

The Circle

Rutland Town's Link between School and Community



December 2024

TOWN NEWS

By Mary Ashcroft
Select Board Chair

The new Public Safety building should be move-in ready by mid-December, 2024. I'm one of many who have driven by the new facility on McKinley Avenue, monitoring progress and cheering every new finishing touch. Still to go are a second coat of paving (in the spring), a flag pole to be donated by Select Board member Kurt Hathaway, a vent for a washer/dryer system to clean firefighters' gear, hook-up of radio, phone and computer equipment, final touches around the grounds, and move-in of furniture, files, and gear.

This is the largest public works project undertaken by our town. In May of 2023, voters approved this \$5.5 million facility to be funded with ARPA grant funds, capital improvements reserve funds, excess revenues from our 1% local option tax, an emergency management grant, and a bond of just over \$2.5 million. We recycled and reused what we could—equipment, furniture and furnishings, and the land itself.

It is money well spent. Our police department had long outgrown its single room office at Town Hall. Our fire department's old McKinley station was cramped, crumbling and unable to accommodate larger fire engines.

Continued on pg. 9

RTS UPDATE

From Principal Sarah Tetzlaff

I want to thank all of the community members for their continued support of our amazing school. We have had a great start to the school year! Last week, Rutland Town School students donated over 2,000 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.

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From the Rutland Town Planning Commission

By Barbara Noyes Pulling

In the last issue of The Circle, I mentioned new state law that is designed to make it easier to construct housing to address Vermont's shortage of homes and rental units. The result was an updated Act 250, "An Act Relating to Community Resilience and Biodiversity Protection Through Land Use" (Act 181). Since its passage, the Select Board and the Planning Commission have been reviewing the Act's provisions. Under Act 181 it will be possible for Rutland Town to be exempt from all Act 250 permitting for the construction of new subdivisions and developments or for many changes to existing projects. That's the act's biggest carrot. But to be able to take advantage of that big enticing carrot, the town would need to meet a list of requirements. One is to have zoning; another is to have a state-designated village center.

The Planning Commission checked with state officials into the potential of adding a designated village center.

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Please check out our last school board meeting on November 6, held at the Town Hall, where we shared our student's academic achievements and other accomplishments.

We are always looking for substitutes and volunteers. If you are interested in being a substitute, please contact Cindy Ondria, GRCSU Substitute Coordinator, at cindy.ondria@grcsu.org or (802) 775-0566 ext. 2126. We are also looking to hire a paraeducator and an administrative assistant. 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!

RTS SNAPSHOTS



Photos courtesy of Sheri Bathalon

Above right, students in the 2024 Halloween Parade. Below, two photos from Fire Prevention Week. Below left, 8th grader AJ Keshava at a cross country meet.



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 Writing Beliefs

Submitted by Susan Quesnel

Writers at RTS in kindergarten to 4th grade have recently adopted new writing beliefs to grow a community of confident writers. The five beliefs have started great conversations where writing is a valued skill that is an essential part of everyday life.

The first belief, *Writers Read and Write Every Day Everywhere with a Purpose*, sets the stage for even our youngest writers to recognize that writing and reading are everywhere! Luke W.

in 1st grade shares, "I realize read and many one day!" in 4th



grade didn't that we write so things in Addison S. grade says

"There is writing all around us!" This belief encourages all students to see how important reading and writing are to our everyday lives.

The belief that *Everyone is a Writer, Writing Matters* empowers students to see themselves as writers. It adds value to thoughts and ideas expressed by students. Domenica, a 3rd grader, enthusiastically declares "I am a writer!"

Writers Collaborate to Grow Their Writing is our third belief. Writers share ideas with peers for inspiration and feedback. Katie S. from 3rd grade said it beautifully, "Writers talk to grow their writing." Her classmate, Finn G. knows "You can get really good ideas from your readers."

The next writing belief, *Writing is a Process* encourages writers to plan, write, and revise. Emmerson S. in fourth grade, knows that "Writing has so many parts and you can change your thoughts." Wesley M. says "It's okay to make mistakes because writing is a process."

The final belief, *Writing is a Roller Coaster*, sparked great conversations. Writing can be an emotional experience with highs and lows. 3rd grader Spencer W. said it perfectly, "You can be nervous, scared, and excited about writing all at the same time!" Cameron H. in 4th grade adds, "Writing can be really crazy!"

We can't wait to see where our new writing beliefs take us as a writing community. We are positive the writing beliefs will help create confident, creative, and skilled writers at Rutland Town School.

From The Listers Office

By Marcia Chioffi

The Holiday season is upon us. Here in the Lister's office the beginning of the end of assessing starts for April 1, 2024. The final Grand List must be sent to the state no later than December 31, 2024. After this date no other changes can be made to the 2024 Grand List.

Homesteads filed after November may not be accepted by the state. If you have filed a "late late homestead," and you are receiving a state payment, the payment will be sent directly to you and not to the town to adjust your tax bill. To avoid any delays, please remember to file your HS 122 when filing your taxes for 2024.

We have done a few home site inspections. Inspection letters are sent out based on the informational building permit indicating the start and finish date of the project. Taxpayers are calling to set up appointments after receiving the inspection letter and we thank those that have already done so. We started these inspections earlier this fall in anticipation of not having to perform several during the winter months leading up to the April 1, 2025 deadline. If you have received a letter requesting an appointment and have not responded, please do so as soon as possible. Please remember that an Informational Building Permit must be filed with the town. The Informational Building Permit Online Fill and Print Form can be found on the town's website at www.townofrutland.com under the heading: Permits & Forms.

As we receive the property transfers, Buyer and Seller Letters are being sent out to all "arms length" transactions, as required by the state. If you have received one, please fill it out and return it to our office in a self-addressed envelope.

Questions can be directed to our office at 802-773-2528.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas!

Listers: Marcia Chioffi, Marie Faignant, and Cathy Kapitanski

A MESSAGE ABOUT DELINQUENT TAXES

From Don Chioffi
Delinquent Tax Collector

Third and final delinquent notices are about to be sent out and I am making this urgent message to any of you who are still delinquent as of this date. Budget hearings are being scheduled and current delinquency lists must be prepared for publication in the town report.

As of this date there are around 75 delinquent accounts in the Town of Rutland, which is actually outstanding for a town our size, but still distressing for any of those 75. At these numbers it appears that I am working myself out of a job which would be a great thing for our town since that was my goal in taking this job in the first place.

Please - do everything in your power to remove yourself from the delinquency list. Any account that makes an agreement with me, either written or verbal for a payment schedule, even if still delinquent, will be noted as making an agreement in the Town Report.

As always, it is a pleasure and a privilege to serve the Town of Rutland, and we are all fortunate to live and work in such a financially viable and well run town. As Thanksgiving approaches we have much to be thankful for.

RTS Music
From Aaron Audet



The band did great this year in the Halloween Parade. We received the runner-up award for "Best Costumed Marching Band." We marched 65 students from grades 5 through 8. We all dressed up as zombies and performed the Michael Jackson song "Thriller." Thanks to all the parents for help and support!

Concerts coming up:

Dec 11 K-4 Concert in the gym 6 p.m.

Dec 17 Rutland Town Senior Citizens lunch in the cafeteria. 11:30 a.m. -12:30 p.m. The T Jazz band will be performing.

Dec 18 Winter Concert Grades 5-8 band, chorus, M Jazz, and T Jazz. 6 p.m.

A Thank You from RTS Students to the Community

Below are some photos from a recent fundraiser by RTS students—read their letter on page 9.



From the Rutland Town School Board

By Chair Tina Keshava

'Tis the season to discuss budgets! The first draft of the budget for FY2026 was discussed at our November meeting in Center Rutland. Senators Terry Williams and Brian Collamore and one of our newly-elected representatives, Christopher Howland, were among those in attendance. They were treated to a presentation on budget cost drivers, which showed that the top two contributors to our budget, tuition and personnel costs, make up 77% of it. Central administration, utilities, transportation, and debt account for the rest. Inflation and the challenges of funding special education were also discussed. If you would like to learn more, check out <https://grcsu.org/budget-information/>. All of our meetings are recorded and posted online as well. New this year is a town-wide email list that the board will use to give updates on the budget and other relevant topics. If you are interested in getting these updates, please subscribe using the QR code here or on the RTS website.



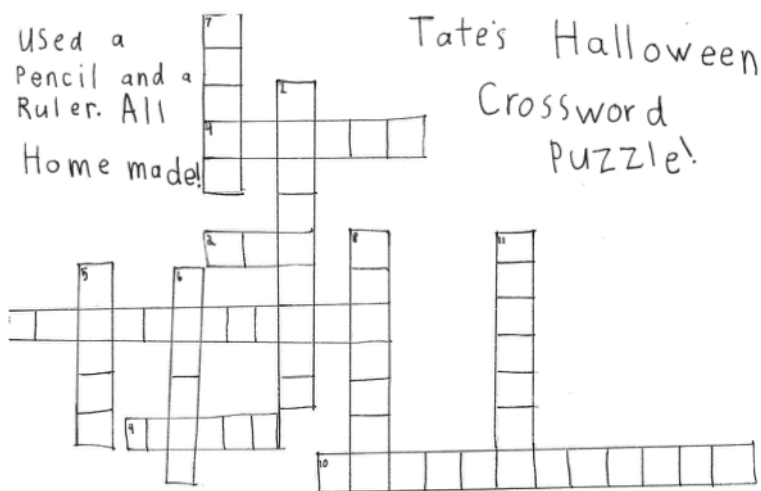
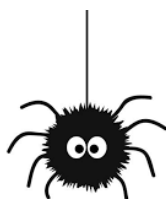
Our next meeting will be held December 10th in the RTS Library and online at 6pm. Our January meeting, where we will likely approve the final budget, will be held January 14th at the same time & place. Virtual links to meetings can be found on Front Porch Forum and on our agendas, which are posted in the main school office and on the school's webpage rts.grcsu.org (following the Board Information link under the Community heading). We welcome feedback from the community.

Lastly, there will be two seats up for election on Town Meeting Day. Petitions for interested candidates are due near the end of January and can be picked up from Kari Clark at the Town Office.

If you are interested in learning more about becoming a school board member and what is involved in the position, feel free to reach out to Tina Keshava at tina.keshava@grcsu.org. The RTS Board wishes you a joyous holiday season and a great start to 2025!

CROSSWORD PUZZLE!

Tate Shelton used the writing process to create this festive crossword! He brainstormed ideas, created a first draft, edited his work, made a final draft for his classmates, and is now a published crossword author. Please enjoy Tate's crossword!



- 1. Used a Pencil and a Ruler. All Home made!
- 2. October 31st
- 3. Word to Scare
- 4. Phrase for getting candy
- 5. Manner of being frightend
- 6. Magic Person (girl)
- 7. Undead person
- 8. White floating figure
- 9. Month of halloween
- 10. Eight legged bug
- 11. Monster made by a scientist
- 12. Clothes made to look like something

From the Town Clerk

By Kari Clark

Warmest wishes from the Town Clerk and Treasurer's office. I'd first like to extend many thanks to all of you, the voters, as well as to the staff that made our November General Election run smoothly. Many hours and preparation went into the execution of the voting process. Roughly 78% of our Rutland Town voters participated in this past vote. This turnout was tremendous compared to the elections we ran this calendar year. This office endured 5 elections in 2024. Thank you all for being patient with us as we navigated through each vote. If you became a new voter to Rutland Town in 2024, then I invite you to participate in our next election in March.

In my opinion, March Town Meeting is even more important to you as a voter than the Presidential Election. Your local vote weighs heavily in an election where only a small percentage of voters participate. Besides that fact, your local vote directly impacts your own wallet. If you want to have a say in your property tax amount, then voting in March Town Meeting is crucial. Town Department budgets and our Rutland Town School budget directly correlate to your tax bill that you receive in August every year. If you think that a ballot item is too high or too low, vote appropriately. Voice your opinion. You are not required to vote YES to everything on a ballot. Town Meeting will be Monday March 3, 2025 at 7 p.m. with the election following the next day on Tuesday March 4. Plan accordingly.

Also in 2025, tax installment #2 and #3 will be due on January 10 and May 10 respectively. If you'd like to sign up for automatic payments, then please come to the office to fill out the necessary paperwork. Several people have signed up for this free service already and have enjoyed the opportunity to forget about due dates for property taxes. Let us do the work for you.

We at the office hope that you have a relaxing Thanksgiving and a nice beginning to your holiday season. Hope to see many of you in 2025!

RTS SNAPSHOTS



Photos submitted by Sheri Bathalon

Above: Ms. Quesnel reading to the 4th grade class. Below: 8th graders at the RTS dance. Bottom: Mrs. Walker and a couple Pre-K students on a field trip to Hathaway Farms.



RTS GREEN TEAM

From Assistant
Principal Mike Lamarre

Members of the RTS Green Team had an eventful evening! On Thursday, October 24, they presented at the Celebration of Public Education where they met VT Interim Secretary of Education Zoie Saunders, who also took the time to hear their presentation and ask questions! They also presented to various superintendents, board members, community members, students, and other educational leaders from all over Vermont. They were supported by and enjoyed dinner with RTS Board Chair and parent Tina Keshava and RTS Board Member and grandparent Jeff Colomb.

The RTS Green Team is a student-led environmental activism group that is on their third year of amazing work. The members that represented RTS and GRCSU were Lily Brown, Emma Coleman, Violet Poli, Sara Minichiello, Luci Breitigan, and Lillian Brownfield, with chaperones Mrs. Moriarity and Mr. Lamarre. They did an outstanding job representing RTS and GRCSU.

Great work, Green Team! Little voices, big solutions!



Some recent photos from RTS. Top: RTS students in the 2024 Halloween Parade. Middle: Mrs. Manovill and her boys at the RTS Haunted Trail. Bottom: Some of the RTS 8th Grade girls that put together the RTS Haunted Trail.



Public Safety Building Nearing Completion

From Clerk of The Works JP Faignant



Photos by JP Faignant

Photos of the new Public Safety Building taken a few weeks ago.

Rutland Town's new Public Safety Building is almost finished, with an anticipated occupancy date before the end of the year.

The facility will provide a much-improved, safer environment for both the Fire and Police Departments. Fire Chief Clark and Police Chief Dumas speak for all the town's first responders in expressing their sincere appreciation for the support the taxpayers have shown over the years for the department's efforts to keep our town safe.



From the RUTLAND FREE LIBRARY

By Director Randal Smathers



Holidays at the library

Rutland Free Library has a wide variety of events for all ages scheduled in December and in particular over school vacation season. From decorate-it-yourself gift wrap through various holiday-themed story times, and concluding with our traditional Noon Year's Eve on the last Saturday of the year, there's something for everybody. See the calendar at www.rutlandfree.org/calendar for dates, times, and other details. And all RFL programming is free and open to all. Be sure to check out the book sales (Friday and Saturday, Dec. 13 & 14, 10-2 both days) and open crafts times for affordable gifting!

Online growth

The library continues to improve its online offerings! We have taken advantage of statewide initiatives to add Biblio+ video streaming (in addition to our Kanopy service). Both offer thousands of high-quality feature films, documentaries, and television series at no charge to our members. As the national providers continue to jack up prices, all you need to access this content is a free library card.

That also gets you the Freegal music streaming / downloading service, and the Palace Project and Libby apps for downloadable e-book and audiobook content. And we've just added several thousand online magazine titles for a wide range of interests. The collection includes former print titles that are now online-only, such as Field & Stream, as well as titles for very specialized audiences, from yachting publications to composting or sheep raising, and one-off editions about celebrities and events that are typically found in the supermarket checkout line.

Teen options expand

Our teen services librarian is expanding and refreshing our collection of young adult titles. She's also adding a couple of new formats, Playaways, which are prepacked, digital audiobooks designed for maximum portability, and WonderBooks, which combine large print text and audiobook formats to help readers comprehension improving. Please let us know what titles you want to see!

Holiday hours

Reminder that the library is closed Dec. 24 & 25 and Jan. 1 for staff holidays.

COMMUNITY GRATITUDE

Dear Rutland Town Community Members,
We would like to thank the community for supporting our 8th Grade class. Your endorsements and generous donations have made a big impact as we work toward meeting our fundraising goal for our class trip to Washington D.C. At the Mountain Top Fundraiser, the 8th Graders enjoyed meeting and serving the community members who attended the event to help contribute to our trip. We also appreciate those who bought baked goods at the Election Day and Town Meeting Day Bake Sales. Your continued involvement in our efforts to fundraise for our class trip have not gone unnoticed. We are extremely fortunate to have our Rutland Town Community help us in achieving our goals and we look forward to seeing you at future events. And thank you to Mr. Audet for volunteering to perform for the event at Mountain Top!

*From Kristin Sweet, Sophie Hammond
and the 8th Grade Class of 2025*



Town News continued from pg. 1

We hope to invite townspeople to an open house at the new facility once all work is completed. Watch for an announcement of that celebration.

Much of the Select Board's focus these days is on crafting department budgets for fiscal year 2025-26, to be voted on at Town Meeting in March, 2025, and to take effect beginning July 1, 2025. It seems like we just started one fiscal year, and are now planning another.

We propose to increase pay for town employees by 3% in the coming fiscal year, slightly more than the COLA increase of 2.5%. Our health insurance cost for eligible employees has jumped by 18%, the state retirement program VMERS is up by 9-11%, and the town is now state-mandated to cover a payroll tax for child-care funding.

Select Board committees are meeting with department heads to comb through the numbers, needs and wants for highway, fire, police, recreation, and transfer station services. The full board will review all proposed department budgets and the general budget at a special session on December 10. The proposed budget package will be presented to townspeople at Pre-Town Meeting in the latter part of January, then finalized for vote at Town Meeting in March.

Each of these sessions is open to the public, with notices posted in advance on the town's website and in town hall. Join us if you can, or review the minutes of these meetings, also posted on the town's webpage at www.rutlandtown.com

Town revenues remain strong. Our grand list has increased and our 1% local option tax on rooms & meals and sales & use is running ahead of our projections.

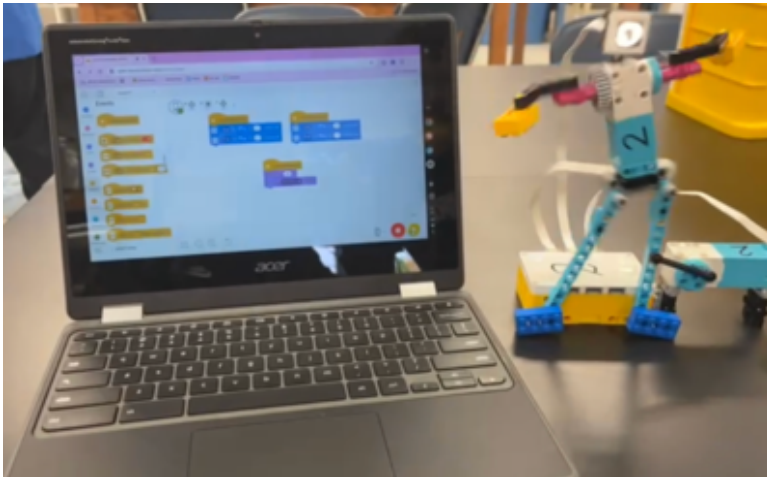
We are being cautious with town funds, paying our current bills while trying to anticipate needs in coming years. Our pool at Northwood Park will be replaced within the next 5 years; town roads will need repaving and culvert work; police cruisers, town highway trucks and fire equipment are on replacement schedules. Town departments are updating 5 years plans to anticipate future costs.

From your Select Board to all of our town employees and volunteers, businesspeople and townsfolk: we wish you happy and safe holidays, and all the best in the coming New Year.

7TH & 8TH GRADE SCIENCE
FROM MRS. MCDUGALL



In this column: Science 8 - Thanks to a grant from Rutland South Rotary, students in 8th grade science flex were able to build and program Lego Spike Prime robots. In small groups, students selected units focused around business, invention and fitness. Throughout their units, they recorded their successful products, as well as identified areas of improvement or struggle.



In this column: Science 7- The Rutland Audubon Society joined the 7th grade class for the third year in a row to help students on native bird populations. Members shared stories and helped students identify birds by sight or sound throughout the hike surrounding RTS. Students were able to ask questions and gain insights prior to selecting their own investigation question in science class. We are very grateful for the time and energy the Rutland Audubon members spent with our classroom.



It was determined that there were not any areas of town that were suitable. The odd shape of our town (a donut circling the City of Rutland) severely limits us from finding an area that would serve as a central historical and commercial area. After informing the Select Board that the town was unlikely to be able to find a location for a village center, the board agreed. It also decided to not pursue zoning (also for the sake of the big carrot). Both the Select Board and the Planning Commission will continue to review the act to see if there are other ways that will help the town with streamlining future housing and other development.

On another note, the town attorney is working with Green Mountain Power to finalize the transfer of land adjacent to Center Rutland Falls. This is the spot where the town would like to create a pocket park with recreational amenities and kiosks depicting the area's rich historical past. While that is going on, the Planning Commission is looking for grant money to fund initial construction of the park and it will be reaching out to town residents and groups, so you can help create a pocket park at this scenic location. It is happening, folks!

ANNOUNCEMENTS



*The Rutland Town School
Holiday Concerts are coming up.
Wednesday, December 11 is the*

*K through 4th Grade concert at 6 p.m. in
the RTS gym. Wednesday, December 18
is the 5th through 8th Grade band chorus
concert at 6 p.m. in the RTS gym.*



A Senior Luncheon will be held
on Tuesday, December 17 in the
RTS Cafe with the band playing

during lunch at 11:30 a.m. Plan on arriving
around 11:15 and the Peer Leader group
will bring you to the cafe. If you have any
questions please let Mike Rowe know at
802-779-2518 or michael.rowe@grcsu.org.

News from the Rec

By Director Michael Rowe



Hello All,

Welcome to fall and early winter! We have had a busy fall season with our soccer/flag football programs playing around the county for grades 3/4 and 5/6.

Our K-2 program was a huge hit as well with over 45 kiddos taking part alongside the middle school teams. I would like to thank our coaches who gave huge amounts of time to make this program possible - Tyler Weideman, Katie Weideman, Lindsey Harris, Katie Brady, Jill Cerreta, Collin Fingon, Karen Kelson, Corey Pollock, Tim Hammond and Zach Hamilton.

This year our Halloween Party "Trick or Treat on the Trail" was a huge success. The 8th grade did a tremendous job creating and running the events as over 450 people went through the trail. A huge thank you to our Fire Dept. and Police Dept. for having trucks and candy as well for the kiddos!

It is close to winter and that means basketball. You may sign up anytime online at www.rutlandtown.com under recreation (it is a two-part sign up). Practice will start after Thanksgiving for grades 3-6. Our K-2 program will be a camp-style during February vacation more info to follow.

A huge thank you to the Highway department for their help with the grass field makeover at Dewey field! The last bit of what is happening is the upcoming Senior Luncheon on December 17 at the School Cafe.

As always if you have any questions please just contact me at 802-779-2518 or michael.rowe@grcsu.org.

Have a great holiday season!

Rutland Town School
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Rutland, VT 05701

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Rutland Town School ... Where Futures Begin!

Rutland Town Community Calendar

DEC	10	School Board meeting - 6 p.m.
	17	Select Board meeting - 6 p.m.
	20	RTS Early Dismissal
	23	RTS Holiday Break starts
	25	Merry Christmas & Happy Hanukkah
	26	Planning Commission meeting - 6:30 p.m.
JAN	31	Select Board meeting - 6 p.m.
	10	Second Tax Installment Due
	10	RTS Early Dismissal
	14	Select Board meeting - 6 p.m.
	14	School Board meeting - 6 p.m.
	16	Planning Commission meeting - 6:30 p.m.
	20	No School - MLK Day
28	Select Board meeting - 6 p.m.	

**HAPPY
HOLIDAYS**

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

