

# The Circle

Rutland Town's Link between School and Community



March 2026

## TOWN NEWS

By Mary Ashcroft  
Select Board Chair

Your Select Board has finished work on town budgets for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, and we ask for your support at Town Meeting on March 3.

Projected spending for our town is up by 14.56%, offset in part by a projected 7.15% increase in revenues, for a net increase of 7.41% over last year.

In raw numbers, we anticipate spending \$4,228,783 for our town fire, police, recreation, highway and general budgets. The general budget includes town clerk and treasurer, listers, planning commission, transfer station, health officer and constables, town administrator and select board. Revenues (other than property taxes) we project at \$2,297,470. The largest revenue stream is our 1% local option tax which should generate at least \$1.4 million in FY 26-27. Other money will come from highway grants, town clerk fees, recaptured delinquent property taxes, traffic fines, transfer station charges, reimbursement for our school resources officer, and rec department activities fees.

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*Plus more inside...*

## RTS UPDATE

From Principal Sarah Tetzlaff

### Rutland Town School 2025–2026 Town Report

Dear Rutland Town Community,

This year marks my fourteenth year as principal of Rutland Town School, and I continue to be incredibly proud of our students and the growth they demonstrate each year—academically, socially, and as contributing members of our community. Our students leave RTS well prepared for high school and beyond, and that success is a direct result of the strong partnership among our dedicated teachers and staff, supportive families, and the greater Rutland Town community.

### Enrollment & School Climate

Rutland Town School currently serves 333 students in PreK–Grade 8, with 176 students attending various high schools in grades 9–12. Our average class size is 16 students, allowing teachers to build strong relationships and provide meaningful, individualized instruction. Enrollment has remained stable year over year, and we continue to welcome new families to our school community.

### Teaching, Learning & Academic Growth

We are in our third year of implementing UFLI as our K–2 literacy program and are seeing strong early literacy outcomes. In addition, elementary, middle school, special educators, and

*Continued on pg. 3*

## From the Rutland Town Planning Commission

By Barbara Noyes Pulling

2026 marks the beginning of construction of the pocket park at Center Rutland Falls, located off Business Route 4 and Simons Avenue in Rutland, Vermont. At long last!

In April and May, the town will start early site work on the approximately one-half acre parcel which sits on the west side of Otter Creek, directly across from the Green Mountain Power hydroelectric facility. This first phase will include removing dead trees and invasive plants, improving the small parking area off Simons Avenue, and rebuilding the path from the parking area to the falls overlook. The new path will meet ADA standards to make the site more accessible for everyone.

Other first-phase work includes adding fencing at the Otter Creek overlook, creating a picnic area, and installing a kiosk and informational signs along the path.

*Continued on pg. 6*

# RTS Therapy Dog

By Marisa Neary



Kipa is a 7-year-old Lab Mix, full of love and energy. She is a certified therapy dog with Therapy Dogs of Vermont, which means she's been trained to provide comfort, affection, and support to anyone who needs it. Kipa spends one day each week at Rutland Town School, primarily with middle school students and her owner and 5th-grade teacher, Marisa Neary.

## Letter to the Editor

Dear Rutland Town School,  
We are part of the Rutland Town Elderly Group. We (30+) were there for dinner and music December 16. What we saw was management galore. First was small kids eating their lunch and then leaving, then the next group doing the same, and so on (1-8). In between teachers were cleaning and making sure the tables were ready for the next group. We were served by the upper class boys and girls. For this to happen there has to be a lot of effort by all of the employees working together. Congrats and thank you.

*Russell and Karen*



**Never miss an issue!**

**Read The Circle online at**

**[www.rutlandtown.com/the-circle](http://www.rutlandtown.com/the-circle)**

## Get Involved!

Rutland Town School is always looking for substitutes and volunteers. If you are interested, please contact Cindy Ondria, GRCSU Substitute Coordinator, at [cindy.ondria@grcsu.org](mailto:cindy.ondria@grcsu.org), (802) 775-0566 ext. 2126. Community members are always welcome to visit our school. Please call the office at (802) 775-0566 to schedule a time to 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 Fagnant. For more information, mailing list changes, to advertise or contribute, email [rutlandtowncircle@gmail.com](mailto:rutlandtowncircle@gmail.com), call the RTS office at 775-0566 or mail items to: The Circle, c/o Rutland Town School, 1612 Post Rd. Rutland, VT 05701

*RTS Update continued from pg 1*

interventionists participated in Keys to Literacy professional development to strengthen writing instruction across grade levels. This shared training has helped align instructional practices and support student growth in reading and writing.

We are proud to celebrate excellence in teaching at RTS. Jill Alderman was named UVM Teacher of the Year at the GRCSU in-service in August and was later honored alongside educators from across Vermont at UVM in October. Her recognition reflects the high-quality teaching happening every day at Rutland Town School.

### **STEM, Innovation & Hands-On Learning**

Rutland Town School was awarded a \$15,000 Educate Innovate Grant from the Vermont Lottery to enhance STEM learning opportunities. The grant, led by Jenn Tiffit and Katie McDougall, supports hands-on, inquiry-based science instruction through innovative tools and technology. Representatives from the Vermont Liquor and Lottery visited RTS this fall to observe classrooms and see firsthand how the grant is enriching student learning.

In addition, students participated in an agriculture-focused partnership with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets, growing Vermont's state vegetable—the Gilfeather Turnip. RTS students harvested a nearly 4-pound turnip, earning recognition and a \$100 award, while connecting science learning to Vermont agriculture.

### **Unified Arts, Athletics & Enrichment**

Rutland Town School continues to offer a robust Unified Arts program, including music, chorus, art, physical education, health, technical education, library, and Spanish. Students also participate in a variety of clubs and activities such as Student Council, Green Team, Big Buddies/Little Buddies, Rainbow Club, Rock Climbing, and Spelling Bee.

We are in our third year of Lifetime Sports, an initiative that provides students with opportunities to explore lifelong physical activities. On six half-days throughout the winter, students participate in activities such as skiing and snowboarding at Pico, rock climbing, skating, bowling, gymnastics, golf, and tennis. In our first year of offering Lifetime Sports, more than 50 students tried skiing or ice skating for the first time—experiences that truly live up to the program's name.

Our arts programs continue to shine. At the Rutland Halloween Parade, the RTS Marching Band earned 1st place for Best Costumed Marching Band, performing *Crazy Train* under the direction of Aaron Audet.

## **NEWS FROM THE REC**

By Director Michael Rowe



We hope you had a great holiday season. Now that winter is in full swing we are moving ahead with our winter programming.

I have created a monthly Recreation Newsletter that has a link on the town's webpage under recreation. The newsletter has what is going on for the month, please check it out.

Here are a couple of events that are happening:

- Basketball season for grades 3-6 is in full swing (a schedule of games is on the website).
- The senior Grab N Go lunches will be every Tuesday in Jan. and Feb. A menu is in the newsletter. All you need to do is let me know that you will be grabbing lunch for that week. You may pick up lunch at the Center Rutland Fire Station between 11:00-12:00 each Tuesday.
- The Ice Skating Rink is open at school, please feel free to use it, just check the ice before you step on. We will be holding Friday night Skating from 5 to 8 p.m. during January and February as long as the weather allows.

Please feel free to enjoy the parks during the winter months. If you have any questions please contact me at [recreation@rutlandtown.com](mailto:recreation@rutlandtown.com) or 779-2518.

Enjoy everything winter has to offer.

### **Community Engagement & Service**

Community connection remains a cornerstone of RTS. This fall, students donated 1,484 non-perishable food items to the Stuff-A-Bus food drive, supporting local food banks. Students also welcomed Rutland Town Seniors for a luncheon, entertained guests through music performances, and supported local families by shopping for holiday gifts.

We are also proud to continue our partnership with the Boys & Girls Club of Rutland County, which provides afterschool programming for 30 students each day, as well as summer programming for RTS families.

### **Looking Ahead**

As we move forward, we remain focused on maintaining high-quality educational programming while being fiscally responsible. Budget planning continues in collaboration with Superintendent Sell and the Rutland Town School Board, with student learning and well-being at the center of all decisions.

Thank you for your continued support of Rutland Town School.



# Rutland Free Library

By Director Randal Smathers

Rutland Free Library had a banner year again in 2025. Circulation was up over 11 percent, and we continue to set records in program offerings and attendance.

The highlights:

## RUTLAND TOWN USERS TAKE ADVANTAGE OF LIBRARY SERVICES

In 2025, Rutland Town residents borrowed the **most physical items PER CARDHOLDER (12.6) of any of our towns**, well ahead of our average (8.7), and the next closest communities (Rutland City & Mendon, 9.2 physical items per cardholder).

In 2025, Rutland Town residents also borrowed the **most physical items PER RESIDENT (4)**, again well ahead of our average (2.6) and the next closest community (Rutland City, 3.5).

That doesn't account for electronic borrowing (none of our software lets us track borrowing by town). Even using the most-conservative estimate of the town's share, total borrowing by town residents is at least 23,000 items, physical and digital. That increases the total borrowed to about 18 items per cardholder (three items every two months) or six per resident.

## THE LIBRARY IS GOOD VALUE

At an average cost of almost \$20 per book or DVD, that puts the value of items borrowed at about \$450,000. That's about four times our request for \$113,949 in tax support, just for the cost of items borrowed.

## ONE IN THREE RESIDENTS USES THE LIBRARY

Total cardholders are down in every town we serve.

The main cause is another long-awaited change to our software: It finally let us remove accounts for people who owe us money. Until July 2025, it was

impossible to remove accounts that had a negative balance. As we no longer charge for late items (along with most of the libraries in the country), this change was way overdue (pardon the pun). In early July, we got rid of all our dormant or ghost accounts that had built up in the decade or so since we purchased this software.

So for the year, we're down 157 Town cardholders, or about 11 percent, but in the second half of the year (since purging the records), we're up 16 Rutland Town cardholders, to 1,266. That's **32 percent of town residents with a valid card**, behind the city (37 percent) and Mendon (33 percent).

That doesn't include folks who don't have a card but who attend meetings, events, use our WiFi or just stop in for a break while they're in the city.

## THE LIBRARY IS RESPONSIVE TO TOWN CONCERNS

As noted, we now track actual borrowing by town specifically at the request of the town.

After a selectboard member expressed concern about where our cardholders are from, we did a full audit of every town cardholder's address, and fixed the handful that were in error (mostly Cold River Road, Townline Road, and Grove St.).

After the town expressed concern about how we recruited board members, we have asked the town to name candidates, and both our current town representatives were chosen by the town, then approved by the Library Board of Trustees. (And welcome and thanks to both Fern & Bill for their service!)

The Library appreciates the longstanding partnership we enjoy with Rutland Town, and hope to continue to serve town residents for many years to come.

RTS in the Classroom



Pictured left: Peer leaders did an amazing job decorating holiday cookies, showing creativity, teamwork, and lots of festive spirit. We're so proud of the hard work they put into our school community!

# ◆ TOWN MEETING 2026 ◆

## Candidate Statements

Mary Ashcroft

3 Year Term for Select Board

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

During my 12 years on the Select Board, we have faced many challenges, but together we have accomplished much.

We have built a new Public Safety building on McKinley Avenue for our Police and Fire Departments, wisely using \$1.3 million from our federal COVID relief funds coupled with a municipal bond loan at a very favorable rate. We continue to add to our network of sidewalks and paths—along Post Road, Cold River Road and Route 7 north, and into and around Northwood Park--using grants and the town's in-kind labor. We've replaced a failing sewer line under Route 7 south, designed a service road for that area, and extended water lines up Post Road and down Randbury Road, all to serve existing and future homes and businesses. We've upgraded fire and highway equipment and vehicles with money from our carefully husbanded depreciation funds. We've improved police services with money from the Cortina settlement fund.

Most importantly, we have supported, compensated well, and kept our talented town employees and volunteers who provide excellent services to our townspeople.

There is more to do, and I'd like to be part of that work. We need a new pool at Northwood as our existing facility is reaching the end of its useable life. We've renovated much of Town Hall, using grants where available, but now the downstairs needs our attention. We've upgraded security and technology throughout our town departments, but need more protection against natural and cyber threats. We've enhanced our recreational offerings at Northwood and Dewey, and now are moving forward with a Pocket Park at the falls in Center Rutland.

We've done all of this with openness and honesty, collaboration and civility. We find ways to cooperate with neighboring municipalities and with our Rutland Town school officials. Even when we tackle difficult challenges within our Select Board, we do so with respect, creativity and good humor.

I've written "we" a lot in this article, because no one person could have accomplished so much for our town. We've done this together. I hope to be re-elected to the Select Board so we can continue together to move our town forward.

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

Greetings from your Town Clerk and Treasurer, Kari Clark.

It is my pleasure to once again run for these two important positions in March. My hope is that you believe that I have served you well over the last 6 years. I have enjoyed honing my skills around local government, meeting new people, and working closely with fellow town officials, residents, and visitors to provide exceptional service and a welcoming environment.

Over my tenure, I've continued to move this office forward by setting systems in place for fraud control, introducing direct ACH options for tax payments, and began the process of digitizing land records online. These are just a few of the achievements we have worked diligently towards under my leadership.

It is with great pride and love for my community that I come to work every day to serve our special town. I ask for your support on Town Meeting Day as you cast your ballot. Thank you for your continued trust in me!

## VOTER INFORMATION For Town Meeting Day Tuesday March 3, 2026

*Early voting ends at noon on Monday before any election and the City Clerk's Office will close for setup.*

**Polls open at 7 a.m. Tuesday, March 3.**

**Polls will close at 7 p.m. Tuesday evening, March 3.**

If you live on the east side of town, your voting place is at Rutland Town School at 1612 Post Road. If you live on the west side of town, your voting place is at Town Hall at 181 Business Route 4 in Center Rutland.

For absentee ballots and other questions please call **Town Office at (802) 773-2528.**

# First Day of Lifetime Sports at RTS!



GRCSU BOARD NEWS

**GREATER RUTLAND COUNTY SUPERVISORY UNION**  
 IRA, MIDDLETOWN SPRINGS, POULTNEY, PROCTOR, RUTLAND TOWN, WELLS, WEST RUTLAND

The Greater Rutland County Supervisory Union School Board is striving to enhance communication throughout all of our GRCSU communities. We have created messaging to provide necessary resources to keep you informed, and we promise not to overload your inbox. Fewer than 3 messages a month will include how our resources, including your tax dollars, are used to enhance the learning experience for every child. **Stay informed and get involved!** Access meeting details, budgets, legislative updates, opportunities to participate, and more. When we work together, we build a stronger, more connected community for our students.

Please share your email address with us today; we value your time and commitment to our community!

**4 SCHOOL DISTRICTS:** IRA, RUTLAND TOWN, QUARRY VALLEY, & WELLS-SPRINGS

**8 SCHOOLS:** RUTLAND TOWN SCHOOL, WEST RUTLAND SCHOOL, PROCTOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, PROCTOR JR/SR HIGH SCHOOL, POULTNEY HIGH SCHOOL, POULTNEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, MIDDLETOWN SPRINGS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, WELLS VILLAGE SCHOOL

SCAN QR CODE TO RECEIVE MESSAGES FROM THE BOARD

[HTTPS://MAILCHI.MP/56D1AFEBB912/GRCSU-SIGN-UP](https://mailchi.mp/56d1afebb912/grcsu-sign-up)

*Planning Commission Continued from pg 1*

These features are meant to make visits more enjoyable while also sharing information about the site.

Center Rutland Falls has a long and important history. The area was used seasonally by Indigenous peoples for fishing and encampments. Later, it played a role in the Revolutionary War and was instrumental in Rutland's early water mill, marble, and hydroelectric industries. The town hopes to highlight this rich history on signs in the pocket park that also include digital links to more in-depth information.

The Town of Rutland Planning Commission would like to share these plans with the community and welcomes your input, especially for the information used on the park's historical signs. If you're interested in participating, please keep an eye out for upcoming announcements about the public meetings planned for March and April.

Volunteers for construction activities for the pocket park are welcome as well. Please let Bill Sweet, Town Administrator, know if you are interested in helping out: 802-773-2528 or [BSweet@rutlandtown.com](mailto:BSweet@rutlandtown.com).

A design map prepared by the Planning Commission is available at the Town Office. Please note that this first phase of work will be limited to the south end of the property, as shown on the map. We're hoping to celebrate a grand opening of the pocket park by early summer!



*Photo credit: Katie McDougall*

Top left: 8th graders have been conducting investigations related to the rate of photosynthesis when light intensity, temperature and carbon dioxide concentration have been manipulated. Students ultimately took their data and constructed a CER using their own evidence. Top right: 7th graders have been completing the Algae Academy program using salt water microscopic algae provided to describe the benefits of algae and explore their microscopic world. More on page 11.

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## **RTS Busses PSA**

By Shelley Pelkey

Hello Families and Happy New Year,

I am writing on behalf of all RTS buses with some information that is vital.

Motor vehicles running our red lights or vehicles passing us from behind, unfortunately, have become more of an issue in our daily routes. It is vitally important for the safety of all children that they follow loading and unloading procedures.

Stops where crossing the street is necessary poses the biggest problem.

Please reinforce with your children the following procedures:

### **LOADING AND UNLOADING**

All children should be at least 10 feet away from the road while waiting for the bus. Never move toward the bus before it is fully stopped and the driver indicates that it is safe to load.

Children also need to move 10 feet away from the road when unloading. Never go back to the bus for forgotten items, unless they have been given the 'OK' by their driver.

Students crossing **MUST** wait for the driver's signal to cross the street (a **THUMBS UP**). We experience times when students may think it's okay to

cross but we have vehicles coming that are traveling too fast. We purposely only give the **THUMBS UP**, when we know it is safe for students to cross.

**ONCE THOSE RED LIGHTS ARE FLASHING WE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SAFETY OF YOUR CHILDREN.** Please do not tell them to cross if we have not given them the **THUMBS UP**.

### **WINTER COMFORT**

We fortunately seldom break down or have our buses freeze up, but it does happen at times. When this happens there is **NO** heat available on the bus. During these winter days it is very important that children are dressed properly or carrying gear for colder temperatures, in the event of an emergency.

### **HEADLIGHTS**

Please-please-please drive with your headlights on. Black, grey and white cars are especially hard to see when it is raining, snowing, foggy, dusk, and dawn. **YOU** may be able to see where you are going but it is difficult for us to see **YOU**.

Thank you.

## Highway Happenings

Submitted by  
Road Commissioner Dave Sears



It is that wonderful time of the year that we refer to as “Budget Season.” I have prepared a budget that on the outside may look bad but there are good reasons for the increases.

While working with the Highway Committee, we had tough choices to make with this budget. This budget is up by 18%. The bulk of that increase is for the replacement of a nine-foot diameter culvert on Stratton Road. This galvanized culvert has reached the end of its expectant life. There are large segments of the culvert that have rusted and rotted through the metal. It is just a matter of time before the culvert fails and we will need to scramble to come up with a fix. This would most likely result in a quite lengthy road closure and a lot of inconvenience for a road that sees quite a lot of traffic.

The estimated cost of the replacement is \$500,000. We applied for and were granted \$200,000, the maximum amount allowed, from the State of Vermont for a Structures Grant. The town will then be responsible for the remaining \$300,000. There is \$150,000 in this budget to pay for half of our share. The remaining \$150,000 will come from either Highway Carryover or the Capital Improvement Fund.

There is a 3% wage increase for the Highway Department employees and a double-digit health insurance increase that everyone in the state has felt.

Other smaller increases are the cost of materials and parts as a cost of doing business.

I would like to ask for a “Yes” vote on March 3rd. And I would like to thank you for your support of the Highway Department.

We are now starting to look ahead to spring and the upcoming construction season. We have begun working on the paving plan for the upcoming construction season. We have a couple of culvert replacements already on the whiteboard and more will be added.

Thank you.  
Stay Safe.

## From the Listers Office

Submitted by Marcia Chioffi

HAPPY NEW YEAR. Now that the final Grand List has been sent to the State, the Listers office will once again begin their busy season. The business personal property forms will be sent out in mid-February. As in the past, the forms will also be online on the town’s website. The due date is April 20, 2026.

Letters will be sent in early March to those property owners that have had material and structural changes as well as new builds over the last year. The available days and times will be listed in the letter. Please call the office for an appointment for a site visit once you receive your letter. If you have had any additions or deletions to your property and have not filed an Informational Building Permit, please do so. You can find this form on the town’s website. Site visits will continue until all properties have been inspected for material changes.

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 verification for the equalization study conducted each year to determine our CLA & COD.

Town Meeting is on March 3, 2026. I have decided that the time has come for me to retire. I have loved being a lister for 15 years as well as my service on the Planning Commission, ballot clerk, and a member of the Fire Department Women’s auxiliary. I do plan to once again be available to work as a ballot clerk for upcoming elections. I will see you at the polls.

It has been an honor and a privilege to serve the Town of Rutland and its citizens and I have enjoyed the contacts and relationships fostered throughout the years. Thank You Rutland Town for the support you have shown me throughout my years of service. I will miss my fellow co-workers, but I am confident that I will leave the town in capable hands.



## From the RUTLAND TOWN POLICE DEPARTMENT

By Edward E. Dumas II  
Chief of Police

I would like to take this time to thank all the residents of Rutland Town for allowing me to serve you for the last 18 years. I know that I was not perfect in any manner, but I can say I did my best and even then, sometimes that is not enough.

I want to tell you all you're very fortunate to have the group of people working at the town Police Department. Ted Washburn and I have worked together for over 10 years, and as I've slowed down, I could see Ted picking up the pace, making important decisions that I wholeheartedly agreed with. I suspect you will all appreciate what Ted will bring to your Police Department.

Officer Jimmy Plakas and K-9 Rooster are a great team. They are responsible for sniffing out many drugs on car stops in Rutland County and beyond at times, taking them off the street and in the process collecting money the drug dealers don't need anymore. Jimmy is ambitious, has a heart for people, especially the victims of crime, and loves to hold those who violate our laws accountable.

Officer Jared Dumas, if you don't know, is my son. I like to call him Dumas 3.0 as he is bigger, smarter and faster than myself. Jared has taken over the firearms program for the Town Police Department and brings almost ten years of experience to our police department.

Officer Mark Perkins recently retired from the Vermont State Police and is the new School Resource officer for the Rutland Town School. Mark has over 30 years of experience in law enforcement from Rutland City and the Vermont State Police. With Mark's experience he brings a level of expertise as the SRO.

Lastly but by no means least are our 2 constables and special officers, John Paul Fagnant and Mike Delehanty. John has served our community now for over 20 years, as a select board member, fireman, police officer and an attorney. John enjoys enforcing our local speed limits, which makes our streets safer.

Mike Delehanty is a level III certified officer which is a tremendous asset to our community. Mike recently was instrumental in having the building at the corner of Gleason Avenue and Route 4 East removed as it was a "Blighted Property."

I would like to thank our current Select Board and Police Committee for all their help over the last few years. Especially when our department was inundated with problems from our local hotel turned into homeless shelter. With their help and thinking outside of the box, using Act 250, they were able to leverage hundreds of thousands of dollars that went to your police department in the form of equipment, extra patrol time in the south end business district and eventually an extra officer to our department, all at little to no cost to the tax payers of the Town of Rutland.

And once again thank you all for the new Public Safety Building, it has been a pleasure to work in our new facility for the last year.

## RTS SNAPSHOTS



Photo courtesy Sheri Bathalon  
Above: Mrs. Mero's Kindergarten class.



Photo courtesy RTS  
Above and Below: Miss Erin's Pre-K had a great time on their skating field trip at Spartan Arena! Thanks to all the parents that came and joined us in the fun!



Photo courtesy RTS  
Below: There have been some great mini lessons taking place in Mrs. Chappy's room! Carter taught the class how to make pumpkin squares and Sophia brought a touch of spring with her demonstration on making pipe cleaner flowers!



## From the Rutland Town School Board

By Chair Tim Hammond

Rutland Town Residents,

Budget discussions began in early October with continued debate to confirm we deliver a budget that provides the resources necessary to engage our Rutland Town School students, empower them, and prepare them for tomorrow.

The board is pleased to propose a budget that we feel accomplishes those objectives. Understanding the importance of our fiscal responsibility, we were able to hold our expenses to an increase of less than 1%, which translates to a 3.43% increase in per pupil spending over last year for a total of \$14,054 per student.

We limited any additions to the budget to help keep expenses down and after successfully completing the planned HVAC and asbestos abatement during the current fiscal year, we have made great progress in long term maintenance objectives.

Rutland Town School and the people within it remain a beacon of pride for our community.

We as a board are dedicated to help uphold the reputation the school has built over many generations.

We thank you for your support each year and hope to see you at Town Meeting Day!

*Town News Continued from pg 1*

Compared with last year's budgets, that's a total spending increase of \$531,373.

Part of this increase will provide every town employee with a 3% COLA raise. We also propose upping further what we pay our town clerk/treasurer, our town administrator, and our pool lifeguards and staff.

We are adjusting pay rates in our police department as well. Our goal is a pay and benefits package that is competitive so we can keep good people and maintain high quality municipal services.

When we increase pay, we must also increase the town's contribution to employee benefits such as VMERS retirement, social security, Medicare, and the new child care payroll tax. Health insurance costs have risen, but we can temper some of that increase by offering employees "opt out" payments if they switch to their partners' insurance instead of town coverage.

In the highway budget, there is a sizable increase in culvert replacement costs to cover a major project on Stratton Road. That cost will be partially offset, we hope, by a state grant. We propose to install weather monitoring stations so that highway crews can respond more quickly to differing microclimates from one end of town to the other, especially during the winter. And we are increasing the resurfacing budget for town roads.

Please plan to attend our Monday evening review session on March 2, at 6 p.m. at the Rutland Town School, and vote on Town Meeting Day, March 3, 2026. Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. at Town Hall in Center Rutland and at Rutland Town School on Post Road. Early voting will also be available.

The Rutland Town Select Board meets every other Tuesday evening at 6 p.m. The public is always welcome in person at Town Hall in Center Rutland, or via zoom.

You can find meeting agendas, zoom information, and contact information on the town website at <https://www.rutlandtown.com/>

We are glad to hear from you anytime.



*Photo courtesy Sheri Bathalon*

RTS 4th Grade Skating Trip.

# Wonderfeet Kids' Museum

By Marissa Arduca  
Family and Community Outreach Coordinator



We had so much fun at our Santa Days event! Thank you to the 450+ families that came out to see Santa, make some crafts, and have some fun before the holidays! A huge thank you to the staff and volunteers who helped make these days magical!

Now that the New Year is here, we are excited and ready to host your family for winter break; come visit us at the museum and play all day! Keep an eye out for Winterfest this year, where we'll be hosting a NERF Battle for ages 4–6 from 4:00 to 4:30 PM and ages 7–13 from 5:00 to 6:00 PM.

Looking ahead to more excitement this spring, don't forget to get your tickets to see Laurie Berkner live at The Paramount Theatre on Saturday, March 28 at 11:00 AM. This show is going to sell fast. Laurie creates some of the most-played children's music in households, classrooms, and early childhood therapeutic/enrichment settings across the globe... and now she's coming to Rutland!

Have time to visit Wonderfeet during the week? It Takes a Village, our free playgroup and support group for babies and toddlers and their caregivers, takes place every Monday from 10:00 to 11:30 AM.

Join us for the Whiz Kid Wednesday STEAM program from 10:30 to 11:00 AM. Thursday's from 10:30 to 11:00 AM, join us for Littles with Wiggles—this is our so-much-fun dance class led by Ms. Nicole for all our friends that love to boogie!

Fatherhood Fridays, in conjunction with Rutland County Parent Child Center, is a free playgroup for male caregivers that takes place the first Friday of every month from 5:30 to 7:00 PM.

There's still some spots left in our LEGO SPIKE Club, sign up before it fills up! Don't forget the opportunity to book field trips and birthday parties at Wonderfeet! If you are interested in any of these programs please reach out to [guestservices@wkmvt.org](mailto:guestservices@wkmvt.org) for more information.

Wonderfeet Kids' Museum is located at 66 Merchants Row in the GMP Energy Innovation Center. We are open Tuesday through Sunday, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. As the snow continues to fall, please check our website and Facebook page for any program or event changes.



## 7th & 8th Grade Science

By RTS Teacher Katie McDougall



*Photos courtesy RTS*  
The 7th graders have been completing the Algae Academy program using salt water microscopic algae provided to describe the benefits of algae and explore their microscopic world.



### ***How do I register to vote?***

In Vermont there is no deadline to register to vote. You are allowed to register up to and including the day of the election. If you are registering to vote in Vermont for the first time, you must provide an acceptable form of ID, such as:

- Valid photo ID (driver's license or passport)
- Current utility bill
- Current bank statement
- Another government document containing your residential address.

To register, visit the Town Clerk's office for an application or visit our website to complete the online form.

**IMPORTANT:** If you register to vote online the day before an election or on Election Day, your application may not be processed and your name may not appear on the checklist. To be sure your name appears on the checklist, please register by the Friday before the election.

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## RUTLAND TOWN COMMUNITY CALENDAR

FEB	10	Select Board meets - 6 p.m.
	19	Planning Commission meets - 6:30 p.m.
	23-27	RTS February Break
MARCH	24	Select Board meets - 6 p.m.
	3	Town Meeting Day - Polls open 7 a.m.
	10	Select Board meets - 6 p.m.
	12	Planning Commission meets - 6:30 p.m.
APRIL	24	Select Board meets - 6 p.m.
	1	Dog Registrations Due
	2	Planning Commission meets - 6:30 p.m.



**Town & School websites: [rutlandtown.com](http://rutlandtown.com) & [rutlandtownschool.org](http://rutlandtownschool.org)**