

January 29, 2016

Colchester, CT Revaluation History & Current Update

Pursuant to Connecticut State Law, every municipality must complete a new town-wide revaluation every five (5) years. At least once every ten years, each town must "fully inspect" each property. Connecticut General Statutes Sec. 12-62 defines "fully inspect" as "viewing the inside of each property".

The inspection process, also known as "Data Collection" is one of the five major phases in a revaluation. The other four phases are: Market Analysis, Valuation, Field Review, and Informal Hearings.

For the 2001 town-wide revaluation, Colchester sub-contracted services that included fully inspecting every property in town at a cost \$284,000. Colchester also completed a town-wide revaluation in 2006 in which we did not inspect every single parcel at a cost of \$153,000. Clearly, Data Collection, with full interior inspections of every property, is the most costly part of the project.

In an effort to reduce those costs for the 2011 project, the Assessor's Office completed some of the revaluation functions in-house, including a portion of the data collection, and lowered the services in which were sub-contracted. Pursuant to C.G.S. Sec. 12-62(b) (4) the Assessor may accept a data mailer questionnaire in lieu of inspecting the interior of the property and, for the 2011 revaluation, Colchester property owners received data mailer questionnaires requiring them to review and compare the actual current data of their property versus the current town assessment records. These efforts saved the town significantly and the cost of 2011 revaluation, that required full interior inspections, cost \$132,100 (in comparison to the \$284,000 in 2001).

In March of 2012, the Assessor implemented an ongoing plan in which their office conducts full inspections on an annual basis with the goal of meeting the statutory requirement of inspecting each property at least once every 10 years. In addition to being a cost saving measure, Town Assessor John Chaponis, believes inspections done by his office will be of a better quality than that of an outside firm that would send multiple data collection employees to Colchester for 3-6 months and then move on to their next town.

"Town employees have a vested interest in Colchester and we will be here after the project is completed," Chaponis said. "These methods are the best way to reduce costs and ensure that quality is not compromised. It only makes sense that we would take more pride, due diligence and avoid shortcuts. Furthermore, when we sub-contract the data collection phase to an outside firm, I still must supervise their work, perform quality control checks and balances, in order to ensure the end product meet our standards" Chaponis added.

In August of 2015, Chaponis released an RFP (request for proposals) on Colchester's 2016 town-wide revaluation contract. Bids were received, reviewed, and on December 17, 2015 the Board of Selectman voted unanimously to award the bid to VGSI (Vision Government Solutions, Inc.) out of Northboro, MA. In the amount of \$109,800.

CURRENT UPDATE: JANUARY 2016

The October 1, 2016 town-wide revaluation officially began on January 15, 2016 with employees from VGSI working in Colchester inspecting "sale properties". The 2016 revaluation will not include full interior inspections of every property in town and will not include data mailer questionnaires being sent to property owners. However, every "sale property" as well as a few hundred randomly selected properties that have not been inspected in the last ten years, will be slated for full inspections.

"Sale properties" are those in which have been sold between September 2015 – September 2016. These properties will be used to determine the fair market value of every other property in town as of October 1, 2016. For that reason, it is imperative that we get out to those properties in order to get a snap shot of exactly what sold before a new owner makes any changes, improvements, or renovations to the property.

If property owners are able to accommodate us, and allow these data collectors access to the property, it will help to ensure a more accurate and fair end product. When we are able to gain entry to the property there is no need for us to make estimations therefore greatly enhancing the probability of an accurate final assessment.

Both Colchester town employees and VGSI staff (listed below) carry photo identification and VGSI staff also carry a letter of introduction from the Town Assessor. If property owners wish to verify the VGSI or Town Employee who come to their property, they may do so by contacting the assessor's office at (860) 537-7205.

If anyone has any questions or concerns regarding any phase of the revaluation process, please feel free to contact Town Assessor John Chaponis directly.