

VLCT NEWS

A PUBLICATION OF THE VERMONT LEAGUE OF CITIES & TOWNS

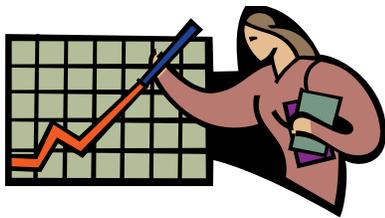
SERVING AND STRENGTHENING VERMONT LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

April 2004

SELECTBOARD'S FIVE-POINT FINANCIAL REVIEW

WHAT YOUR MONTHLY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS SHOULD TELL YOU

Most decisions that a governing body will make throughout the budget year rely on a clear understanding of the municipality's financial position. Whether you are making spending decisions or allocating resources, proper financial reporting is the basis for solid management strategy. Up-to-date and accurate financial statements, both balance sheets and budget-to-actual comparisons, are



essential and should be provided on a monthly basis.

Monthly reports allow management to be proactive, to make budget decisions that allow the municipality to end the year in the black. If the annual audit or annual report is the only financial document available to you, there will be no time to react to potential problems such as over-expenditures or revenues that do not meet original

projections. This is reactive management and reflects a governing body with little control over its finances. Here are some guidelines to help Vermont selectboards avoid this situation.

With regular reports in hand, there are five key things to look for:

Budget-to-Actual Performance

Carefully review all budget reports. You should be approving balanced budgets (projected revenues should equal projected expenditures) at your annual meeting unless you have to cover prior year deficits. Material over-expenditures should be explained to your satisfaction and provisions made to under-spend in other line items that contain surpluses.

On the revenue side, determine if year-to-date actuals are on target and ask for projections to the end of the fiscal year. If you anticipate an overall revenue shortfall, you will have a couple of choices: make it up on the expenditure side or be prepared to ask voters to fund a deficit the following year.

At year-end you should examine historical data, comparing budget performance for the fiscal year just ended with at least the prior four years. A five-year trend analysis will give you a good sense of how well you are managing your budgets. Look at both revenues and expenditures: how close were you to what you

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NEW MUNICIPAL EMPLOYMENT LAW HANDBOOK RELEASED

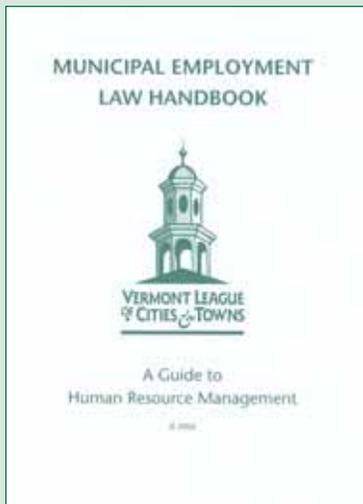
The VLCT Municipal Assistance Center is pleased to announce publication of the *Municipal Employment Law Handbook*. Production of the handbook was partially

underwritten by VLCT Property and Casualty Intermunicipal Fund (PACIF), whose members will receive a complementary copy in the mail this month.

The handbook provides a comprehensive treatment of the laws and best practices of human resource management in a municipal context. Subjects were chosen based on the most frequent inquiries at the Municipal Assistance Center. Particular attention is paid to employee selection, key federal and state laws applicable to municipal employees, compensation, the difference between an employee and an independent contractor, employee leave, and termination.

According to Municipal Assistance Center Manager, Dominic Cloud, "Understanding how federal and state employment laws apply to municipalities is one the most complex tasks facing local officials. We hope

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FINANCIALS -

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budgeted? If you find that you are consistently overestimating revenues or underestimating expenditures, then you should plan to tighten up projections when you are preparing a budget for the next fiscal year. The important thing to remember is to always look back before looking ahead to determine if you are on course. Examining trends is crucial to good budget management.

☒ Tax Collections

Property taxes in Vermont make up around 90% or more of the budget in many towns. Therefore, projecting what you will collect during the fiscal year, in current and delinquent taxes, will determine whether or not you will meet your budget projections. You should know what is owed at prior year-end, as well as at any given time during the current budget year. You should also have a good sense of what percentage of current taxes billed are usually collected every year and how much of the delinquent taxes receivable might be collected. Without this information, you cannot make reasonable tax revenue projections at budget time or during the course of the year.

Again, trend analysis is useful here. Comparing the percentage of billing collected over the past five years will be helpful in making projections. When you get halfway through the budget year, ask for an analysis of tax collections and determine if you will be able to meet your tax revenue budget.

☒ Unanticipated Expenditures

Be on the lookout for circumstances that could result in unanticipated expenditures. Legal costs and large equipment failures are good examples. Although they are unexpected, when you are aware of them they should be taken into account in the budget projections. Immediately identify any surpluses in other line items that can be tapped to cover the overage and make provisions in the reporting to ensure that those surpluses will not be used for any other purpose.

☒ Cash Flow

This is an area frequently overlooked. Cash flow, as opposed to revenue and expenditure flows, is a measure of actual cash moving in and out of the checking account. This includes transfers of funds, as well as revenues and expenditures that have hit the checking account.

Some towns must borrow in anticipation of taxes during certain times of the year because they do not have enough cash to cover operating expenses until taxes start flowing in. A monthly cash flow analysis shows all receipts and disbursements throughout the year, indicating the months where you have a shortfall and need to borrow money. The months you have a surplus give you extra cash for investing. This analysis is useful for planning both short-term borrowing needs as well as investing strategy and should be done at the beginning of each fiscal year and, if at all possible, updated throughout the year along with the normal monthly reporting.

☒ Projected Fund Balance

Using your revenue and expenditure projections to fiscal year-end, you should be able to determine what your fund balance will be, assuming projections hold. Fund balance is what is left over when you subtract all your liabilities from your assets. It includes your surplus or deficit from current year operations added to the prior year's fund balance. It consists of any reserved funds such as investment in capital assets, as well as reserves set aside for specific purposes, and, last but not least, unreserved funds, those that are left over to be returned to the taxpayers or carried over into the new budget year. Your balance sheet should break out your fund balance into reserved and unreserved.

Fund balance is important! You should know where you stand at year-end because the unreserved fund balance will be carried into the new year and factored into your tax calculations unless you are maintaining a balance as a cushion.

Once again, trend analysis is a must. Compare unreserved fund balances over the last five years to see how stable your equity has remained. Ideally, you should have a **positive** fund balance every year. A deficit should always be retired the following year by raising taxes for that purpose. Frequent deficits or a steadily declining fund balance can indicate poor budget management.

Following these guidelines should give you a clearer picture of your finances. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Be sure that you are able to explain any variances in your budget or financial statements that could raise questions in the taxpayers' minds. Your town finances should never be a mystery to you or the taxpayers!

- Michael Gilbar, Director, VLCT
 Administrative Services



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TAX CREDITS AND PROPERTY VALUE

TAX CREDITS COUNT TOWARD PROPERTY'S VALUE

The Town of Manchester has succeeded in a tax appeal involving the question of whether federal low-income housing credits may be considered as taxable income by local listers or appraisers in setting the grand list value of an affordable housing property. In *In re: Appeal of Manchester Knoll Housing Limited Partnership*, Judge Karen Carroll of the Bennington Superior

credits, which affordable housing investors may claim on their federal income tax returns. 26 U.S.C. § 42. The entity that owns the project, Manchester Knoll Housing Limited Partnership ("Partnership"), is a non-taxable entity (because of its status as a partnership). Because of this exemption from income taxation, the Partnership cannot use the federal low-income tax credits that other, taxable organizations could. Therefore, the Partnership marketed interests in

in affordable housing developments.)

In appraising the Manchester Knoll property, the Town of Manchester considered the value of the federal low-income tax credits as income. The Partnership appealed this valuation to the Bennington Superior Court, where it argued that tax credits are not "real estate" and, therefore, should not be considered as income when calculating the fair market value of the property. The question for the Superior Court was whether this issue had ever been addressed by the Vermont Supreme Court. While the Court has never directly answered the question about whether federal low-income housing tax credits should be considered as income, it has decided on a closely related matter. In *Brattleboro Housing Limited Partnership v. Town of Brattleboro*, No. 97-402 (Vt. Sept. 3, 1998), the Court decided that depreciation and debt service calculations should be included in determining a property's fair market value under the income approach. The Court stated, "it is uncontested that the subject property has *tangible* value from the real estate and *intangible* value from the tax credits and that both should be considered for appraisal purposes." *Id* at 2. Therefore, intangible characteristics of income

(Continued on next page)

It is important to realize that, while the Vermont Supreme Court has indicated, at least conceptually, its support of including the value of tax credits in the property appraisal, it has not laid down a direct ruling on this issue.

Court stated that federal "tax credits are intangible property which the Vermont Supreme Court has recognized must be included in an appraisal of low-income housing projects." *In re: Appeal of Manchester Knoll Housing Limited Partnership*, Docket No. 52-2-02Bncv (March 31, 2004).

There are at least three accepted methods of property valuation, including the "income approach," the "cost approach," and the "direct sale comparison approach." The primary question in this proceeding is whether it is appropriate to consider tax credits as income when calculating the value of a property using the income approach. Under this theory of property appraisal, an appraiser of real property is trying to establish the fair market value of the property by translating the "future benefits of property ownership into an expression of present worth." *Beach Properties, Inc. v. Town of Ferrisburg*, 161 Vt. 368, 372 (1994) (internal cite omitted). This approach to valuation is particularly useful in the appraisal of commercial properties, as its goal is to quantify property value on the basis of what income it will yield to the property owner in the future (the keystone principle being that income is the primary reason for owning a commercial property).

The property at issue in *Manchester Knoll* is an affordable housing development of four buildings, each containing five apartments. Pursuant to the federal Internal Revenue Service (IRS) code, affordable housing projects are entitled to federal low-income housing tax

the partnership to investors who would, in turn, be able to use the tax credits themselves. These tax credits were, in fact, the primary financial benefit to investing in the project. In its "Offering Summary," the Partnership estimated that the value of the tax credits to an institutional investor would be worth \$1,379,849 over a ten-year period. (Income generated by banks is taxed at the rate of 40%; banks also have community investment obligations pursuant to the federal Community Reinvestment Act of 1977, 12 U.S.C. §§ 2901 *et seq.*, additionally, institutional investors are the primary investors

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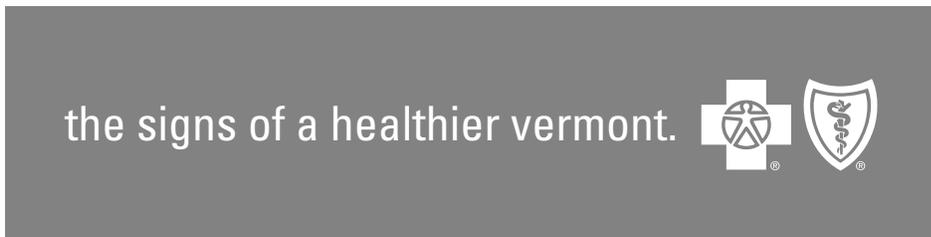
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accrual should be included in a proper income capitalization approach valuation.

Courts in many states have determined that federal low-income housing tax credits are income and should be considered as such in property appraisals based on the income approach. Based on this Court's analysis, there is at least one state which has held to the contrary. However, Judge Carroll decided that, based on the Vermont Supreme Court's decision in *Brattleboro Housing Limited Partnership*, federal low-income housing tax credits should be considered as income for real property appraisals.

This issue will no doubt apply to a number of Vermont municipalities which have low-income housing, and where listers and appraisers are struggling with the issue of whether to include the tax credits as income when using the income method of property appraisal. It is important to realize that, while the Vermont Supreme Court has indicated, at least conceptually, its support of including the value of tax credits in the property appraisal, it has not laid down a direct ruling on this issue. Additionally, the Vermont Legislature is currently addressing this issue and whether the law should be changed to favor affordable housing developments even more through a property tax exemption for federal low-income housing tax credits.

- Brian Monaghan, Attorney, VLCT Municipal Assistance Center



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ASK THE LEAGUE

PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS; CEMETERY ORDINANCES AND RESIDENCY

How does a town decide, under 32 V.S.A. § 3802, which properties are exempt from property taxes?

This question is two-fold. First, before any property may be determined to be exempt, the property must be *owned* by one of the organizations selected by the statute for exemption. 32 V.S.A. § 3802. Second, the property must be used according to the statutory provisions for that organization under § 3802.

There are several types of organizations selected for exemption under § 3802. Besides land owned by the federal government and the state, the organizations that most commonly claim exemption are churches, non-profit organizations, and schools. 32 V.S.A. § 3802 (4). However, there are a number of other organizations that may fall under the "public, pious or charitable uses" exemption. *Id.* For example, a fly-fishing school and museum was found to be a "public" organization under this statute based upon the purpose of the organization. See *American Museum of Fly Fishing v. Town of Manchester*, 151 Vt. 103 (1989). The key inquiry here is who owns the property. If a private individual owns property and leases this property to a nonprofit organization, this does not meet the requirements under § 3802 (4). See *Lincoln Street, Inc. v. Town of Springfield* 159 Vt. 181 (1992).

Once a town has determined that a property is owned by one of the organizations listed in the statute, the next question is whether the lands are being used "in pursuit of one of its (the organization's) exempt purposes." *Burr & Burton Seminary v. Town of Manchester* 172 Vt. 433 (2001). The Vermont Supreme Court has ruled on this issue a number of times, setting up different tests for different organizational types. In the *Burr & Burton Seminary* case the Court created a test to determine if property owned by a private school was exempt from property taxes. The Court stated the property must be:

- (1) owned by an educational institution; and
- (2) used for that institution's educational purpose or have an educational use. *Id.*

Therefore, if a school has several pieces of property - some of which are classrooms, others are meeting places, and still others are faculty housing - all these parcels have been held to be exempt because they advance the institution's educational purpose or have an educational use. *Id.* However, if a school rents a building for private use (to individuals for private housing), that property does not meet the requirements for property tax exemption. *Id.* In a related case, the Court found that a school which owned a parcel of undeveloped land did not fall under § 3802 (4) because there was no current educational use of this land, even though there were future plans to use it. *Berkshire School v. Town of Reading*, 172 Vt. 440 (2001).

Towns that have property owned by other types of non-profits (such as museums, wildlife conservation foundations, or recreational organizations) must use a different test to determine if the property is exempt. The Vermont Supreme Court has created a "public use" test for these organizations. A piece of property is tax exempt as a "public use" under § 3802 (4) if:

- (1) it is dedicated unconditionally to public use;
- (2) the primary use must benefit an indefinite class of persons who are part of the public and therefore confers a benefit upon society as a result of the benefit received by this class of persons; and
- (3) the property is owned and operated on a not-for-profit basis. *American Museum of Fly Fishing v. Town of Manchester*, 151 Vt. 103 (1989).

Obviously, this is a murky area and the Court has created different tests for different types of organizations. This area of the law is very fact-specific, and your town may have a situation that is not addressed by current case law. If your town is questioning the tax exempt status of property, the best advice would be to contact the League or your town attorney.

- Elizabeth Willhite, Intern, VLCT Municipal Assistance Center

May a town restrict the sale of town cemetery plots to former and current residents, or landowners of that town?

VLCT believes that towns may restrict to whom they sell cemetery plots through the use of ordinances. 24 V.S.A. Chapter 59; 18 V.S.A. § 5305.

An example: Jill was from Illinois, but her mother was born and raised in a Vermont valley town. Before Jill's mother passed on, she asked that she be buried in the town of her birth. Years later, Jill, though never having moved to Vermont herself, found that she wanted to be buried beside her mother. The town, however, prohibits non-residents from being buried there.

There is very little case law to guide towns on how to handle this situation. Some towns have an ordinance that restricts who may purchase a lot. Some also, however, permit the selectboard or cemetery commission to grant permission to sell to applicants who are not former or current residents, or landowners in the town. This process operates in much the same way as a request for a zoning variance.

Ultimately, a town may limit to whom it sells cemetery plots. Towns have a reasonable

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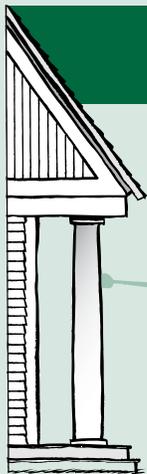


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OFFICE FIRE SAFETY TIPS

DON'T FORGET – A FIRE CAN START ANYWHERE

Fire can break out in offices just as it can anywhere else in a facility. In fact, one of the pool's largest fire losses occurred in an office. If

you work in an office, you need to remember these important points:

- Know where the main circuit breaker panel is and how to shut off power to various circuits.
- Keep heat-producing equipment such as copiers, word processors, coffee makers, and hot plates away from anything that might burn and allow sufficient clearance all around the equipment so cooling air can circulate freely. This type of equipment is often overlooked as a potential fire hazard.
- If electrical equipment malfunctions or gives off a strange odor, disconnect it and report it to your supervisor.
- Promptly shut off any electrical equipment with cracked, frayed, or broken electrical cords or plugs. Report the problem so that it can be repaired. Don't touch the plug or cord.
- Extension cords are intended as *temporary* wiring only. Keep extension cords clear of doorways and other areas where they can be stepped on or chafed. Replace with permanent wiring when needed.
- Never plug one extension cord into another, and don't exceed the stated and rated current carrying capacity. Use devices that are UL-rated and have circuit breakers built in.
- Smoke only in designated smoking areas.
- Keep combustible materials like paper, boxes, etc., away from heat or ignition sources.



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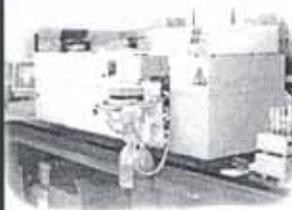
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The best time to think about fire safety is before a fire starts. In addition to these safety tips, make sure you know the location of fire escape routes, how to activate the fire alarm and call for help. Also, become familiar with stairway exits – elevators may not function during a fire, or may expose passengers to heat, gas, and smoke.

For more information about VLCT Group Services' health and safety programs, contact Brian FitzPatrick, Manager, Safety and Health Promotion, at 800/649-7915 or bfitzpatrick@vlct.org.

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VLCT WELCOMES NEW UNDERWRITER

The League's Human Resources Administrator has been particularly busy in the last few months, as staff members move around, join VLCT and bid us goodbye.

Tina Feeney joined the VLCT staff earlier this month as Underwriter for VLCT's Property and Casualty Intermunicipal Fund (PACIF). She takes the position vacated late last year by



Tina Feeney

Sandra Lockerby, who left the League to work for the Travelers Insurance Company.

Tina has over a decade of insurance experience, most recently as Executive Vice-president and Underwriting/Compliance Officer with Entertainment Specialty Insurance Services in Woodstock, Vermont. Prior to her move to Vermont, Tina worked for 11 years in New York City for the Gulf Insurance Group, Cohen Insurance and Chubb Custom Market.

Tina has hit the ground running, literally and figuratively. She is excited to be learning about municipal underwriting needs and hopes to get out to visit PACIF member towns as part of her learning process.

An avid runner and horseback rider, Tina recently moved to East Montpelier with her husband, Joe. The horses will come too, she said, as soon as the ground thaws enough to drive the fence posts in.

Welcome, Tina!

- Katherine Roe, VLCT Communications Coordinator

CONGRATULATIONS AND GOODBYE

In an effort to keep up with PACIF's extraordinary growth in the last few years, VLCT has created a new Claim Representative position and promoted **Patricia Boyle** to fill it. Pat has worked for VLCT for just under seven years, most recently as Administrative Assistant/Claims Associate. Pat passed the state workers' compensation licensing exam in 2002 and will now work full-time on PACIF workers' compensation claims.

Pat's administrative duties will be filled by current Production Specialist/Technician **Sonia Rivera**, who will move into the Administrative Assistant - Claims position. Sonia has been in charge of VLCT's "print shop" and mailing center for two years, increasing its efficiency considerably by integrating new copying, binding and mailing technology.

Congratulations to Pat and Sonia on your promotions!

Finally, last month VLCT bid goodbye to Administrative Assistant/Member Relations **Niki White**, whom many members (and staff too!) considered our "Answer Lady" for all VLCT Health Trust-related questions. Niki's extensive knowledge and pleasant, steady telephone manner will be sorely missed. We wish her luck as she and her husband move back to Connecticut to be closer to family (and farther away from snow...).

VLCT is in the process of filling the Administrative Assistant/Member Relations, Production Clerk, and Municipal Assistance Center Associate positions. Look for introductions to our new staff in future issues of the *VLCT News*.



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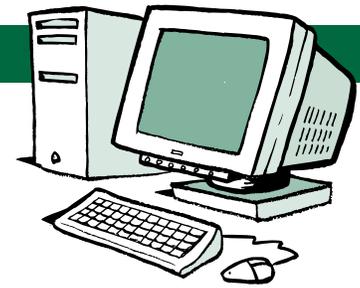
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CAPITAL ASSETS ACCOUNTING USING EXCEL

PART 2

Last month we examined the formulas necessary to create a workbook to track and depreciate capital assets. Using that same workbook, we will look at how to report those

assets so year-end entries may be made to adjust your financial reports.

When June 30th rolls around (or December 31st if you're on a calendar year), you will want to "archive" your current year data so the new budget year can be started with the prior balances rolled over. To copy the worksheet to another blank worksheet, click on the box in the left margin just above the "1" of the first row and just to the left of the "A" in the first column. The entire worksheet should be highlighted. Click on the **Copy** icon or right click and choose **Copy** from the menu that appears. Click on the tab of a new, blank worksheet and position your cursor on cell A1. Click on the **Paste** icon or right click and choose **Paste** from the menu. You should now have the same data in two different worksheets. Label this worksheet FY04 by right clicking on the worksheet tab at the bottom of the sheet, and choosing **Rename** from the menu.

One more adjustment needs to be made to this archived worksheet. Because the current depreciation and the accumulated depreciation columns contain formulas referring back to the named ranges in the first worksheet, the formulas must be eliminated in order for the values to remain as they were at year-end. To do this, highlight all of the numbers in the current depreciation and accumulated depreciation columns. Right click and choose **Copy** from the menu that appears. Next, right click again and choose **Paste Special**. When the dialogue box appears, click on the option that says **Values**, then click OK.

At year-end, you will also want to sort the data in such a way that you can sub-total the depreciation amounts by type as well as by department. I've added a "Department" column to our workbook from last month and assigned a department to each item booked. For purposes of reporting, we need two pieces of information: totals by type and totals by department. There are a number of ways we could develop this data, but for simplicity's sake we'll do two different reports.

First let's sort by type. Placing your cursor on the first column, first row of data below the "Date Acquired" heading, click on **Data** in the main menu, then **Sort**. You will see that the data table will be highlighted and a dialogue box will appear. In the dialogue box you are asked how you wish to sort. In the top dropdown entry box, choose "Type." You want to sort in Ascending order and be sure that on the bottom of the box you have clicked on the choice which indicates that the table has a Header Row. Click OK.

Now we will subtotal the data. With your cursor positioned anywhere in the table of data, click on **Data** in the main menu, then **Subtotals**. The table will be highlighted and a dialogue box will appear asking for some information. In the first entry box labeled **At Each Change In**, choose "Type" from the

CORRECTION

October 2003 Tech Check "Useful Debt Functions in Excel"

A very astute reader, Susan Fortunati, Treasurer, Town of Corinth, tested the debt functions explained in the article and noticed that they did not calculate correctly. The problem was the interest rate. I neglected to point out that the interest rate should match the term of the loan/lease, i.e., if you are calculating monthly payments, the interest rate should be the annual rate divided by 12 months. I apologize for the error and thank Susan for catching it.

	Date Acquired	Date Disposed	Type	Item	Dept	Cost	Life	Salvage	Annual Depreciation	Current Year Depreciation	Accumulated Depreciation	Net Value	Disposal Sale Amount	Net Gain or Loss
3	5/1/1970		Building	Fire Station	Fire	100,000	30	-	2,000	2,000	67,333	32,667		
4			Building Total						2,000	2,000	67,333	32,667		
5	11/1/2001		Improvements	Municipal Offices	Manage	40,000	15	-	2,667	2,667	9,111	32,889		
6			Improvements Total						2,667	2,667	9,111	32,889		
7	1/15/2003		Equipment	Computers	IT	12,000	5	-	2,400	2,400	3,400	8,600		
8	2/12/2004		Equipment	Copier	Clerk	1,400	5	-	1,400	617	617	6,783		
9			Equipment Total						3,817	3,017	15,383			
10	6/3/1990	1/1/2004	Furniture	Conf Furniture	Board	2,100	15	-	140	70	1,902	188	250	52
11			Furniture Total						140	70	1,902	198	250	52
12	4/23/1999		Vehicles	Truck	Highway	120,000	10	2,500	11,750	11,750	60,708	59,250		
13			Vehicles Total						11,750	11,750	60,708	59,250		
14			Grand Total						19,917	14,177	139,929	250		52

(Continued on next page)



TECH CHECK -

(Continued from previous page)

dropdown. That tells Excel what column you want it to subtotal by. The **Use Function** in the next entry box allows you to choose various mathematical functions. Here you want to choose "Sum" because we want to add the numbers in the columns. The next entry box, **Add Subtotal To**, will allow you to choose the columns that you want added. Check off all of the columns starting with Current Year Depreciation. Click OK. You should now have a report that looks like the one on the previous page.

After printing this report or copying it to another worksheet, you can remove the subtotals by clicking on **Data, Subtotal** and at the bottom left of the dialogue box, **Remove All**. You can then repeat the sort process, sorting by "Department" instead of "Type," and then subtotal the results to get a report by department.

To prepare your original worksheet for the new year, simply delete any rows of items that have been disposed of, then enter the new fiscal year beginning date.

If you'd like a copy of this Excel workbook or need assistance with developing your own, contact Mike Gilbar at 800/649-7915 or email mgilbar@vlct.org.

*- Michael Gilbar, Director, VLCT
Administrative Services*

NEW HANDBOOK -

(Continued from Page One)

this handbook will make that job a little easier."

The handbook has been in the works for two years and relied on the considerable expertise of Sue Ritter, Esq., of English, Caroll, and Ritter, P.C. in Middlebury, Vermont. Ms. Ritter worked on the handbook during her tenure as a VLCT Staff Attorney and after her return to private practice.

The handbook also provides helpful models and examples of job descriptions, a sexual harassment policy, and checklists for the interview and termination processes. Additional models and samples are also available from the Municipal Assistance Center at any time.

For a copy of the handbook, please call VLCT at 800/649-7915 or visit the VLCT Web site Bookstore. Handbooks are available for \$50 for members, and \$75 for non-members. And don't forget, as noted above, municipalities who are PACIF members will automatically receive a free copy in the mail.

THE VLCT CONTRIBUTING MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM

The VLCT Contributing Membership Program is offered to businesses, individuals, and organizations that share the League's mission of serving and strengthening local government in Vermont. Through their support of VLCT, our Contributing Members are instrumental in helping VLCT to provide services and programs to its member municipalities. Their membership also promotes cooperation by improving communication between VLCT, Vermont municipalities, public and private organizations, and their members/clients.

Contributing Members benefit from a variety of services. These services include use of our toll-free telephone line to ask important

questions concerning local government and research opportunities in our large resource library. Member rates are provided for the purchase of VLCT publications and registration fees for our educational workshops. Contributing Members may purchase exhibit and print advertising space at *Town Fair* at a reduced rate as well. In addition, all Contributing Members receive subscriptions to the *VLCT News* and *Weekly Legislative Report*.

We thank the current Contributing Members listed below for their support of VLCT, as we work together to serve and strengthen Vermont local government.

*- Tara Fischer, Research and Information
Assistant, VLCT Municipal Assistance Center*

Angela M. Ross, Esq. - (Albany) General law practitioner serving as town attorney for several towns in the Northeastern part of the state.

Banknorth - A one-stop provider of financial products and advice.

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Chittenden Bank - A Vermont financial services company.

Citizens Bank - (New England) Full-service bank.

DesMeules, Olmstead and Ostler - (Norwich) Law office specializing in civil litigation, criminal law, residential & commercial real estate, family law, personal

injury/worker comp, wills & estates, creditor/banking advocacy, landlord/tenant, and business.

English Carroll & Ritter - (Middlebury) Specializes in real estate, estate planning, civil litigation, business law, and municipal law.

Forcier Aldrich and Assoc. - (Essex Junction) Civil and environmental engineering.

Heritage Ford - (Burlington) Specializing in traditional customer service and sales expertise.

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(Continued on next page)



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employment discrimination law, family law, personal injury/accidents/property damage, real estate law, wills/trusts/probate, title claims, zoning, business and estate planning, and divorce.

Langrock Sperry & Wool – (Middlebury)
Legal services to business and individual clients throughout Vermont, as well as ° to municipalities, educational institutions, and other non-profit institutions.

Liccardi Crawford & Ogden – (Rutland) Specializing in real estate law, family law, legal malpractice, personal injury, estate planning, employment law, labor law, and criminal law.

Massamont Insurance – (Greenfield, MA)

Insurance products for private and public entities.

McNeil, Leddy & Sheahan – (Burlington) In addition to the general practice of law, the firm specializes in municipal, employment, labor, school, utility, personal injury and civil rights law.

Neuse, Smith & Venman – (Middlebury)
Specializing in estate planning and small business planning/incorporation/partnership.

New England Municipal Consultants – (Hampton Falls, NH) Consulting firm dedicated to quality data collection, model construction and defense of value.

Parker & Ankuda – (Springfield) Specializing in real estate law, personal injury, contracts, business organizations, family law, and workers' compensation law.

Piecick and Company – (Brattleboro)
Public accounting firm providing service to

businesses, individuals and organizations.

Primmer and Piper – (Montpelier)
Provides corporate, commercial, government relations and administrative legal services, with an emphasis on regulated industries, particularly financial services, insurance and utilities.

Reiber Kenlan Schwiebert Hall & Facey – (Rutland) Full-service law firm.

Stitzel Page & Fletcher – (Burlington)
Special areas of expertise include advising public boards, drafting of legal documents, lobbying, labor and personnel matters, special education and disabilities law, staff and board training and seminars, board policies and procedures.

Sullivan, Powers & Company – (Montpelier) Offering accounting, auditing, tax compliance services including payroll, consulting for individuals & small business information systems, management & taxation issues, litigation support, business valuation, and personnel management.

UVM MPA Program – (Burlington) The Master of Public Administration at the University of Vermont is a professional interdisciplinary degree, which prepares students for public service by providing education on leadership and analytic and management skills.

Weber, Perra & Munzing – (Brattleboro)
Full-service law firm specializing in personal injury, domestic relations, real estate, and bankruptcy.

Weston and Sampson Engineers – (Waterbury) Full-service environmental and infrastructure engineering firm.

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Burlington, Vermont will be the host of an innovative, international conference, entitled *Sustainable Communities 2004*, from July 14-18 this summer. The Sustainable Communities Conference will bring together academics, professionals, citizens, businesses and educators in working groups to discuss real-life problems and take home new tools, practices and skills to use in their home communities around the world. VLCT is among a long list of co-sponsors, including the International City Managers Association (ICMA), the National League of Cities (NLC), the American Planning Association, Lake Champlain Chamber of Commerce and the City of Burlington.

Working groups at the conference will visit sites, consider case studies and simulations, and attend sessions on a variety of issues, including:

- the role of the arts in community development;
- restoration economy;
- public participation and citizen empowerment;
- financing mechanisms for innovative development strategies;
- environmentally certified construction practices; and
- contracts for energy efficiency and purchasing renewable products.

It is appropriate that some of these discussions take place in Vermont, the only place in the world that UVM Professor Frank Bryan has determined practices “real democracy,” the right of citizens to come together in town meeting to actually make decisions about the governing of their communities.

Speakers at the conference will include internationally known experts as well as people who have worked in the trenches. NLC President Charles Lyons will discuss NLC’s new initiative to promote equality and opportunity on the municipal level. Over the three days, participants will witness how all the elements of sustainable community development are being employed in a comprehensive strategy by the City of Burlington, as well as how they might be employed in smaller communities.

For more information and registration materials, please visit the conference Web site at www.global-community.org or contact Gwendolyn Hallsmith, Conference Coordinator, (and former Randolph, Vermont town manager) at ghs@global-community.org.

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Please visit the VLCT Web site to view many more classified ads: www.vlct.org/classifieds.cfm. You may also submit your ad via an e-mail link on this page of the site.

FOR SALE

Dump Truck. The Town of Killington has for sale a 1998 Mack RD690P dump truck with a 7cy body, plow frame, reversible front plow, wing plow, and hydraulic tailgate sander. Asking \$45,000. This like-new truck is available immediately and can be seen or

driven at the Town Garage by appointment. Write or call David Lewis, Town Manager, PO Box 429, Killington, VT 05751, 802/422-3241.

HELP WANTED

Request For Proposals to Provide Auditing Services. The Auditors for the Town of Stowe are requesting proposals from Certified Public Accounting firms that service Vermont towns to provide auditing services for FY2005-2009 for the Town of Stowe, Vermont. Proposals are due by 4:00 p.m., May 20, 2004. Copies of the RFP are available at: Selectboard Office, Town of Stowe, P.O. Box 730, Stowe, VT 05672, 802/253-7350.

Facilities Manager, Sullivan County, NH. This managerial level position reports directly to the County Manager and is responsible for direct supervision of the Maintenance Department, indirect supervision of the Housekeeping and Laundry services, as well as all buildings and structures in both the Newport and Unity complex, including maintenance, repair and capital improvements. Qualifications: Bachelor's degree in an appropriate discipline and at least five years' experience in management or supervisory responsibilities. Position requires considerable knowledge in areas such as engineering, construction, electrical, materials, heating & cooling systems, landscaping, roads and drainage, and mechanics. For more information, contact Human Resources: 603/542-9511 x 286; 5 Nursing Home Drive, Unity, NH 03743.

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Calendar

For more information about the VLCT-sponsored events described below, please contact Jessica Hill, VLCT Conference Coordinator, tel., 800/649-7915 or e-mail, jhill@vlct.org. You may also visit www.vlct.org, select the Calendar, and select a workshop for more information or to register on-line.

Town Officers Educational Conferences. Last two! April 28, Rutland; May 4, Dover. For more information, contact mary.peabody@uvm.edu.

Selectboard Member Orientation and Tune-up. Thursday, April 29, 2004, Middlebury Town Offices. Sponsored by the VLCT Municipal Assistance Center. This workshop will focus on fundamental skills for both new and seasoned selectboard members. Topics will include Statutory

Sources of Authority, the Role of the Selectboard in Town Government, Conflict of Interest, and others.

Municipal Attorneys' Forum. Thursday, May 6, 2004, Capitol Plaza Hotel, Montpelier. Sponsored by the VLCT Municipal Assistance Center. This forum provides an opportunity for municipal attorneys across the state to gather and discuss the most pressing issues in municipal law.

Vermont Municipal E-government Conference. Tuesday, May 18, 2004, Howard Dean Education Center, Springfield; Lyndon State College, Lyndon; and UVM, Burlington. Sponsored by VLCT and UVM Center for Rural Studies. All municipal officials interested in learning how e-government can improve their government's operations and communication with their citizens will benefit from this conference!

Clerks and Treasurers Workshop. Thursday, May 20, 2004, Capitol Plaza Hotel, Montpelier. Sponsored by the VLCT

Municipal Assistance Center. This annual workshop will focus on legislative and policy changes affecting the conducting of elections, municipal record keeping, and municipal finance.

Group Services Day. Thursday, June 3, 2004, Hartness House Inn, Springfield. Sponsored by VLCT Group Services.

Planning and Zoning Series #4: Natural Resources Planning. Thursday, June 10, 2004, Vermont Interactive Television sites throughout the state. Sponsored by the VLCT Municipal Assistance Center. This final evening session in the series will illustrate how local tools such as the town plan, zoning bylaws, and municipal ordinances can be vital in protecting open space, shore lands, flood plains, and preserving scenic and historic features.