

Community Update
December 14, 2021

- Good evening. I am Mayor Bob DeFillippo and on behalf of the Township Council, I want to welcome you to tonight's Council meeting – the last Council meeting for the year 2021.
- Before we continue with our agenda, I ask that you please join me in a moment of silence for the people who were killed, injured, and left homeless in the wake of the recent devastating tornadoes in Kentucky and other states.
- Thank you.

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- Now, for the Community Update. First, I want to say how wonderful it was to see so many of you at the Home for the Holidays and Tree-Lighting events that took place Dec. 4 and 5.
- We had beautiful weather and it looked like everyone had a great time.
- There are so many other events around town. I am going to leave it to my fellow councilmembers to get to them later -- including this year's very successful Community Clean-up run by our own Kellie Ann Keyes.
- The holiday season is in full swing in town, and it looks like everyone is more than ready to gather together with friends and relatives.
- I mention this because it also helps explain why the number of people who have contracted Covid in Roxbury has leaped from 3,308 at our last Council meeting on Nov. 30 to 3,594 people today – 286 people in slightly less than three weeks.

- This is an extraordinarily high increase. In fact, on Dec. 3, we hit 41 new cases in one day – the highest one-day increase since the pandemic began.
- By all reports, this surge is reason for concern but not necessarily alarm. As I said last meeting, it was not unexpected. Our health care professionals warned us that more people would contract Covid as people began travelling and getting together with family and friends in doors.
- It is important to note that most health care officials agree with reports that most of the new cases -- including break-through cases and cases caused by the new variant -- have not resulted in as many hospitalizations or serious illness. At least not for people who are fully vaccinated.
- Nevertheless, there are precautions that you can and should take to reduce the chances of contracting or spreading Covid during the holiday season. They are the same precautions that our health professionals have urged us to take from the beginning of the pandemic:
 - Wear a mask indoors, especially in crowded spaces.
 - Wash your hands frequently and avoid touching your face.
 - Get tested.
 - And, if you are eligible, get fully vaccinated and boosted.
- These remain the most effective ways to prevent contracting and spreading the virus.
- Despite these high numbers, during 2021, the residents of Roxbury did a pretty good job following health and social distancing recommendations and as a result, we have not been as severely impacted by Covid as other towns -- we remain firmly on course to emerge from the pandemic stronger -- both economically and as a community that cares.

- As we get ready to close out 2021, let's just take a minute to be thankful and grateful for how Roxbury has been blessed during this very difficult time.
- That is not to say there weren't plenty of people in town who struggled this past year because of the pandemic and economic shutdown.
- The residents of Roxbury responded by collecting and distributing food, raising money for Social Services, caring for the elderly, and meeting the needs of those less fortunate among us.
- We met the challenges of the past year the way we always do, by rolling up our sleeves and doing what needed to be done.
- On behalf of the Council, I would like to thank everyone who helped out. No matter what you did personally, you contributed to making Roxbury the great place it is to live, work, and raise a family.
- On a personal note, I would like to thank each member of the Township Council for their dedication, support, and hard work this year on behalf of our community and its residents.
- It is an honor to serve on this Council and as your mayor, and I know I speak for all my colleagues when I say that we look forward to continuing to work hard on behalf of our residents next year.
- I would also like to thank Township Manager John Shepherd and our township staff for all your efforts to keep us safe and to keep township services running without interruption.
- As mayor, I had the privilege to watch up close this year as our Township staff met every challenge thrown at them. They worked through storms

that caused wind damage, power outages, flooding, and heavy snow – all during a pandemic.

- When we were telling everyone to stay home, many of our township employees were still reporting to work. While we were working from home, our police, first responders, and essential workers were on the job.
- Thank you on behalf of a very grateful community.
- And finally, but certainly not least, I would like to thank my wife Morris County Commissioner Kathy DeFillippo for being a great partner in all things.
- On behalf of the Township Council, I wish every Roxbury resident a very Merry Christmas, the happiest of holidays, and a New Year filled with joy and peace.
- Thank you. And now back to our agenda.

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