**Thoughts on planning the Annual Meeting** (please revise/rewrite each year):

Timing is everything. (This timeline assumes an early June Annual Meeting. If the month is changed, then change the timeline accordingly.)

January RGT meeting:

1. Program: topic, location, and date. Discuss and plan to make decision in February. If any homework needs to be done about speaker/place/whatever, do it now. (A list of all previous annual meetings can be found in the xx Years: The Short Version - handed out at annual meeting and on the board only part of the website.) One interesting problem with the date: the town newsletter articles are due June 1st. The newsletter appears in mailboxes about the 8th. In a perfect world, the date/time/place/plan would be in that newsletter, but sometimes that is not possible.

2. Nominating Committee needs to have a timeline for their meeting in preparation for a presentation at the February meeting and a vote at the March meeting. Committee members need to divide up the Board members up for re-election and ask each of them if they are willing to serve for another 3 years. That list with dates their 3-year term is up is also found on the Board-only section of the website.

February RGT meeting:

1. Vote on Program: topic, location (need rain location for the official annual meeting even if rest of outdoor part of the event needs to be cancelled), and date. If gifts are to be given, the Board needs to vote funds. If space reservation is necessary ‑ or whatever necessary, do it now. If any mailing goes out this spring, put this date in it.

2. Nominating Committee reports on the status of the candidates who are already board members and reviews the new candidates with the Board in preparation for March vote.

3. Put annual meeting information on website, EVENTS page.

March RGT meeting:

1. Program: divide up the work:

a. Writing official announcement for any spring newsletter that you can use. (Find out date and get it in on time). This is a bylaw requirement.

Annual Report (which always carries the pervious year's date)

b. Who is going to prepare the Secretary's Report (traditionally describes from previous annual meeting to the present). Either written by secretary or group, edited/proofed - want done 2 weeks before date (or earlier) and formatted appropriately. It is printed on RGT stationery which is a formatting challenge.

c. Who is going to prepare the Treasurer's Report and put it in a legible format? (This is calendar year January 1- Dec 31). want done 2 weeks before date (or earlier) and formatted appropriately.

d. Who is going to get the stationery from the archives and print the 25-30 copies (front secretary's report, back treasurer's)

d. Who is going to organize refreshments, tables/chairs, whatever is needed?

e. Who is going to plan the program - what will be needed?

f. Who else, besides Board and new members, gets invited? This has varied from special postcard to email to nothing except notice in town newsletter and website. Who is going to do that?

g. Who runs the meeting? Who makes the nominating Committee Report? Are there other pieces that need to be done?

h. Who does cleanup, necessary thank you letters, etc.?

i. Who is going to update the xx Years: The Short Version? (for print and website)? And print it back-to-back stapled.

j. Who is going to update the photo streamer (picture of each property)? (kept in basket above filing cabinets at the museum)

k. Who is going to update the New Members Packet (and presumably mentor the new members)? See the end of this document for the Table on Contents for this packet

l. Who is going to put secretary's report (scanned on stationery) on RGT website (About/reports) and Short History (on Board-only section). Copies of all documents also go in the Minutes file which is kept by a Board member. Two copies are printed out each year and put in paper files - on kept by the secretary, one in the archives.

2. Vote on candidates presented by the nominating committee. (Both renewing members and possible new members.) It is the responsibility of the committee members to then contact the new candidates new to ask them if they will join the Board. And ideally meet with them to answer questions. Some years members are invited to join the Board meetings April and May before the official election i.e. be non-voting members.

April RGT Board meeting:

1. Program. Review so all members are updated and can check for missing pieces; consider ways to increase publicity or personal invitations; are there additional materials that should be available? (trail maps, for example)

2. Nominating Committee:

a. Report on status of candidates new to the Board. Do others need to be considered?

b. The Committee needs to ask present officers if they would like to continue as officers. If not will, the Committee needs plan for filling position from the Board. The elections of officers takes place at the June Board meeting, after the Annual Meeting, but having officers ready to serve should be earlier.

May RGT Board meeting:

1. Program. Final review of written materials, food, equipment, planning, etc.

2. Report of officers for next year (to be elected at the meeting following the annual meeting). Any other Board candidate issues.

3. Make sure someone (secretary if possible) takes notes for Annual Meeting Minutes (has to be done and kept in minutes notebook).

4. Make sure that one (or more) Board members has agreed to mentor new member(s) and that that person will prepare the "new members packet" - see end of this packet for Table of Contents and notes. The packet should be handed out at the Annual Meeting.

June RGT Board meeting (assume Annual Meeting already has happened)

1. Annual Meeting Minutes. These need to be put in the minutes file for this calendar year (two print copies for archive and secretary). They have not traditionally gone through the "approval" at Board meeting process. They MUST include the election of Board members with the names of both returning members and new members.

2. Election of new officers. (Board would have been told who is will be nominated at the May meeting. Responsibility of the nominating committee.)

3. Program. Any follow-up, review and correct these notes so next year it will be easier.

4. Nominating Committee needs to make sure each new Board member has a mentor and that time is used on each topic to orient new members to the issues.

5. Web manager. Need to change the list of Board members on the History section. Also insert the newest Annual Report (front side only).

6. AND it is time to plan the fall fund-raising letter and the Harvest Festival. . .

New Board members packet

The purpose is, obviously, to provide new members with the basic RGT information. The 2016 version does not include the annual list of properties with monitoring names and notes. (Just not time to include it, not because it should not be there.)

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**Packet for New RGT Board Members, June 2016**

**This packet:**

a. RGT charter (and amendment) – legal but still interesting

b. RGT bylaws – we actually use these

c. The map of all protected lands in Leverett - and the trails

d. The most recent annual report - Secretary's Report on one side; Financial Report on the back

e. Lou Bannister’s beautiful RGT brochure

f. *28 Years: The Short Version* - the most recent RGT Data Sheet - when Annette Gibavic wrote this Fact Sheet for the first year Annual Meeting, it was one page, then two. . .

g. The Conflict of Interest Policy - very legal-sounding, but a reminder to speak up at any Board meeting when you might be facing a conflict of interest on some issue. There is no way in this small town that, over time, each Board member will not have a conflict of interest.

**The website:**

In addition to this packet, there is the RGT website ([www.rattlesnakeguttertrust.org](http://www.rattlesnakeguttertrust.org)).

**Public pages** It might be useful to read the YOUR LAND section first to understand the difference between a:

Conservation Restriction (CR) - where the property is owned and managed by the owner and RGT holds the CR. This means that RGT holds an obligation to monitor the land at least annually to make sure that the conservation value of the land is being maintained (no development, no dumping, etc.)

RGT-owned property - which RGT manages.

Wander around the other sections to understand what the public knows - or could learn if they went to the website

**Board-only pages** Go to ABOUT, then down to "Board area." The password is “2lips” (referring the red, painted lips on the cliff at the top of Rattlesnake Gutter). Once you type that (without the quotes), you should find yourself on a page that will link you to "All the documents, maps, forms you will ever need."

Oh, there are lots of them.

You might want to start with the "Property Information for Monitoring Teams." While no one would ever read all of this, select a property you already know and wander around.

Wander around the other sections to find out what is available when you have questions later.

**The notebooks:**

Each property (both those owned by RGT and those owned by others where we hold a CR – Conservation Restriction) has two theoretically identical notebooks.

The Field Notebook (Green) is kept by the leader of the property committee/monitoring team;

the Archive Notebook (Blue) is in the filing cabinet at the SW corner of the upstairs of the Leverett Family Museum. You are always welcome to visit/read those files. The contents of these notebooks are posted on the Board-only section of the website, but some notebooks have additional reports or pictures that were not posted. If it is not the middle of winter (cold in the attic of the museum) or the middle of summer (not cold), ask a Board member who knows about the key and what is there to take you on a tour.

Finally, when you have time to reflect on this packet, make some notes on changes that would have made this packet more helpful and give those notes to the RGT Board member responsible for Board membership. Welcome to the Board!

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Final note on the Annual Meeting process. While it seems complicated, it really isn't if it is not left until the last minute. Reminder that publically publicized Annual Meetings are q legal responsibility of all nonprofit organizations. And a reminder that these how-to lists only work if folks updated it when new ideas and/or new problems happen. And they will.

(Mary Alice, June 2016)