Volume 40 Issue 1

Established 1975

The Rowe Goal Post

January 2021

photo by Chuck Sokol

Town Clerk

Submitted by Paul McLatchy III

What a year 2020 was. I am cautiously optimistic that 2021 will be better, and perhaps we may even be able to return to "normal" at some point. I hope that everyone had as wonderful a holiday season as they could under the circumstances and wish everyone happiness and good health in the coming year.

Dog Licenses/Rabies Clinic: Dog Licenses are now available. By now you should have received your annual street listing, which included a dog license application form. In order to obtain a license, I will need the application form, appropriate payment, and a copy of the dog's up-to-date rabies vaccination if not on file. Fees are $5 for spayed/neutered dogs and $10 for unspayed/unneutered. While it is my hope that we might be able to do a rabies clinic at some point, given the ever-changing nature of the pandemic, I am not actively planning any sort of event at this time. Please keep an eye out in future issues of the Goal Post for more information.

Annual Census: It is extremely important that you fill out your annual street listing forms and return them to me. The street list helps emergency departments, school enrollments (and tuitions), and other important agencies within the town and state. Failure to return your annual street listing may inactivate you as a voter, and repeated failures to return can even result in your removal from the voter list. It takes only a moment to fill this out and return it.

Annual Election Voting: Legislation was passed at the state level to allow for no-excuse mail-in voting for local elections, but only those taking place before March 31st. "No-excuse" means that you are not required to provide a reason for voting by mail, whereas traditionally there are limits on who can vote absentee. More information will be provided as it becomes available.

Nomination Papers: Nomination papers for the annual town elections will be available January 4th. Please contact me if you are interested in running and we will arrange for you to obtain papers. To qualify for the ballot, you must obtain 20 signatures from registered voters and submit them to the town clerk or a registrar. As the state has not relaxed its signature requirements, I recommend getting papers early in case you choose to pursue alternate signature-gathering methods such as mailing them versus in-person. Electronic signatures are not permitted for local nomination papers.

Below are the offices that are up for election and a brief description of their responsibilities. The word "oversee" is repeated a lot to emphasize that many of the tasks handled by departments are often performed by hired staff, with the elected body focusing more on setting general policy rather than the day-to-day workings. All stipend amounts are based on the current fiscal year's approved budget as voted at the Annual Town Meeting in June. Nomination papers must be obtained and submitted no later than Saturday, March 27th.

Office Name:	**Board of Assessors**
Seat(s) Open:	One (1). 3-Year Term.
Annual Stipend:	$1,784.66
Meeting Frequency:	Three meetings per month; approx. 100 meeting hours per year
Additional Hours:	Required for research, site visits, association meetings, etc.
Requirements:	DOR Certification required to perform statutory duties
Basic Duties:	The Board of Assessors' are municipal finance officers responsible for assessment administration concerning property ownership, mass appraisal, certification standards, Proposition 2½, property tax classification, the tax rate setting process, personal property, abatements, exemptions and motor vehicle excise. They work together as a municipal finance team with the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee to finalize the town budget (both revenue and expenditures). The Assessors must complete MA DOR Course 101 to perform their statutory duties.

Office Name:	**Board of Health**
Seat(s) Open:	One (1). 3-Year Term.
Annual Stipend:	$1,646.00
Meeting Frequency:	Biweekly
Basic Duties:	The Board of Health oversees several town programs, including the Refuse Garden/Transfer Station, the town nurse, and the general health department. Members get involved in areas such as water testing, percolation tests, health inspections, etc.

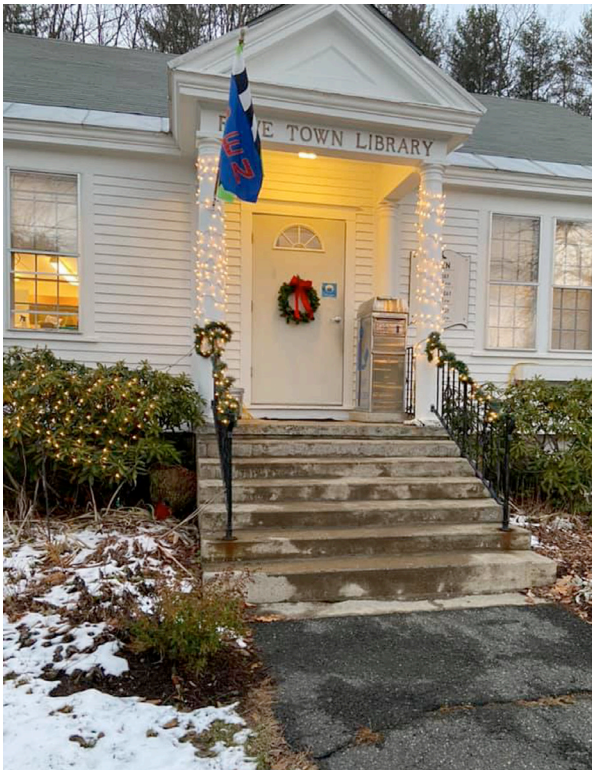
Office Name:	**Board of Selectmen**
Seat(s) Open:	One (1). 3-Year Term
Annual Stipend:	$1,976.00
Meeting Frequency:	Biweekly, sometimes more if needed.
Basic Duties:	The Board of Selectmen serves as the chief executive officers of the town. A complete list of items that could fall under their purview would be lengthy, but an overview includes: general oversight of the town's administrative officials, serving as the chief financial officers of the town, making annual appointments, calling town meetings/elections, crafting an annual budget, hiring/firing of employees, annual appointments of around one hundred officers in town, overseeing emergency services, overseeing the DPW, employing and conferring with town counsel, and overseeing the Goal Post.

Office Name:	**Cemetery Commission**
Seat(s) Open:	Two (2). One 3-Year Term, and One 2-Year Term.
Annual Stipend:	None
Meeting Frequency:	As Needed
Basic Duties:	The Cemetery Commission is the public body charged with managing the town's three public cemeteries. This includes hiring maintenance staff, setting general cemetery policy, and occasionally assisting in the preparation of a plot for a burial.
Office Name:	**Finance Committee**
Seat(s) Open:	Two (2). 3 Years Each Seat
Annual Stipend:	None
Meeting Frequency:	Usually once per month between July and November, more frequently between December and June
Basic Duties:	The Finance Committee is responsible for preparing the annual town budget (in cooperation with the Board of Selectmen), make recommendations for/against town meeting articles and financial policies, and controls the Reserve Fund.
Office Name:	**Library Trustees**
Seat(s) Open:	One (1). 3-Year Term.
Annual Stipend:	None
Meeting Frequency:	Usually Monthly
Basic Duties:	The Library Trustees manage the town library, set general policy, and are the oversight body for the library staff.
Office Name:	**Park Commission**
Seat(s) Open:	One (1). 3-Year Term.
Annual Stipend:	None
Meeting Frequency:	Usually Monthly
Basic Duties:	Park Commissioners are in charge of setting policy and hiring staff that protects and preserves the town's park lands- over 1,500 acres of it. In addition, the town hall fitness center falls under the jurisdiction of the Park Commission. While it is currently being leased to the Historical Society, the Browning Bench is also the responsibility of the Commission.

Office Name:	**Planning Board**
Seat(s) Open:	Three (3). One 1-Year Term, One 3-Year Term, and One 5-Year Term
Annual Stipend:	None
Meeting Frequency:	Usually once per month, more if there is a special permit application or other important matter.
Basic Duties:	The Planning Board is the special permit granting authority in town. Any major projects or land use proposals that require a special permit must be submitted to the Board. In addition, the Planning Board reviews the town's zoning bylaws and makes recommendations on changes to protect the town while balancing commercial, industrial, and residential needs.

Office Name:	**School Committee**
Seat(s) Open:	One (1). 3-Year Term.
Annual Stipend:	$1,521.33
Meeting Frequency:	Usually Monthly
Basic Duties:	The School Committee oversees the largest single department in town. Managing a budget in excess of a million dollars and many employees, the School Committee's purpose is to set policy for the education and well-being of our students and staff members. The school's central office staff (superintendent, business manager, etc.) report to the School Committee.

photo by Joanne Semanie



Rowe Town Library News

Submitted by Molly Lane, Library Director

Modified Library hours: Tuesday Wednesday and Saturday 10-1 Thursday 2:45-6:15 (New hours!!) Open by appointment. Call, Email or Facebook message us. Appointments are 30 minutes for 1 household.

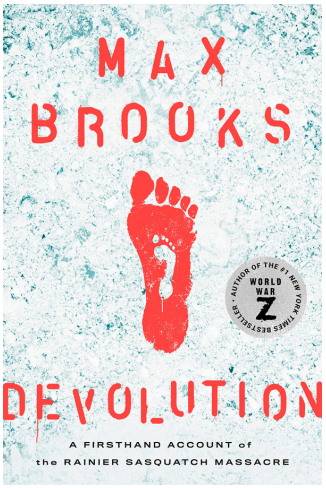
The library is continuing to offer curbside pick-up and will provide home delivery upon request. Please look at our catalog online to see what items we have available and call or email us with your requests.

The library is open to the public for browsing by appointment. We know not everyone knows what book they are looking for and browsing on a computer screen just isn't the same. Call, email or Facebook message us to book your appointment.

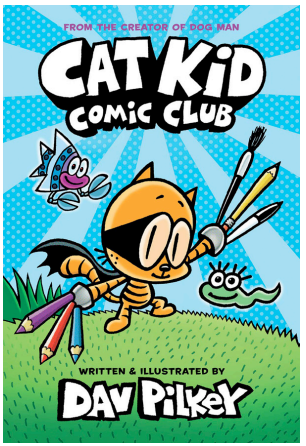
***New hours include Thursday evening. So far it is under appreciated and Donna would love the company from 2:45-6:15 every Thursday.

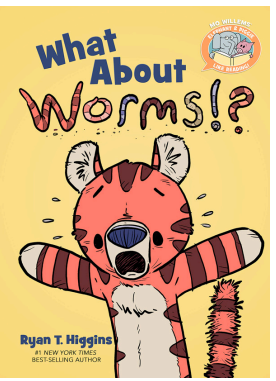
Some New Items This Month

Adult Fiction:

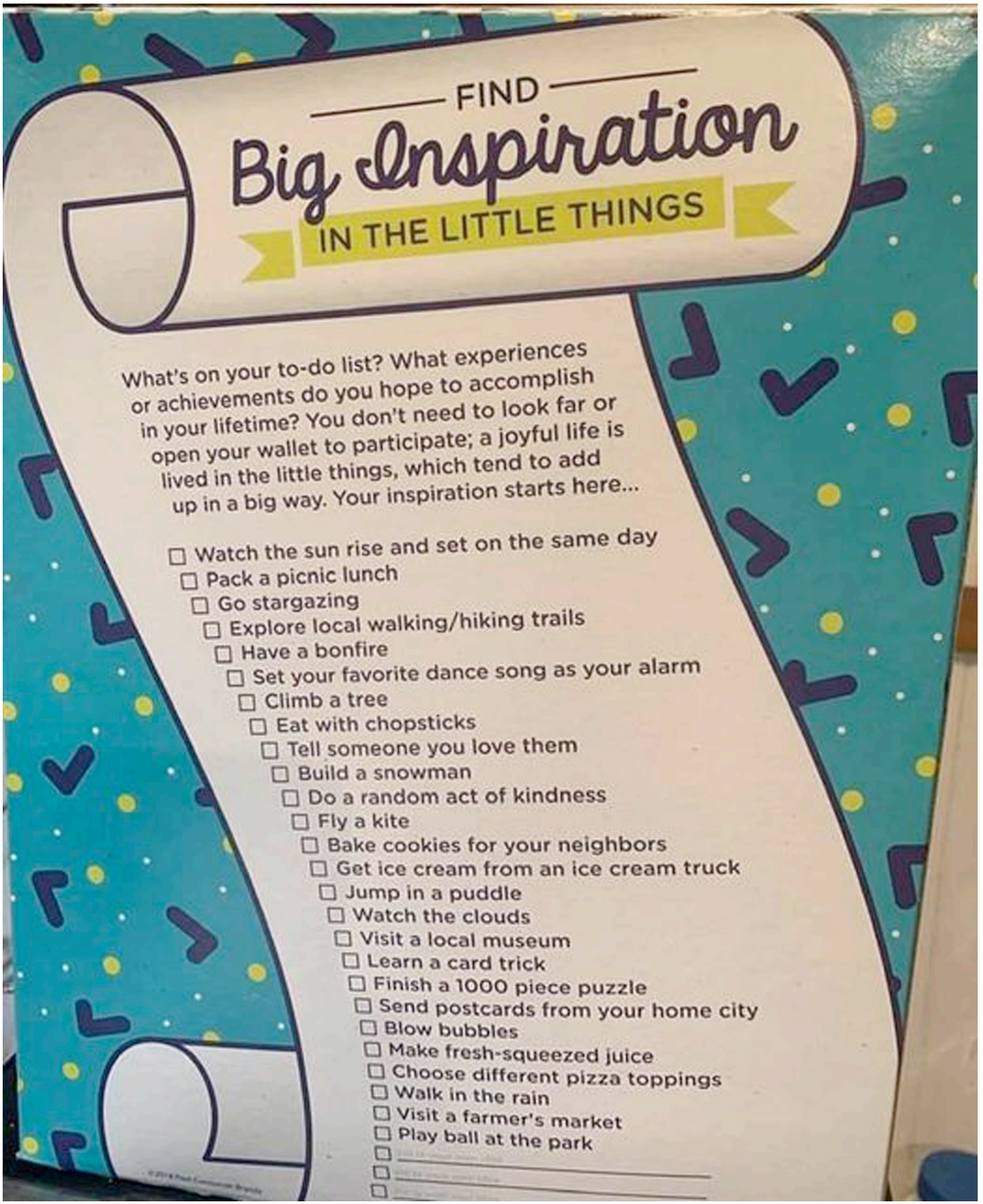


Kids:





"The first fall of snow is not only an event, it is a magical event. You go to bed in one kind of a world and wake up in another quite different, and if this is not enchantment then where is it to be found?" — J.B. Priestley


FIND
Big Inspiration
IN THE LITTLE THINGS
What's on your to-do list? What experiences or achievements do you hope to accomplish in your lifetime? You don't need to look far or open your wallet to participate; a joyful life is lived in the little things, which tend to add up in a big way. Your inspiration starts here...
☐ Watch the sun rise and set on the same day
☐ Pack a picnic lunch
☐ Go stargazing
☐ Explore local walking/hiking trails
☐ Have a bonfire
☐ Set your favorite dance song as your alarm
☐ Climb a tree
☐ Eat with chopsticks
☐ Tell someone you love them
☐ Build a snowman
☐ Do a random act of kindness
☐ Fly a kite
☐ Bake cookies for your neighbors
☐ Get ice cream from an ice cream truck
☐ Jump in a puddle
☐ Watch the clouds
☐ Visit a local museum
☐ Learn a card trick
☐ Finish a 1000 piece puzzle
☐ Send postcards from your home city
☐ Blow bubbles
☐ Make fresh-squeezed juice
☐ Choose different pizza toppings
☐ Walk in the rain
☐ Visit a farmer's market
☐ Play ball at the park

Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program[1]

Rowe has received a grant from the State to create a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan and become an "MVP" community. This MVP status will allow Rowe to apply for implementation grants to build projects and advance work that helps the Town be more resilient and prepared for the lasting effects of climate change.

Climate Change impacts on Rowe's Infrastructure

In our last newsletter articles, we discussed the main effects of climate change you have likely already witnessed and how they could affect Rowe's residents. In this article, we would like to highlight how those changes could have a direct impact on Rowe's infrastructure. These impacts could include:

- Basement flooding that may destroy electrical panels and furnaces;
- Peaks in power demand during hotter summer days could cause outages;
- Extreme heat may cause heat stress in roadway asphalt and increase the frequency of repairs and replacements;
- Flooding caused by heavier downpours may damage roads and stormwater infrastructure like undersized culverts;
- More ponding on roads that could cause dangerous travel;
- Rapid freeze thaw cycles may cause damage to road surfaces, such as frost heaves;
- Costly damage to roads, bridges, and rail networks may occur as a result of extreme nor'easters, hurricanes, severe thunderstorms and blizzards;
- Extensive flood damage to roads and bridges could dramatically affect public health and safety especially where alternative routes are not available;
- High winds could down power lines and poles adjacent to roads; and
- Communities and critical facilities could be cut off after storms.

These impacts from climate change are already being experienced in Rowe and across Franklin County and will only increase in frequency and magnitude in the coming decades. They can be expensive for both residents and Towns to repeatedly fix and deal with. Taking proactive steps, such as installing larger culverts to drain roadways and trimming trees around power lines, can make a community more resilient and also save money in the long run.

[1]http://resilientma.org/sectors/transportation.

Photo: Failed culverts resulting in road washout on Rowe Road/Dell Road between Rowe and Heath after Tropical Storm Irene.

As we move through the planning process, we are hoping to hear from residents about how you have been impacted by climate change, or what your concerns are for the future. You can answer survey questions related to this newsletter here: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RoweMVP3, and if you missed previous surveys, they are posted on the Town's MVP project page at https://rowe-ma.gov/p/71/Municipal-Vulnerability-Preparedness-MVP-Planning.

For more information, please contact Paul McLatchy III or Megan Rhodes, FRCOG Senior Planner at mrhodes@frcog.org.

A West Cemetery Mystery Solved

Submitted by Joanne Semanie

The West cemetery is located on Hazelton Road. In 1802 it was voted "to allow Sherman Langdon ten dollars for half an acre of land where the burying place is near his house . . . or three quarters at fifteen dollars." This represented the actual transfer of the land now known as the West Yard but seven years earlier (1795) a second sexton, Thaddeus Merrill, was elected to care for this cemetery. He lived just a short half mile north of the West Yard and the gravestone marking the grave of his two-year-old son, David, who died July 8, 1788, is the oldest. This yard was a burying ground before the town acquired it.

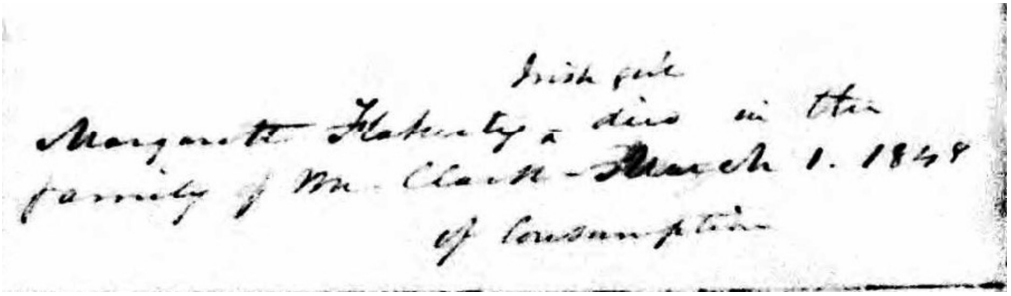
In 1923 an additional area was added to the cemetery as a gift from the Shippee family.
A walk through this place was nostalgic, not only for the people I've know but the people that I have researched in town history. There are photographs of these family members at the museum along with clothing and other mementos.

There is a stone that is of particular interest to me (and many others). A lonely stone in a remote corner belongs to Margaret O'Flaherty Late of Ireland who died in 1848 at the age of 20.

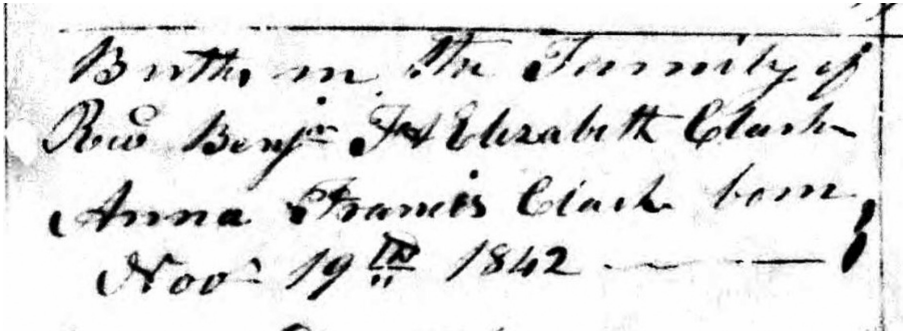
These are the things that send me on a search of other resources. Why was Margaret here? Where did she live? How long had she been here? How did she die at so young an age? The fact that she has both a head and foot-stone tells us that someone cared about her.

I decided to do a little digging in the old records to see if I could find her. The fact that she was "late of Ireland when she died in 1848 tells me that more than likely there wouldn't be a record of her in any census since they are taken every 10 years at the beginning of that decade. I looked up Immigration records, but Margaret Flaherty is a common name for a woman coming from Ireland and the number of records I saw of women with this name and age was not to be narrowed.

Now I had already searched her name in Ancestry and came up empty handed so I decided to do a page-by-page search of the town's death records. After searching a few pages I skipped to the end and there she was, the last record.


Irish girl
Margaret Flaherty a dies in the
family of Mr. Clark - March 1. 1848
of consumption

These records are organized by family name so Mr. Clark was on the same page as Margaret's entry. This was above her entry


Birth in the Family of
Rev Benj Jr Elizabeth Clark
Anna Francis Clark born
Nov 19th 1842

By this record we know that Benjamin and his wife were here in 1842 when their daughter Anna was born. In searching Rev. Clark online I found that he was a missionary with the Congregational Home Missionary Society. He filed a report included in their 1849 Annual report for the year 1848 stating that he had established a temperance society in town. He had one student for the ministry.

We will never know why Margaret came here. The largest percentage of immigrants in the 1840s were the Irish due to the potato famine. We do know that she was taken in by a family that cared about her and honored her memory in the West Cemetery.
For years I've heard about the poor Irish girl in this cemetery and I have to say that this little research project helped me understand a little more about her and the people that took her in. She may have been employed as a domestic as well as being a student for the ministry but we do know that she was cared for and cared about.

From the Town Hall

Submitted by Janice Boudreau

It is safe to say that 2020 will be long remembered for all the disruptions to our life the pandemic has caused. We have all become more versed on infectious diseases. With the vaccine on its way, a glimmer of hope is emerging for the coming year. The adage "we are all in this together" has taken on a profound meaning since our actions can impact so many others both in our community and afar.

It has been heartening to see people in our community wearing their masks, social distancing and doing their part in big and small ways. Thank you for all your efforts.
The small gestures of the Holiday decorating the Fire Station, Library, outdoor tree and the "big foot" appearance have brought a smile whenever I arrive in town and bring the sense of 'normalcy' and mean so much and is appreciated.

It has been challenging to continually adjust to changes due to the Covid-19 virus for a municipality as we are concerned with the health and well-being of employees, citizens and surrounding communities. We continue to attend meetings with state and regional officials to better prepare for Rowe. Several officials from the Franklin Regional Council of Governments and others that I have spoken to, acknowledged that Rowe seemed to be in the forefront of many other communities for getting information out to citizens and taking appropriate actions. Kudos to town officials.

As the new year begins the Board of Selectmen meet with the Finance Committee to begin the Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) budget hearings starting on January 21st. We will be reviewing each department's plans and any special projects. It seems at this point we have all adapted to the Zoom meeting format and welcome you to attend any meeting by logging in or telephoning in. It works well to share documents during the meeting so that we are all literally on the same page!

VOLUNTEERS:

Thank you to Ellynn Packard for volunteering to be on the Carl Nilman Scholarship Committee representing Rowe and to Cindy Stetson for coming forward to be on the Beautification Committee. We still need 3-4 additional volunteers for the Beautification Committee. (See the town website click 'About Rowe' – 'Volunteer Opportunities' for more information and the list of openings)

Have a wonderful and safe New Year!

***FREE* Yoga Classes on Zoom in the comfort of your own home!**

Free yoga classes on Zoom sponsored by the Rowe Park Department will be offered weekly on Tuesdays from 9-10 AM through the winter. Join us for a stress relieving workout focused on breathing, balance, flexibility, and strength to improve your mental and physical well-being. If interested, please email instructor Kate Peppard at kate@highlandyoga.studio for Zoom login information or call the park at 339-8554. A great way to start your day!

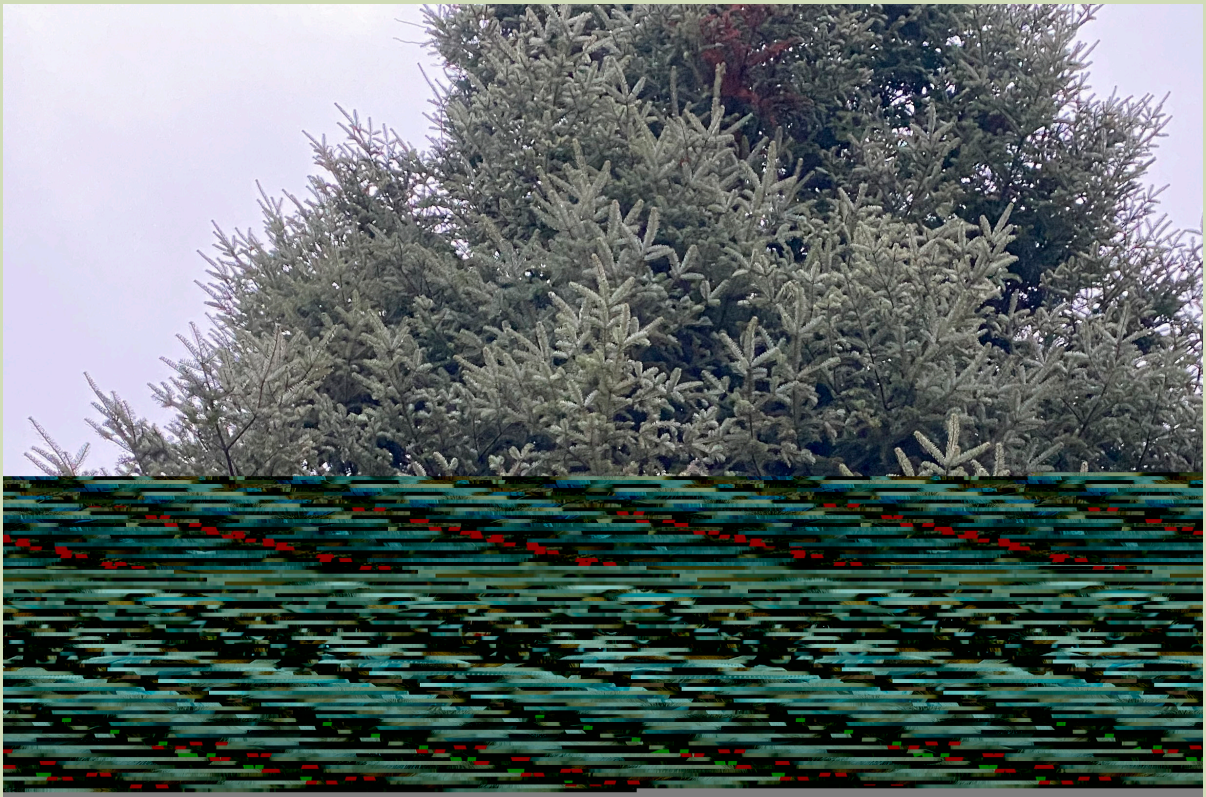


photo by Chuck Sokol

Town Services

Accountant	Wed	9:00-12:00 (or by appt)	339-5520 x12
Admin Assistant	M,T,Th,F	8:00-12:00,12:30-4:30	339-5520 x10
Assessor's Clerk	Monday	3:30-5:30pm	339-5520 x15
Fire Station		Emergency - 911	339-4001
Executive Secretary	Mon-Thurs	9:30-5:00	339-5520 x11
Fitness Ctr	Mon-Fri	8:00-5:00	339-5520 x21
FRTA Sr. Bus	Tuesdays	9:00	774-2262 x103
Historical Society		(by Appt)	339-4238
Library	Tues, Sat 10:00-5:00, Wed 10:00-8:00		339-4761
Park	Mon- Friday		339-8554
Police Dept	Wed	5:30-7:30pm	339-8340
Post Office	Mon-Fri 12:15-4:15, Sat 8:30-11:30		339-5390
Rowe School	Mon-Friday	8:00-3:15	512-5100
Tax Collector	Wed	8:00-2:00	339-5520 x19
Town Clerk	M,T,Th,Fr	7:00-8:00am, 4:30-5:30pm	339-5520 x14
Town Garage	Mon-Thurs	6:30-4:30	339-5588
Town Nurse	Mon,Wed,Fri	9:00-5:00	339-5520 x20
Transfer St.	Wed 7-10am, 4-7pm Sat 8-2, Sun 8-12		339-0216
Treasurer			339-5520 x16

TOWN HALL IS OPEN BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

The Rowe Goal Post
P.O. Box 462
Rowe, Masachusetts 01367

The Rowe Goal Post

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the first of every month with paper copies sent out by mail the first week
.
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Any articles received after this time cannot be guaranteed that
they will appear in the next issue.

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