

The Circle

Rutland Town's Link between School and Community



December 2023

TOWN NEWS

By Mary Ashcroft
Select Board Chair

The Select Board's major fall chore is preparing budgets for voter consideration at pre-Town Meeting in January, and Town Meeting Day in March. We craft budgets for fire, police, recreation, and highway departments, and for general government which includes the planning commission, listers, transfer station, town clerk and treasurer's office, constables, health officer, select board, emergency management and the town office building in Center Rutland.

Budgeting is always a bit of a guessing game. We must project the town's income and expenses for the fiscal year beginning on July 1, 2024—7 months away—and for an entire year ending 19 months from now. Luckily, we have experienced and thoughtful department heads who are watching trends carefully.

The Select Board brings its collective experience to this process. The five of us have run businesses, non-profits, and service organizations. We are all taxpayers in town. We watch the trends, too.

Wages paid to town employees drive much of our budgeting. We want to pay decent wages that are competitive with area employers so we keep the good people we have. We also don't want to over-tax taxpayers, particularly those on fixed incomes who will see only a 3.2% CoLA in their social security checks in 2024.

Your Select Board researched pay increases being offered by area businesses and agencies, and agreed to propose a 4% pay increase for Rutland Town employees. We hope voters will agree that this is a fair amount.

Continued on pg. 3

RTS UPDATE

From Principal Sarah Tetzlaff

I want to thank all of the community members for the continued support of our amazing school! We have had a great start to the school year! Middle and elementary students have enjoyed spending time with their big and little buddies. Our 7th and 8th grade Student Council had fun completing four fall activities- Jack-o-lantern TA contest, dance, themes for Red Ribbon Week, and Stuff A Bus. Rutland Town School students donated over 1,500 non-perishable food items to Stuff A Bus! We are looking forward to our winter concerts, welcoming the Rutland Town Seniors for a luncheon later this month, and a fun year of learning.

As the new year approaches, we will continue to work on our school budget with Superintendent Sell and the Rutland Town School Board. As always, our priority is to continue to maintain our high quality of education while being fiscally responsible.

Continued on pg. 2

News from the Rutland Town Planning Commission

By Barbara Noyes Pulling

Post Road Solar

A solar array that is slightly larger in size than the one off Rt. 7 near the airport in North Clarendon has been proposed for Rutland Town. This 2.2-megawatt project would be located on farmland off Rt. 7 near Post Road and across from Discount Appliances. For the most part the site is tucked away from view, but initial plans have one side of solar panels extending close to the highway.

The town planning commission is monitoring the developer's plans and working with him on possible additional screening (trees) and a wider setback from the highway. A site visit with the developer, select board and planning commission was done on November 16. It looks like it will be several more months before the developer is ready to submit a final application to the Public Utility Commission.

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A PEEK INSIDE...

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FROM THE TOWN CLERK AND TREASURER

By Kari Clark

MOVING INTO 2024!

Happy Holidays from the Clerk and Treasurer's office! Here's to a great New Year. Moving into 2024, I'd like to remind you of a few things ahead.

Wednesday, January 10 is the next installment due date for our town taxes. You may choose to pay online, in person, or by mail. Please do so by the close of business on the 10th (4:30 p.m). Automatic payments for taxes will be forthcoming. We will have this feature ready to go for the May 10 payment. Call our office with inquiries about this new process.

Animal licensure opens January 2 and lasts until April 1. If you own a dog in Rutland Town, then you need to have it registered with us by April 1 according to state law. We will accept registrations after that date, but an additional fee will be included.

There will be three elections in the 2024 calendar year. In March, we will have the Annual Town Meeting and the Presidential Primary. In August, we have the State Primary and in November, the General Election. November's election will be the election in which we vote for president, state seats and Justices of the Peace. Information on these elections will be posted as we learn more from our Secretary of State.

Feel free to contact the office with any questions you may have. We are available by phone and email.

Have a great New Year and I look forward to seeing you in 2024!



Photo credit: RTS

RTS Preschool kids hanging out and having fun.

5th Grade Field Trip



Photo credit: Marisa Neary

RTS 5th graders visited the Ndinna Education Center in New York recently.
More on page 9.

RTS Update Con't. from pg. 1

We are always looking for substitutes and volunteers. If you are interested in being a substitute, please contact Ellen Coyle, ellen.coyle@grcsu.org, (802) 775-4342 ext. 2126, and if you are interested in volunteering, please contact Kristine McGuinness, kristine.mcguinness@grcsu.org, (802) 775-4342, ext. 2101. We are also looking to hire a special education teacher, paraeducator, and two long-term substitutes for grade 1 and grade 2. Please give the school a call if you are interested in these positions.

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!

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 Faignant. 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

RTS Buddy Class

From RTS Teacher Amanda MacIntyre

Pictured below and bottom right, photos from the RTS 7th grade big and little buddy program. This year the middle school team implemented big and little buddy classes that meet once a week with Mrs. Chapdelaine's 4th grade class. Recently 7th graders lead their buddies in a Thanksgiving Day turkey headband craft! *More on page 6.*



Thank you, Bill Bauer!

Our friendly and dependable transfer station attendant Bill Bauer is retiring from that position this month. We will miss his cheery greeting and willing hand with trash and recyclables. Bill has our gratitude for the many years of service he has given our town. Best wishes to Bill and Donna in their well-deserved retirement.

Town News Continued from pg. 1

Other town expenses are increasing as well. Fuel, maintenance, supplies, insurances - all will likely cost more. This coming fiscal year we will be adding the cost of borrowing \$2.5 million for the new McKinley Avenue Public Safety Building.

On the plus side, our town's grand list is strong —our listers have been hard at work capturing increases in personal and real property values. Revenues from our 1% local option tax are steady. And we are tapping state and federal grants to fund several projects around town, reducing what we would otherwise need to raise in taxes.

Town budget building is a process you can watch in person or via zoom at SB committee meetings and regular select board meetings. Check out the town website for schedules and agendas, and instructions to participate remotely. <https://www.rutlandtown.com/>

NEWS FROM THE REC

By Director Michael Rowe

Hello All,

I would like to thank all of our coaches who helped make the fall sports season a huge success. Our soccer and flag football teams did a great job in their league play. Thank you to all the coaches - Katie Brady, Jill Ceretta, Brian Kamuda, Sawyer Hathaway, Tim Hammond, Sue Cooley, Tyler Weideman, Katie Weideman and Lindsey Harris. Our middle school soccer teams did a great job with Corey Pollock running the K-2 soccer program, fun was had by all.

The Halloween Party "Trick or Treat on the Trail" was a huge success! Over 400 people came to the event with the 7th graders creating and running the games on a spooky trail. Also thanks to the town police and fire departments for helping out.

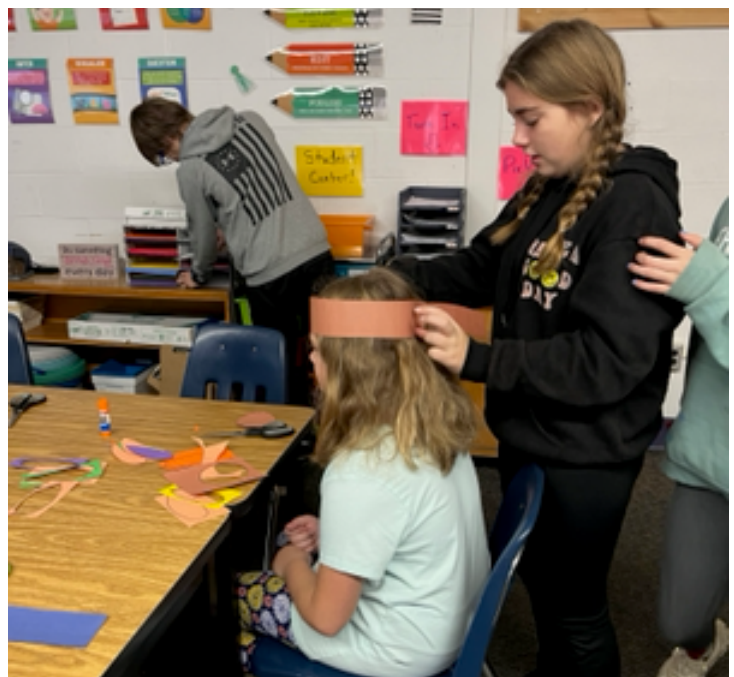
We will be getting the ice rink ready soon here at school, so if you like to skate, pray for cold weather.

Just a reminder to enjoy all the parks over the winter, please make sure to clean up after yourself and your furry friends.

The winter season sign-ups ended on November 10 and their season started for basketball after the Thanksgiving break.

More info on the upcoming season can be found on the website under Rec. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at 779-2518.

The Rec would like to wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season!



Rutland Free Library

From Director Randal Smathers

Financial help from Rutland Free Library

Following the summer flooding around the state, there was a great deal of concern that those scrambling to rebuild, file insurance, and / or sell property might be victimized by unscrupulous types seeking to take advantage. There's also been a bit of a scramble trying to find Medigap plans; my cell phone has been blowing up with spam calls about it and I'm not eligible for two more years.

In an effort to help people navigate the confusion around financial services, RFL has added a new online service. Weiss Financials offers independent ratings for insurance companies (including Medigap plans), banks, credit unions, stocks, mutual funds, and exchange traded funds.

One handy feature is that you can limit any search to only include companies or services available in Vermont.

Weiss also offers free financial literacy tools, with variations for teens, for how to make a budget, buy a car, rent an apartment, manage debt, and more.

The service is made possible via a grant by Finra, a nonprofit investor education foundation. It is provided at no charge to anyone with a library card, or from a computer on the library network.

Programming milestone

In 2023, we offered more programs to more people than in any time in the past decade! By Halloween, we had offered 635 programs, one more than the 634 we offered in 2019, and by the time you see this we will be nearing the mark of 12,700 for the most attendees in any one year.

That includes our regular programs for kids weekday mornings, after-school and Saturday programs, and adult programs ranging from regularly scheduled yoga, swing dance, and book club to special events including Ray Vega performing live jazz and Bird Diva Bridget Butler. We are also bringing kids programs to the community. Our stuffed animal program about pigs was so popular that we had to offer it for three nights at Hathaway Farm instead of the one planned. Even so, we couldn't accommodate every family that wanted to join us! Watch our calendar page at <https://rutlandfree.org> for events, dates, and times, so that you won't be left out of our most popular events. They fill up fast!



Photo credit: RFL
The library's stuffed animal program about pigs was so popular that they had to offer it for three nights instead of the one planned!

Planning Commission Con't. from pg. 1

River Corridors

The Planning Commission is looking into the possibility of adding river corridors to the town's special flood hazard areas. River corridors allow rivers to have room to move and meander over time so that their flows are slower and cause less erosion and flood damage. Our initial work indicates that there may be 38 properties in these river corridors which may be subject to some restrictions on adding structures near the river. They are a mix of government, commercial, industrial, and residential properties. We are still working on finalizing that list. There are some financial benefits to the town adopting river corridor protections. We would be eligible for more state funding to pay for damages after natural disasters, which would translate into less money required from town taxpayers.

Pocket Park

Dare I say that Green Mountain Power is in the final stages of re-licensing its hydro plant at Center Rutland Falls. GMP is working through some environmental and archaeological assessments currently with the federal government and these are typically among the last steps before re-licensing. GMP owns most of the land that the planning commission has proposed using as a pocket park. Once it has been re-licensed, the town can hopefully resume its discussions with the utility to obtain legal access to the site. Is the long wait over?

RTS Preschool Classroom

Happy Winter from Mrs. DuBois, Mrs. Bridgmon, Mrs. Walker and our preschool classroom!

We are having so much FUN in preschool. We are so busy! We have been cooking with Hillary Lambert and the Healthy Foods Program. We love to cook! We really love to eat what we cook!

We have been learning about log hotels and who might live there. We are so lucky to have the 4-Winds program in our classroom.

A big thank you to Ms. Caouette and Mrs. Grote for providing this each month in our classroom.

Here are some things the children want to learn about this year:

1. **Dancing, ballet & gymnastics**
2. **Robots & transformers**
3. **Shapes & ABC's**
4. **Dinosaurs & woodsy animals**
5. **Fairies & unicorns**
6. **Door knobs**
7. **Whistling & singing**

We are going to be so busy this year! Happy Winter! Please Remember to have FUN, be safe and be kind to one another!



RTS Music

From Aaron Audet

The Rutland Town Marching Band did a great job in the Halloween Parade. Our theme was Duran Duran's

"Hungry Like the Wolf." The band had 60 students from 5th-8th grade. Thanks to everybody who helped out.



Winter concerts coming up soon:

Dec 6

K-4 concert, 6 p.m.

Dec 13

5-8 Bands, Chorus, T Jazz, M Jazz 6 p.m.

AN UPDATE FROM YOUR DELINQUENT TAX COLLECTOR

By Don Chioffi

Just a note to thank the many taxpayers who have corrected their failures to get tax payments in on time and therefore were on the delinquency list. I appreciate that there are many reasons - not excuses - why these situations occur, and have spoken to many of you and resolved these problems. In fact, there are many who have entered into agreements with me to make timely payments on a regular basis to catch up with past owed taxes.

As of this Circle Edition, the delinquent taxes that I have collected since taking office in March total \$338,698.87 and the interest collected totals \$26,756.88 for a grand total benefit to our town of \$365,455.85.

It is very critical that anyone who finds themselves in a delinquency situation contact me immediately to make arrangements to clear these matters up. As I have a responsibility to all taxpayers who have met their obligations, and as the end of year Town Report deadline is rapidly approaching, I intend to publish the list of delinquent taxpayers. When this list is published, any taxpayer that has made arrangements to clear the delinquency will be so noted in the report.

I have noticed that there is a clear indication of the fragile nature of our economy in this past year represented by the numbers of delinquencies in relation to past years. I have tried to react to this with compassion. Our taxpayers are really decent people and are doing their level best to meet their obligations. This is not an easy position but I am trying my best to meet my fiduciary obligation to the town. Thank you all and please contact me to arrange payment if you are in arrears.

From the Rutland Town School Board

By Chair Tina Keshava

Greetings neighbors!

The board has some exciting news—we have decided to ask voters to approve a bond to finish our second floor! Over the past year, we have diligently researched the need for this new space and feel that although expensive, the time is now. The school is literally bursting at the seams. There is a long wait for Pre-K and no space for new programs. Some staff are using closets as offices, and there is not enough space for storage. Ed Clark and Schylar Corsones-Brown from NBF architects provided us some beautiful drawings and estimates for this project. In addition to finishing the second floor, we will tackle a long awaited project of asbestos abatement in the flooring of our original buildings. We feel that the cost savings of doing it all at once justify adding it to the bond. Not only will our school be safer and easier to maintain, but these improvements will increase opportunities for our students.

In addition to the bond, the board is actively working on bringing back Lifetime Sports to the students of Rutland Town. Students will have a chance to experience skiing, cross-country skiing, ice skating, curling and other personal fitness options that they can enjoy throughout their lifetime over five afternoons this winter. We are hoping this program allows students to try something new, explore some recreation options available in our area, and gain some self-confidence.

Our last major focus currently is the budget for the 2024-2025 school year. Health care costs are up an incredible 16.4% across the state for teachers and staff. That, combined with an increase in utilities, tuition, and other expenses, have us looking at a minimum increase of about 5-6%. We will continue looking at ways to trim the budget while providing a robust education to our students over the next couple months. We will present the budget at Pre-Town Meeting in January.

Our next meeting will be held at 6 p.m. in the RTS Library on December 12. Check out our agenda for the meeting link to join virtually.

RTS Buddy Class

From Teacher Amanda MacIntyre



Photo credit: Amanda MacIntyre

Above and below: More photos from RTS 7th grade big and little buddy program with Mrs. Chapdelaine's 4th grade class. The 7th graders lead their buddies in a Thanksgiving Day turkey headband craft!



THANKSGIVING at RTS

Highway Happenings

By Road Commissioner Dave Sears

As the leaves fall to the ground, and the air begins to have the bite of winter, we are set to begin another snow season.

We are buttoning up our construction projects for the 2023 year. The plows and sanders have been installed and the crew is geared up and ready for whatever lies ahead.

We spent considerable time on Quarterline Road earlier this fall cleaning and re-establishing the drainage ditch to help ease the roadside erosion that was happening from the heavy rains of the past summer.

We used the spoil fill to close off the pull off on Boardman Hill Road that was used for nothing good.

We have also spent quite a bit of time trimming overhanging trees on several of the town's roads. This should help with falling limbs during the winter and aid our snow removal efforts.

This time of year also ushers in the long held tradition of Budget Time. I have been working with the Select Board to put together a budget that is reasonable and affords the town with the services you have come to expect.

This will be the last issue of The Circle before the holiday season. The Highway Department would like to wish everyone a happy and safe holiday season that will bring us into 2024.

Be Safe!!

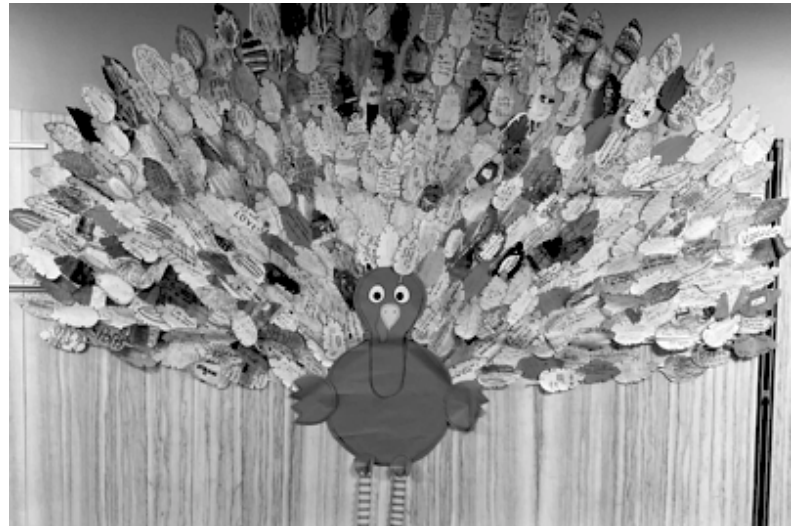


Photo credit: RTS

Above, a hand-made turkey hangs in the halls at RTS.
Below, a few student snapshots.





Photo credit: RTS

Students in 7th Grade Science measured the biodiversity of plant and animal life on the trail system behind the school. Next they will analyze their data to determine which plot had the highest biodiversity.



Up Close:

Students in 8th grade science used their Flex Time to prepare for their elementary class collaboration on Waves. The middle schoolers will be teaching and exploring sound and light waves with 1st and 4th grade. *More on page 11.*



Rutland Town Seniors

From Secretary Nancy Burgess

Mark your calendars, our next meeting will be held at Rutland Town School in the cafeteria on Friday, December 15.

We ask that you reply by Sunday, December 10 so we may give them a count of how many will be attending. Please arrive at the front (main) entrance, where we will be met and escorted to the cafeteria by a member of the student council. Please be seated in the cafeteria by 11:15 a.m. where we will enjoy a delicious dinner, served by our gracious students. I guarantee no one should go home hungry. There is no charge for this luncheon.

As usual we will be entertained by our fabulous Rutland Town Band under the direction of Mr. Audet.

We would like to thank Principal Sarah Tetzlaff, the kitchen staff, and students to make this holiday meal possible.

At our November meeting, Randy opened with the pledge and prayer. Once more it was stated that he would not be president next year and asked that someone please step up. Kay Ritchie volunteered to take over the responsibilities of secretary. We had a guest speaker, Lynda Tucker from the Rutland Sheriff's Department, who enlightened us on security measures to be aware of. This was very informative as seniors, especially as high-risk candidates for scammers and thieves. We hope you will tell everyone you know what we've learned.

5th Grade Field Trip

RTS 5TH GRADERS RECENTLY VISITED THE NDAKINNA EDUCATION CENTER IN GREENFIELD CENTER, NY. NEC'S DIRECTOR JAMES BRUCHAC TAUGHT THEM ABOUT ABENAKI STORYTELLING, MUSIC, AND THE IMPORTANCE OF NATURAL RESOURCES, PICTURED BELOW.



Spelling Bee Competition

Congratulations to Izzie Classen, who won our first RTS Spelling Bee competition this year!

The final two school competitions take place December 5 and January 23.

Students are always welcome to join the Spelling Bee Club! If your child is interested, please email:

Lorraine Cornell
lorraine.cornell@grcsu.org

or

Marisa Neary
marisa.neary@grcsu.org



From the

RUTLAND TOWN POLICE DEPARTMENT

Submitted by Chief Edward E. Dumas II

*Rutland Town Police Department Report
Authored by Deputy Police Chief Ted Washburn*

The last eleven months have been busy for the Town Police Department. At the time of writing this letter, the Town Police have responded to 1,767 complaints. The majority of complaints are stemming from the south end of town, which is continuing to tie up our officers from being elsewhere. We are asked by town residents and businesses why the hotel is continuing to operate as a homeless shelter when the program ended. The program was supposed to have ended, however the legislators in Montpelier overrode the governor's veto of the budget, and by forcing the budget they wanted, it continued the program until March, 2024. We will continue to do our best in addressing the needs of the town, while continuing to deal with the south end issues.

Officer Antje Schermerhorn and Officer Jimmy Plakas have both completed their one year probationary period with the Town Police Department. In a time when finding police officers is a nationwide problem, we are very appreciative of them and their continued work.

Officer Plakas and his partner, K9 Rooster, are now a certified narcotics detection team, and have had multiple successful deployments resulting in the removal of illegal narcotics, guns, and money from the streets. Officer Plakas and Rooster will be attending K9 Patrol School in the coming months. The Patrol School certification will allow Officer Plakas and Rooster to scent-track persons (missing or criminal), conduct building searches, and engage in K9 apprehensions.

A reminder to residents and guests of the Town of Rutland: Do not leave your vehicle unlocked, whether it be in your driveway or out in public, and do not under any circumstances, leave firearms in your vehicles.

The Police Department would like to thank all the town voters for approving the funding (both times) for the new Public Safety Facility being built on McKinley Avenue. The local support from the town residents and selectboard for the Police Department is greatly appreciated.

...More from RTS Science Class...

Submitted by Teacher Katie McDougall

Science Collaborations

The 1st grade classes joined 8th grade science to jump start their learning about light waves and types of medium - transparent, translucent and opaque objects. First graders tried out the 8th graders' laser mazes, then played some vocabulary matching games, pictured below.



Below: 4th grade classes joined Mrs. McDougall's 8th grade science class for a sound wave collaboration using Chrome Music Lab. Both classes enjoyed sharing their music with one another!



Rutland Town School
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Rutland Town School ... Where Futures Begin!

Rutland Town Community Calendar

DEC	6	School Board meeting - 6 p.m.
	7	Planning Commission meeting - 6:30 p.m.
	11	Select Board Budget meeting - 5 p.m.
	13	RTS Band, Chorus & Jazz Concert - 6 p.m.
	19	Select Board meeting - 6 p.m.
	21	RTS Early release - 11:45 a.m.
	22	RTS Winter Holiday Break through Jan. 2
	28	Planning Commission meeting - 6:30 p.m.
JAN	2	Select Board meeting - 6 p.m.
	9	School Board meeting - 6 p.m.
	10	2nd Tax Installment Due
	12	RTS Early Dismissal - 11:45 a.m.
	16	Select Board meeting - 6 p.m.
	18	Planning Commission meeting - 6:30 p.m.
	26	RTS Talent Show - 6 p.m.



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

Happy Holidays!