

The Circle

Rutland Town's Link between School and Community



TOWN NEWS

By Mary Ashcroft,
Select Board Chair

Budgets--they're all about the numbers.

Town Meeting voters will be asked to approve town budgets for 2021-22 with a combined modest increase of 0.43%. Planned expenditures for General, Fire, Highway, Recreation and Police total \$2,766,802. Anticipated income—from the 1% local option tax, grants and other sources—totals \$1,516,802, covering more than half of our expenditures. That leaves \$1,249,852 to be raised by grand list taxes. We appreciate the hard work of all department heads who crafted tight, thoughtful budgets.

Details about our finances and requests are in our Town Report which is at the printer and will soon be mailed to town residents. Special thanks go to Bill Sweet and Kari Clark for their diligent work compiling the report.

About 35 townspeople participated in our first-ever zoom pre-town meeting on January 19. We will also "zoom" the March 1st evening information meeting. Voting will be in person, by Australian ballot, on Tuesday, March 2 from 7am to 7pm at Rutland Town School and the Town Office.

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RTS UPDATE FROM Co-Principals

Deborah Rodolfy and Sarah Tetzlaff

We want to again thank all of the community members for the continued support of our school, especially during the pandemic. We are so proud of our students, teachers, and staff for their diligence in following all of the guidelines set forth by the state.

Throughout the pandemic, we have offered our students both in-person learning, as well as a remote learning option. This has been quite the undertaking for our teachers, technology department, and families. We greatly appreciate everyone's hard work, especially our dedicated and talented teachers and staff.

We continue to have strong enrollment numbers year after year. Unlike other schools in Vermont, Rutland Town School has maintained a consistent student enrollment. We currently have 359 students, Pre-K through grade 8, and 140 students attending high school.

Continued on pg. 3

From Rutland Town School Board

By Lynette Gallipo

The School Board and Administrators continue to be extremely sensitive to the financial burden of taxpayers in our community and have made every effort to propose a budget which is affordable while meeting the educational, emotional and physical needs of our students.

The Board approved a small portion of the FY21 budget for: equipment for the Pre-K playground; a scoreboard to be installed on the outside of the building; tables, cubbies and chairs for students; and funds to refurbish the gymnasium floor.

Increases to this budget include: a 10% increase in health premiums (\$56,000); increase to high school tuition reimbursement (\$10,000); increase to transportation (\$48,000); increase in Special Education due to increase in IEP students (\$34,000);

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Transfer Station Reminder
Next Hazardous Waste Disposal
Saturday, May 15 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.



RTS Preschool Classroom

Greetings from Mrs. DuBois, Mrs. Garrow and our preschool classroom!

Winter is here and we are thoroughly enjoying it! We have been sledding, building snowpeople, taking hikes, making tracks, looking for tracks and learning about migration and hibernation.

We have been feeding the birds and watching them every day. They are not afraid of us and keep feeding even when we are outside playing. We have seen some plump gray squirrels and red squirrels under our feeder. We have also seen the tracks of a deer who is eating the seed dropped by the birds under our feeder. We are awesome investigators. We love being detectives!

I have a bit of inspiration for each of you from a very thoughtful and caring young five year old: "Be kind, Be happy, I hope you are healthy. We are family and friends. We can do this!"

Please be kind, be safe, wear a mask and remember to wash your hands!

Road Notes

from Byron Hathaway, Road Commissioner

Time to talk about budget. This year's highway budget is down 3%. Let me explain the highlights. Culvert replacements is up by \$55,000 to cover the cost of replacing the failing Gleason road culvert on the Moon Brook. This project will be bid outright after Town Meeting. This will assure us that this project will get done this summer. Part of this project may get some grant funding. Let us hope for the best.

Construction season equipment rentals and materials are down because of fewer projects this summer. Cost of operating our little truck is down because we are not making payments anymore. This truck is due to be replaced by next winter and a new truck, paid for out of the depreciation account, will only need oil changes and fuel for the first year. The sidewalk grant line item is down as we received a grant to cover 80% of the cost of the scoping study. The budgeted amount is our share of the cost.

Engineering is down because the Gleason Road and Town Line Road culvert projects are all engineered and ready to be put out to bid. In addition, stormwater engineering has been moved into the General Fund. The Town Line Road culvert will be bid out next year and hopefully will be done with some grant funding. The stormwater line item has been eliminated and all the Town's stormwater costs will be found in the General Fund. The Town's MS4 obligations and the Lake Champlain TMDL are the driving forces for the continued rising costs of stormwater.

Our highway budget remains cost effective with our annual operating cost per mile very similar to other communities like ours. Please vote on Town Meeting Day March 2 and support the highway budget.



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THE CIRCLE is a publication of Rutland Town and Rutland Town School. The newsletter informs the community about issues of local interest. Each year five issues are published every other month from October through June. The Circle is not a public forum. The principal and Select Board have the authority to exercise editorial control over style and content of the newsletter. Newsletter staff include Janelle Fagnant and Carol Bam. For more information, mailing list changes, to advertise or contribute, email rutlandtowncircle@gmail.com, call the RTS office at 775-0566 or mail items to: The Circle, c/o Rutland Town School, 1612 Post Road, Rutland, VT 05701

ATTENTION, HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS!

The Rutland Town Select Board is now receiving scholarship applications from graduating high school students who wish to pursue higher education. Applicants must have resided in town for at least two years prior to the date of graduation.

Awards will be based on scholastic achievement, family and community service, leadership, extra-curricular activities, and financial need. Applications are in two parts and are available on the town's website.

Completed applications must be received in the Rutland Town Office, 181 Business Route 4, Center Rutland, Vermont 05736 by noon on Friday, April 23, 2021.

The award of scholarships is contingent on voter approval of the \$15,000 scholarship funding request at Town Meeting on Tuesday, March 2, 2021.

(RTS Update Cont. from pg. 1)

We have worked hard to fine-tune our budget to maintain quality programs and are working to make improvements to our facilities, specifically in adhering to our new COVID protocols. In our proposed, 2021-2022 budget, Educational Spending Per Pupil is set to increase minimally at 74%. We have worked extremely hard to keep our position of the budget we control as low as possible. Due to property yield, equalized tax rate, and CLA (state-controlled factors), the estimated adjusted tax rate we will see an estimated tax increase of 2.66%.

As always, our priority is to maintain our high quality of education while continuing to be fiscally responsible. Please check out our website, Rutland Town School – Chargers for more detailed budget information and view the attached slides that were presented at the Pre-Town meeting on Monday, January 18th, Rutland Town School Town Meeting Presentation FY 22.pdf. Feel free to reach out to us with any questions regarding next year's school budget if you have any questions.

We welcome others to visit our school and meet with us, anytime (virtually for now). Feel free to call the office and make an appointment, (802) 775-0566. We also encourage everyone to check out our website and follow us on Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/rtsvt> to see what is happening at Rutland Town School!

Most Sincerely,
Deborah Rodolfy and Sarah Tetzlaff

NEWS FROM THE REC

By Director, Mike Rowe

Hello All,

I hope you and your family are safe and enjoying the winter weather. We just got the green light from the Governor to start basketball for our rec teams. We are starting with skills/drills and looking to move to games later in February, more info to follow. I would like to thank the following parents who are running the basketball program this season. Greg Fuller, Dennis Moser, Nate Bellomo, Alex Grimes, Pat Whalen and Tom Velde thank you all for all your effort during this season. You can check out the Rec info on the towns website, www.rutlandtown.com, all rec info is located there. We are looking forward to spring and the sports season that will take place. If you are interested in helping coach our baseball program please just let me know (it is never too early to think spring). As always if you have any questions or want to offer any programming for our town please contact me at 779-2518. Get Up and Get Out, enjoy winter, spring will be here soon.



A student from Rutland Town preschool puts the finishing touches on a snowman.

Rutland Free Library

From Randal Smathers, Director

Library eyes Center Rutland benefits: By now, most folks will have heard that Rutland Free Library is in talks to purchase the administration building at the former College of St. Joseph campus and its library.

There's been a lot of conversation about access to the new site as opposed to the current downtown location, but what hasn't been discussed much is what it means for Rutland Town. Center Rutland residents will find the library on their doorstep, and their access will link up with the bike lanes connecting to West Rutland. It's highly likely, whether the library moves or not, that the Creek Path through the city will connect with the campus sooner rather than later, as residents are already looking for bike / pedestrian access to the city Rec Center.

For Town residents in the rest of the circle, access will be different, but not necessarily better or worse. Many people do make the book drop a stop on the way through the city so the new location will be a little out of the way, but on the other hand, once people do arrive at the campus we know they'll appreciate the ability to park (including a bank of ADA-compatible spots planned for directly in front of the building). We're planning on a 24-hour book drop and are trying to figure out the logistics of a drive-through drop as well. We haven't had the drive-through option requested, but other librarians around the state who have made similar moves have advised us that their patrons loved that particular addition.

Our timeline is to spend through February getting public input on the proposal with an eye toward adding features requested by our users, then hand the plans to the architect for her to finalize in March. Work should start in June / July, so don't worry if you're reading this the first week in March ... the conversation will continue and we would love to hear from you! Log on to the website and look for the "Our New Home" link for a simple form to tell us what services you need. We'll try to provide as many solutions as we can in the new building, and any ideas that we can't accommodate we'll pass on to Project Vision and other local partners to see if someone else can help. We look forward to hearing from you! www.rutlandfree.org



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Office (802) 747-4544 • (800) 870-4545 in Vermont
65 N. Main St. • Suite 2 • Rutland, VT 05701

From Mrs. Aurelie Swasey, School Counselor

Peer Leaders is a group of students who were recommended by teachers for showing qualities of leadership and service. These students will go on to make a difference in their communities and the world. This student group is select and small, but mighty! Run by Rutland Town School Counselor, Aurelie Swasey, peer Leaders of 2020/21 are the following: **Matthew Clark, Emma Grimes, Madeline Kleber-Rose, McKenna McLaughlin, Amelia Shelton, and Ethan Whalen.**

This year Peer leaders have chosen to focus on the challenges that youth face during a pandemic, an Anti-bullying campaign and Kindness challenges. Throughout the first half of the year Peer Leaders discussed challenges they've faced through the pandemic and how it's contributed to stress factors.

For the second half of the year, Peer leaders have been discussing bullying prevention and what they can do in our school community to help advocate and promote being an UPSTANDER. Peer Leaders are beginning to plan The Great Kindness Challenge, which will involve creating kindness activities that can be implemented during Morning Meetings in Middle School Teachers Advisories and lunchtime.

Rutland Town School is so Proud of 2020/21 Peer Leaders! Thank you from the bottom of our hearts to each and every one of you.



Bottom from Left to right: McKenna McLaughlin, Amelia Shelton, Madeline Kleber-Rose. **Top from Left to right:** Emma Grimes, Ethan Whalen, Matthew Clark.

CANDIDATES, TOWN MEETING 2021

Select Board - Sharon G. Russell is running unopposed for the two-year seat; Don Chioffi, Christopher Howland, and Aaron Jones are running for the three-year seat.

School Board - Tina Keshava is running unopposed for the one-year seat; William Canfield, and Tim Hammond are running for the two-year seat; and Jeffrey Colomb, Collin Fingon, Kirsten Hathaway, and Bethany Jones are running for the three-year seat.

Running for **Delinquent Tax Collector** are James Scholtz, Christopher Howland, and Robyn Sweet. Running unopposed for **Cemetery Commissioner** is B.J Hathaway. Incumbent Howard Burgess is running for **Lister**. Edward E. Dumas II and John Paul Faignant are running for **First and Second Constable**, respectively. And Matthew Getty is running unopposed for **Moderator**.

To the voters of Rutland Town, my name is Sharon Russell and I am running for the Select Board two-year seat which I first held for a year to fill a seat left by a previous member. I then ran and won a two-year term. I served also on the School Board and the Recreation Board and chaired that for over five years. I have lived in Rutland Town for over 40 years and continue to want to add to the growth of our town. I am the Executive Director of the Open Door Mission where I began the Veterans Program for homeless veterans and I work closely with the VA. I am most proud of this program and the men and women veterans I have helped get their lives back after serving in foreign lands, so that we have our freedom. So I ask for your vote for Select Board and more importantly to just vote, it makes a difference. Let's hope by next year we are all able to put the worst of this pandemic behind us.

Sincerely,
Sharon Garofano-Russell

Hello Rutland Town!

I am happy to announce my candidacy for Rutland Town School Board Commissioner for another 2 years. As a proud parent of two future Rutland Town graduates, I am thrilled to continue to be a part of Rutland Town School's community.

These past two years of service as a member of the Rutland Town School Board has provided me with some of the most rewarding, prideful, and purposeful moments. It has been a great experience to work collaboratively with fellow board members, members of the GRCSU board, our administrators, and our passionately engaged teachers. We all faced an enormous challenge over the past year. I was glad to be involved in making challenging decisions in providing our students/staff with a safe environment while still providing a quality learning atmosphere both in person and remotely. These were not easy conversations and required critical thinking and listening. Countless hours have been spent having thoughtful dialogue in decisions made during policy committee meetings, negotiation meetings, and representing Rutland Town as a member of the GRCSU board. I am proud of the work and progress we have made over the past two years at RTS. I am thankful to the community for their unwavering support and trust as we navigate each situation to ensure Rutland Town School remains a beacon of pride for our community. I am most proud of the students of Rutland Town and the spirit they bring to school each day. They are our future and for that I am hopeful.

I am proud of what we have done and I am excited for the things to come. For that reason you will find my name on the ballot for Rutland Town School Board Director (2 year seat) on March 2nd. I humbly ask for your VOTE. Tim Hammond

Hello,
My name is Jeff Colomb and I am running for a seat on the Rutland Town School Board. I recently retired from Rutland Town School after 30 years. I feel that these many years of service and experience make me uniquely qualified to sit on the Board. I am also a parent whose children went through the Rutland Town School system and received a wonderful education there. Now I am a grandparent looking forward to the future, when my grandson will be attending Rutland Town School in just a few short years. If I am elected, I will pledge to work collaboratively with the other Board members to ensure Rutland Town School is the best school it can be for the students, teachers and staff that attend and work there. I believe this goal can be accomplished while also being fiscally responsible to the tax payers in our town. I would like your voter support on March 2nd 2021, please vote.

Thank you,
Jeff Colomb

VOTER INFORMATION

FOR TOWN MEETING Tuesday, March 2, 2021

Same Day voter registration is in effect in Vermont allowing voters to register when they go to the polls. The State of Vermont requires new voters to provide a driver's license or social security card. Voters must be 18 years old on or before March 2, 2021.

Absentee Ballots. If a resident has obtained an absentee ballot, it must be dropped off at the poll site on Election Day before it closes **Tuesday, March 2, 2021 at 7 p.m.** Prior to that it can be delivered to the Town Office drop slot until closing, Monday, March 1 at 4:30 p.m.

Informational Town Meeting on Monday, March 1 at 7 p.m. will review budgets and ballot items for March 2. The meeting is not in-person this year, please visit the Town website for the Zoom link at rutlandtown.com.

Vote Tuesday, March 2 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Residents living on the east side of Route 7 vote at Rutland Town School. West side residents vote at the Town Office. **Call the Town Office at 773-2528 with questions.** Hours are Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 8 - 4:30 p.m.; Tuesday 8 - 6 p.m., Friday 8 - 2 p.m.

First of all, thank you to the Circle Staff for providing this space. Rutland Town is a precious gem and I have been privileged to live and work here since 1970 with my wife Marcia and our two children, William and Lisa. A Vietnam Veteran, I have over 30 years of combined service to the Town of Rutland, 17 years as a Middle School Teacher at Rutland Town School, Founder and Chairman of the Recreation Commission during major building phases and completion of Dewey Field and Northwood Park, Member and Chairman of the Selectboard during major business expansion years, Town Moderator, BCA Member and Justice of the Peace, Vermont State Representative serving on the Education and Judiciary Committees and also on the New England Board of Higher Education. I have worked alongside some of the finest as a Volunteer Fireman in one of the best departments in the state. I am proud to have been on the Police Committee and a driving force for our own Department which Protects and Serves us daily.

I also have 25 years of successful business experience in the retail and construction trades operating Kremee Country Kitchen, Kehoe's Corner Deli, and Chioffi Construction Inc.

I also strongly lobbied, against a lot of opposition, for the adoption of the Local 1% Option Tax, which has provided an annual gift of 1.1 MILLION dollars to reduce our property taxes.

I'm now serving in my 8th year as your representative on the Board of Directors of the Regional Ambulance Service, and am on the BCA as Justice of the Peace.

Strong, proud, and economically sound communities do not happen by accident. I ask your support, and your vote, to be able to join a team of dedicated board members to continue that excellence. Thank you.

Respectfully, DON CHIOFFI

Aaron Jones for Rutland Town Select Board

I am Aaron Jones, and I am running for Rutland Town Select Board. I have lived my whole life in the Rutland area. In retrospect making the decision with my wife to stay and raise our children here in Rutland town was the greatest choice we ever could have made. Late last year I was appointed by our Select Board to fill a vacancy. In the short time that I have been working for the great people of Rutland Town, I have gained immense fulfillment in the work that I am doing, and I take pride in that work. I aim to serve the people of Rutland Town the same way that I have served local non-profits the last 10 years, with empathy, integrity, and dignity.

If the last year has given us anything, it is the insight that there may be no simple solutions for the problems we face today or even tomorrow. That dutiful governance serves the community. It is a welcomed obligation, to fulfill this commitment with you in mind. A great Vermonter John Dewey said, "Democracy is not an alternative to other principles of associated life. It is the idea of community life itself." I invite you to reach out to me with questions, comments, or ideas and I ask for your vote on March 2nd, 2021.

Humbly,
Aaron Jones

My wife, Jackie, and I have chosen to raise our family in Rutland Town. I personally experienced K-8 in my childhood at RTS and our son Asa, is halfway through his kindergarten year. Asa has two siblings due this spring, that will join him at RTS in the future!

My family has always been involved in and around public education throughout my whole life. My mother was on the Rutland Town PTA when I was growing up and my father was the business manager for the Rutland City Public School system for 20 years. I was previously on the Rutland City School Board of Commissioners from 2006-2011 until I moved to Rutland Town and had to resign my seat. I hold a high regard for education for our youth and their future.

I am a financial planner and I have extensive knowledge of how public education is funded in our unique State of Vermont. While on the RCPS board, I both negotiated with and advocated for the staff while fulfilling my duties to the tax paying citizens of the City, all with the goal of helping every child in our district every day. My favorite accomplishment while on the city board was helping orchestrate the reorganization the City School Pension plan to ensure its future funding would not over-burden the taxpayers yet protect our teacher's financial futures.

Rutland Town School is a wonderful asset to our community, and I would love to be involved as a parent and taxpayer. Vermont, and all of its schools face great financial challenges moving forward. I would like the opportunity to serve my community in helping us create solutions that work for our children, our teachers, staff and citizens.

Thank you for your consideration,
~Collin Fingon

"This year has been an interesting one to serve as Town Moderator. I believe we had a successful informational meeting in January through Zoom, which will be repeated on the eve of Town Meeting. Please join us to learn what is going on with your hardworking Select Board and School Board. Thank you for your consideration for another term as your Moderator." Matt Getty

I am Bethany Jones and I am running for the Rutland Town School Board. My Husband and I have two children, a son who is a student at Rutland Town Elementary and a daughter who will soon walk the very same beloved halls that I did through my elementary years. Some of the same great educators that helped shape mine and now my son's education will be there to greet my daughter. I am sure every parent and member of our community would agree that it is clear how invaluable our school is. What is important is not just the building itself but rather the community that encompasses it, the minds that thrive within, and all the amazing people who work hard to make it happen every day. This school year presented nearly insurmountable challenges. Without the incredible resilience of everyone involved our children would have shouldered the weight of these times. I ask for your vote on March 2nd 2021 and If selected I will bring the same enthusiasm and diligence to my duties on the board, as I do raising our family.

Bethany Jones

Dear Rutland Town Residents,

My name is Tina Keshava, and I am running for a 1-year term on the Rutland Town School Board. After Korrine Rodrigue resigned in October, I was selected from a pool of candidates to fill in for the remainder of her term which will expire March 2022. I am a parent of four children, three of which are still attending Rutland Town School, and one who has ventured off to Rutland High this year. Although I am an optometrist by training, education has always been a passion of mine, which is why I have been involved with teacher-hiring and curriculum committees over the last several years at the school. I have also been involved with Four Winds as a parent volunteer and Girl Scouts as a leader between 2011 and last year, as well as giving my time at other PTO and school functions. I believe a strong community needs a strong school at its core, and I will do my best to ensure that our school is meeting (and hopefully exceeding!) the needs of our students and staff, while keeping costs in check for our residents. Thank you for your time in reading a little bit about me. I look forward to serving you on the school board.

Sincerely,
Tina Keshava

Hello Rutland Town! My name is Kirsten Hathaway. I am running for the three-year term for Rutland Town School Board. I am the mother of two boys. My son Clayton is a student at Rutland Town School and his brother Tucker will soon start Kindergarten.

As former Town Clerk and Treasurer, I also served as School Treasurer. This knowledge will help me keep your school taxes as low as possible. I am also proud to say I was a driving force behind making our school a safer environment during town elections.

Currently, I serve as Board Chair Elect for New Story Center and as a member of the VBSR Changemakers Table. Over the past year as Director of Finance and Human Resources for the Rutland Housing Authority, I have gained valuable Human Resource skills which I believe will benefit our school employees. I have also been accepted to Vermont Law School.

Rutland Town is my home, and I am incredibly fond of the residents in our community. I hope you will consider me for this important position. Please remember to get out and vote!

My name is Robyn Sweet and I am running for the position of Delinquent Tax Collector. I have grown up in and around the Rutland area, graduated from West Rutland ('98) and have raised my family here in Rutland Town.

My husband, Bill Sweet, and I moved into our home in Rutland Town in 2014 with our blended family. I am a paralegal with the law firm of Cleary Shahi & Aicher, P.C. in Rutland. Our family has a strong commitment to our community in both volunteer service (such as firefighting and foster parenting) but also in supporting local non-profits and community programs.

I am interested in pursuing this new additional area of service to our town as I feel I have the skills, personality, and desire work with the debtors in a productive fashion to recover the amounts past due. I am an organized and detail driven person with a high level of technology skills in a number of computer applications. My professional and personal life have taught me a multitude of different communication and dispute resolution techniques. I have a strong understanding of the privacy as well as the debt collection regulations involved with this position.

Thank you for your consideration and I would appreciate your support and vote on Town Meeting Day, March 2, 2021.

Collector of Delinquent Taxes

James W. Scholtz

I thank the citizens of Rutland Town for electing me as Collector of Delinquent Taxes in 2018. For those who did and those who did not vote for me at that time, I hope my four years in this position give you the confidence to have me continue serving you.

In 2014 I was appointed for 11 months. Since March of 2018 to date I have been tasked with collecting taxes totaling \$806,317. Of this I have collected \$613,614. The breakdown is as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Delinquent*</u>	<u>Collected</u>	<u>Balance</u>
2018	334,194	213,564	120,630
2019	236,587	184,688	51,899
2020	235,536	207,097	28,439
2021		<u>8,265</u>	<u>-8,265</u>
Total	806,317	613,614	192,703

* Delinquent Tax Warrant issued in May each year.

Additionally, \$64,234 in interest was collected.

There are six properties pending tax sale which will result in another \$73,387 in taxes being collected with an additional \$29,823 in interest.

The most important part of this position is contacting taxpayers. My conversations with taxpayers are tempered with compassion and the understanding that many times bad things happen to good people. During those conversations I found the good citizens appreciate my desire to work collaboratively with them to meet their obligations. We are able to achieve that in a calm, rational and professional manner.

I have lived in Rutland Town for 20 years. I find it very gratifying to give back to our community as your Collector of Delinquent Taxes. I enjoy the challenge of meeting the needs of both the individual and the town. It would be my pleasure, and I would feel privileged, if you will help me to continue serving you in this position. I will truly appreciate your vote on Town Meeting Day.

**From the Rutland Town
Fire Department
By BJ Hathaway**

Greetings all from the Rutland Town Fire Department! Hopefully this finds everyone well after the holiday season! It would appear that any “January thaw” we may have been having is now safely over and we are now in February we are back into winter. 2021 was a unique year for the Fire Department. Out of an abundance of caution due to concerns regarding the Covid-19 situation the department did not hold its annual meeting. The Select Board chose to amend the bylaws for 2021 to remove the annual meeting requirement and thus no election of officers was held. The slate of officers from 2020 was carried over for 2021. 2021 Officers are as follows: Asst. Chief (Stn 1): Larry DellVeneri. Asst. Chief (Stn 2): Mike Carlson. Captain (Stn 1): Jared Rau. Captain (Stn 2): Matt Voity. Lieutenant (Stn 1): Chris Henderson. Lieutenant (Stn 2): Aaron Bates.

As we continue through the winter months with our fingers crossed for an early spring we would like to remind residents of the following things: Remember to check vents and keep them clear of ice and snow to prevent CO from accumulating in your homes. Keep walkways and driveways clear of ice and snow. This makes it not only safe for you and your house guests but also makes it easier and quicker for first responders to reach you in the event of an emergency. Ensure that your 911 street address is clearly displayed at the driveway and on your residence if you have a shared driveway or private road.

We are also rapidly approaching town meeting day. We’d like to thank the community in advance for their continued support! It is the Department’s pleasure to serve you and we look forward to doing so for another year! Please remember to get out and vote on Town Meeting Day, March 2nd!

Cheney Hill Seniors

By Jim Hall

As we head into 2021, there are still concerns about the COVID 19 Virus; the statistics surrounding this issue are up and down, creating questions and comments from the populace. All of this is to be expected.

This past year, our activities were very limited with one lunch during the summer outdoors. Those folks who attended were very appreciative of the opportunity to get out and we were pleased to be able to offer the gathering.

Looking ahead, there will be conversations with the Select Board about the possibilities for the coming spring and summer. We wish there was more to offer, but that is not the case, unfortunately. So the best advice that I can give to our elders, members and friends, is to stay healthy, stay well and safe, and continue with the masks.

Also, I am reminded that the SWCOA, (Southwest Council on Aging) is available for those who may be encountering difficulty in shopping, getting to doctor appointments, or need help with daily housekeeping and such. They can provide a list of references to assist; their office is on Maple Street in Rutland. Any questions or comments please feel free to call me, I will do my best to help.

COVID-19 INFORMATION

By Lisa Lones, RN BSN, School Nurse

Do you have questions about the vaccine? Do you want to know more about Covid-19? What is quarantine or isolation? How do I know when to quarantine or test? When can I get the vaccine? All these questions and more can be answered at the Vermont Department of Health website healthvermont.gov

Southern VT Council on Aging

By Ellen P. Green, Communications and Volunteer Coordinator

Hello – I am not able to go grocery shopping because of the COVID Pandemic. I heard you have a grocery shopper volunteer that can help me?

Hi – I am the case manager for a person who was very active in the Senior Center programs and is now very isolated because of the pandemic. Do you have anyone to call this person once a week and check in with them?

Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging (SVCOA) has two safe opportunities for you to give back to your community, and the need is ongoing. As the pandemic continues, new guidelines such as using double masks and keeping farther than 6 feet apart encourage more older Vermonters to choose wisely to stay home. The result is often isolation and food insecurity. YOU can make a difference in a way that will not jeopardize your safety or that of the client. Both the Grocery Volunteer Program and the Phone Check-in Program are meeting the increasing needs of our neighbors, but SVCOA needs more volunteers. So many of our volunteers have expressed the sentiment that while they are helping others, the act of service to someone else gives them joy and hope. For more information on these programs and how you can join us, please call SVCOA at 802-786-5990 and leave a message for Ellen Green.

(School Board Cont. from pg. 1)

purchase of instructional software for curriculum; the first payment of the Bond (\$23,500) for last year's land purchase. The budget includes a decrease in custodial wages. Supervisory Union administrators, along with school principals offered to take a 0% salary increase due to the financial restrictions boards are facing. The Greater Rutland County Supervisory Union is in ongoing salary negotiations with teachers and support staff employees regarding their salaries.

The proposed 2021-2022 budget is: \$8,611,782, representing an increase of 2.22% over last year. This budget shows an increase to the Tax Rate to 1.5541 or an estimated tax increase of 2.66%. The main reason for the increase is the projected Property Yield (set by the State). The State lowered the property yield in order to cover the education fund deficit. The Board has no control over this figure. There is some evidence that the State will adjust the Property Yield which would lower our Tax Rate. As it stands now, the proposed budget shows an increase of the Tax Rate to 1.5541, or an estimated increase of 2.66% (\$.04). Facts: The amount of funds sent to the State for non-residential education tax is projected to be \$867,377 down from 2020's amount of \$922,696. Rutland Town does not come near the per pupil threshold. (RTS \$16,730 vs Threshold \$18,789). RTS Enrollment: 2019-20 school year is 359 Grades PreK-8 and 148 Grades 9-12.

We know that without you, the voters, residents, parents, and community members who have supported the School District we could not accomplish the tasks necessary to meet our student's needs. Please contact any of your board members or Superintendent Chris Sell if you have questions and/or concerns.

Rutland Town Board of Education
Lynette Gallipo, Chairman
Timothy Hammond, Vice Chairman
Matthew Branchaud
Russell Marsan
Christina Keshava

(Town News Cont. from pg. 1)

We will NOT be mailing out ballots to every town voter, so please call the Town Clerk at 773-2528 if you want a ballot mailed to you.

Voters will notice a new request on this year's ballot: authorization to establish a depreciation account for the transfer station. This will be funded by 1/8 of a cent per \$100 of the grand list, to generate just over \$11,000 per year for the purchase, repair and/or maintenance of building/equipment at the Northwood waste handling facility. The Town already maintains depreciation accounts for the police, highway, fire and recreation departments, and a capital improvement account is funded with any surplus left at the end of each fiscal year.

We recently appointed Aaron Jones to our Select Board to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of now State Senator Josh Terenzini. Aaron is a life-long resident of the Rutland area. He is currently employed by NeighborWorks of Western Vermont where he helps promote and provide affordable and safe housing in our area.

The Town's combined best wishes go out to Jim Gamble, who is leaving the Rutland Town Police Department. Thank you, Jim, for your years of service keeping our citizens safe.

Rutland Town received a \$13,500 state planning grant for the Center Rutland Pocket Park. Engineering work has begun on the shared use path link from Chasanna Drive to Northwood Park, with construction slated for this summer. A new vehicle and equipment cold storage shed at Northwood has received necessary permits and will be built this spring.

We close with a reflection on three good citizens. Over the past few months, our town has lost Gene Hathaway, Dave Seward and Bill Thomas. All three men served on our Select Board and in many other capacities, unselfishly giving their time and talents to better our community. Our condolences, fond memories and warm thanks go to their families.

A Goodbye Toast to The Circle

By Carol Bam

If The Circle were a person, it would be legal to drink, and would have voted 3 years ago. This February marks 21 years since I took over layout of the newsletter. Our volunteer team was to retire after our 101st issue last February. But the Pandemic interrupted the transition to Janelle Fagnant who debuts with this issue. I did one more issue in December and will now step into a consulting role.

The Circle has always been a collaboration. Theresa Kulig who logged more years than I on Circle precursors has been RSVP and mail coordinator, assembled the Calendar and proofread each issue, in addition to writing many articles. Team member Marie Pennington had the idea to ask the Town to match RTS funding to allow for commercial printing of the newsletter. No one was more happy at that than the teachers whose copy machines were commandeered 5 times a year to crank out 1300 12-page issues. We successfully pitched the idea to the Select Board on Monday, September 10, 2001.

There are many to thank. RTS teachers Iris Ferraro and Dutch Redman initiated the newsletter as a learning tool for their students. Principal Tom Poliseno embraced the idea of a community newsletter emanating from RTS. Teacher Carol Montrone taught many the Publisher program and parent Martha Leonard guided our first issues. Sandi Switzer wrote Town News early on. When Theresa, Marie and I began, we had children at RTS. After they graduated and our teacher friends retired, librarian Theresa Czachor helped greatly until she retired in 2018. Pam Mock at RTS has been an ally for every issue; Rutland Printing has printed each issue since 2002.

The school was always supportive of The Circle; in the beginning the town was unconvinced. For the first 5 years when Circle funding was a line item put before voters, the votes were close. At one pre-Town Meeting a resident suspicious of our motives characterized the group as a potential "band of thieves." To our everlasting gratitude, several who knew us and our non-nefarious intentions stood up to defend The Circle as a worthy mission.

Gradually, as Town News, Fire, Highway and Rec updates appeared regularly, the advantage of having a reliable communication medium within the town became clear. Byron Hathaway's Road Notes have appeared in every issue, and Michael Barron's years of Fire Department contributions should be bound for publication. The inclusion of voting information, senior news, direct updates from our own state representatives and input from resources like Rutland Free Library and Southern VT Council on Aging enhanced the content. The Circle found solid footing with Josh Terenzini at the Select Board helm. Now the newsletter is equally and eagerly supported by both mainstays of our community, the school and the town.

Our early publications preceded widespread internet access. We transcribed articles from paper to computer, upgraded to compact discs and then CD's. For years now all material is sent via email resulting in many fewer car trips to retrieve articles. We have had generous advertising support from the beginning. Long term sponsors A & J Auto Parts, Hathaway Farm, Dr. Maurice Cyr, Dr. Don McLaughlin, Rob Stubbins Electrical, Pezzetti Property Management and Dr. Blane Nasveschuk have been stellar supporters of The Circle mission.

In recent years as The Rutland Herald has included much less town news, The Circle still is relevant. Whether you hold it in hand or read it online on the school or town website, The Circle has a bright future continuing to bring together news and information from the many sectors of our larger community. It's been a fun and rewarding challenge. Most of all, thanks to Rutland Town readers who continue to enjoy our work.

My Circle Farewell

By Theresa Kulig

Thank you for being readers of The Circle. I became involved over 25 years ago as a member of the school PTO which supported the "Rutland Town Post" published by students. Paula Townsend, other PTO members and I shared the idea that RTS needed a publication to distribute facts and information pertinent to our school so that we could make informed voting decisions about the school. So, PTO began publishing RTS News, which went only to school families. Paula and I co-chaired the newsletter committee and were pleased with the vehicle, but we wanted more. We began to include town news so at Town Meeting in March everyone had the facts from both the school and town. With guidance from Principal Tom Poliseno, The Circle was born, published by the PTO and mailed town wide. Carol Bam and I became co-chairs of The Circle committee and at this time asked the Select Board to help with the mailing costs. They agreed and after five years as a ballot item the publishing cost was incorporated into the General budget.

I am so thankful for both the school and town seeing the importance of the newsletter and the funding to accomplish this. I have enjoyed bringing you a glimpse of what is going on with all our different town entities, from the school kids and senior citizens, to town departments to our legislature and to all other activities happening in Rutland Town. As I have decided to not continue with The Circle I want to say "Thank You" for a great 25 plus years! So many people have been involved with this mission: all PTO members that were involved with the various newsletter committees as we grew; article writers, formatters, ad solicitors, proofreaders and mailers. Without this help, doing 5 issues each year would not have been possible. Paula also had the wonderful idea to ask RSVP volunteers to help with folding, taping and labeling. This partnership has been long standing and very much needed. As I reflect back on The Circle, I cannot help but feel like a proud parent involved with the "birthing" of a vehicle for providing Rutland Town news to our citizens. Keep reading and stay informed.

Rutland Town School
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RUTLAND TOWN COMMUNITY CALENDAR

MARCH	1	Informational Town Meeting - 7 pm. Please check the Town website for the Zoom link.
	2	Town Meeting Day - Vote Town Hall, 7 am - 7 pm
	8	School Board meets
APRIL	1 & 2	RTS Early release - Parent/Teacher Conferences
	5	Deadline for Circle articles
	9	RTS Early release
	12-16	RTS Spring Break - No School



Town & School websites: rutlandtown.com & rutlandtownschool.org