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500 hours. It will use three gallons of diesel per hour. At \$5 per gallon, that's \$7,500. They're only allotting \$4,500, which wipes out the savings for the first years."

Carla Levesque asked who will drive it. Vicky Mishcon answered, "We own a grader, and the Road Agent or his crew drive it. It will be the same if we own a backhoe. We'd still have to rent a second backhoe or loader now and then because some jobs require two separate pieces of equipment. We're still renting six-wheelers and other big equipment. The savings on purchasing rather than renting a backhoe in the last 10 years is huge."

Wood Sutton: "The contractors need work from the Town so they can afford to own the equipment, so they can hire it out to homeowners when we need it."

Cynthia Lewis: "This is not very clear or detailed information. What about supporting the community? What about repair? I'd rather pay extra and use equipment that's already in town."

Jeff Miller: "Most municipalities keep a backhoe/loader for 5,000 hours, not 10,000 as the Board is proposing. I can't imagine running a backhoe that old every day."

Jeff Newcomb: "The comparison

chart in the *Beacon* isn't a fair comparison because of accounting differences from town to town. If we approve this article, how soon will we have to buy six-wheelers? We should have a clear growth plan for the highway department showing how we get from no employees to several employees."

Vicky Mishcon: "The Board has been careful not to present a full plan because those have been shot down in the past. All we're asking for is one piece of equipment and a full-time Road Agent. Jeff is right about comparing budgets from town to town. The point we wanted to make was just that you can have a small town with a highway department and still have a reasonable budget."

John Thompson: "The grader that the Town owns sits in the Road Agent's driveway, where he has everything he needs to start it on cold days, fix it when it won't start, and so on. Every thousand hours you have to replace all the tires, which is about \$2,000 plus \$500 to put them on. There are also pins and bushings to replace."

"This is not a good deal. We haven't had a committee or a study. The selectmen left out a lot of things."

Andy Guttill: "The Town was told we'd have to have a building to store

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come away from residents who now rent their equipment to the town. Cynthia Lewis, a resident, said she would rather rent to give business to her neighbors.

"What about support of our community?" she said. "Support of people who live here and rely on the income?"

Resident Wood Sutton said that if residents cannot make money renting their backhoe loaders to the town, they might stop keeping the equipment. Then other residents would lose access to it, he said.

"I think there's a misconception that if we get this backhoe loader, all our problems will go away," Sutton said.

A full-time road agent would cost the town \$45,000 in salary and an additional \$19,000 in benefits, according to the selectmen. But they said that would

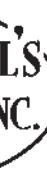
replace another \$45,000 in budget items, and that the town actually would save more because departments would be better coordinated.

That argument held little sway with resident Mark Thompson, who asked his fellow meeting-goers if they understood the current elected road agent receives no salary and is only paid when he uses his equipment. He asked why the town would spend \$64,000 to do a job "that's getting done almost for nothing."

Bill Johnson, another resident, warned attendees that "this highway department thing is a slippery slope." He said Andover doesn't need another town employee.

"It's just going to grow, just like everything else, just like our government has," Johnson said to applause.

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THANK YOU, ED.

By Vicky Mishcon

Andover Board of Selectmen

These are the remarks with which
Vicky opened Town Meeting.

One of the best parts of my position is to recognize and thank people for their service to our town. Ed and Mary Hiller moved to Andover full time in 1987, and Ed wasted no time getting involved in community affairs. He served on the Planning Board and has been deeply involved with the Andover Historical Society and the Northern Rail Trail project and has also done easement monitoring for the Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust.

Speaking of the rail trail, Ed seems to have a secret life as a heavy equipment operator. Whenever new crushed stone is added to the surface of the rail trail, Ed's the guy operating the 12-ton vibrating compactor. Who did you lobby to get to drive that big machine, Ed?

But the real reason we are honoring him this evening is for his 24 years on the Budget Committee, with nine of those years as chairman. If you've ever sat on the Budget Committee, you'll know what an onerous task that can be, especially in lean years. Ed brought solid budgetary knowledge, an even temperament, a sense of fairness, and a sense of humor to the committee. His articles in the *Beacon* have helped us all understand the budget and its impact on our wallets.

Ed's real specialty is the "visual aid." What will we do without your graphs and charts to show us, in picture form, the meaning of all those numbers?

Please join me in thanking Ed for his years of service to our town.



Photo: Charlie Darling

THE LAW OFFICE OF JAY C. BOYNTON



Attorney Jay Boynton and Paralegal Robin Boynton are The Boynton Law Office. We have a modern, technologically savvy, fulltime office in Andover, New Hampshire. We live in town, enjoy our friends and neighbors, and practice law with common sense.

Our practice provides more than 30 years of legal experience, personalized service, attention to detail, a willingness to listen, the promise of absolute confidentiality and our best efforts on your behalf.

We have a general civil practice representing individuals, families, businesses, non-profit organizations, and municipalities in New Hampshire with an emphasis on school and municipal law, corporate, probate, estate planning, real estate and business law.

We do not have the overhead of many large firms, and we do not accept cases that are beyond our expertise. We stick to the matters that we can handle efficiently, economically and effectively. If we cannot handle a matter, we will help find someone who can. If you choose not to retain us, there is no charge for the preliminary consultation.

Please call or stop by. We would be pleased to meet and talk with you.

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