

The Circle



Rutland Town's Link Between School and Community

February 2025



RTS UPDATE

From Principal Sarah Tetzlaff

Dear Rutland Town,

This is my thirteenth year as Rutland Town School principal, and I am proud of the progress our students continue to make year after year. Our students are well prepared for high school and beyond, both academically and socially. We attribute their success to the support and dedication of our incredible teachers and staff, families, and the greater community.

Enrollment numbers remain consistent year after year. We currently have 353 pre-K through grade 8 students and 174 students attending various high schools. Our class sizes average 17 students per class and we welcomed 45 new kindergarten students to our school this year!

Continued on pg. 2

TOWN NEWS

By Mary Ashcroft
Select Board Chair



March 4

In my last Circle article, I wrote that the new Public Safety building should be move-in ready by mid-December, 2024. I was wrong. The latest, best estimate for move-in ready is mid-February. We still are waiting for a sprinkler system pump to be delivered and installed on the roof. Until this fire protection system is completed and functioning, we can't get approval from our insurance carrier to move our fire trucks (or our police and fire departments) into their new station. In the meantime, the fire trucks are temporarily housed in the Town Highway garage at Northwood, which means that the highway trucks must be left outside. A recent cold snap caused freeze-up of some trucks, resulting in delays in plowing roads in town.

And so goes our town as we look forward to Town Meeting.

Your Select Board has completed work on proposed department budgets for fiscal year 2025-26, to be voted on March 4. If approved by voters, these budgets will take effect July 1, 2025.

Continued on pg. 9

From the Rutland Town Planning Commission

By Barbara Noyes Pulling

The Center Rutland Falls Pocket Park is on! In late December 2024 the two-acre parcel was deeded to the town by Green Mountain Power. That means it's now town property and that we can resume our planning for a third park in the Town of Rutland.

Currently, the Planning Commission is looking for a grant to fund Phase I of the park. The initial construction would feature an overlook near the falls and a picnic area. There would also be a general information kiosk, extra parking, and a walking trail. Plans include getting rid of the invasive plants at the park site and replacing them with native trees and shrubs. We also want to make sure the park is as safe as possible including high water warnings and routine police patrols.

The Commission is also working with local historians to have three historical signs made for the park and to move the Daughters of the American Revolution watering trough to the park. The trough is now hidden from view in the vegetation in the right-of-way along Business Rt. 4.

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We continue to have a strong unified arts program: music, chorus, art, physical education, technical education, health, library, and Spanish. We also offer a variety of sports and clubs for our students. We have an active student council, big buddies and little buddies, Green Team, rock climbing, Rainbow Club, and a Spelling Bee Club.

We are in our second year of lifetime sports. We appreciate the support of our school board, community, and parents in helping to make this happen- it is all hands on deck!

For 6 half-days this winter, K-8th grade students will have the opportunity to participate in skiing/snowboarding at Pico, rock climbing at Green Mountain Rock Climbing Center, skating at Giorgetti, bowling at Bowlerama, gymnastics at Head Over Heels, and tennis at Vermont Sport and Fitness. Last year, we had 50+ students skiing/snowboarding and ice skating for the first time! These opportunities will truly last a lifetime!

We are in our second year of implementing UFLI which is our K-2 literacy program and are seeing great results. Our elementary teachers, special education teachers, interventionists, and middle school English Language Arts teachers have participated in Keys to Literacy training this summer and fall to further our students' writing ability.

Our students participated in the Stuff-A-Bus food drive this November and donated over 2,000 items that will help feed our local food banks. A whole school ice cream celebration will happen in January for surpassing our goal of 1,500 items! We just recently welcomed the Rutland Town Seniors for a luncheon in our cafeteria where they were entertained by our talented Jazz Band and our middle school Chorus sang at the last Rutland Rotary Luncheon. Our middle school students also shopped for multiple RTS families so our children would have gifts for the holiday season.

We are in our second year of offering our summer and after school program Boys and Girls Club of Rutland County to Rutland Town School. The Rutland Town School Boys and Girls Club offers after school programming to 31 students every day.

Again, I am proud to be your principal and I appreciate your continuous support of our school. Our students have a reputation for being hard working, polite, and respectful and our teachers and staff are second to none. 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 recently hosted a senior luncheon.



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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 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



Hello All,

Winter is in full swing and our local rec basketball teams have started their season. If you wish to check out a game please visit www.rutlandtown.com, under recreation there is a list of game dates. Get out and support our local youth.

Just because it is winter does not mean Northwood Park is closed. Please feel free to snowshoe, cross country ski or even play a round of winter disc golf.

Please remember to keep your dog on a leash and clean up after them. We have doggie waste bags and trash bins to place it in.

We are on a senior group break until March when we will start up with our activities. If you would like to join our group please contact me at 802-779-2518 and we will add you to the list.

It is not too late to sign up for our K-2 basketball camp which will be February 17-20 from 9 to 10:30 a.m. at the RTS gym.

If you have any questions or programming ideas please contact me at 802-779-2518. Enjoy the winter weather!



Recess fun!

From The Listers Office

By Marcia Chioffi

March elections are quickly coming upon us. Cathy Kapitanski was appointed to fill a vacancy in the Lister's Office and has decided to run for the 3 year term. Cathy has contributed greatly and has been an asset to this office.

We would like to thank all of those that responded to our Buyer/Seller verification letters. These responses are extremely important as we complete our sales verifications for the equalization study conducted by the state.

REMINDER: HS-122 Homestead Declarations need to be filed annually. April 15 is the due date for filing this form with your State of Vermont tax filings. An extension for filing income tax returns does not relieve a property taxpayer of the obligation to file a timely Homestead Declaration by April 15. Should you miss this date, you will be penalized by the state, and you may not be eligible to receive the State Income Sensitivity payment.

US Department of Veterans Affairs eligibility is based on receipt of disability compensation rated 50% or higher. Summary of Benefits letters are mailed out in January of each year. To request your letter call (866) 687-8387 ext.5335 or go online www.va.gov/records/download-va-letters. Applicants must submit this form and documentation each year by May 1, except for individuals meeting the One-Time-Filing criteria.

"Informational Building Permits" are required for construction of dwellings, garages, outbuildings, etc. There is no fee associated with the permit. They are also required when adding or removing decks, pools, etc. The permit form can be found on the Town of Rutland's website: www.rutlandtown.com.

Effective as of April 2024, the Town of Rutland has adopted a **"Short Term Rental Ordinance"** which can be found on the town's website under the ordinance tab. This ordinance is adopted pursuant to 24 V.S.A. §1971 and §2291(29). This Ordinance is designated a civil ordinance under 24 V.S.A. §1971(b).

It is always an honor and a privilege to serve the Town of Rutland and its citizens and we have enjoyed the contacts made in this office throughout the year.

Marcia Chioffi, Marie Faignant, Cathy Kapitanski

RTS Welcomes New School SRO



Mark Perkins joins Rutland Town School as the new School Resource Officer after being hired by the Rutland Town Police Department January 2 , 2025. Mark is from the Rutland area, having attended MSJ, Castleton and Hudson Valley Community College in Troy, NY, completing the Paramedic Program.

Mark began his career in public service working for Regional Ambulance Service in 1989. In 1991, Mark was hired by the Rutland City Police Department as a part-time police officer. In the fall of 1994, Mark was hired full time by the Rutland City Police Department and attended the Vermont Criminal Justice Training Council in Pittsford, being certified as a full time Law Enforcement Officer in Vermont.

In January 2004, Mark left the Rutland City Police Department after being hired by the Vermont State Police. Over Mark's career with VSP, he has held various assignments in the agency, initially assigned to the Rutland Barracks and Castleton Outpost. Mark later transferred to the VSP Traffic Operations Unit and was assigned to the VSP Commercial Motor Vehicle Unit. In 2012, Mark was promoted to Sergeant at the Rutland Barracks and later transferred back to the VSP Traffic Operations Unit. Mark has held further positions as a Sergeant in the Westminster Barracks, the VSP Office of Professional Development and Shaftsbury Barracks.

On December 1, 2024, he retired from VSP as a Sergeant at the Rutland Barracks. Mark has been a Field Training Officer, member of the Crowd Control Team, Tactical Services Unit and Members Assistance Team. In addition to his career, Mark enjoys spending time with family, especially his four children, Emily, Kate, Grace and Daniel. Mark also enjoys exercise, playing guitar, hiking, cycling, reading and road trips.

RTS Music From Aaron Audet



Upcoming Events

Friday, February 28 at 6 p.m.

Rutland Town School Talent Show at RTS Gym

Tuesday, March 18 at 7 p.m.

Rutland Town School T Jazz Band and Rutland High School Jazz Band concert at RHS

Friday, March 28 at 6 p.m.

Rutland Town School Jazz Bistro - T Jazz, M Jazz and RTS Alumni Jazz at RTS



Above: Middle School Chorus Winter Concert.
Below: Middle School Band Winter Concert. Bottom: Middle School Chorus at the Festival of Trees at the Killington Grand.



From the Rutland Town School Board

By Chair Tina Keshava

Frosty greetings, fellow Rutland Town residents. I have good news to report this year in that our taxes will be going **DOWN** over 11% for FY26. Yes, you read that right! The adjustments made at the end of the last legislative session, combined with mostly level funding in the budget and less of a drop in our CLA than in recent years, has enabled us to present a budget with an 11.61% decrease. With the numbers being more in our favor this year, and because we had a larger surplus than usual from last year due to unexpectedly high interest income, ESSER funding, and unfilled positions, the board has decided to authorize some capital maintenance improvements as one-time line items in next year's budget. We have earmarked \$160,000 to improve the HVAC system and \$290,000 to complete the asbestos abatement for the entire building. Finishing the latter all at once, rather than piecemeal over several years, will allow us to save extra money as well, because testing and setting up for this project will only have to be done once, rather than multiple times. Even with those plans, per pupil spending only increased 1.27% from last year for a total of \$13,587 per student. We are excited that we can improve our school and tackle some items on our to-do list without raising

taxes or going out to bond. We hope you are, too! We also hope we can count on your support this March. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me (until 3/4/25) at tina.keshava@grcsu.org or any other board member at firstname.lastname@grcsu.org. Our next meeting is February 11 at 6:30 p.m. in the RTS library. There is always a link to join online at the top of every agenda if you prefer to join virtually.

****New this year**** The School Board has an email list to keep you updated on School Board happenings. If you would like to join, sign up on the Rutland Town School website at rts.grcsu.org.

Lastly, this will be my last update as chair of the School Board, for now at least. My term is up in March, and I have decided not to continue at this time. I have enjoyed my last four-plus years on the board, but it is time for me to tackle some other projects, both personally and professionally. It has been an honor serving you in this capacity, and I am sure it is not the last you have heard from me!

Thank you for allowing me to serve in this position for as long as I have.

7th & 8th Grade SCIENCE



Science 8 - Students in 8th grade science are learning about heredity. After winter break, they made models of DNA to represent the backbone and base pairing. Continued on pg. 6.



From the RUTLAND TOWN POLICE DEPARTMENT



By Deputy Police Chief Ted Washburn

I want to first thank all thank you for your continued support of the Town Police Department. It is extremely humbling and I know each officer in the department will continue to work hard to ensure your support is not misplaced.

Rutland Town Police responded to 2,052 calls for service in 2024. Of these 2,052 calls, approximately 64% stemmed from the South End of Rutland Town. Though the Cortina was closed by the State of Vermont for health violations, we continued to respond to theft and trespassing complaints from the south end businesses, along with quality of life issues such as parking complaints of campers, abandoned vehicles and the pan handling in the Green Mountain Plaza.

Senior Officer Schermerhorn resigned as our School Resource Officer at the end of the 2024 school year. Senior Officer Schermerhorn accepted a position with the United States Department of Transportation and we wish her the best in her new career.

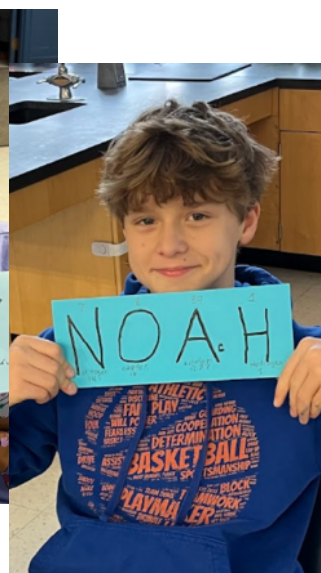
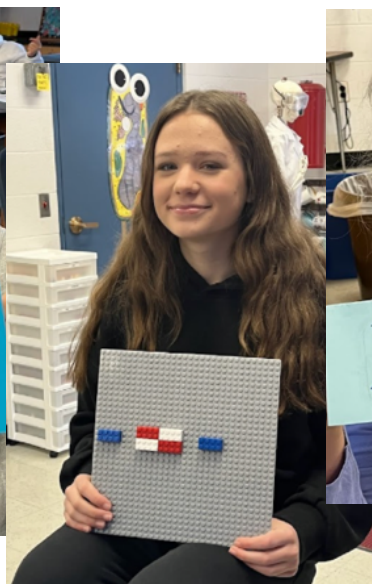
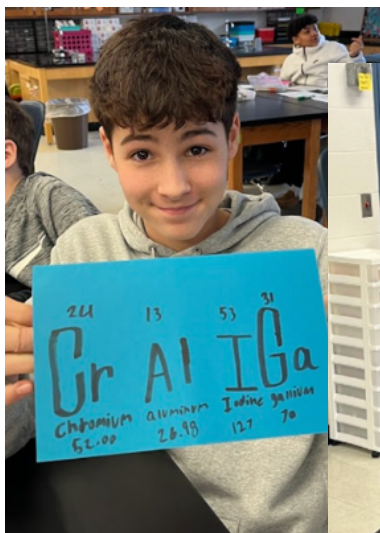
With her resignation, we began a hiring process for a new School Resource Officer. We are happy to announce we've hired Mark Perkins as our new School Resource Officer. Officer Perkins recently retired from the Vermont State Police after 21 years of service. Prior to his time with the Vermont State Police, Officer Perkins worked for the Rutland City Police Department. Officer Perkins has begun working in the school so please say hello the next time you are there.

Thanks to the voters approving the hiring of a new patrol officer, we've hired Jared Dumas as our new full-time patrol officer. Officer Dumas previously worked for the Rutland City Police Department for eight years and is looking forward to a career with the Town Police Department.

Senior Officer Plakas, and his partner, K9 Officer Rooster, continue their work on patrol. They attended and graduated from the K9 Patrol School that was 4 months long and concluded in October of 2024, and are now certified in tracking, criminal apprehension, building searches, and search and rescue, and continue to be certified in narcotics detection. In 2024, they had 26 deployments resulting in the seizure of illegal narcotics, firearms and currency used in drug trafficking.

Our Administrative Secretary, Lynette Gallipo enters her 27th year of work in the law enforcement field and her 9th year working for the Rutland Town Police. She continues to keep the department up to date with all FBI and National Crime Information Center requirements. She also does the monthly stats for the agency, which helps us plan accordingly on shifts and where presence is needed. Chief Dumas is entering his 40th year in law enforcement, and his 13th year as Chief of the Town Police Department. Please remember to lock your vehicle regardless if you're home or out and about and do not leave valuable items or firearms in your vehicle at any time.

7th & 8th Grade SCIENCE



Science 7 - Students in 7th grade science are learning about the periodic table. After exploring the periodic table, they used element names to make their own names, and modeled atomic composition using legos.

~ CANDIDATE STATEMENTS ~

Joseph Denardo

To the Residents of Rutland Town: It is my intention to run for re-election to the Town Select Board.

Firstly, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Rutland Town community for your continued support. I have enjoyed my three terms on the Town Selectboard, and hope to continue for another term. Being able to make a difference in the community that I was raised in, that I raised my daughters in, and now my grandchildren are a growing up in, means a great deal to myself and my family. I am currently working on several projects that I look forward to continuing with your support. As Chair of both the Building Committee and the Highway Committee, I am committed to the renovation of Town Hall to update the facility, as well as previous expansions to the Highway Department. In addition to these projects, I hope to make changes to Randbury Road to provide better access to Route 7 and the surrounding businesses. When you go to vote on March 4 please consider Joseph Denardo for continued dedication to excellence in improvement in Rutland Town.

Thank you.

VOTER INFORMATION

Polls will be open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 4 at Rutland Town School, 1612 Post Road, and at Town Hall, 181 Business Route 4 in Center Rutland. For absentee ballots and other questions please call Town Office at (802) 773-2528.

Sharon Garafano Russell

Hello Rutland Townspeople. My name is Sharon Garafano Russell and I am a candidate for re-election to a 2 year term on the Select Board. Between my School Board and Select Board service, I have been privileged to serve our town and its kids for some 12 years and though challenging at times, it has been an absolute pleasure to see the progress my fellow board members and I have been able to make working as a team.

I have served on the police committee and as a negotiator for additional funding from the Cortina Inn previously, and presently am a member of the Fire Committee and the Recreation Committee. Our negotiations with Cortina have resulted in over \$200,000 of additional funding for our police dept. and provides much needed extra patrols to interdict burglaries and drug trafficking in our southern sector. I took a keen interest in this work because of my long experience with homeless and veterans overseeing operations, building, and budgeting at the Rutland City Rescue Mission.

As a longtime Recreation Commission member and Chair, I have overseen and been a proud contributor to the expansion of many programs and the very sound and excellent management of our facilities, which is why my service on the Recreation Committee of our board has given me such great pleasure. I look forward to continuing to serve you as one of your board members, and I humbly and sincerely ask for your support and your vote to continue to do so. Thank you very much and Happy New Year.

FROM the DELINQUENT TAX COLLECTOR

By Don Chioffi

First of all, I wish to sincerely thank all taxpayers in Rutland Town, both residential and commercial, for timely payment of your taxes. Essentially you are all responsible for everything good that happens in this town as without your financial support nothing would be possible. As I intend, at this point, to view this coming year as my last one as your tax collector I wanted to inform anyone interested in this position of a few policies that are significantly different than the norm for elected officials in this town. Though I have disagreed with these policies, both as they apply to me and also as they applied to my predecessors, my respectful requests that the board change them to treat all elected officials

have fallen on deaf ears thus far.

The board has taken the position that in my position I am "an independent contractor." That would put me outside the boundaries of statute and long standing policies and procedures that apply to all elected officials in these positions throughout the state. I am not an independent contractor, I am a duly elected town official, just like any other elected town official. Delinquent Tax Collectors are paid on a commission basis by state statute. Our board has, by its own opinion and not supported by any statutory definition, interpreted this to mean that ALL expenses associated with this position must be borne by the elected official and not the town. In

this regard and unlike any other elected official in this town, I have been required to pay for postage, stationary, business cards, office equipment and supplies, computer access to state programs, town computer access and mail programs, and even access time and personnel support from our town administrator.

Since I have requested remote access so that I can work from home at any and all hours of the day and night and weekends when people are actually home, that has required a home office, desk, computer etc., and those costs in addition to those mentioned above are well into the thousands of dollars.

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Highway Happenings

By Road Commissioner
Dave Sears



Happy New Year to everyone! We are firmly ensconced in winter at this point. We got a pass in November, and now the payments for that are due!

The Highway Department has been quite busy since our last submission to The Circle. We finished up most of our summer projects and got ready for winter.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our winter contractors for their hard work and dedication to the town during the winter plow season. It is not always easy or convenient to be called away from our families and friends because mother nature decides to snow. The Hubbard crew are always ready to go no matter what or when. Thank You from the Highway Department and the town.

By the time this gets distributed, Pre-Town meeting will have happened. The Highway Department budget is up this year. Most of the increases are in items that are out of our control, i.e. health insurance.

We hope you can find our budget satisfactory and thank you in advance for your "yes" vote.

We are currently working on the 2025 paving list. We paved approximately two and a half miles of town streets in 2024. We hope to pave at least the same amount or more in 2025. Taking advantage of the VTRANS Class II paving grant program has had huge impacts.

A quick PSA: We still have a lot of winter ahead of us. Please drive for the conditions. Take a few extra minutes to get where you are going safely in inclement conditions.

Follow us on our Facebook page at Town of Rutland, Vermont Highway Department. We post road closures and project progress. Be Safe!!

From the RUTLAND FREE LIBRARY

By Director Randal Smathers



School Break

Our calendar is jam-packed with activities during February school break, from kids yoga to the third annual Great Bigfoot Chase to Tales to Tails, where kids read to trained therapy dogs. There's a movie matinee and swing dance lessons for the adults, too! Everything is free and open to all.

Check out the listings at rutlandfree.org/calendar

Public Forums

The library has been holding a series of public meetings since Jan. 16 to discuss its proposal to consider moving down the hill to 88 Merchants Row (the Asa Bloomer / state office building). The final meeting for this phase of the project is on Feb 12 at 5:30 p.m. at the current library, 10 Court St.

After this round of public conversations, the library expects to hire an architect to develop preliminary plans and a more detailed budget, to allow side-by-side comparisons between the proposed site and doing renovations at 10 Court St., followed by more public conversations.

Details, including timelines, site plans, and preliminary budgets are at rutlandfree.org/civic

New Offerings Online

We have several new offerings. Our most popular online service is Libby, which now offers magazines in addition to downloadable audiobooks and ebooks. The Palace Project has similar products, and has added titles in a variety of foreign languages.

Kanopy is our No. 1 video streaming service, with a range of feature films, documentaries, TV series, and a whole suite of kids' entertainment. Biblio+ is a new service from the state Department of Libraries, and offers mostly art-house and British cinema.

Finally, we have Freegal audio streaming service, which offers up to three hours of free, uninterrupted, ad-free music each day, as well as the option to download tracks to keep permanently.

All our online offerings are supported by the Nella Grimm Fox fund.



Never miss an issue!
Read The Circle online at
www.rutlandtown.com/the-circle

Rutland Town School is hiring!
GRCSU Paraeducator at RTS, start ASAP; Assistant Principal, start 7/1/2025
Apply on www.schoolspring.com,
or contact RTS Principal: sarah.tetzlaff@grcsu.org, (802) 775-0566 ext. 4003

From Town Administrator, Bill Sweet

After more than a year of work including meetings of both the Selectboard and the Planning Commission, our Short-Term Rental Ordinance is now in effect. Any property being used as a short-term rental in town is required to be registered. The first registrations were due by January 1, 2025. There is a frequently asked questions document on the Town Ordinance web page. One of our most asked questions is in regard to permits needed for building. While we do not have zoning, we do have a permit tracking ordinance which does have a permit requirement. The ordinance states: No building or structure of any kind,

whether business or residential, including but not limited to houses, outbuildings, retail and/or commercial structures, as well as an enlargement or addition that increases the footprint of an existing structure, shall hereafter be constructed, or installed within the limits of the Town of Rutland unless an informational permit is first obtained from the Town Permit Officer. An informational permit is required for the alteration of an existing building or structure that results in an increase in the number of bedrooms. Of course, if there are questions please reach out to us. Follow us at: <https://www.facebook.com/townofrutland>.

Town News continued from pg. 1

General budget:

proposed \$1,415,187 up from \$1,385,967

Highway budget:

proposed \$1,113,339 up from \$1,086,969

Police budget:

proposed \$754,155 up from \$609,619

Fire budget:

proposed \$262,538 up from \$250,038

Recreation budget:

proposed \$207,211 up from \$175,792

TOTALS

proposed \$3,752,430 up from \$3,508,385.

Total increase in spending for town departments:
\$244,045.

This increase of 6.5% is due to four major factors. First, an across-the-board pay increase of 3% is proposed for all town employees. We want to keep our good and well-trained people so town services will continue to function at a high level. Next, health insurance premium costs for qualified employees have increased by 18%. While not all employees are covered by the town's policy, this still is a major increase in the budget over last year. Third, general insurance for the town - liability, property and vehicle coverage, workers compensation - has increased significantly. Fourth, we are adding a new police officer, and increasing hours for our recreation director from part to full time. There are also many smaller increases in costs, similar to what taxpayers have seen in their own homes and businesses. That's the spending side.

On the income side, more than half of our proposed expenditures for FY 25-26 will be paid by income sources other than property tax revenues. We are confident in projecting income of \$1,893,410 in FY25-26 from these sources: our 1% local option tax, collection of delinquent property

taxes, town clerk fees of many kinds, transfer station coupons, speeding ticket revenues, rec department program revenues, highway state aid, and much more.

Even so, this other-source income will be down by \$182,359 in FY 25-26 for several reasons. First, we will not have the so-called Cortina Fund to draw on to assist with policing expenses. The Cortina has ceased to function as a homeless shelter, so the contracted monthly payments to the town have ceased as well. Other projected revenue drops are due to loss of stormwater grants and culvert replacement grants.

The loss of \$182,359 in revenue plus the increase in department spending of \$244,045 creates a difference of \$426,404 between budgets for our current fiscal year and the coming one. To cover this difference, we will need to raise \$1,859,020 in real estate taxes for FY 2025-26 compared to \$1,432,616 in FY2024-25.

Yes, our property taxes will go up. We won't know by how much until we set the tax rate in July, 2025. We hope that in the next 6 months, our 1% local option tax revenues are stronger than projected, that our grand list grows, and that we win grants to help with some expenses.

You should be receiving the annual Town Report in the mail shortly after you read this Circle. All budget details are in the report, as is a wealth of other town information. Contact any one of your Select Board members if you have questions <https://www.rutlandtown.com/town-departments/select-board/#email>

Don't forget to vote on Town Meeting Day, March 4. We hope you will support our proposed budgets.

Thanks for reading.

A Heartfelt Thank You & Farewell to Mrs. Mock



We want to take a moment to celebrate and recognize the incredible person you are. Over the past 26.5 years, you've dedicated your heart and soul to the Rutland Town School community. While it's difficult to fully express how much your dedication has meant to all of us, we want you to know just how deeply we appreciate everything you've done for all of us.

Your commitment to this school and its community has been truly extraordinary. From knowing our families inside and out to organizing every school function, your love and dedication are evident every day. You've been a steady presence, guiding us through challenges, busy days, and changes, always ensuring everything ran smoothly. Whether managing attendance, handling student records, arranging substitutes, or coordinating lunch coverage, you did it all with grace and efficiency. Even in the whirlwind of the school office, you remained calm, ensuring every task was completed with precision and care.

What truly sets you apart, Mrs. Mock, is your kindness and the genuine care you showed to everyone around you. You were never just an employee; you were a friend and confidant to all of us. You took the time to check in, remembering the little details about our lives and always making us feel valued. You even called after hours to make sure we were doing okay—a gesture that meant so much to all of us.

You have always been one of the first to arrive and one of the last to leave. Your commitment to our school never wavered, even when the demands were overwhelming. Your tireless work ethic ensured everything was running smoothly, and you were always willing to solve problems, plan ahead, and lend a hand where needed. You've truly been the heart of this school.

Mrs. Mock, you aren't just a colleague—you are the work mom many of us have turned to for advice, encouragement, a hug, and even a plate of sweet treats to brighten and help us get through our day. Your thoughtfulness and extra little touches helped make this school feel like a family, and we'll miss that more than you know.

Your impact on Rutland Town School cannot be overstated. You've been a cornerstone of this community, and your contributions have been vital to the success of every school day. While we'll miss you tremendously, your legacy of dedication, care, and service will continue to echo through these halls for years to come.

As you embark on this well-deserved new chapter, please know that you will always have a special place in our hearts. We are so thankful for every moment you've shared with us, and we wish you all the best in everything that lies ahead.

Thank you, Mrs. Mock, for everything. We love you and will miss you deeply.

Love Always,
Your Rutland Town Family



Pictured above: Some highlights from the first day of RTS Lifetime Sports!

Tax continued from pg. 7

Essentially, our board is asking anyone who seeks this job to pay thousands to enjoy the responsibility to raise and deposit to the town coffers amounts as high as \$383,000 in a single year without putting any burden of cost on the town for office space and all support services enjoyed by all other town officials. It is a very unique position that the Delinquent Tax Collector has when he or she is an elected official in town government responsible for a net positive dollar contribution in amounts always over a quarter of a million each year.

I sincerely hope the board will revisit their policies in this regard to make the position of Delinquent Tax Collector more desirable, accessible, and financially feasible to any towns person who may seek the position. It is not an easy job but it is very rewarding to treat all taxpayers with respect and help them meet their obligations in tough times. Thank you all and HAPPY NEW YEAR.

By Liv Cadena
Guest Services Coordinator

Happy New Year from your friends at Wonderfeet Kids' Museum! In the month of December, we were so excited to welcome over 6,200 visitors to Wonderfeet for some holiday fun! We hosted several holiday celebrations, including Soulful Santa, a Hanukkah Festival in collaboration with the Rutland Jewish Center, and our own Winter Wonderland and Santa's Workshop events. Mark your calendars for next year: Santa's Workshop dates are set for November 30th and December 6, 2025!

As the snow continues to fall, we are open and available for warm and cozy birthday parties, field trips, and other gatherings. If you are interested in booking with us, please reach out to guestservices@wkmvt.org for more information.

One of our newest offerings is the Have a "One"derfeet Year program. Residents of Rutland County with a 1-2 year old are eligible for a free one-year membership to Wonderfeet Kids' Museum when they complete a short developmental screening with their child. The screening can be done by an outside organization or by our Family Liaison, Jenn Brittenham, while you play at Wonderfeet! Members of the program will also receive invites to unique workshops and classes, meet-ups & support groups throughout the year hosted by

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The pocket park's site has an incredibly rich and extensive historical past so one of the first orders of business would likely be an archeological assessment of the area. That may affect where some of the recreational and historical amenities are placed.

The Rutland Regional Planning Commission is assisting the town with preparing grant applications. We hope to have some good news on the funding front soon. In the meantime, the Town Planning Commission is lining up volunteers to help with some of the construction. Let us know if you'd like to become part of making the town's newest park!



Wonderfeet in collaboration with other local organizations. Visit wonderfeetkidsmuseum.org/development for information about joining the program as well as events and screening dates.

Looking ahead to February and all the fun that Winterfest brings, we are excited to host our annual Loved Ones and Little Ones dance on Saturday, February 22. Come dressed ready to dance the night away and make some memories with your kiddos! Tickets are \$15 per couple (one child, one adult) and can be purchased via our website, wonderfeetkidsmuseum.org, or by calling the Museum at 802-282-2678. Snacks, groovy tunes, and maybe even a surprise visit from everyone's favorite abominable snow monster await at this family-focused event.

We're planning ahead for lots of fun this summer with our preschool and big kid camps! Registration will open mid to late February via our Facebook and website. Your littles can look forward to camps with themes such as Space, Community Heroes, and Healthy Living!

Wonderfeet Kids' Museum is located at 66 Merchants Row in the GMP Energy Innovation Center. We are open Tuesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. It Takes a Village, our free playgroup and support group for babies and toddlers and their caregivers, takes place every Monday from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Fatherhood Fridays, in conjunction with Rutland County Parent Child Center, is a free playgroup for male care-givers that takes place the first Friday of every month from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Additionally, we are excited to offer a Multi-Language Playgroup on the second Sunday of every month from 9 to 10 a.m.

For more information, please contact guestservices@wkmvt.org.

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Rutland Town Community Calendar

- FEB** 7 RTS Early Release - 11:40 a.m.
 11 Select Board meeting - 6 p.m.
 11 School Board meeting - 6 p.m.
 13 Planning Commission meeting - 6:30 p.m.
 17-21 RTS Winter Break
 25 Select Board meeting - 6 p.m.
 28 RTS Talent Show - 6 p.m.
- MAR** 4 Town Meeting Day
 6 Planning Commission meeting - 6:30 p.m.
 11 School Board meeting - 6 p.m.
 14 RTS No School
 18 RHS-RTS Jazz Night - 7 p.m.
 24 RTS Spelling Bee Competition - 3 p.m.
 25 Select Board meeting - 6 p.m.
 27 Planning Commission meeting - 6:30 p.m.



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