

The Circle

Rutland Town's Link between School and Community



March 2023

TOWN NEWS

By Don Chioffi,
Select Board Chair

It hardly seems possible that another election year is upon us, but time does march on, and March is, after all, your opportunity to weigh in on who governs you and who will be responsible as the temporary custodians of our community.

On behalf of our board I want to tell you, sincerely, what a privilege it is to be a part of the management of such a vibrant and healthy town, affordable, well-managed, and always looking to improve our services to you, the citizens of Rutland Town.

Budgets have been formulated and approved by the board with one eye toward efficiency and the other concentrating on affordability. You will soon be receiving our annual Town Report and you will be able to scrutinize every dollar that our town spends on your behalf so I will not bore you with those details. I do wish, however, to engage in a bit of what sports people call "inside baseball." That is the behind-the-scenes thinking and planning that goes into the transparency you see in our budget reporting.

Our town has been very fortunate to take advantage of the 1% Option Tax on sales in the town, allowing tens of millions of "outside income" to reduce your property taxes for well over a decade. These Option Tax revenues have been consistently in the 1.1 million range for years then went to 1.2, so when we estimate those funds in budgeting it was always safe to assume that amount or less to be conservative.

Continued on pg. 10

RTS UPDATE

From Principal Sarah Tetzlaff

Dear Rutland Town,

This is my 11th year as Rutland Town School principal, and I am incredibly pleased with our students' progress in both their academic excellence and resilience. Rutland Town School has a standing reputation for being one of the most successful schools in the area. I am proud that our students continue to perform above the state and district average on assessments and standardized tests. As our 8th graders transition to high schools of their choice, echoes of positive feedback on how well-prepared, polite, and well-rounded Rutland Town students are continually heard. We attribute this to the support and dedication of our amazing teachers and staff, families, and the greater community.

Enrollment numbers remain constant year after year. We currently have 356 Pre-K through grade 8 students and 157 students attending high school. Our class sizes average 17 students per class.

Continued on pg. 3

From the Rutland Town Planning Commission By Barbara Noyes-Pulling

The Rutland Town Planning Commission hit the ground running in 2023. Here are a few highlights of the year so far:

Pocket Park

The falls at Center Rutland are picturesque any time of the year - even when it's 25 below zero. Because of this, the falls have been both an attraction and frequently used throughout history. That's why this area seemed a natural location for a pocket park to provide us a place for relaxation, for recreation, and for understanding our history.

Since Green Mountain Power owns much of the parcel being considered for the pocket park, the Planning Commission and Selectboard are working with GMP on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This agreement would allow the town to continue to promote the design of the pocket park and to organize the various volunteers and donations needed for the construction of the pocket park. This MOU is an important next step in making the pocket park a reality.

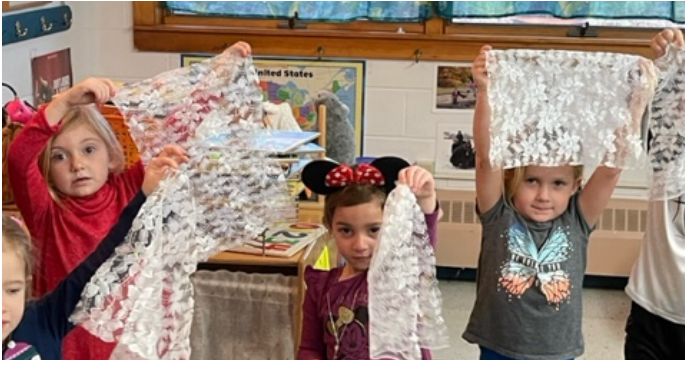
As part of GMP's current application to re-license its hydro facilities at the falls, it will oversee an archaeological assessment of the pocket park site.

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RTS Preschool Snapshots



Hello from Mrs. DuBois, Mrs. Bridgmon and our preschool classroom!

In preschool right now we are learning about monsters. We think they are hairy, have claws, have sharp teeth, they stomp, they are loud, and have big feet.

We have been busy with some pretty exciting activities. In January we visited the Wonderfeet Museum. What great fun! This month they are coming to visit us in our classroom to talk about forces in motion! We can't wait.

We continue to work with Mrs. Lambert from the HAMMS Farm in Pittsford. This month we made spinach smoothies. We blended bananas, honey, spinach, ice and almond milk. We took our time to smell, look at, and carefully observe. It received mixed reviews. We all loved the color green!

We love having Miss Linda visit us each week for music and movement. We have been walking like a penguin, a pigeon and a python. Linda MacFarlane comes to us each week and we sing songs, play games, do a bit of dancing and make beautiful music!

We have enjoyed taking care of the birds this winter. We try to keep feed in the feeders and when it was really cold, we made special pine cone feeders to put out over the weekend. This helped both the squirrels and the birds.

Happy Winter! Please be kind to yourself and to one another!

More photos inside!

From the Town Clerk and Treasurer

By Kari Clark

2023 ELECTIONS

It's Town Meeting time once again which means it's time for all of you fine folks to vote and have your voice heard at the local level. We want everyone in town to have an opportunity to vote. So here is some information for you for this year that will hopefully make your voting experience a good one.

2023 will be a year where we will only have one election, and that will be our Town Meeting.

Town Meeting will begin on Monday, March 6 at 7 p.m. with a brief description of budgets from our Town Select Board members as well as the Rutland Town School Board members. **Following this, a recess will commence until the next morning at 7 a.m. when the polls open for voting.** The same two voting places remain for town voters. If you live on the east side of town, your voting place is at the school on Post Road. If you live on the west side of town, you will vote at Town Hall in Center Rutland.

Polls will close at 7 p.m. Tuesday evening March 7. If you wish to vote by absentee ballot you may do so by calling our office during normal business hours to request that one be sent to your address. Our number is (802) 773-2528. This is not an election where the ballots will be sent to every active voter as we all saw take place in November. Just remember that you may request a ballot for yourself and/or a family member but we cannot issue a ballot to you for someone other than yourself.

If you are a new voter in town and wish to sign up, you may do so in a few ways. You may come by the office to fill out paperwork, you may also fill this same paperwork out on the day of voting. You can register online at <https://mvp.vermont.gov/> or register when you renew your license at the DMV. Just make sure to provide proof of residency in the town if you choose to register online.

We look forward to seeing you all at Town Meeting. The employees of your town work diligently throughout the year to provide you with the most streamlined budget possible to keep your taxes from increasing drastically. Come to support our hard work and have your voice heard!



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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. 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 Rd. Rutland, VT 05701

RTS Update con't. from pg. 1

We continue to have a strong, unified arts program: music, chorus, art, physical education, health, library, and Spanish. We also offer a variety of sports and clubs for our students. We are looking forward to the middle school play in the spring and are excited to introduce a spelling bee team this year!

Again, I am proud to be your principal and I appreciate your continuous support of our amazing school. I welcome others to visit our school and meet with me, anytime. Feel free to call the office and make an appointment (802) 775-0566. I also encourage everyone to check out our website and follow us on Facebook to see what is happening at Rutland Town School!



Never Miss an Issue!

Read The Circle online at

<https://www.rutlandtown.com/the-circle/>

Bird Watch



Students in 7th grade science are reporting on their birds at RTS feeders throughout the winter. They are running low on seed and would love donations! If you are willing and able to donate seed, please drop it off at the front office (& please let us know who donated it!)

NEWS FROM THE REC

By Athletic Director Michael Rowe



Hello All,

Well it looks like spring might be trying to peek its head out the window. That means we will be getting ready for our outdoor activities at our parks. I want to thank all the coaches and game officials who helped make this winter season a huge success. We will be starting baseball sign-up soon so look for our flyer in the weekly email from school and on the town's website under recreation.

We will be offering baseball for kids in grades K-6 this spring and are looking for people who would like to help out with these programs. We will be looking to start our 5/6 baseball the middle of April, our 3/4 baseball the end of April, and the 1/2 baseball along with T-ball (K) the first week of May. If you have any questions or would like to help with our programing please let me know.

Have a great early spring and don't forget to VOTE. You can contact me at 802-779-2518.

From the Town Administrator By Bill Sweet

We continue to receive many questions on building rules in town. The FAQ page on our website should answer most questions, and we are currently reviewing Town Ordinances to help communicate the rules and regulations easier.

All the permit forms are available on our website and can be found at <https://www.rutlandtown.com/rutland-town-permits-forms/>.

A directory for town businesses is still under development. We need information from town businesses to be able to populate it. Please fill out our form if you would like your business included, and feel free to share the link.

The form is available here: <https://www.rutlandtown.com/business-info-request-form/>

There have been inquiries as to what to do if there is damage to a mailbox from road maintenance. We have a policy, which was adopted several years ago, available on the Highway page on our website. Also on the Highway page is a link to a form which can be filled out if you do have damage which meets the criteria in the policy. Using the form is the best way to report your issue to the Road Commissioner. We also use our Town Facebook page to send out notices of meetings, press releases, events, town news and more! Follow us at: <https://www.facebook.com/townofrutland>.

Is there something you would like to see added to our site? Please reach out using the contact page on our website and let us know!

Rutland Free Library

From Director Randal Smathers



New Town Rep at Library

Ken Watson is the new representative for Rutland Town at Rutland Free Library. He replaces Ed Ogorzalek, who is going off the board just shy of his sixth anniversary. Board members typically serve two consecutive three-year terms, according to our bylaws. Ed was a long-time member of the Finance and Building Committees, so put in a lot of unpaid hours on behalf of both the community and the library, and departs with heartfelt thanks from all of us. He's been a terrific resource, and always had well-reasoned, well-explained points to add to a discussion. He will be missed.

Ken and his family are new to the area. He is working on his PhD; his wife is on staff at the hospital and they have children in the local school system, so are already deeply involved in the community at a variety of levels. He formally joined the board at our January meeting, after meeting the Select Board, and attended the pre-Town Meeting meeting. We look forward to working with him.

At that meeting, we presented our budget for the fiscal year beginning on July 1, 2023. The library is asking for \$102,777. That's an increase of five percent, or \$1.25 per person, and continues a long string of library budgets coming in below the rate of inflation.

In our conversation early in the winter, the selectboard were specifically concerned about the effect of an increase on residents on fixed income as a concern. Five percent is 3.7 percent below the Social Security increase of 8.7 percent for 2023, which according to the SSA will be some \$146 per month or \$1,750 annually for an average pensioner. So while we are very much aware of the many town residents we serve who are retired, we do not feel that an increase less than one-tenth of one percent of their expected increase is significant.

And usage is up in the town! Our town cardholders went from just under 1,300 to 1,438 in 2022, an increase of 10-plus percent. We're delighted to welcome so many new members. To sign up for yourself or a family member, please see our website at www.rutlandfree.org, and look for the "Join" tab.



Two kiddos trying out the piano in the Fox Room at a recent Wednesday playgroup at the library.

**WONDERFEET ON
CENTER STREET
CLOSING 2/28**

**OPENING ON
MERCHANT'S ROW
MAY OF 2023!**

Wonderfeet Kids' Museum

By Danielle Moore, Executive Director

This is a very busy season for Wonderfeet Kids' Museum. In addition to welcoming families five days a week, hosting birthday parties every weekend, and connecting families through It Takes a Village playgroup every Monday, Wonderfeet is also planning for our big move. Tuesday, February 28 will be our last day operating on Center Street in Rutland. The museum will be closed in March and April as we move our current exhibits and complete our renovations at the GMP Energy Innovation Center on Merchants Row in order to open in May. But before we say goodbye to Center Street, we've got a lot of fun planned!

We're still booking birthday parties and field trips through the end of February and will still be bringing programs to schools throughout our spring closure. We will be participating in Winterfest activities February 17-25, including Center Street Sledding, the Rutland Free Library Yeti Hunt, and the Loved Ones and Little Ones Family Dance. The Wonderfeet Loved Ones and Little Ones Dance will be a fantastic family night out, hosted at ONE Church Rutland with DJ Brett Myhre, magical decorations, and kid-friendly refreshments on Saturday, February 25 from 5 to 7 p.m. Tickets will be available on the Wonderfeet website. We hope you can join us for the family dance or for a visit to Wonderfeet before we say goodbye to our Center Street location. All active memberships or new memberships purchased in January or February will carry over to the new museum.

Lastly, we invite you to save the date for the return of the Wonderfeet Lip Sync Battle to the Paramount Theatre on Saturday, April 29. Watch as teams of your friends, neighbors, local businesses and non-profits join together for fun and spectacle raising money for Wonderfeet Kids' Museum and our work for the community's families. You won't want to miss it!



~SENIORS CORNER~

RUTLAND TOWN SENIORS

By Secretary Nancy Burgess

Our December gathering took place on Tuesday, December 20 at 11:30 a.m. We were met at the main doors by a member from the student council who escorted us down to the cafeteria. We were all served by students with a delicious meal consisting of turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, gravy, hot veggie, dinner rolls, and a huge chocolate chip cookie. Everyone thought the meal was outstanding. No one should have gone home hungry as our plates were full. Special thanks are extended to Principal Sarah Tetzlaff, the kitchen staff, and the students who made this possible.

Mr. Audet had the Rutland Town School Band again entertain us with music during our luncheon. These students did an outstanding job and our hats off to Mr. Audet and all who participated that day.

We did not have a meeting in January of 2023. Reminder: A notice will go out in late February or early March with information on the March, 2023 meeting.

Stay warm and we will see you in March.

Who Are We?

By Treasurer Martin Wasserman

When someone says Rutland Town Seniors what do you think, "Some old people tottering around"? Boy are you wrong. Some of the seniors are your Town Selectmen, Listers, Firemen, Emergency Management Director and Artisans to mention a few.

Being retired in this day and age does not mean you have one foot in the grave. We are active and doing things! If you have any interest or ideas in promoting or participating in new activities, reach out and let us know. We currently meet for lunch once a month but we could be doing activities such as, but not limited to, card games, board games, vocal group or and even more importantly we could be a very formidable community service group.

If you would like to know more you can contact us for more information:

Marty Wasserman at 802-236-4182, email: martin.wasserman@comcast.net; or Mary Wasserman at 802-236-4206, email: mary.wasserman@uvm.edu.

For more information on senior gatherings, please feel free to contact any of the officers below:

*Randy Roberts, President:
rr1954@comcast.net*

*Mary Ashcroft, Vice President:
mashcroft@rutlandtown.com*

*Marty Wasserman, Treasurer:
martin.wasserman@comcast.net*

*Nancy Burgess, Secretary:
hnborg738@gmail.com*

AUDUBON OUTING

Thank you to the Rutland Audubon Society for taking RTS students on a bird walk through the beautiful RTS trail system, pictured below.



CANDIDATE STATEMENTS



Mary Ashcroft **Select Board, 3 Year Term**

I'm running for re-election to the Rutland Town Select Board, and I would appreciate your votes.

I have very much enjoyed my nine years serving the town in this role - I had also served on our Planning Commission, as Justice of the Peace, and as a volunteer at Rutland Town School.

As selectboard member, I've taken an interest in improving the town's infrastructure to better provide for our future needs. We've extended water lines up Post Road and down Randbury Road to help homeowners and local businesses.

We've built a sidewalk along Cold River Road and are constructing a shared-use path in Northwood Park this winter. We are planning a walkway to connect our school to Northwood, and have completed a scoping study for a sidewalk along Route 7 north to link city sidewalks to Post Road and beyond. With the help of several diligent town employees, we have won grant funds to help move these projects along.

Renovations in our Town Hall were long overdue, with decades-old windows leaking precious heat in the winter, outdated equipment, tatty carpeting, dented furniture and inefficient lighting.

With small increases in the general budget over the past several years, we've renovated the main floor offices at our Town Hall, replaced the windows and the roof, and modernized the lighting, heating and cooling, and computer systems.

There's more to do, including renovating the downstairs meeting space, but we are taking small, affordable steps and looking for more grant funding.

We have earmarked our \$1.3 million share of federal Covid relief funds for a new Public Safety building on McKinley Avenue. Thanks to creative grant writing by our Town Police Department, we've found additional funds for that facility, to be constructed this year.

I've used the word "we" a lot in this article, and it's intentional. None of the projects above were accomplished by a single individual. The Select Board is a collection of five elected officials charged with running this town—together. Civility and collegiality toward town residents, businesses, employees, other officials - and each other - is critical. I hope to be reelected to continue moving our town forward in a responsible and cooperative manner.

Thanks for reading. Call me with any questions: 802-775-5189.

Abby Bennett **School Board, 2 Year Term**

My name is Abby Bennett and I am running for the two-year School Board seat. I have lived in Rutland Town since 2012 when I moved here with my family. I currently have two children attending Rutland Town School and have worked in education for over 15 years. I have experience as a classroom teacher, behavior specialist and currently work in a school leadership position in a nearby district.

As a member of the School Board I would bring my knowledge of public education and my commitment to our students and teachers to ensure that Rutland Town School provides quality education to all students in our community. I look forward to hearing from you and would appreciate your vote!

Kari Clark **Town Clerk and Treasurer**

To the residents of Rutland Town:

It has been my honor to serve as your Town Clerk and Treasurer. This unique position has proven to be rewarding and fulfilling.

During my first term, it was a joy to meet so many of you as you visited Town Hall to conduct municipal business.

I will continue to work collaboratively with your Selectboard members, department heads, and town employees to serve the best interests of our constituency. It takes many hands to run a municipality and I am proud of what we've accomplished together.

I appreciate your support on Election Day!
Thank you for voting.

VOTER INFORMATION

For Town Meeting, March 7, 2023

Informational Town Meeting on Monday, March 6 at 7 p.m. to review budgets and ballot items for March 7.

Polls open at 7 a.m. Tuesday, March 7

If you live on the east side of town, your voting place is at Rutland Town School on Post Road. If you live on the west side of town, you will vote at Town Hall in Center Rutland. **Polls will close at 7 p.m. Tuesday evening March 7.**

If you wish to vote by absentee ballot you may do so by calling Town Hall during normal business hours to request that one be sent to your address. The number is (802) 773-2528.

CANDIDATE STATEMENTS



Marcia Chioffi **Lister, 3 Year Term**

Thank you for this opportunity to speak to our townspeople. My name is Marcia Chioffi and it has been very rewarding to have been involved in many aspects of our town for decades. I have served as both a member and in leadership positions in our school Parent-Teacher Organization, in the Rutland Town Volunteer Fire Department Auxiliary, and as a 7-year member of the Town Planning Commission.

Following my retirement as Corporate Purchasing Manager for the OMYA Corporation, I began a retirement career as a part-time Lister and have served in that capacity for four terms - 12 years - and this year, due to the retirement of my colleague Howard Burgess as full-time Lister, I have assumed that full-time position as head Lister.

Our town is in the midst of a major transition in the Lister office and in this three-year term, which I intend to be my last, my goal will be to assist the town in this transition as all three of our long-time valuable staff will be retired.

Part of this effort will be a major shift in the statewide tax equity system, called CAMA (Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal) and its integration to a new system called VTPIE (Vermont Property Information Exchange) all of which will ultimately lead to much easier access to all who need lister information. The new solution modernizes the collection of municipal and education property tax, and is a real-time, online system used by every municipality in the state.

Our town, like over a hundred in Vermont, must also be prepared to undergo a complete Property Reappraisal within the near future due to a statutory requirement and our Common Level of Appraisal (CLA). This will be a major undertaking in addition to all the regular daily functions of the Lister's office.

I am very grateful for the support the voters have given me for these five terms of office and will continue to be available to answer any questions you may have. I can be contacted at the town office, (802) 773-2528, ext. 3205 or direct at (802) 770-1898. Please get out and vote on Tuesday, March 7.

Thank you,
Marcia Chioffi

Sharon Garafano-Russell **Select Board, 2 Year Term**

My name is Sharon Garafano-Russell and I am running this year again for a two-year term as a selectman. I have served the town as a selectman, on the Rutland Town Recreation Committee for 11 years, and the School Board two terms. I have also served on the board for Governor Douglas.

I ran the Open Door Mission, a shelter for veterans and the disenfranchised, for almost 30 years, whose motto is "a hand up, not a handout." I truly believe in our town and the good people who live and work here. I would appreciate your vote but more important, exercise your right and vote.

Thank you,
Sharon Garafano-Russell

Cristy Lauzon **School Board, 2 Year Term**

Hello, I would like to introduce myself. My name is Cristy Lauzon. I am running for a two-year seat for the Rutland Town School Board. I would like to share with you a bit of who I am and my reasons for wanting to serve our community on the School Board.

I am a mother, a teacher and a Rutland Town resident. My oldest son attends RTS and I have also been a teacher at the school. I have been an elementary school teacher for a total of 11 years and have been working with children in a variety of ways my whole life, not only as a public school teacher, but also through my own business, All Together Yoga.

I am reaching out to you for your support. If you choose to vote for me, I promise to listen, be open to all input, and as a community come up with ways to inspire our children, not only by offering a high-quality education, but also a strong foundation that instills kindness, respect and helps to create happy human beings.

I will embark on the journey with openness, dedication and a kind ear, with the end goal being to provide our children with a strong foundation for their future.

Thank you for considering me for a two-year seat on the Rutland Town School Board.

RUTLAND TOWN FIRE DEPARTMENT

ANNUAL MEETING

By Sharon Garafano-Russell,
Fire Committee Chair



On January 9, the Rutland Town Fire Department held its Annual Meeting. Myself and Mary Ashcroft attended and a great meal was served. Below are the Recognition and Service Awards passed out, and officers elected.

50 Years of Service Award

Joe Denardo

35 Years of Service Award

Paul Williams

30 Years of Service Award

Dan McCarthy

30 Years of Service Award

Mike Gould

5 Years of Service Award

Trevor Brown

5 Years of Service Award

Assistant Chief Larry Dell Veneri

5 Years of Service Award

Brian Sanderson

Officer of the Year

Lieutenant Chris Henderson

Firefighter of the Year

Jax Elliot

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Chief 3 Year

Chris Clark

Assistant Chief Station 1

Larry Dell Veneri

Assistant Chief Station 2

Mike Carlson

Captain Station 1

Jared Rau

Captain Station 2

Matt Voracity

Lieutenant Station 1

Chris Henderson

Lieutenant Station 2

Jorge Mada

Safety Officer Station 1

Dan McCarthy

Safety Officer Station 2

Billy Joe Mills

From the Rutland Town

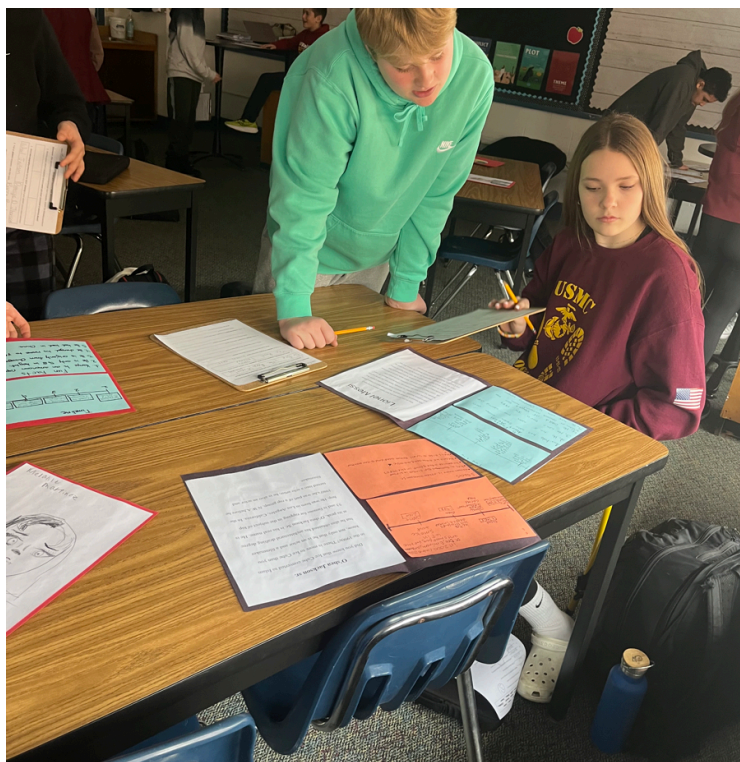
School Board

By Chair Tina Keshava

It's budget time! The proposed 2023-24 school budget is \$9,939,560.10, which is 7.58% higher than last year. Our education spending per student is up 4.26% at \$18,244 per pupil. We will be receiving surplus monies in the education fund to bring the equalized tax rate down 10.32% which helps offset the higher budget. The adjusted tax rate of 1.3965 is only a 2.41% increase over last year (1.3637), which is much better than it could have been. Covid did a number on inflation and the supply chain, as we all have noticed at the grocery store. The school budget, unfortunately, is not immune.

With a common level of appraisal for Rutland Town coming in at 84.4% (which is 12.43% lower than last year and negatively affecting the budget), health insurance up 12.7%, and tuition to Rutland City up 10%, the board has had many difficult conversations during meetings this fall and winter. We feel that the budget we are presenting this upcoming Town Meeting Day is as tight as we could go without reducing quality at the school. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

In other board news, we are looking for community members that would be interested in serving on our second floor expansion committee. Our community has already approved the bond for an elevator that makes this space accessible, but there is much work to do before we can move forward with this project. If you are interested in joining this committee which plans to meet about once every month or so, please email me at tina.keshava@grcsu.org.



Mrs. MacIntyre's 7th grade ELA students read information texts, then wrote biographies on a subject of their choice. They also created a Visual Portfolio Project for a gallery walk activity to end their unit!

Highway Happenings

By Road Commissioner Dave Sears



It is that wonderful time of the year that we refer to as “Budget Season.” I have prepared several budgets in my past life with the City of Rutland. The town budget is similar in process but very different in many aspects.

With the help of the Highway Committee Chairperson Joe Denardo and the entire selectboard, we developed a proposed budget that is down by 12% while still providing the services the town has come to expect.

Some of the reductions come from salaries. Two long-time employees retired from the town in the last 14 months and the salaries for the new employees are lower than the senior employees.

We also had two of the town’s winter maintenance contractors choose to not renew their contracts this year. The Highway Department has absorbed those plow routes internally therefore reducing that budget line by \$40,000.00. We reduced the “Retreatment” (paving) line by \$100,000.00. We are applying for the State of Vermont Class II Paving Grant that will make up that difference with no added expense to the taxpayers of the town.

Please come out to vote on March 7 and support the Highway Department Budget. As mentioned earlier the Highway Department is doing the winter maintenance of three of the six plow sections in the town. The winter maintenance routes were consolidated and rearranged in November after one contractor retired and one contractor opted to not resign the contract.

We will continue to provide safe roads for the traveling public as we cross the midway point of winter.

We are now starting to look ahead to spring and the upcoming construction season. We will begin the Post Road Sidewalk Project from Rutland Town School to Chasanna Drive as soon as the snow and frost are gone.

Thank you. Stay Safe.

7th & 8th Grade Science



Photo courtesy of Katie McDougall

Rob Gydus from Forest Service Law Enforcement came in to share with students the importance of being informed and aware of environmental laws.

By Katie McDougall

RTS Science Teacher



Students in 7th grade science worked on an invasive species unit from the USDA, and are now starting matter and chemistry. The USDA unit focused on foreign and local invasive species using close reading, collaborative research, interactive maps, and self-reflection. In the final project for our Matter unit, students will use the 3D printers to develop models of how individual atoms bond to form molecules.

Pictured below, students in 8th grade science have been learning about genetics. Students solved punnett squares, built models of DNA and protein synthesis, and read kayrotes that inspired our current research project on genetic disorders.





RTS Spelling Bee Team

Rutland Town school has started a Spelling Bee team! The spellers, in grades 1 through 8, have been meeting every other week after school, using words from the Scripps National Spelling Bee lists. They have been working hard to learn new words and have had lots of fun! 15 students participated in our first bee recently. The winner was 4th grader Hailey Zilski, who correctly spelled the word "wrestle" to secure her victory. Congratulations to all students who worked hard and participated in the spelling bee. The club will continue to practice in hopes of challenging another local school to a spelling bee later in the school year. Stay tuned!



Photos submitted by Lorraine Cornell

5th grade Teacher Ms. Kiefaber and Reading Teacher Mrs. Cornell pictured with Spelling Bee Team students.



Town News Con't. from pg. 1

Last year, however, we actually received 1.5 million thus creating a 300-thousand surplus, which we channeled to reserve accounts approved by you voters in 2014.

Though every town should be so fortunate, it still poses the dilemma of just how much to "assume" for this fiscal year. After much debate the board decided to take a more conservative approach and anticipate 1.2 million for this budget year. Our reasoning was that it could have been an anomaly or more likely an increase in online sales during the Covid pandemic.

When we look at the total increase in all town budgets for all departments, the increase to the taxpayers over last year's budgets is \$177,504, which translates to an increase of 5.91%.

We could easily have assumed all of this or more based on the receipt of 1.5 in Option Tax last year, thus creating a level funded or even a decreased budget this year. But we did not. Your board took the more conservative approach with the intention of putting any surplus funds into those reserve accounts that are used for infrastructure improvements, capital, and public safety equipment, all of which would be paid for with sales tax rather than property tax funds. And that is "inside baseball" because you cannot spend money you do not know you are going to get.

The bids for our new Public Safety building are due shortly and we are hoping for a spring start to our construction. Regarding the funding for this project, our Deputy Chief, Ted Washburn, has trained himself well in grant writing and if the last two or three submissions come through he will have successfully funded a half-million of our costs of the project. Optimistically, we could be looking at only a half-million of bonded costs for the entire project.

And on this further happy note, maple sugar season is approaching, as is spring in 49 days as of this writing. We encourage you all to get out and vote on Tuesday, March 7. We wish you all the very best.

Photo submitted by Katie McDougall

Below, middle school RTS students work on their Triarama projects to compare and contrast different types of reproduction.





*Photo by
Barbara Noyes-Pulling*
A recent photo of
Pocket Park Falls -
taken on the coldest
day of the year!

Planning Commission con't. from pg. 1

That study may tell us even more about past use of the area. It is expected to be conducted later this year. Meanwhile, the Planning Commission is reaching out to the Native American tribes that are known to have used the area. What we have heard so far is, because of the importance of the falls, they would like access to the park for occasional tribal gatherings and events.

Energy Survey

The results of the survey are being reviewed by the Town's Energy Committee - made up of Mary Ashcroft from the Selectboard, and Planning Commission members Sherman Hunter, Norm Cohen and myself. We are using the survey to assemble baseline data on what steps residents have already taken to reduce energy use and costs as well as inform us what our next steps should be - what workshops or events you would like to see, what additional information or resources you need, and what the town should do to do its part in conserving energy and cutting energy costs.

River Corridors

The Planning Commission has begun looking at possibly designating river corridors along the town's rivers, creeks and some streams in order to slow down floodwaters during storms and, ultimately, reduce damages. River corridors typically extend beyond floodways and special flood hazard areas. This is to ensure there is enough room to allow for erosion, channel changes, and meandering to occur.

Enacting river corridors would allow the town to receive more state money when federal disasters are declared. This could make a substantial difference in reducing the amount of money the town would have to spend to replace and repair roads, bridges, and culverts that get damaged or even destroyed in major storms.

In the coming months, the Planning Commission will be reaching out to residents with maps and other information. We are also hoping that when it is warmer, that we will lead some field trips to get a first-hand perspective for what a river corridor looks like on the ground.

The Planning Commission is also updating the town's Subdivision Ordinance; the first rewrite of that in more than 40 years. A huge thank you to Dana Peterson, Norm Cohen, and Bill Sweet for the time they have spent on that project.

Look for an update on all the topics above in the next Circle.

RTS MUSIC UPDATE



From Aaron Audet

The Jazz Bistro is back! We haven't had a jazz bistro since 2019. The Bistro will feature our M Jazz, T Jazz and Alumni Jazz Bands on **Friday, March 31 from 6 to 8 p.m.** There will be food, and we will be selling tickets through the RTS main office at the beginning of March. The jazz bands have been working really hard this year. We are excited to bring the Bistro back.

DARE at RTS



Photo courtesy of Sheri Bathalon
Officer Antje Schermerhorn, SRO, pictured far left, standing, poses with RTS students.

By RTS Teacher Sheri Bathalon

Officer Antje Schermerhorn, SRO, was certified as a DARE officer in 2021 and started teaching DARE to Rutland Town School's Kindergarten classes in 2022.

In 2022 – 2023 School Year, Officer Schermerhorn started teaching DARE to Kindergarten, 1st grade and 5th grade. RTS had their first 5th grade DARE graduation in January 2023. We were able to buy all the supplies necessary to teach the class, and for certificates and T-shirts for the graduation for each child thanks to OMYA, McDonald's and the Mason Lodge #34 and their generous donations to our DARE program.

Officer Schermerhorn is the only active DARE officer in Rutland County at this time.

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Rutland Town School ... Where Futures Begin!

RUTLAND TOWN COMMUNITY CALENDAR

FEB	20-24	RTS February Break
	28	Select Board meets - 6 p.m.
MARCH	6	Informational Town Meeting - 7 p.m.
	7	Town Meeting Day - Polls open 7 a.m.
	9	Planning Commission meets - 6:30 p.m.
	14	Select Board meets - 6 p.m.
	17	RTS Faculty Inservice - No School
	23	RTS Supermarket Bingo - 5:30 p.m.
	28	Select Board meets - 6 p.m.
	30	Planning Commission meets - 6:30 p.m.
APRIL	31	FOM Jazz Bistro - 6 p.m.
	1	Circle article submissions deadline
	6&7	RTS Early Release - 11:30 a.m.
	10	School Board meets - 6 p.m.



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