

A Discussion on Voter Options for Repurposing the Roxbury Village School

**By: Roxbury Selectboard
Submitted on 17-Dec-24**

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Purpose

The Selectboard has had many discussions at our meetings with the public and amongst its members about buying back the Roxbury Village School (RVS) in the near future. This is pending an official selectboard vote for the \$1 as per the original Merger Agreement. We are glad to get ownership of the Town Hall, but we are also keen to seek advisory guidance from residents on what to do with the rest of the building and land.

At Town Meeting on Tuesday March 4th, 2025, Roxbury voters will be asked to make their voices heard on a series of articles related to the disposition of RVS. The purpose of this paper is to provide everyone with as much information in advance as we currently have. This paper contains background, current options and the various supporting documents surrounding this all important topic.

Anticipated Article questions, as of the writing of this paper, are:

- ARTICLE X: Should the Town of Roxbury, pursuant to the terms of the Montpelier Roxbury Unified Union School District Article of Agreement, accept the conveyance of the Roxbury Village School property? (Advisory, Non-binding article.)
- ARTICLE XX: If the Town of Roxbury accepts conveyance of the Roxbury Village School property, should the Town of Roxbury:
 - a) Sell the Roxbury Village School property while retaining a portion for the Town's use;
 - b) Consolidate municipal functions at the Roxbury Village School property and sell or lease other Town buildings that may become unused or vacant as a result, such as the Library, Community Hall, Historical Society, or the Town Office;
 - c) Lease some or all of the Roxbury Village School property to one or more tenants? (Advisory, Non-binding article)
- ARTICLE XXX: If the Town of Roxbury accepts conveyance of the Roxbury Village School property, shall the Town appropriate \$_____ for estimated property-related expenses?

If after reading this paper you have any suggestions, comments, questions or concerns please feel free to email the Selectboard at: roxburytown@roxburyvt.org

Overview

As we all know, the school budget property tax chaos of Spring 2024 caused the Montpelier Roxbury School Board (MRSB), over the course of 2 or 3 weeks, to move to close the Roxbury Village School (RVS). This option was available to them as part of the Merger Agreement that Roxbury agreed to back in 2018.

Prior to the first budget failing at Town Meeting in March 2024, the school board had committed to having a Committee study the ongoing feasibility of RVS, but after that first budget failed, closing RVS was put forth as an acceptable option to cut costs. The MRSB chose to take that option.

In response, the Roxbury Selectboard chose to file suit against the MRSB based on the fact that the MRSB Annual meeting (information session) was held on the same day, in fact after, the polls had opened. As such it was argued that this act was not in accordance with Vermont State statutes and meant voters went to the polls with insufficient information. Just prior to the suit being heard, the school board held a special meeting where they passed this resolution:

NOW, THEREFORE IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the Montpelier Roxbury School District Board finds and states that any errors, omissions, or defects arising from actions not conducted in accordance with 17 V.S.A. § 2680(h) at the March 5, 2024 Annual Meeting of the Montpelier Roxbury School District were the result of oversight, inadvertence, or mistake; we therefore vote to validate the action of the qualified voters at the March 5, 2024 Annual Meeting approving Article 4 (capital reserve fund), Article 5 (board compensation), and Article 6 (audited fund balance), and rejecting Article 3 (budget).

This hastily adopted resolution satisfied the Court and although the Court did not agree with our objections nor find in our favor, it did agree that significant and irreparable harm has been caused to the community of Roxbury.

Students completed the school year at RVS into June 2024 and then starting in September 2024, all Roxbury students began commuting daily to/from Montpelier schools, including the Union Elementary School (UES).

The MRSB continues to maintain the RVS facility and the MRSB has continued support for the afterschool program known as Bridges which operates 3 days a week (Tue-Thu). This program is said to have about 40 students participating at a cost of \$15 per child/per day. To their credit, the MRSB does seem to appreciate the tremendous value Roxbury parents see in this program's continuation. Pre-Town Meeting March 2025, it has been stated that funding for Bridges at RVS is in the school budget through June 2026.

Summer 2024 to December 2024

On July 1st, 2024 the newly expanded Roxbury Selectboard of 5 people was seated. One of the first steps taken by the new Board was to draft and send questions to the MRSB to try and ascertain their plans for RVS ([Attachment 1](#)). The Selectboard recognized that the decision was ultimately theirs to make.

Through the Fall of 2024 the MRSB pursued a course of developing and reviewing options for their continued use of the building ([Attachment 2](#)).

Whilst the MRSB was working through their process, an independent group of citizens here in Roxbury banded together to explore possible uses for the building. This group chose to operate as a non-official committee, unconstrained by Open Meeting Law requirements and called themselves The Committee for the Future of the RVS Building (CFRB). At their initial meeting ideas for 25 scenarios in 4 main topics were put forth ([Attachment 3](#)).

An option that had been mentioned early on was using RVS for Senior Housing but that idea was set aside after it was reported there was no funding available for this. The Selectboard Chair subsequently looked into this for the Board and after a series of inquiries ultimately had a 30+ minute conversation with Ms. Angie Harbin, Executive Director at Downstreet.org on Wednesday 25-Sep-24.

Downstreet is a non-profit operating out of Barre with a focus on community housing in Central Vermont. It was explained that they match up donors & investors with projects. Ms. Harbin confirmed there was no funding for Senior Housing at this time and said that the issue with RVS was primarily the rural location with its lack of public transportation and the demographics that they as an organization prefer to house. Downstreet investors prefer projects which focus on subsidized housing as vacancies are almost non-existent with a guaranteed cash flow. She foresaw the need for a mix of renovations and construction as typically projects are successful when the number of units exceed 20 or 25. Altogether, she did not feel this project would be easy to fund, if at all.

During the months of August, September & October the CFRB met many times and produced a final report ([Attachment 4](#)) which was presented to the Selectboard at the Nov 4th meeting.

The final report basically presented two options. Option 1 was to have the MRSB continue status quo with operating the building and afterschool program. Option 2 was to have the Roxbury Selectboard or MRSB sign Letters of Intent to enter into leases with a childcare operator from Randolph ([Attachment 5](#)) and a private school from Roxbury ([Attachment 6](#)).

On Oct 30th, the co-chairs of CFRB met with the MRPS Superintendent and the MRSB Vice Chair, prior to presenting their report, to pitch the idea of the school board entering into leases.

At the Selectboard meeting on Nov 18th the Board agreed that a letter would be sent to the MRSB requesting they consider refraining from entering into any leases ([Attachment 7](#)). This decision was made so that Roxbury voters would not be locked into anything before they had a chance to voice their guidance. This was based on actions the Selectboard had taken at a special meeting held on Oct 30th to discuss budgets. In that meeting we had discussed the potential need to add funds to the General Government budget should RVS be offered back to the Town. It was agreed that voters needed to tell us if they wanted us to buy the building and if so, to also add monies to the budget to cover operating expenses.

The MRSB made their final decision at a meeting on Nov 20th, 2024. The MRSB voted on the question of whether they had a continued educational use for the building in their portfolio. The Board voted that they did not. This opened the door to offering RVS back to the Town.

The MRSB letter ([Attachment 8](#)) was received on Wednesday Dec 4th and the Town has until April 4th, well after Town Meeting, to let the MRSB know of our decision.

On Friday Dec 6th a conversation was had between the Selectboard Chair and a board member of the childcare center out of Randolph. The conversation was not what was expected. It was learned that:

- the childcare center is actively looking for temporary space for a 3-5 year age bracket program for Orange County parents
- whilst RVS could be a good fit, the travel distance would be great for their Orange County parents, so they would prefer something closer to Randolph Center
- they do not think they would need the 40 spaces as proposed
- I asked and they will consider running a program for Roxbury children, but only if one of their Board members agrees to take on that project

These new set of facts should be considered when reading through the CFRB final report and Option #3 below.

Childcare is a good use for a portion of RVS, but we may wish to seek out a program offering the Town a more stable and long-term relationship. Having said that, as of Dec 12th, a site visit in the near future is planned with a Board member or two from Lil Sunshine and we will explore more at that time, their willingness to run a Roxbury child focused program for us.

School Diagram and Uses:

A diagram of RVS ([Attachment 9](#)) is provided for your reference in the list of attachments. Looking at this diagram the reader should know the following:

Current use - Room 3 behind the Town Hall is used by the Bridges afterschool program

Proposed use – Rooms 10,11, 013 and restrooms 09 & 010 are licensed for a childcare operation. It is envisioned a locking door in the hallway to the left when you enter the building through the main entrance will be constructed for their security purposes.

Proposed use – Rooms 5, 6, 7, 03, 9 and restrooms 06 & 07 (shared) are proposed use by the Roxbury private school.

Options

Listed in no order of importance, the Selectboard is asking that voters consider three possible options for RVS.

- 1) keep the Town Hall at a minimum and sell the rest of the building and land
- 2) consolidate Roxbury municipal functions & costs under the single RVS roof: the Library, the Town Office, the Community Hall / Senior Center & the Historical Society. Then either sell or lease out the smaller buildings left empty by taking this option.
- 3) keeping the Town Hall and commercial kitchen as available Town resources, lease out some or all of the remaining space

The Selectboard has opted to not yet spend funds on determining the estimated cash value of Town bldgs. Having buildings properly assessed by a third party is said to cost something like \$3k-\$5k per building. As such, the option discussions below are purposefully somewhat high level.

The Merger document provides that if the Town does not take the building back then the school district is free to sell it to someone else. While this is clearly an option, the Selectboard feels it is not in the best interests of the Roxbury taxpayer. As such, it has not been put forth as an option.

Option 1: Keep the Town Hall at a minimum and sell the rest of the building and land

Discussion Notes:

We do know that RVS is carried on the school's books for insurance purposes at \$2.7M. Our insurance broker says the same firm that assessed Roxbury's buildings recently for VLCT also did RVS at the same time. He believes the school district's 2025 insurance value for RVS may be \$3.3M.

There is a big difference between the insurance value, which is what the insurance company will pay to rebuild the structure, verses the actual cash value, which is what someone would be willing to pay you for the land and structure.

Having said that, a traffic study over the Memorial Day weekend logged over 10k vehicles passing by the Tennis Camp heading south. The location near the intersection of Rt 12A and Warren Mountain Road has value. What that value actually is remains to be understood...\$750k, \$1M, \$1.25M...more?...less?

Selling could unlock capital which could be conservatively invested to generate ongoing cash in the form of interest income for the Town. Or that capital could be used to buy down the cost for a new Town Garage or other infrastructure improvements. Selling could also potentially open the property up to generating cash to the Town via property taxes in expanding our grand list.

Issues/Questions:

- a. do we have obligations for existing non-school users tied into water and septic?
 - if yes, do we need to update policies and/or ordinances as now Town owned utility?
 - if no, what does that mean for existing non-school users as well as the Village wastewater system being studied for possibly the same area as the existing school system near the Tennis Camp?
- b. decisions would have to be made for having water and septic for Town Hall or not?
- c. if we also keep the classroom behind the Town Hall, do we relocate kitchen & bathrooms into portions of that space too?
- d. can the playground & raised beds be relocated to the Garner property or the Third Branch Park?

Pros:

- a. retains use of Town Hall for Red Cross emergencies, various Town Meetings and other functions
- b. could generate some amount of cash for investment and annual cash flow
- c. could generate some amount of cash for buying down the cost of other infrastructure improvements
- d. could generate some amount of annual cash flow via property taxes by growing grand list
- e. lower insurance costs as opposed to insuring entire RVS facility
- f. lower overhead
- g. no management of tenants
- h. current real estate market is good

Cons

- a. once sold, we lose control over uses
- b. in addition to the normal selling costs of a real estate broker fee, appraisal fee, inspection fee and repairs as required by any inspection, if sold within 5 years of taking ownership, we would owe the School District \$180,000 for upgrades per the merger agreement and the answers to our questions in July
- c. if bought by a non-profit the Town could be denied full realization of property taxes *
- d. renovation costs will be incurred depending on answers to Questions b. & c. above
- e. lose area for playground and potential community gardens
- f. eliminates possibility of perhaps becoming a school again
- g. high cost to rebuild a school if one was ever needed, could probably exceed \$20M
- h. if buildings remain attached then little say over appearance of non-Town portion, or use of non-Town portion, special buyer who wants to be attached may be hard to find

** Unless exempted under specific requirements, non-profit-owned properties do indeed pay full property taxes. Only public buildings, churches or other pious uses, and fully charitable uses are exempt such as active churches, public schools or charitable entities that serve the public as a whole.*

"For the public, pious, or charitable use exemption to apply under the law, the property must meet all the following conditions:

- *the property must be dedicated unconditionally to public use;*
- *the primary use must directly benefit an indefinite class of persons who are part of the public, and must also confer a benefit on society as a result of the benefit conferred on the persons directly served; and*
- *the property must be owned and operated on a not-for-profit basis.*

See Vermont law here: [32 V.S.A. § 3802\(4\)](#)

Option 2: Consolidate Roxbury municipal functions & costs under the single RVS roof: the Library, the Town Office, the Community Hall / Senior Center & the Historical Society. Then either sell or lease out the smaller buildings left empty by taking this option.

Discussion Notes:

The Town could use this opportunity to consolidate the functions and costs of four buildings into one.

For the Library, consolidation could mean expanded space and no longer storing books in the attic of the Community Hall whilst also merging into one space their collection. The library was given thousands of titles by the school when they pulled out which Ryan and his crew have been diligently cataloging and assessing. Consolidating this new bonanza into the current Free Library building's existing collection seems a challenge.

For the Town Office, consolidation could mean expanded space for the ever-growing collection of documents being generated in the ordinary course of business. Yes, it would mean constructing a replacement vault, but I'm told by a past-selectman and builder of the current vault, that is not a big problem...just a concrete box.

For the Historical Society it would mean having their collection of items, pictures & memorabilia stored in a more controlled environment with heat & electricity. I've been told by a resident that one day their safe will end up in the basement. Perhaps that building could be relocated as an addition onto RVS on a proper foundation and the land it sits on sold to a neighbor(?).

For the Community Hall / Senior Center it could mean forgoing the expense of upgrading a building that needs a lot of work. Yes, we have recently been awarded monies to make energy efficiency upgrades and also make it ADA compliant, but perhaps that outlay of cash and time can be redirected or avoided entirely.

Selling some or all of these smaller buildings would be akin to selling RVS. Sales help us realize capital and possibly generates annual property taxes and an increase to the grand list.

Leasing some or all these buildings mean we retain ownership for possible future use. We would also have better control in the use of these buildings in the Village to be offices, homes or businesses.

Issues/Questions:

- a. Town office and Community Hall share a septic...need to relocate or replace/resize?
- b. Town office and Community Hall share water from the Town Garage...how impacted by a sale or lease?
- c. can the warmth & hominess of the Free Library be recreated within RVS?
- d. is there value in relocating the Historical Society building as an attachment to RVS or as a standalone structure somewhere on the RVS grounds?
- e. would a full-time property manager be required or could this function be a split-task for a new hire in the Highway Dept?
- f. do we have obligations for existing non-school users tied into water and septic?
 - if yes, do we need to update policies and/or ordinances as now Town owned utility?

Pros:

- a. more space & storage for the Library collection and Town office materials
- b. better environmental conditions for storing historical Town items
- c. generally, more space for Town functions both indoors & out
- d. eliminate costs associated with improvements to the Community Hall
- e. consolidate/lower costs using one newer building with perhaps newer & better systems
- f. easier to manage one building
- g. personal safety improved for singular people sitting alone in small buildings
- h. Town Hall & commercial-type kitchen remain resources for all residents
- i. selling the smaller buildings generates cash to the Town as well as possible annual property taxes depending on buyer **
- j. buyers or lessees for the smaller buildings might be easier to find
- k. leasing the small buildings could generate cash flow for the Town
- l. selling or leasing could see buildings used to their full potential...potential professional offices, housing or business uses
- m. small changes to smaller buildings would not potentially change the character of the Village as opposed to the large RVS facility

Cons:

- a. leasing the small buildings and not selling, increases property management needs and Town govt may need to manage or hire a property manager
- b. renovation costs incurred for a new vault, the possible relocation of the Historical building and other Town uses

- c. eliminates possibility of perhaps becoming a school again
- d. less taxable sq ft as compared to the existing buildings (total sq ft in school vs combined existing smaller buildings)
- e. potentially not enough space for other services or needs (afterschool or daycare)
- f. potential loss of use of existing Town buildings if sold
- g. limited identity for each Town entity

*** Unless exempted under specific requirements, non-profit-owned properties do indeed pay full property taxes. Only public buildings, churches or other pious uses, and fully charitable uses are exempt such as active churches, public schools or charitable entities that serve the public as a whole.*

"For the public, pious, or charitable use exemption to apply under the law, the property must meet all the following conditions:

- *the property must be dedicated unconditionally to public use;*
- *the primary use must directly benefit an indefinite class of persons who are part of the public, and must also confer a benefit on society as a result of the benefit conferred on the persons directly served; and*
- *the property must be owned and operated on a not-for-profit basis.*

See Vermont law here: [32 V.S.A. § 3802\(4\)](#)

Option 3: Keeping the Town Hall and commercial kitchen as available Town resources, lease out some or all of the remaining space

Discussion Notes:

The plan, such as Option 2 put forth in the CFRB report, fits into this option. The Town retains ownership of the building and leases out some or most of the space. In this way the Town maintains control over the building appearance and tenant uses as well as the water and wastewater systems. The goal here would be to generate enough revenue to cover operating costs and to build up a reserve to help defray the periodic maintenance every building requires over time.

Issues/Questions:

- a. would a full-time property manager be required or could this function be a task for a new hire in the Highway Dept?
- b. do we have obligations for existing non-school users tied into water and septic?
 - a. if yes, do we need to update policies and/or ordinances as now Town owned utility?

Pros:

- a. potential to cover all operating costs for the RVS building
- b. Town maintains control of tenants and uses
- c. shared use of space
- d. Roxbury residents may make use for offices or businesses and so not have to leave Town for work
- e. potential to attract new homeowners and cash to Roxbury
- f. Town Hall & commercial-type kitchen remain available resources for all residents
- g. most sq ft revenue as compared to Option 2
- h. tenants may fill a community need by the services they provide
- i. rental real estate market is good now

Cons:

- a. Town takes on the responsibility & operating costs for another Town building (insurance, etc...)
- b. risk to taxpayers by having vacancies not generating cash flow
- c. Town Hall could remain vacant and unused most of the time

- d. Town govt may need to manage or hire a property manager
- e. tenants spaces fall into disrepair during or after lease is up
- f. higher legal costs managing leases, especially if turnover high

Attachment 1

23-Jul-24

Mr. Jim Murphy, Chair
MRPS School Board
Montpelier, VT 05602

RE: Roxbury Village School Questions

Prior to any decision being handed down by the Board of the Montpelier-Roxbury School District (MRSB) with regards to the Roxbury Village School (RVS) property, the Town of Roxbury Selectboard is seeking to better understand what your plans are and what the potential costs to us may be.

In looking at the approved Articles of Agreement for the merger of the Roxbury and Montpelier school districts, a few questions come up that we would appreciate your answers to.

- 1) What is happening with any MRSB committee or group in terms of the fate of the RVS facility?
 - a. Who on the MRSB or on their behalf is working on this issue?
 - b. Who is/are the decision maker(s)?
 - c. What is your working timeline and when do you expect a decision to be made?
- 2) If the MRSB does offer the property back to Roxbury, the Town must take it subject to all "encumbrances of record" (easements, liens, mortgages, etc.).

Therefore, to better understand these potential liabilities, please provide details as to what if any outstanding bonds, notes, grants or other encumbrances currently exist on the RVS facility.

- 3) Should Roxbury buy back the property and subsequently elect to sell the real property prior to five years of ownership, then Roxbury would have to compensate the Unified District for all capital improvements and renovations completed after the formation of the Unified District and prior to the sale to Roxbury.

Therefore, to better understand these potential costs, please provide details as to what the “capital improvements and renovations completed after the formation of the Unified District and prior to the sale to the Town” have been to-date.

- 4) If the MRSB does offer the property back to Roxbury and should the Town move ahead with the buy-back, then the Town would assume the ongoing costs for the facility.

Therefore, to better understand these potential costs, please provide details as to the vendors used and what the historical ongoing facility costs have been for regular items such as insurance, heating fuel, electricity, generator and HVAC costs, etc...

- 5) Members of the Roxbury Selectboard would like an opportunity to walk through the property and buildings with someone from the District who is familiar with the facility and its workings.

We would like to understand the maintenance required and the associated maintenance routine currently being followed for the building, HVAC, water system and the wastewater system.

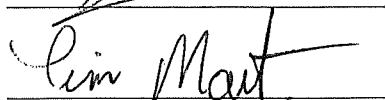
- 6) The Roxbury Selectboard would also like to request an opportunity for the Town of Roxbury to arrange for a professional, third party, inspection/appraisal of the facility and its systems.


Thank you in advance for your assistance with these requests and we look forward to your reply.


Regards,

Town of Roxbury Selectboard

 Rene Bouchard, Chair

 Tim Martin, Vice Chair

 Nathan Donahue

 David McShane

1. What is happening with any MRPS committee in terms of the fate of the RVS facility?
The school board appointed a RVS transition committee. You can access all documents pertaining to the committee [here](#). This committee was charged with discussion regarding the future of the building. It has done so in a limited capacity and feel that this discussion would be better suited for the school board as whole to work on.
 - a. Who is working on this issue?
 - i. Rhett Williamns, Lyn Turcotte, and Scott Lewins are the acting board members on the committee. In addition, school staff include the superintendent, community liaison, director of SEL & wellness, three teachers (2 who previously worked at RVS, 1 working at MSMS), two Rox community members - Amber Wodtli & Hannah Zajac, one Rox student - Diego Soria, and two Montpelier residents - Vic Guadango and Katie Stevens-Favorite
 - ii. In addition, the Superintendent and Buildings & Grounds Director have met with Judy Lusk and Tom Frazier. I believe the two of them are attempting to start a committee about the future of the building. It appears that it might be beneficial to make an official committee through the Selectboard so there are not multiple groups working on the same question.
 - b. What are the decision makers?
 - i. Ultimately, the School Board and the Roxbury Selectboard
 - c. What is your working timeline and when do you expect a decision to be made?
 - i. The school board has not created a timeline for decision making. The public budget discussions begin in December. I would imagine this influences the timeline.
2. If MRPS does offer the property back to Rox, the town must take it subject to all “encumbrances of record” (easements, liens, mortgages, etc...). To better understand these potential liabilities, please provide details as to what, if any, outstanding bonds, notes, grants, or other encumbrances currently exist on the RVS facility.
There are no easements, liens, bonds, notes, or mortgages on the property.
There is an agreement with the neighbor for use of the driveway. I believe they also have an option to add onto the septic. There is also an obligation by the building owner to supply water to Frazier's, library, and church. This was in exchange for an easement to run the septic line through their property down to the leach fields by the tennis courts.
3. Should Roxbury buy back the property and subsequently elect to sell the real property prior to five years of ownership, Roxbury would have to compensate the district for all capital improvements and renovations completed after the formation of the district and prior to the sale to Roxbury. To better understand these potential costs, provide details as to what the “capital improvements and renovations completed after the formation of the Unified District and prior to the sale to the Town” have been to date.
Capital improvements:

Bathroom renovations: \$90K

Heat Pumps: \$75K

Kitchen: not included as most of the cost was equipment and code upgrades

Remote DDC access: \$25K

Generally, the building is in good condition with costs mainly associated with ongoing maintenance: paint, flooring, and ceilings...

4. If MRPS does offer the property back to Roxbury and should the Town move ahead with the buy-back, then the Town would assume the ongoing costs for the facility. Provide details as to the vendors used and what the historical ongoing facility costs have been for regular items such as insurance, heating fuel, electricity, generator, HVAC costs, etc....

Oil (Gillespie): approximately 4,500gl/yr.

Electricity (Green Mtn. and off-site solar): \$10,000/yr.

Generator service (Brook Field Service) \$500/yr.

Boilers (clean and service) (Johnson Controls): \$2,500/yr.

Water testing (Presidential Water): \$1,200/yr.

Cleaning supplies (Various): \$3,500/yr.

Lawns (Various): 2-3hr. \$150/per

Pest Control (JC Ehrlich): \$1,400/yr.

Trash and Recycle (Mayer's) \$4,000/yr.

Septic (Silloway): \$1,600/yr.

Plumbing (Roto-Rooter): \$1,000/yr.

Sidewalk snow removal (Various): \$750/mo.

Contractors used in the building

- Electrical, Roux Electric
- Mechanical, Johnson Controls
- Heat Pumps, Alpine Services
- Fencing, Round Hill Fencing
- Playground Equipment, Pettinelli
- Carpentry, Paine Mountain
- Plumbing, Gould Plumbing and Heating
- Generator, Brook Field Service
- Water Testing, Presidential Water
- Fuel Oil, Gillespie Fuels
- Cooking Gas, Gillespie
- Power, Green Mountain Power
- Fire Alarm, Johnson Simplex
- Flooring, Delair's Flooring

Answers Received from MRSB – Libby Bonesteel
 From Our Letter to Jim Murphy on 23-Jul-24
 as at 14-Aug-24

(from Rene) The following grid is based on the above figures/estimates:

Vendor	Service	What	Estimated	Estimated
			Cost	Total
Gillespie	Oil	4500gl/yr	3.00	13,500.00
Green Mtn Power	Electricity	& off-site solar		10,000.00
Brook Field Service	Generator Service			500.00
Johnson Controls	Boilers - Clean & Service			2,500.00
Presidential Water	Water Testing			1,200.00
Various	Cleaning Supplies			3,500.00
Various	Lawns 2-3 hrs 150/per	26 wk?	150	3,900.00
JC Ehrlich	Pest Control			1,400.00
Mayers	Trash & Recycle			4,000.00
Silloway	Septic			1,600.00
Roto-Rooter	Plumbing			1,000.00
Various	Snow - Sidewalk snow removal	750/mth (6 mths?)	750	4,500.00
				47,600.00

In this chart, I assumed \$3/gal for oil, 26 weeks of mowing and 6 months of shoveling.

Attachment 2

Hypothetical Uses for Roxbury Village School

MRPS School Board Meeting
Updated Presentation from 9/4/24
Presented on 10/2/24



What are the potential educational uses for the building?

Hypothetical Scenarios

Benefits
Needs
Potential Costs
Additional Information

1. Magnet-type school
 2. Regional Boces for mental health supports
 3. Remote site for Central Vermont Career Center (CVCC)
 4. Central Office
 5. Community Center
-

Historic Refresher

1. Because of budget pressures caused by new VT statutes influencing FY25 budget & beyond, the school board decided to bus elementary students from Roxbury to UES this fall.
 - a. This was an ~\$1.5 million decrease to local budget.
2. The Roxbury building is hosting an afterschool enrichment program.
3. MRPS will maintain building for the year.
 - a. Costs ~\$60,000 for building upkeep w/ afterschool program
 - b. Costs ~\$85,000 for enrichment program



Magnet-Type School

Potential Benefits:

- Meet community values & desires
- Innovative, alternative programming options
- Students in the building on a daily basis

Potential Needs/Drawbacks:

- Significant planning
 - ◆ Re-prioritize focus
- Community input on focus of school
- New staff w/ expertise
- Additional transportation

- ★ Sustainability School (adolescents)
- ★ STEAM School (adolescents)
- ★ [Bilingual School](#) (elementary)

Potential Costs:

- Significant monetary investment
 - ◆ Staffing (1 teacher = ~\$100K)
 - ◆ Renovation, Furniture, & curricular resource needs
 - ◆ Training

This option would require MRPS to add the money, plus some, back into the local budget. Costs would reach over \$2 million to accomplish this option.

Regional BOCES for student mental health [\(Act 168\)](#)

Potential Benefits:

- Provide needed mental health services for students to the region
- Collaboration across region
- Alleviate pressure on local schools to provide acute, immediate mental health services

Potential Needs/Drawbacks:

- Significant planning with regional partners
- New staff w/ expertise
 - ◆ Hard to come by
- Start up grant from state

Potential Costs:

- Monetary investment shared across the region
 - ◆ Staffing (1 teacher = ~\$100K)
 - ◆ Furniture & curricular resource needs
 - ◆ Training
 - ◆ Additional business office support

This option would require MRPS to add the money back into the local budget and would take significant time to get off the ground. Regional superintendents have already stated Roxbury is not a good location for this type of endeavor.

Rent Space to CVCC

Potential Benefits:

- CVCC has stated they need additional space
- Potential revenue opportunity in rental income

Potential Costs:

- 1 time monetary investment for renovation
- Additional transportation costs for sending districts

Potential Needs/Drawbacks:

- Significant renovation to accommodate technical education needs
- Additional transportation options
- Location

CVCC has not expressed an interest in RVS. RVS is located nearly an hour away from some sending districts.

Move Central Office to RVS

Potential Benefits:

- Increase space at MHS & MSMS
- CO in one space
- More training space for staff development

Potential Costs:

- 1 time monetary investment for renovation
- Additional mileage costs
- Loss of staff

Potential Needs/Drawbacks:

- Significant renovation to accommodate office needs
- CO staff would be far from every school building & majority of community
- Significant increase to commute time for most CO staff



MRPS Community Center

Potential Benefits:

- Offer daycare to employees
- Increase flexible pathways opportunities for MHS (eg. garden, childcare, senior care, etc..)
- After school enrichment
- Potential revenue

Potential Needs/Drawbacks:

- Location
- New employees w/ specific expertise
- Collaboration w/ town
- Significant planning

Potential Costs:

- 1 time monetary investment for renovation for childcare center
- Additional transportation costs
- New employees
 - ◆ Daycare providers
 - ◆ Building manager
 - ◆ Business office staff
 - ◆ Teachers

It is unlikely the revenue would equal or surpass the expenses.



UPDATE

***answers to board
questions & parameters***

Parameters for Consideration Determined by School Board on 9/18/24

1. Consideration of financial implications, particularly concerning potential property tax increase
2. Use of building meets an unmet need of school district
3. Desires of Roxbury and Montpelier communities



Feedback from Regional Colleagues

Jody Emerson, Superintendent of CVCC (technical school) stated in an email to the Superintendent that she cannot see an immediate use for the school, but did say that she could speak with her board regarding the matter. She has since been quoted in a [Times Argus](#) article as saying, ““It’s not my decision to make,” she [Emerson] said, noting that given its remote location — Roxbury technically isn’t in the region served by CVCC — there was no obvious use for the property.”

Superintendent discussed the idea of a regional center with the superintendents in the Winooski Valley - her regional group.

- Two superintendents said they were willing to discuss it further, however recognized it would take years to plan and that it would only work for their district when there were no snow covered roads.
- Three superintendents believe the location is too far to make any sense for them and were not interested in the idea.
- Two superintendents stated that they have no bandwidth or budget for that type of regional scaled effort and therefore were not interested in pursuing the idea.

Financial Predictions for Potential MRPS Community Center

***Any prediction is dependent on building use. These numbers should be considered as guides only, not real numbers.**

- Annual Costs
 - Facilities Maintenance (highly dependent on amount of daily community use) = ~\$60,000-\$75,000
 - New employees
 - Part time manager of property = ~\$35,000
 - Part time business office staff = ~\$35,000
 - Continued employees
 - Enrichment Staff = ~\$100,000-\$120,000 (dependent on enrollment)
 - Insurance (dependent on use) = ~\$7,000-\$10,000
- Potential Revenue
 - Any use from private organization (eg. private day care provider) = \$45/day
 - 5 days a week, 52 weeks, 8 hours a day = \$93,600/year

Attachment 3

Preliminary breakdown of potential RVS scenarios as suggested in public meetings on July 16 and 18

School/Educational

- preschool
- alternative school
- after-school programs
- rent to or partner with other school
- re-open as public school
- Norwich extension
- private homeschool
- Central VT Career Center rental
- university model (like Bethel)

Food Hub

- community vocation center with cooking, commercial kitchen
- food co-op
- community meals

Town Center

- library
- daycare
- youth center
- community gathering space
- Town offices
- multi-use
- coffee shop
- co-working space
- Roxbury Museum of Natural History
- maintain green space around building

Other

- possible sale of property
- mothball building except Town Hall
- determine operating expense

Attachment 4

Final Report

Committee for the Future of the RVS Building

The Committee for the Future of RVS Building (CFRB) has completed its investigation into the future of the RVS building. The CFRB was formed as an independent committee to make Roxbury aware of the ramifications of the closing of the RVS. The merger agreement that formed the Montpelier Roxbury School District requires the MRPS Board to offer the RVS building back to the Town of Roxbury for \$1.00 should the district not have a use for the building for an educational purpose. Although the district transferred all our students to Montpelier, they have not made a determination as to the district's need for a building. Therefore our committee looked at two possible ways forward for the RVS building.

First is the possibility that the district continues ownership of the building as a space for an after school program and a safe space for pick-up and drop-off of Roxbury students of all ages. This would be the optimal solution, having the district responsible for the continued cost of maintaining the Building. At this point the district has not made that decision.

The second option is that the Town of Roxbury takes ownership of the building. This option requires that the voters of Roxbury vote to buy back the building for \$1.00 when MRPS offers it to the town. The CFRB believes this is the most likely scenario for the RVS building, and is why we have investigated the options that the town might have to support ownership of the building without it being a burden on taxpayers. Many possibilities were considered, including not taking the building when offered or taking the building back and selling it. The committee decided early on that it would not recommend either of those options. The overwhelming opinion of the committee was that the town should take back the building when offered. The RVS building is the centerpiece of our village, of which our town hall is a part, has water and septic systems that serve the school and several landowners, and may be the basis for village wide systems in the future.

The committee looked at many rental scenarios that included remote work space, makerspace, office space and space for a child care provider.

During our deliberations we were presented with two unsolicited options from individuals: one for a child care center for 2 rooms, and an education option for possibly 3 rooms plus an office space. The committee received letters of interest from both parties requesting letters of intent to rent. This is exactly what the committee was hoping would be the outcome of our work. These options were presented to the Selectboard at their November 4th meeting. From the beginning, the overriding interest was to keep kids in the building and to keep the building as it is should the opportunity to have our students back become a reality. This arrangement would allow for both, and the possibility to keep the after school program and a safe landing for kids, without placing an undue burden on the taxpayers.

So what needs to happen? First, the Selectboard needs to request a decision from the MRPS Board as soon as possible. Both of the rental possibilities are time sensitive. Letters of intent need to be offered to them by January 30, 2025. We are asking that the Selectboard make a decision at the November 18, 2024 meeting to move ahead with a meeting with the MRPS board to work out a timeline so the rental options are not lost. If the MRPS board issued a letter of intent to offer the building to the town by a specific date, the Selectboard could offer the potential lessees a letter of intent to rent based on voter approval to take the building back. This would require the Select Board to solidly get behind whichever path of ownership presents itself. We understand that there are a lot of details to be worked out and that takes time, but a commitment can be made with allowance for time to work out the details.

The CFRB urges your cooperation with the school board to make what we have presented a reality. Most school closures result in a building remaining vacant for a number of years and falling into a state of disrepair that many times results in the building being lost forever. We believe that this is a once in a lifetime opportunity and we as a town cannot let it slip away.

Respectfully submitted for your action,

Judy Lusk, Tom Frazier, Amy Barrett, Heather Holter, Jim Rogler, Dotti Guiffre, Don Randall, Mike French, Heidi Albright, Ben Pincus, Nate Donahue

Attachment 5



Lif Sunshine Child Care Center, Inc.
32 No. Main St
Randolph, VT 05060
2010sunshinecc@gmail.com

To whom it may concern on behalf of the Roxbury Village School,

The following is a letter of interest from the Lif Sunshine Child Care Center (LSCCC) for the vacant pre-kindergarten and kindergarten classrooms currently at the Roxbury Village School.

LSCCC is a brand new nonprofit center located in downtown Randolph. Our mission is to provide child-centered, quality care to children of families who live or work in Randolph, Braintree or Brookfield (the Orange Southwest School district). LSCC is committed to providing high quality care to eight infants and 10 toddlers, in an environment that promotes all aspects of development, is evidence based and includes an emphasis on outdoor experiences. In addition to providing a much needed service to families and businesses, we will be working collaboratively with other local organizations, keeping children and families at the heart of our work. We will collaborate with Kimball Public Library and the Randolph Senior Center, to create literacy and intergenerational programs to enhance social-emotional health for both children and seniors.

We officially opened our doors to infants and toddlers under age 3 just last week on October 7th. However, the Board has also been considering options for expanding to include a 3-5 year old program. Although we as a Board are not in a position to commit to renting the space, the timing and opportunity are very exciting to us. We would welcome the opportunity to learn more about the space, rental terms, and timeline for opening.

Thank you for hearing our letter of interest as you consider how to move forward with this community space! Please reach out via email if you have any questions.

Lindsay Kil
Vice President, Lif Sunshine Child Care Center

Attachment 6



Vermont Farm and Forest School
Roxbury, Vermont

www.vermontfarmandforestschool.org

802-261-0258

missa@vermontfarmandforestschool.org

October 29th, 2024

Dear Montpelier-Roxbury Administrators and School Board,

The Vermont Farm and Forest School (VFFS), a VT Recognized Independent School is currently researching a relocation campus for it's K-5th grade day school. This letter is to inquire about the possibility of leasing a portion of the Roxbury Village School beginning August 15th, 2025.

We are in need of three different classrooms, one office/meeting room, and bathroom facilities. A playing field, gardens, and playground are also of need. If the Roxbury Village School would be available for VFFS to lease, we would be looking for a letter of intent to lease by January 31st, 2025.

If this proposal is of interest, we would like to request a meeting to discuss lease terms, finances, and visit the facilities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Warm Regards,

Missa Axelrod, Founder/Director of VFFS

At VFFS, our mission is to embrace academic and social learning through place-based education, while cultivating a long-lasting connection with the community and the natural world.

Attachment 7

18-Nov-24

Mr. Jim Murphy, Chair
and Other MRPS School Board Members
Montpelier, VT 05602

RE: Roxbury Village School Leases

I know that you are considering the future of the RVS building on Wednesday Nov 20th. As you well know, the Roxbury Selectboard is standing by for any decision.

Should you decide status quo is fine for the time being, we are okay with that and Roxbury will continue in stand-by mode. Of primary importance to us as a Board and our school age community is the continued support for the after-school program and the much-needed help it offers Roxbury parents.

Should you decide that you would like to step back from owning RVS at some point in the future, know that the Roxbury Selectboard is requesting that you consider holding off on entering into any lease agreements for the RVS facility.

The Roxbury Selectboard was made aware the other week that the ad-hoc Committee held a meeting with Libby and someone from the school board. The purpose of that meeting I've been told was to request your consideration of their leasing letters. One of those letters specified an action date well before our annual Town Meeting in March.

At our October 30th Selectboard special meeting, before hearing any of this, we agreed to give Town Meeting voters a chance to provide us with guidance.

The Roxbury Selectboard appreciates the report generated by a group of our citizens conveying their opinion for one option. We believe this option is a plan which voters may or may not have become "the plan". We hope you can understand our desire for Roxbury voters at Town Meeting to have multiple options for considering the future use of the building and not just be locked into one.

Thank you for your time.

Best,



Rene J. Bouchard, Chairman
on behalf of the Roxbury Selectboard

Attachment 8

Montpelier Roxbury Public Schools

5 High School Drive, Unit #1, Montpelier, VT 05602

Office: 802-223-9796

Fax: 802-223-9795

www.mrpsvt.org



Our schools are caring, creative, and equitable communities that empower all children to build on their talents and passions to grow into engaged citizens and life-long learners.

TO: Rene Bouchard, Roxbury Select Board Chair

CC: MRPS School Board, Libby Bonesteel

FROM: Jim Murphy, MRPS School Board Chair

December 4, 2024

Rene,

The Montpelier Roxbury Board of School Directors (the “Board”) for the Montpelier Roxbury Public Schools (the “District”) has approved a motion that could lead to the sale of the Roxbury Village School. Under the Articles of Agreement that created the District, the Town of Roxbury has the opportunity to acquire said school for the cost of \$1. The sale is subject to the terms and conditions set out below:

“In the event that, and at such subsequent time as, the Unified District School Board determines, at its discretion, and subject to the school closure provisions of Article 6 (c), that any of the real property, including land and buildings, conveyed to it under the terms of these articles, by the City of Montpelier, and/or its school district and the Town of Roxbury and/or its school district, is or are unnecessary to the continued operation of the Unified District and its educational programs, the Unified District shall offer such real property, for the sum of One U.S. Dollar, and subject to all encumbrances of record, the assumption of a payment of all outstanding bonds and notes and the repayment of any school construction and/or grants as required by Vermont law, to the city or town in which it is located. The conveyance of any of the above school properties shall be conditioned upon the Town/City owning and utilizing the real property for community and public purposes for a minimum of five years. In the event a Town/City elects to sell the real property prior to five years of ownership, the Town/City shall compensate the Unified District for all capital improvements and renovations completed after the formation of the Unified District and prior to the sale to the Town/City. In the event the Town/City elects not to acquire ownership of such real property, the Unified District shall sell the property upon such terms and conditions as established by the board of the Unified District School Board and pursuant to Vermont statutes.”

Please let the Board know on or before April 4, 2025, if the Town of Roxbury intends to exercise its rights and purchase the school. If you have any questions please contact me at jimmurphy@mpsvt.org.

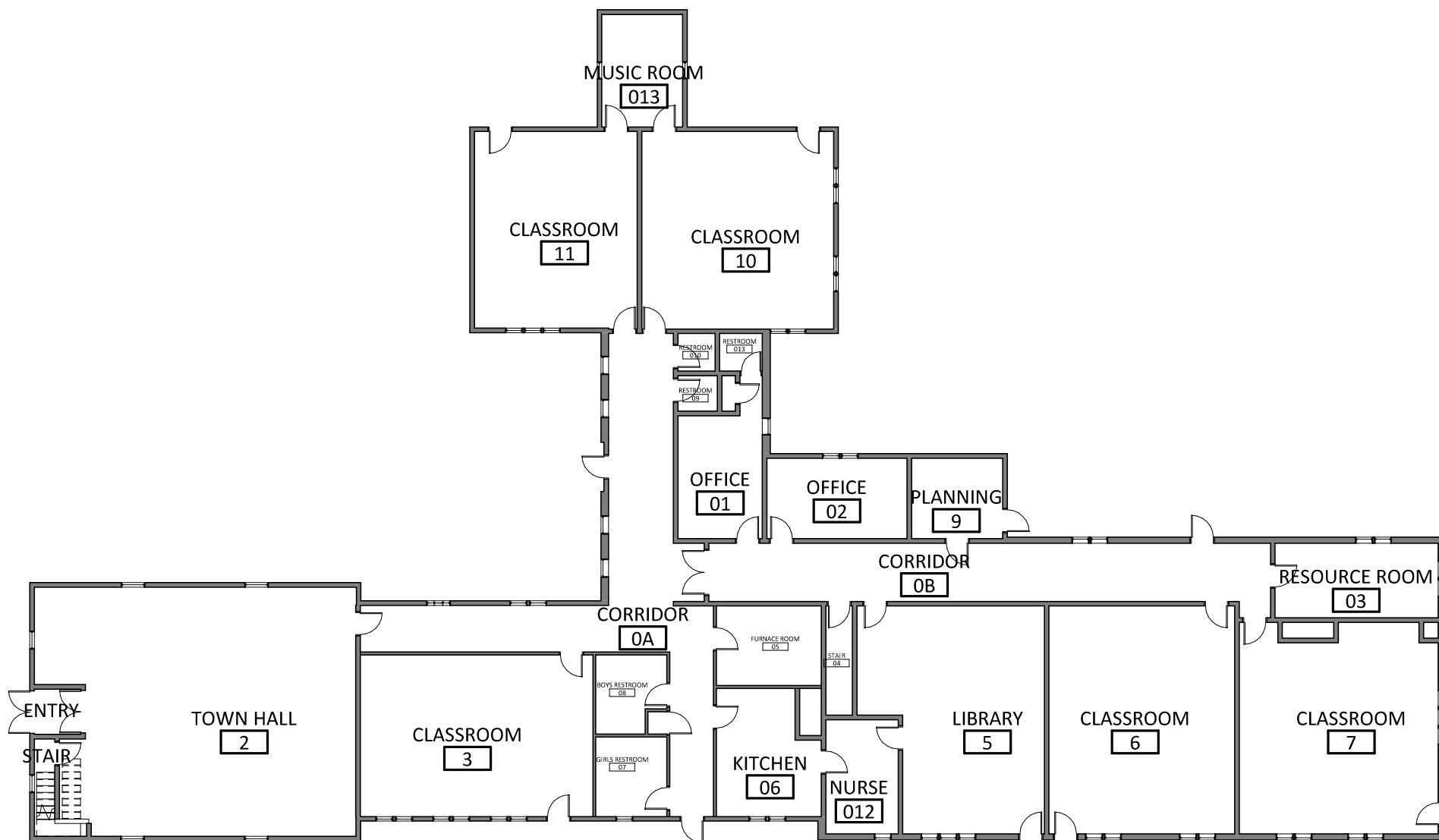
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Jim'.

Jim Murphy

MRPS School Board Chair

Attachment 9



MONTPELIER ROXBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

5 High School Drive, Unit 1 Montpelier, VT 05602

ROXBURY VILLAGE SCHOOL

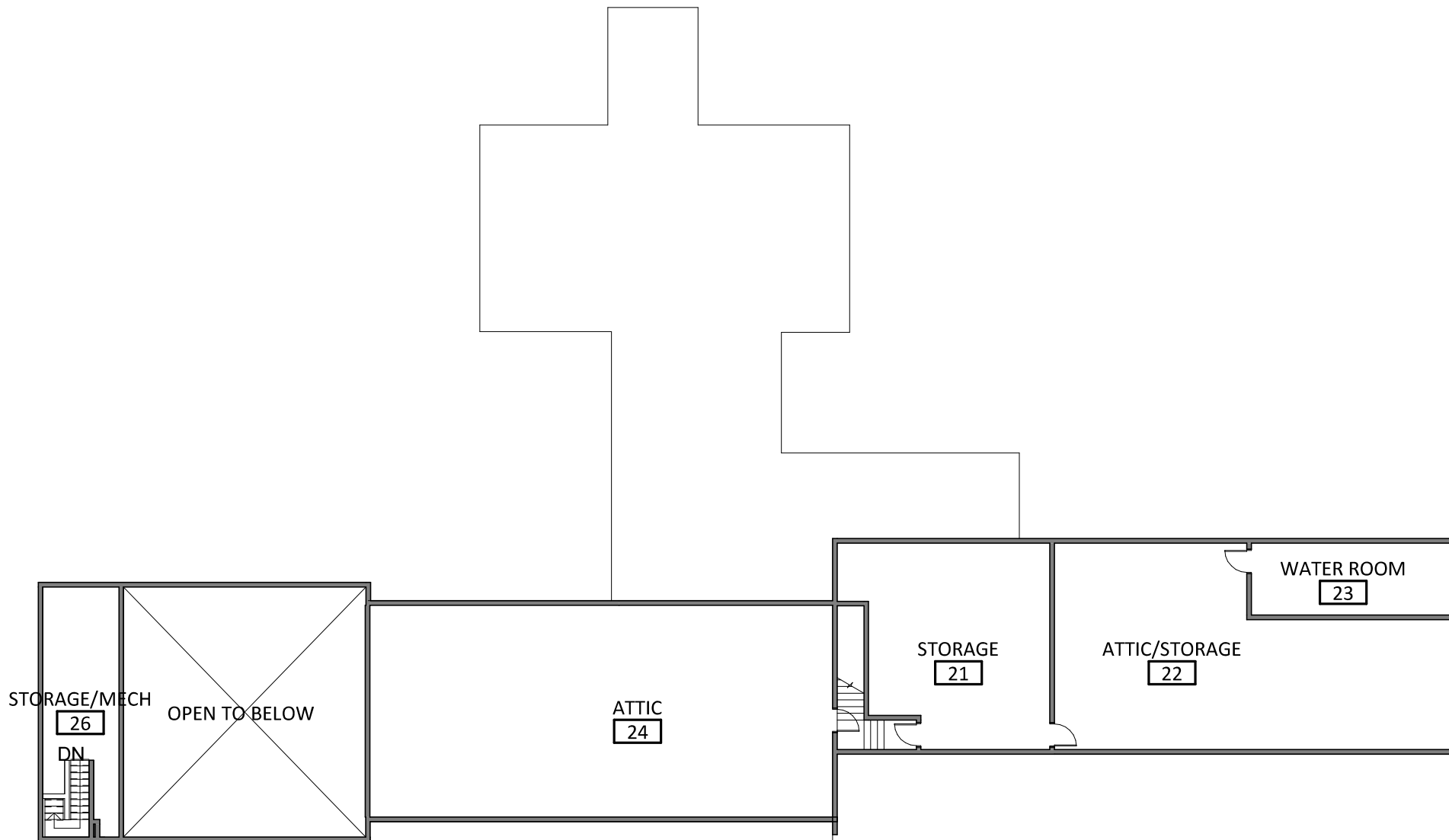
1559 Route 12A Roxbury, VT 05669

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

0' - 0" 10' - 0" 20' - 0" 40' - 0"



REVISION 10/19



MONTPELIER ROXBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

5 High School Drive, Unit 1 Montpelier, VT 05602

ROXBURY VILLAGE SCHOOL

1559 Route 12A Roxbury, VT 05669

SECOND FLOOR PLAN

0' - 0" 10' - 0" 20' - 0" 40' - 0"



REVISION 10/19