

Roxbury Newsy

Your community newsletter

January-March 2022, Vol. 7 No. 1

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Photos and illustrations contributed by
Heidi Albright and Michelle Acciavatti

Do you have upcoming
newsletter submissions,
suggestions, or corrections to
the mailing list?

Please contact the RFL at
librarian@roxburyfreelibrary.org
or 802-485-6860

Thanks to Ryan Zajac, Courtney B.
Jenkins, Jane Pincus and Heidi Albright
for compiling, editing and designing
this issue of the Newsy!

We hope you enjoy it.

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Vermont's First Natural Burial Cemetery Planned for Roxbury

by Michelle Acciavatti with The Roving Reporters

A new business coming to town, Vermont Natural Burial, is the joint effort of Michelle Acciavatti and Tim Graves who are pioneering a unique model of after-death care. They will combine their unique skills to offer traditional funeral services with education about end-of-life options on the grounds of a natural burial cemetery to be located on Beaver Meadow Road in Roxbury. Vermont Forest Cemetery will be the first cemetery in Vermont dedicated to natural burial.



*Michelle and Tim at the Vermont Forest Cemetery
in Roxbury*

Ending Well, a full-service funeral home opening in 2023, will welcome visitors with a design that is a cross between a forest cottage and forest chapel. There will be no embalming or chemicals used. Approximately forty people will be able to attend funerals, classes, and even participate in bathing and shrouding their loved ones.

Tim, a skilled woodworker and stone mason, will keep a small shop. There he will build caskets, urns, and keepsakes for natural burial and cremation, and offer simple carving of stone markers. He'll work mostly with wood and stone reclaimed from the land.

The businesses seek to return to a simpler way of caring for the dead, one that is in harmony with the natural world, well-suited to a community of people who love the outdoors. And it is easy to access from all over Vermont.

Vermont defines "natural burial" as burial without embalming, in a biodegradable container or shroud made of natural materials, at a depth of 3.5 feet, in land

continued on next page...

"Vermont Natural Burial" continued from front page...

managed in an ecologically sound manner. If that sounds strange, consider that it is likely the way everyone was buried in historic Orcutt Cemetery. In conventional burial, embalming, concrete burial vaults, and the deeper holes necessary to accommodate those vaults, prevents the natural partnership between body and soil. Through natural burial, the forest will be restored and conserved. Three and a half feet might not seem very deep, but it is in keeping with best natural burial practices. In 2017, Michelle was part of the statewide effort to change Vermont's minimum burial depth. Why does burial depth matter? Below four feet, the heat, oxygen, microorganisms, and mycorrhizal (fungal) networks aren't sufficient to recycle nutrients from the body back into the ecosystem. At 3.5 feet this process happens efficiently, while providing sufficient soil on top of the body to form a physical and chemical barrier that breaks down any odors, keeping the body out of the water table, and preventing run off from disrupting the burial mound.

Vermont Forest Cemetery will be located on 60 acres of an old logging tract. Michelle and Tim will improve the former logging road that runs through the property so that people of all physical abilities, including those needing to drive, can travel within the cemetery. They will create trails to loop through the burial areas where several hundred gravesites will be available. Starting in the summer of 2022, they'll invite people to schedule a tour of the cemetery and choose their own burial lots. Gravesites are available for people and household pets, as well as for the interment and scattering of ashes. In a memorial grove people can dedicate a site to the memory of those who have died without a body to bury, including pregnancy loss. The cemetery will be open 365 days a year. Yes, even for winter burials.

Tim, a native Vermonter, has family roots that go back to the time of the New Hampshire Grants. He grew up in Hyde Park, where he spent a lot of time outdoors. His curiosity about the natural world led to a hobby as an amateur naturalist. He started playing stringed and percussion instruments at a young age, began woodworking in his early teens, and became a luthier in his mid-thirties. He joined the Army in 2004, first as a military police officer and then a Mortuary Affairs noncommissioned officer responsible for the Kabul-based cluster, in Afghanistan from 2009-2010. Stateside, he was a team leader for the Army's Military Funeral Honors program from 2005-2014. He joined Guare and Sons Funeral Home in 2014 where he was mentored by Paul Guare about the importance of service and putting the needs of families first.

Michelle fell in love with Vermont when she moved here to attend college in 2001. After working at Boston Children's
continued on page 3...

From the Town Clerk's Office

2022 TOWN MEETING

Town Meeting is on March 1st. The Roxbury Selectboard voted to have all articles voted by Australian Ballot. **In-person Town Meeting will not take place.** Voting will take place at the Town Office; a notice will be posted of all changes. Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the Roxbury Town Offices. The Selectboard is encouraging people to vote absentee. Covid continues to affect our residents. Masks will be required if people come to the polls. A postcard will be sent to all active voters informing them of the change. Voters can call the Town Clerk's Office requesting a ballot. Please consider voting by absentee. An Informational Meeting is required to be held within ten days of Town Meeting. The Informational Meeting will be held on February 19 at 10 a.m. and on February 18 at 6:30 p.m. This meeting will be held virtually by conference call. Please read the Town Report when you receive it.

TAXES

Third installment of property taxes is February 11, 2022. The Town Office will be open until 5 p.m. on the Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday of the week that taxes are due. Normal office hours are Tuesday – Friday, 9 a.m. – noon/1 p.m. – 4 p.m.

2022 DOG LICENSES

Dog Licenses are available. Dogs are required to be licensed annually by April 1st. The Rabies Clinic will be held on March 26 at 1:00 p.m. at the Town Garage. One person will be allowed in the garage at a time. Please be patient. Please contact the Town Clerk for more information.

SELECTBOARD MEETINGS

Currently, the Selectboard meetings are being held at the Community Hall but this could change if the Board decides to have remote meetings. Please look at the agendas for dates and details on how to participate.

Clare St. John has resigned; Jon Guiffre was appointed to fill the position until Town Meeting. Jon comes with a lot of knowledge; he was on the Roxbury School Board for many years. 🏠

Town Meeting, March 1, 2022

There will NO in-person Town Meeting this year. All articles will be voted on by Australian Ballot at the Town Office. Masks are required at the polls, and voting by absentee ballot is encouraged. See details above for when the virtual Informational Meetings will be held in February.

Newsy Book Corner

Readings of a Roxbury Library Trustee

We asked the members of the RFL Board of Trustees this question: "What book changed your life?"

Here is **Jeanne Beckwith's** response:

This isn't so much a book that changed my life as it is a book that got me back onto the path that I needed to follow.

It was the mid-seventies, and I had just finished an M.A. in English at Indiana University. My life was not going the way I thought it would, and I didn't see a way to make it better. After spending the whole of my life reading, I stopped. I went off literature altogether. I would start something, lose interest, put it down and forget to pick it back up. Eventually, I had a pile of books keeping my bedroom door closed at night. I wasn't writing anything either.

One day I was whining about how my world sucked to a friend from Costa Rica. The next day, he brought me an armful of new books by South American authors. I promptly dumped them in a basket by my bed and kept on being "broken." Then one day I picked up *One Hundred Years of Solitude* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez. I thought, "Well, I'll give it fifty pages."

It was hours later in the middle of the night before I had to force myself to put it down, so I could get at least a little sleep before having to go to work the next day. I finished it that next night. I'd never read anything like it--the way it turned reality on its head and blurred the line between the mundane terror of life's onslaught and the magic that was necessary for humans to soar above it all. It woke me up to new possibilities for me, for my work, and for my world.

Life still sucked for a while, but gradually joy snuck back in, and I started moving forward. Books can be so much more than door stops. 🏠

What book changed YOUR life, or your way of thinking? Send us a short paragraph with the book title and description of its impact on you! email: librarian@roxburyfreelibrary.org

Roxbury Food Shelf

We are asking individuals in need of food to please contact Claire Chomentowski at 485-7779. She will let you know how food may be picked up, or if necessary, delivered. 🏠



Red Cross Shelter

The Roxbury Village School is an American Red Cross Emergency Shelter. The school now has a generator which makes the building a great resource in case of an emergency. We have cots, blankets, and dried food stored at the shelter.

Tina Young is the coordinator and can be reached at tinayoung@mpsvt.org or 262-1506. Please contact her if you would like to be added to the list of volunteers. 🏠

Planning Commission

The Roxbury Planning Commission is pleased to announce that the 2021 Municipal Plan for the Town of Roxbury was approved for submission to the Regional Planning Commission by the Roxbury Selectboard on December 20, 2021.

The Roxbury Planning Commission will now be able to focus on projects that were delineated for the planning commission in the new town plan. Meetings, which are currently held in the Community Center, will be posted on the Roxbury Website. 🏠

"Vermont Natural Burial" continued from page 2...

Hospital, she studied to become a death doula, home funeral guide, pregnancy loss doula, advance care planner, and natural burial educator. She launched the first iteration of Ending Well in 2016, believing people should be prepared to understand the decisions they need to make about end-of-life. She earned her Vermont Funeral Directors license in 2019.

People are invited to be active participants in burials at Vermont Forest Cemetery. Studies show that this active participation in burial helps promote a healthier grieving process. A natural burial can also include a church service, or any other traditional funeral service.

Ending Well is already open as a consulting funeral home, offering hands-on support for home-based death care and burial, as well as educational workshops on disposition choices and values-based advance care planning. Learn more at www.Ending-Well.com

Vermont Natural Burial will be hosting free orientation Zoom programs for Vermont Forest Cemetery. The first will be on February 5th. VNB also puts out a monthly newsletter. Sign up for both at www.vermontnaturalburial.org 🏠

MRPS

(Montpelier-Roxbury Public Schools)

Kristen Getler and Rhett Williams

Greetings from your Montpelier-Roxbury Public School Directors, Kristen Getler and Rhett Williams. As we welcome 2022 amid the cloud of Omicron, each day, every MRPS staff person is doing a task (if not many) outside of their job description to meet the demands of these unparalleled times. The collective effort is nothing short of heroic.

We extend our deepest gratitude to the MRPS team for making school possible for our students each day. We also know our youth are struggling; if you have a young person in your life, check in with them and ask how they are doing. We need all eyes, ears, and hearts available to them.

The 2022-23 school year budget has come into focus over the past two months. The school budget formula is a complex puzzle with various inputs (federal grants, taxes) and constraints (number of equalized pupils), and also includes factors beyond the district's control (property appraisals, economy).

In addition to these typical factors, MRPS also has access to \$3.4 million one-time federal dollars through September 2024 via the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) and America Recovery Plan (ARP) funds. These funds are and will be used to invest in the human and physical infrastructure of our school system. And then there are Capital Plan spending opportunities, with a proposed \$260,000 contribution in FY23. Needless to say, we've been immersed in a swarm of numbers, needs, and opportunities.

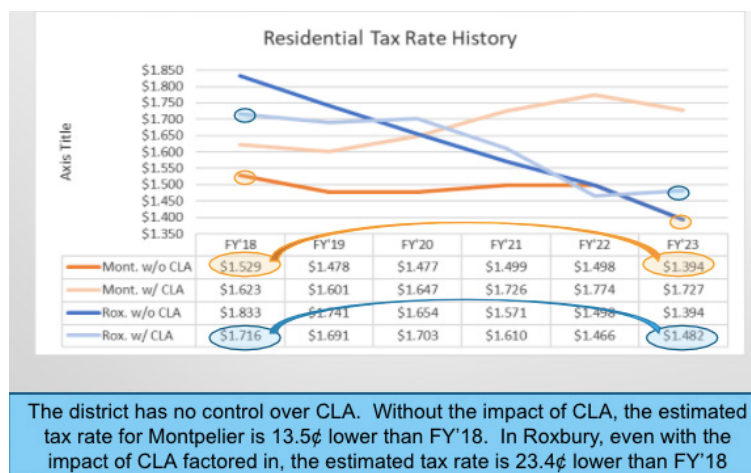
The total proposed FY23 education spending for the MRPS district is \$22, 524, 641.00 (4% increase). Per pupil spending would increase by 5% (\$18, 037.89/pupil). The primary theme of the budget this year is to strengthen instruction and student supports. As you might imagine, the impact of COVID is being felt in the classroom academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally.

The proposed FY23 budget would bring a reimagined district-wide "truancy officer" role, dubbed the Community Liaison, who will devise new ways to work directly with families to re-engage students who have drifted away from school. New "interventionist" teachers would be added at Main Street Middle School (MSMS) and Montpelier High School (MHS) to focus on small group instruction and drill down on skills our kids need to catch up on. At the middle and high school levels, we would see more staff for fine arts and world languages. An alternative program, THRIVE,

would be staffed and offered at MSMS to get students the intensive support they need. Students have requested funding for a Math Team and Racial Justice group. Additionally, an expanded English Language Teacher position is in demand as we welcome Afghan refugee families to our district.

The FY23 Capital Plan allocation is \$260,000. MRPS Infrastructure priorities identified, that could be funded via a confluence of funds (Capital, Fund Balance, ESSER), include an outdoor covered learning space at RVS, replacement of windows at Union Elementary and MSMS (approximately 80 and 100 years old, respectively), improvements to the MSMS cafeteria and kitchen, and a sizable upgrade to the MHS track—a program that gained significant student participation in the past 2 years. Kristen is on the board's Facilities and Energy Committee; if you have any questions/ideas around district infrastructure, please contact her at kristengetler@mpsvt.org.

Per the MRPS budget presentation, Roxbury's tax rate would increase by 1.6¢ (1.1%); notably, Roxbury's tax rate has decreased 23¢ (13%) since the merger with Montpelier in 2018 (\$1.716, FY18; \$1.482, FY23). A significant factor in Roxbury's overall increase this year is the Common Level of Appraisal (CLA), which the school district has no impact on. The CLA impact seen this year is a function of the increase in the market values of Roxbury homes, exceeding appraised values, thereby having a negative impact of 11.8¢ on the tax rate.



Above: MRPS School Budget Presentation January 19, 2022

Stay tuned for the details on the pre-town meeting MRPS budget presentation.

Finally, WE NEED YOU! The school board initiated a contract with Montpelier-based consulting firm BUILD to facilitate a really exciting community visioning process. The goal of the process will be to gather community perspectives to articulate a shared vision for exceptional education in our MRPS schools; there will be specific efforts to capture the voices of students and community members often underrepresented. This

continued next page...

"MRPS" continued from page 4...

commonly happened when towns merged via Act 46 and we just hadn't gotten to it yet.

We are one school district, comprised of two communities with some similarities and many differences. We hope to facilitate communication and collaboration in order to build relationships between our communities that will help the district meet the needs of all students to the best of our ability. We are seeking 2 Roxbury adults and 2 Roxbury youth (middle or high-school aged) to serve on the VISION Committee. There will be 2 committee meetings per month from January - May (mostly virtual); committee members will receive a \$45 stipend for each meeting attended. Rhett will also serve on the committee; please reach out to him at rhettwilliams@mpsvt.org should you be interested in serving on this committee. Don't be surprised if Rhett reaches out to you for input in the coming weeks!

Please don't hesitate to reach out to us with any thoughts or questions on the board and district work under way. In fact, we would love to hear from you.

--

Kristen Getler, School Director
Montpelier Roxbury School District Board
kristengetler@mpsvt.org 

Roxbury Ice Rink 2022

The ice rink is up in downtown. Please get out and enjoy the ice while we have it. Thank you to Mike Dickinson and the RVFD for helping pull off the filling.

Are you interested in helping out with the rink in some capacity?

Please reach out to Ryan Zajac if so, at 485-4278.

Calling all Roxbury Kids !

Tell us what you did this year! Got a story to share? We want your artwork, poetry, photos, and writing to publish in the next Newsy.

Send it to librarian@roxburyfreelibrary.org

Roxbury Village School PTO

Hello from the Roxbury PTO!

What We Have Been Up To:

The PTO has been meeting monthly to help support our students and staff at the Roxbury Village School. As of January we will be meeting on the 2nd Monday of each month at 6pm. We meet virtually—so be on the lookout for a link and join us if you can!

We started the school year off with a Little Caesars Pizza fundraiser, bringing in over \$600!

We were unable to host a Halloween party this year with COVID and all, but hope to bring back the tradition next year. Students did receive a small Halloween gift from the PTO instead.

THANK YOU TO RYAN ZAJAC for organizing the ice skate rink liner replacement and to the community members who made the purchase. The school has a large variety of skates in assorted sizes. We recently had the skates sharpened by Mark Gerdes—so they are ready to be used! Just before the holidays, the PTO purchased small appreciation gifts for all teachers and staff at the school.

What's to Come:

- The PTO is working on creating a wish tree list for teachers to add things they could use in their classroom. The PTO hopes to purchase some of these items and the list will also be shared with the community.
- For January, we are holding a month-long bottle drive with Randy (at the store) and proceeds will go towards a community day at the ice rink. Drop off your redeemable bottles at the the Roxbury Country Store this month!
- The PTO has been in contact with a few seed companies and are hoping to get a Spring Seed Fundraiser going mid-winter.
- This spring we hope to help get students on an outdoor field trip somewhere fun!
- Roxbury Village School is also in need of volunteers to sort books, etc. If you may be interested, please email the PTO at roxburyppto@gmail.com as we are trying to organize a volunteer list and can guide you towards the application process.

We are always looking for new faces to join our monthly meetings, please contact us for more information!

THANK YOU and HAPPY NEW YEAR

from the Roxbury Village School PTO 

Visit our Town website for official information on the COVID-19 pandemic.
www.roxburyvt.org/resources-vt/covid-19-resources/

Roxbury Park Development Committee

At the start of 2021 a Roxbury Donor Fund Committee was appointed by the Roxbury Selectboard. The goal of the Committee was to solicit the funds from the Roxbury community to facilitate the purchase of land across from the Roxbury School and turn the property into a park to be enjoyed by the Roxbury community and the visiting public.

In a few short months, thanks to the persistent effort of the Roxbury Donor Fund Committee and the generosity of many of the citizens and friends of Roxbury, the funds were raised to purchase the land, which is now owned by the town of Roxbury.

Following the acquisition of the land, the Roxbury Donor Fund Committee was transformed by the Selectboard into the Roxbury Park Development Committee and the Roxbury Donor Fund became the Roxbury Park Development Fund.

The goal of the Roxbury Park Development Committee is to transform the purchased land into an attractive functional park for year-round use. It is anticipated that the park will have a meandering path with picnic tables and benches, a gazabo, life size chess set and a ping pong table. There will be screening shrubbery, flower gardens along the path and a bike stand for bikers young and old to take a break from their strenuous exercise and perhaps enjoy lunch in the park.

Because the Committee relies on donated funds and grants, progress in park development will depend on our ability to attract help and resources. Our landscape architect, committee member Dotti Guiffre has already been successful in having her project "Lanterns in the Park" funded by AARP. Some of the funds will be used to purchase accessible seating for the park.

Recently the Roxbury Park Development Committee was enlarged by the Roxbury Selectboard to 5 members with the addition of Elizabeth Carney and James Rogler. It is the Committee's intention to transform the acquired land into a functioning park to be enjoyed by all this summer.

As we prioritize our to-do list for spring 2022, we would like to identify individuals with some grant writing experience or who are comfortable soliciting funds for materials or the planned installations. Other activities on our list include donating time and /or machinery for transporting trees and shrubs, planting flowers, removing grass, and helping with the circular pathways.

continued next column...

Roxbury Volunteer Fire Department

RVFD Passes the Leadership Baton

Election of officers was held during the final 2021 meeting of the Roxbury Volunteer Fire Department (RVFD). The leadership baton of chief was passed to Mike Dickinson by Tim Martin, who has served in that role for twenty-three years. Clarence Baker is now assistant chief, Tim Martin is treasurer and Don Randall continues as secretary.

Mike and Clarence bring many years of experience and training to their new positions. Mike has been an RVFD member for ten years and also serves on the Northfield Volunteer Fire Department. He has achieved certification as a Fire Fighter II through the Vermont Department of Public Safety Division of Fire Safety. Clarence Baker first joined the RVFD in 1971. The Roxbury Volunteer Fire Department sincerely thanks Tim Martin for his many years of leadership during which he guided firehall, equipment and vehicle upgrades in a fiscally responsible manner. The RVFD welcomes Mike and Clarence into their new roles!

Fire and Carbon Monoxide Safety Reminders from RVFD

Smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) alarms are essential in all homes, along with proper maintenance of these warning devices. Install alarms on every level of your home, including near all sleeping locations and the basement. Check the manufacture date on your alarms and replace the units when needed. Replacements should be a photoelectric style that is UL listed. Test the alarms monthly and replace batteries twice each year. Vacuum the outer surface of the alarm periodically to avoid false alarms.

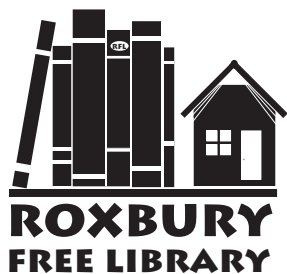
In addition to alarms, practice an escape plan with the residents of your home. If an alarm sounds, have all people and pets go outside to your planned meeting place and call 9-1-1. 🏠

"Roxbury Park" continued ...

For those of you who have already helped the members of the Roxbury Park Development Committee, we are truly grateful, and for those of you who would like to help and are waiting on the sidelines, we can provide you with an opportunity to contribute to the success of the Roxbury Park Project. Give us a call, email us (roxburytown@vt.org), or come to a meeting and provide your enthusiastic input and support.

See you in the Park,

The Roxbury Park Development Committee: Ed Carney, Elizabeth Carney, Dotti Guiffre, James Rogler and Craig Sullivan 🏠



Roxbury Free Library Notes

Happy New Year Roxbury!

We're looking forward to what 2022 will bring. How many new stories will be shared and how many old ones discovered for the first time? Stick with us and find out.

Days before this issue went to print we received our award of ~\$1,000 in children's print materials for the RFL collection. By early January all those new materials will be out and on the shelves ready to go home with you. How exciting!

Assuming the weather is still cooperating, we will have a new story skate setup around the community ice rink by the time you are reading this. Be sure to check it out. You can even borrow kids' ice skates to go with you if you call the RFL in advance. We have great news for you if you haven't been utilizing our digital movie streaming services and you tend to binge-watch series. Hoopla is now offering a binge pass to access some of their digital content in binge fashion. Now, some complete TV mini-series and magazine titles can be borrowed all at once. The best news is that it doesn't exceed your normal limit of monthly borrows!

During much of this issue's coverage period many of you will be working on tax filings. Though we don't offer tax guidance, we do offer access to computers, the internet, and free copies of the most common forms used to file personal taxes. Check in advance to ensure we have ready the form you need. Please let us know if you have any questions or if we can offer any other resources related to your tax filings.

We wish you all a safe and healthy 2022. Let the RFL help you fill up the year with great information and entertainment.

Stay in touch and Happy New Year from the RFL crew,
Lisa, Caitlyn, and Ryan 🏠

Did you know you can access all these services at our little library?

- Over 8,000 books to borrow, plus more through interlibrary loan
- Puzzles, games, DVDs and crafting patterns you can take home
- A Digital Library of almost a million resources, including books, audio books, movies and music
- Free passes to Vermont Museums and Vermont State Parks
- Free access to over 500 online classes
- Free WiFi hotspot, 24/7, no password required
- Between 100 and 200 free books distributed to Roxbury children every year
- Computer tablet to use or borrow
- Public computers
- Research and reference help from staff
- Free programs offered year-round, on a variety of topics (both in-person and by Zoom)
- Help using computers and other technology
- Printing, scanning and fax services

A person using the internet connection to explore new job opportunities

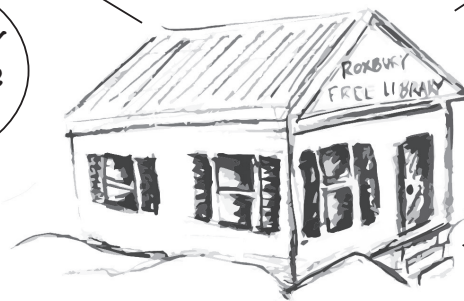
A teen using the computer to work on a college application

The librarian helping a senior citizen research family history

A family borrowing books to read and DVDs to watch at home

Someone downloading an audio book to listen to while commuting to work

Hmmm, I wonder who is using the library today?



Kids doing puzzles and reading books after school

The Roxbury Free Library is a valuable resource for everyone!

The Newsy always welcomes new contributors. Please let us know if you have anything you'd like to share with the community and we can get it into the next issue. Send questions and content to librarian@roxburyfreelibrary.org.

Roxbury Newsy

PO Box 95

Roxbury, VT 05669

Roxbury Website

www.roxburyvt.org

As we greet a new year, I just wanted to remind everyone that once the final 2021 Minutes have been approved, all 2021 Selectboard Minutes and Agendas will be archived and available through the link at the bottom of the web page, <https://roxburyvt.org/our-government-roxbury-vt/agendas-and-minutes/roxbury-selectboard-agendas-minutes/>.

All 2021 meeting Minutes from other Commissions will be archived under their respective subpages, from the page, <https://roxburyvt.org/our-government-roxbury-vt/agendas-and-minutes/>. Committees and Commissions who provide Minutes should get them to Tammy/Britney so I can post them.

Just a reminder, the website is where Selectboard agendas are available first, not Front Porch Forum. I only add them there as a backup. If I lose my marbles and forget to post the agenda on FPF, head to the homepage of the website, and the Government/Agendas & Minutes/Selectboard page.

Questions, ideas on the website, or spot a mistake? (Yep, it happens, believe me!) Have a new business in Roxbury or changes to your existing business? Let me know. I will add/update the listing on the Our Businesses page. Feel free to drop me a line! Tatiana at roxburyvtweb@gmail.com.

Your Webmaster hopes all of you had a restful, happy holiday season and hopes that 2022 brings you continued good health, success, and whatever you desire! 🏠
