is recommended as necessary to fund the expenditures. The total recommended Town budget is \$29,358,165 including the debt reduction previously noted.

Link to COMPLETE
2013—2014
proposed budget:
http://www.charlestownri.org/vertical/sites/%7BDF68A5B8-A4F3-47A1-AE87-B411E21C6E1C%7D/uploads/FY13-14_Budget_TC_Approved_5-13-13.pdf

BALLOT QUESTION:

"Shall the Town appropriate the FY 2013-2014 budget of **\$14,712,808** for municipal services, as adopted by the Charlestown Town Council on May 13, 2013?"

Continued...

The Budget Commission's recommendation for the FY 2013-2014 budget and a comparison with the prior year's budget (FY 2013) is presented below.

EXPENDITURES				
	2013	2014	\$ Change	% Change
Chariho School Budget	14,894,812	14,645,357	(249,455)	-1.67%
Department Expenses	8,576,456	8,973,930	397,474	4.63%
Transfers Out	1,443,921	1,782,500		
Debt Service	627,199	751,214	124,015	19.77%
Capital Expenditures	425,206	397,436	(27,770)	-6.53%
General Fund Expenditures	25,967,594	26,550,437	582,843	2.24%
Retire Police Station Debt	-	2,807,728		
Total Recommended Budget	25,967,594	29,358,165		

The proposed revenue schedule is based upon the current best estimates of local revenues, and the Governor's proposed state transfers/grants to the Town. The Governor's proposed local funding, subject to state legislative action, is \$2,299,588 in FY 2014, a net increase of \$354,687 or 18.24%.

Given the economic condition of the state government and the necessity for legislative action regarding state payments to the Town, continued close monitoring and review, is required.

The Budget Commission's recommendation of Revenue for the FY 2013-2014 budget and a comparison for the prior Fiscal Year is presented below:

REVENUES				
	2013	2014	\$ Change	% Change
General Fund Tax Revenue - Current Year	21,811,249	22,232,364	421,115	1.93%
General Fund Tax Revenue - Prior Years	250,000	300,000	50,000	20.00%
Interest	135,000	145,000	10,000	7.41%
In Lieu of Tax	23,000	24,900	1,900	8.26%
Motor Vehicle Excise Tax	41,218	40,195	(1,023)	-2.48%
State Aid Education	1,671,305	1,716,895	45,590	2.73%
Other Governmental	232,378	542,498	310,120	133.45%
Local Revenues	999,301	1,112,085	112,784	11.29%
Fund Balance Transfers	754,143	386,500	(367,643)	-48.75%
Impact Fee Transfers	50,000	50,000	-	0.00%
General Fund Revenues	25,967,594	26,550,437	582,843	2.24%
Transfer from Fund Balance for Debt Retirement	-	2,807,728		
Total Recommended Revenues	25,967,594	29,358,165		

The Commission recommends the utilization of \$160,000 from the Unassigned Fund Balance to support the Town's operating expenses, and \$2,807,728 for the police station debt payoff. The Fund Balance reported in the recent annual audit will decline based upon this use of funds, but is expected to be within the recommended range of 15-25% of budget to support emergency and monetary flow needs of the Town.

Continued...

The Budget Commission's comments regarding major changes and recommendations for fiscal year 2013 – 2014:

Charlestown's contribution to the Chariho School budget has decreased by \$249,455 due to enrollment and other changes.

The Commission recommends Debt Service refunding of bonds to refinance the \$3.0 million Open Space Bond previously issued. This action is estimated to save \$125,783 by reducing the interest rate paid on the loan from 4.5% to an estimated 2.0 - 2.5% at current rates.

New or changed programs:

Police Department Accreditation and Standards: The Police Chief has recommended that the Town Police develop standards and procedures that are accredited best practices for law enforcement organizations in the state of Rhode Island. The program is expected to be continuing, subsequent to the three-year implementation plan (\$12,000 per year, 3 years to complete).

Funds are provided for the Town's Comprehensive Plan of Development Update which is required by law. Budgeted at \$20,000 per year for three years.

Legal Reserve Fund: A legal reserve fund is established to eliminate the need to annually budget large sums which are typically not expended but must be available, if needed. The Reserve Fund will be funded initially with a reserve transfer of funds available, but unused in FY 2012, \$226,500.

Staffing recommendations: Due to several years of recession, staffing needs and workloads have not been adequately addressed. The Commission recommends funding of additional staff assistance on a part-time basis only, which not only saves on employee costs, but also provides flexibility to address changing needs, as follows:

Senior Center Director: Increase part-time hours and rate of pay, 18 to 29 hours per week.

Town Clerk and Town Assessor's offices: Restore part-time staff previously reduced, and increase part-time hours available, 19 hours per week in each department.

Emergency Management: Increase rate due to storm related work load in recent years, increase hours of two part-time assistants. The Town receives 50% reimbursement for these salaries.

Public Works/Recreation: Part-time hours for Recreation Dept. increased maintenance efforts – 15 hours per week.

Police Department: Replace previously reduced hours of part-time Janitorial services required to maintain the facility. 15 hours per week.

Capital Projects recommendations incorporated in the budget include:

Improved information technology; new servers/replacements \$50,000.

Replacement of two Public Works vehicles, 4WD pickup w/ plow, and Dump truck with plow, lease purchase \$29,115.

The Commission recommends funding for the Klondike Road rehabilitation project, Phase II in the amount of \$800,000.

The Police Department capital items include: Two new Police Cruisers and one Administrative vehicle replacement, replacement of bulletproof vests, and replacement of outdated Portable radio units, total cost \$133,987.

Recreation Department improvements include; Disc golf course improvements (\$5,000), Ninigret Park, 2 bathroom retrofits (\$30,000.), Senior Center lighting (\$19,500).

Geographic Information System (GIS) 44" Plotter (\$11,320).

This budget contains support of the Pond and Beach Preservation Fund, \$175,000 and the Healthcare Reserve Fund in the amount of \$346,000.

Property Revaluation and Assessment Equalization Program

TAX ASSESSMENT OFFICE

401-364-1233

This information has been prepared by the Charlestown Tax Assessor's office. The Town wishes to keep the citizens of Charlestown informed of all aspects of the revaluation project.

Revaluation Overview

All Rhode Island communities are mandated, by State Law 44-5-11.5 & 11.6, to perform property revaluations. These Laws explain and schedule the specific revaluation for each community.

Charlestown is scheduled to complete a Full Measure & List Revaluation for December 2013. The property values established as of that date will be reflected on your July 2014 tax bill.

This property revaluation is a multi-phase project starting with property inspections to verify assessment characteristics.

Information for this project will be posted in the local newspapers, and property owners will be notified when an inspector will be in their area.

Additional segments include, but are not limited to, establishing neighborhood valuation areas, analyzing all current sales, establish and test valuation schedules for land and building values, generate preliminary property values, mail valuation notices to property owners, and conduct informal valuation hearings. The Tax Assessor will be involved in all phases of the project.

Vision Government Solutions has been awarded the property revaluation contract to assist the Tax Assessor's office with the examination of properties, analysis of data and the completion of the revaluation process.

Do not hesitate to contact the Tax Assessor's office for any additional information.

What is Meant by "Revaluation"?

The revaluation process involves the reappraisal of all real estate in Town, in order to bring about equalization in property valuations and to assure all property owners that they are paying only their fair share of the cost for community services. Revaluation is NOT intended to raise revenues; its purpose is to value all properties by the same standards at the same point in time.

Why is Revaluation Needed?

It has been three years since the last revaluation of all real estate in Charlestown. Meanwhile, constantly changing economic conditions have caused inequities to develop. The solution to this problem is to reappraise all real estate, bringing assessment records up-to-date with present day values.

What is Fair Market Value?

The legal standard defined by the courts is the price established between a willing buyer and a willing seller.

Who Determines the Value of My Property?

People make the market – willing buyers and willing sellers. The Revaluation process is to research and determine fair market value in a particular area. The most significant part of the appraisal process is accomplished by gathering recent sales data, between January 2010 and December 31, 2013, and comparing those sales to your property.

Isn't Fair Market Value What I Paid for My Property?

Not always. You may have purchased your property when prices and values were considerably different. The true test is what your property would sell for in today's real estate market.

Continued...

When and how will I Receive My New Assessment?

You will be notified by mail by late April 2014.

When will the New Assessments be Effective?

The revalued assessments will create the December 31, 2013 Tax Roll. The tax bill you receive in July 2014 will be based on your new assessment.

Who Sets My Assessment and What Can I do if I think it is Wrong?

The Assessor, with the assistance of the Revaluation Company, determines the market value. If you believe your appraisal is in excess of fair market value, the first step is to schedule an informal hearing. Instructions for making an appointment will be included with your new property valuation notice. This is the proper time and place to correct any errors. Adjustments will be made if justified. If a discrepancy exists which requires another inspection, Assessment personnel will schedule another review of your property. In some cases, where factual evidence is presented, adjustments can be made without further review.

What if I Still Disagree with the Assessment?

If you disagree with the appraised value after the informal hearing process, you may begin a formal appeal process to the Tax Assessor, then on to the Charlestown Tax Assessment Board of Review. Application forms will be available for this process after June 15, 2014.

If you still disagree after the Tax Assessment Board of Review Hearing, you may file an appeal to Superior Court as provided by State Law.

Adoptable Pets

Charlestown Animal Shelter
Call ahead, 364-1211

M-F 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM, Saturday 8:00 AM to Noon



Boundary Questions and Answers

**Where does my property end?
Don't I own all the way up to the pavement?**

Many residents are uncertain in regard to their boundary at the street front. Many homeowners presume that they own and control the property from their home to the pavement. **IN ALMOST ALL CASES THE FRONT BOUNDARY OF YOUR PROPERTY IS NOT THE ROAD PAVEMENT!** In most areas Town property, known as the 'shoulder', is situated between your home and the pavement. The road shoulder may be grass, or natural un-improved woodland and brush. The shoulder may vary from twelve (12) feet in newer subdivisions to thirty (30) feet or just one foot or less along the original colonial roads in the community. It is important to know your boundaries before planting trees, shrubs, fences or other improvements. The shoulders are very important to the Town as they provide space to dodge traffic, infiltration of stormwater, and storage for snow in the winter. To determine your true boundary, we recommend a survey by a surveyor licensed in the State of R.I.

The DPW is not responsible for damage to items placed within the Town owned right-of-way by residents, i.e. landscaping, fences, timbers, etc.

Charlestown Welcomes Two New Top Officials

Town Administrator Mark S. Stankiewicz



After five months of searching, Charlestown finally has a new Town Administrator. Mark S. Stankiewicz officially started work at Town Hall on February 12, 2013. A graduate of the University of Connecticut, Storrs, with a Masters in Public Administra-

tion, Mark brings over 25 years of municipal experience to our town.

Mark has lived in Stoughton, MA and worked in that southeast corner of Massachusetts for many years. Married to Cindy and the father of three, he is originally from Plainfield, CT where family members still reside.

Known as a knowledgeable man with a friendly personality, a quirky sense of humor, and a quick smile to all, be sure to say hello and give a welcome to Mark!

Police Chief Jeffery Allen



Police Chief Jeffery Allen began his role as Charlestown's top cop on September 10, 2012 with his wife Karen, their two daughters and other family members looking on. Chief Allen and his family have resided in the Carolina

section of Charlestown for the past 20 years.

The Chief earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in law enforcement administration from Salve Regina University in Newport as well as attending the FBI's National Academy in 2009. He spent 5 years as a patrolman, 10 years as a detective, 4 years as a sergeant, and 6 years as a Lieutenant on South Kingston's force with the past seven serving as captain of the department's operation's division.

Generally known as a "good guy" and a "fair person", we welcome him into his role as Charlestown's new Chief of Police.

A Big Thank You to Town Treasurer Pat Anderson!

Pat Anderson began her role as Charlestown's Acting Town Administrator in April 2012 while still fulfilling her duties as Town Treasurer. Wearing "two hats" was a juggling act at times, but she did it with grace and dignity. Along the way she found time to serve on the committee to find a new Police Chief, attend all Council meetings and deal with the day-to-day operations of the Town. Charlestown owes Pat a great big "thank you" for taking on these dual roles. Thank you Pat!



Free Disposal of Electronic Waste



Electronic waste can be disposed of for free at the Charlestown Residential Collection Center. This disposal program is open to all state residents, and is available without the purchase of a CRCC sticker. Examples of items that can be disposed of are computers, computer monitors, televisions, printers, keyboards, mice, adaptors, stereos, speakers, VCR's, scanners, fax machines, copiers, telephones, computer drives, storage devices, circuit boards, laptop batteries, and related computer and electronic equipment. The Charlestown Residential Collection Center is open Mon, Thurs, Fri and Sat from 8am until 4pm. Please call (401) 364-1230 with related questions.

**A very helpful online
resource for questions
about how to recycle
various items is located at
www.rirrc.org. Go to
A-Z Recyclopedia.**



2013 Spring/Summer Parks & Recreation Programs

Tennis Lessons at Ninigret Park Tennis Courts. Spring Tennis will be held on Saturday's May 4th – June 22nd and the cost is \$95. The summer lessons will be held on Tuesday/Thursday mornings July 7th-August 17th and the cost is \$95. The times for spring and summer are: 8 am-9 am Ages: 6-8, 9 am-10am Ages: 9-12, 10 am-11 am Ages: 13-16. Junior Travel Team Tennis will be held July 10th-August 16th on Wed/Fri afternoons for \$45. The instructor is Donald Fair. Register online at www.charlestownri.org or in person at the Charlestown Parks and Recreation Department.

Summer Day Camp in Ninigret Park: For children ages 5-12; registration opens for Charlestown residents on Monday, May 20th. The cost for the five week camp is \$250 and runs from July 1st – August 2nd. There will be extended weeks offered at the end of camp, August 5-9, 12-16 for an additional cost of \$100 per week. Non-resident registration opens Tuesday, May 28th. Field trips are offered for an additional minimal fee. There is also a Counselor-In-Training program within the camp for 13 and 14 year olds. Please register online at www.charlestownri.org or in person at the Charlestown Parks and Recreation Department. Call 364-1222 for further information.

Boston Red Sox Trip to Fenway Park: Saturday, June 29th vs. the Toronto Blue Jays. The bus will depart at 1:30 pm from Charlestown Town Hall and leave Fenway immediately after the game. The cost is \$70 per person which includes ticket and transportation. Seats are limited. You must come in to the Charlestown Parks and Recreation Department to register.

Higher Learning Basketball Camp: At the Chariho High School on June 25-28 from 9 am-3 pm for grades 2-8. The cost is \$140 – which includes a camp T-shirt. The camp is run by Eric Simonelli – head coach at LaSalle and Sean Casey. Players will be separated by ability. Contact seancasey@aol.com – 451-5807.

U.K. International Soccer Camp in Ninigret Park: From July 15-19, 9am – 10 am (3-4yrs) \$60 and from 10:30 am-noon (5-6 yrs) \$75, 9am-noon (6-14yrs) \$115, 9am-3pm (7-14 yrs) \$160. Register at www.uksocca.com/2013.

Charlestown Town Teens Theatre Series: Run and directed by Anne Mulhall LDI Casting. Class dates: July 14, 17, 21, 24, 28 and 31. Cost is \$120 for ages: 14-17 and limited to 10 per class. There will be an emphasis on fun with monologues and scenes. Anne Mulhall, the director of LDI, has extensive casting, film, television, theatre, commercials and print and has been a mentor for countless actors and filmmakers. Contact Anne Mulhall: ldicasting@cox.net.

Fitness classes continue in the Community/Senior Center in Ninigret Park.

Zumba: Monday Evenings, 5:30 pm – 6:30 pm

Pilates & Strength Conditioning – Tues/Thurs – 5:30 pm-6:30 pm

Tai Chi: Monday mornings: 10:30 am

Yoga: Monday Evenings: 6:45 pm

Tuesday Mornings: 8:30 am

Thursday mornings: 9:00 am

Saturday Mornings: 8:30 am

Beach Yoga to begin in late June on Thursday evenings at Charlestown Town Beach.

All fitness classes are \$5/class. No pre-registration is necessary.



Pre-School Gymnastics for 2 and 6 yr. olds is being held at the Charlestown Community/Senior Center from 9:30 am – 10:30 am. Cost is \$10 per class and no pre-registration is necessary.

Fertilizer Use

We need your help. The RI Department of Environmental Management has identified that lawn fertilizer and pesticide use is one source of pollution that affects the quality of our local waters. The same kind of harmful nitrogen that many are required to remove using denitrification septic systems gets into our Salt Ponds by applications of lawn fertilizers.

Many people use fertilizers, weed killers and pesticides to enhance their yards and gardens, but if you use too much of these products or apply them at the wrong time, runoff can easily carry them from your lawn or garden into our sensitive Salt Ponds and other surface water bodies.

Similar to gardens or lawns, fertilizer in the Salt Ponds makes plants grow, but too much algae and other aquatic

plant growth can make boating, fishing and swimming unpleasant. More so, as the algae and other plants decay, they use up the oxygen in the water that fish and other aquatic life need. This also can cause very unpleasant odors. Weed killers and pesticides are designed to kill plants and animals, however when they get into our waters, they can kill beneficial plants and animals. Fish and amphibians are in particular vulnerable to these chemicals.

Lawn and garden care doesn't have to be a problem. You can make a difference in the health of Charlestown's Salt Ponds! Will You Help In This Effort? A lawn care brochure is available at Town Hall. If you have any questions, please feel free to call Matt Dowling, Town Office of Wastewater Management at (401) 364-5030 or visit the Town's website for more information on stormwater, wastewater and pollution protection at www.CharlestownRI.com.

Beach Sticker Fees 2013

Resident Beach Sticker	\$ 45
Resident Senior Citizens	\$ 25
Non-Resident Beach Sticker	\$ 90
Non-Resident Senior Citizen	\$ 50
Cottage Pass	\$400

As of May 1, 2013 seasonal Beach passes are available at the Town Clerk's Office. You may stop in or mail a letter of request to the Town Clerk along with your Charlestown property address, a copy of your vehicle registration, a check made payable to Town of Charlestown and a self addressed stamped envelope.

Daily Entrance Beach Fees

Charlestown Beach	
Weekdays	\$ 15
Weekends/Holidays	\$ 20
Blue Shutters	
Weekdays	\$ 15
Weekends/Holidays	\$ 20

CRCC Reminder

ID Stickers expire annually at the end of the calendar year, and must be renewed at Town Hall or by mail with a copy of your registration(s) and a twenty dollar check (made out to CRCC) for each sticker. Please call Alan at (401) 364-1230 weekdays with questions.



Emergency Tree Waste Waiver

May 14 to June 14, 2013 only.
You must pick up a form at the Town Clerk's counter for every load of tree waste from winter storm "Nemo" you bring to CRCC.

Town Hall Info

364-1210 Administrator
364-1215 Building/Zoning
364-1230 Dept. of Public Works
364-1222 Parks & Recreation
364-1225 Planning
364-1233 Tax Assessor
364-1234 Tax Collector
364-1200 Town Clerk
364-1235 Treasurer
364-1212 Police (non-emergency)
346-1076 Public Assistance
364-5030 Wastewater Mgt.

4540 South County Trail, Charlestown RI 02813
Town Hall Hours: M-F 8:30 AM – 4:30 PM
CRCC Hours: M, TH, SA, 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM
Animal Shelter: Call ahead, 364-1211
M-F 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM, Saturday 8:00 AM to Noon

NOTE: If a holiday falls on a Sunday, it will be observed the next day (Monday). If a holiday falls on a Monday, the CRCC does not open another day to compensate.

THE TOWN HALL PIPELINE

Charlestown Town Hall
4540 South County Trail
Charlestown, RI 02813



Time Sensitive Material