

OPINION

New Hampshire Republican Platform Moves Towards Libertarian

Mary Anne Broshek, Andover

We have a Republican Governor and Republican majorities in the New Hampshire Senate, House, and Executive Council. The current Republicans in control of the state are nothing like the Republicans you voted for 20 or 30 years ago. Their platform has moved towards a Libertarian ideology. Two of Andover's candidates – Louise Andrus and Alvin See – are endorsed by the New Hampshire Liberty Alliance.

Property taxes: In the past legislative session, there was an opportunity to move revenue back to towns and cities to make up for the downshifting of costs in previous years. Instead, the Republican majority voted to give tax breaks to corporations and the wealthy. An early draft estimate of lost revenue is 90 million for state fiscal year 2023. Once the Interest and Dividends tax is phased out, that alone is estimated to lose 117 million dollars of revenue a year.

Public Education: New Hampshire has the lowest state contribution to education in the country and the highest percent of property taxes going toward education. It's a problem, and the New Hampshire School Fair Funding Project states this results in 2.3 billion a year in funds down-shifted from the state to towns and cities. Instead of addressing the problem, Republicans slipped the

“no accountability” school voucher program into the budget with an estimated cost of \$130,000 the first year and 3.3 million the second year. The actual program costs were 8 million the first year and 14.7 million the second year producing another drain on the Education Trust Fund. All efforts to protect taxpayer funds from misuse and attempts to establish fair education funding were voted down in the past two legislative sessions.

Reproductive Rights and Public Health Services: The Republican legislature added abortion restrictions to the budget – a first for New Hampshire. The Republican members of the Executive Council have voted multiple times to deny funding for non-abortion services (contraception, cancer screenings, STD screenings). The Commissioner of Health and Human services stated “It is the equivalent to reducing access to health care services for low-income women”.

In October, the House Judiciary Committee voted against HB1181 being recommended for future legislation by a vote of 12-7. HB1181 is a proposal which would allow a biological father to use the courts to stop an abortion. Louise Andrus was one of the seven who supported HB1181.

As for Governor Sununu, he went along with abortion restrictions, tax cuts for corporation and the wealthy, and nominated the current Commissioner of Education who pushed for the school voucher legislation.

Fire Department Replaces Trucks Using Capital Reserves

Avoids raising taxes for needed equipment

Rene Lefebvre, Andover Fire Chief

Fire trucks are designed and manufactured to last a long time. We keep them in service an average of twenty to twenty-five years. In that time we use them in the worst of weather and require them to carry very heavy loads, between the water we haul and the equipment we use. The key to the long, useful life of a fire truck is purchasing a truck of good quality and having a very intensive maintenance program. During the time we have a truck in service we spend hundreds of hours checking every piece of the truck and the equipment it carries. As silly as it sounds, taking care of a truck, in time, becomes personal. You know every odd quirk, every sound it makes, and the way it handles going down the road. Firemen gain a trust that the truck will perform its task and keep everyone safe. As the trucks age-out and maintenance becomes very expensive the trust becomes tempered by frequent breakdowns.

Our plan is to replace a twenty-four year old truck (Engine 1) with a truck that is currently in a front line position but is aging-out for that level of service (Engine 3). We will keep Engine 3 in backup service for five more years and then not likely replace it. It is nice to have a backup engine; however, we are concerned that the cost will be a strong consideration.

The Fire Commissioners appointed a replacement truck committee last year. Their task was to assess the needs of our fire department and find a truck that would meet our requirements for at least twenty-five years. The committee has recommended to the commissioners an engine that will fill our needs. If approved, it will be manufactured by Four Guys Fire Apparatus. It will be an attack pumper similar in style to our Engine 2 housed at the East Station. The cost will be \$650,000 and will take one year to manufacture from the time the order is placed.

A fair question at this point is to ask how much this truck will raise current taxes. We will have a capital reserve of approximately \$350,000 at the end of this year. We currently place \$65,000 in capital reserve each year. We will stop the capital reserve for five years and make payments for the truck with the \$65,000 that is currently reserved. The goal is to purchase that truck on the current budget and not raise your taxes to the fire department. This budgeting practice has been used to purchase fire trucks for the past thirty years.

We will include the purchase of this new truck in the 2023 budget. In the coming months we will provide information and drawings from the manufacturer and will be prepared to answer your questions. Our goal is to keep one front line attack pumper at each end of Andover. This request will help us to accomplish our mission of safety.

GOT NEWS?

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THANK YOU!!



SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Doug Colby & Sebastian Colby,
NHTI Robotics & Professor Dennis Tappin,
Belletetes of Andover, Colby Lumber of Boscawen,
Bob Norander, Frank Baker, Fred Nystrom,
Susan Schnare, and Spunk Ford



Andover Historical Society would like to thank the volunteers & donors who helped with the new semaphore signal at the Potter Place Train Station.

Republican from page 27

“America” as we know it will cease to exist.

This November's election is an important one for New Hampshire, made especially so because there is no presidential contest to discolor our view of local New Hampshire issues. Therefore, please beware of political arguments, and perhaps your own justifications, that refer to national and presidential politics in this non-presidential election! These arguments may be calibrated to rub salt in old wounds, but they won't address important local issues like New Hampshire property taxes, local schools, and our sovereignty over our own bodies. Don't let the emotion of old fights cloud your judgment. Like John Newton, use your secret ballot to repent and choose a new safer political direction, if you think New Hampshire's dangerously fragmentary course is a poor choice for our de-

mocracy to survive the current storm.

You probably have not had the opportunity to notice that on Andover's September primary ballots, there were 16 Democrats vying for 13 offices, while a “double slate” of 42 Republicans contested 15 offices. Not all those “Republican” candidates share the same platform; some are what I consider to be quite extreme and “stealthy”. I find it is more enlightening (but tedious) to research the incumbents' voting records at the New Hampshire General Court website [gencourt.state.NH.us/NHgcroll-calls/] than to read many of their Facebook feeds, that I feel are sometimes information-poor and misleading. You may come to the same conclusion that I have: voters should reject the politics of national division among the Republican factions, repent, and vote for moderate Democrats, to steer our ship back to the side that favors the people, and the best interests of our communities.

TOO GOOD NOT TO REPEAT

“Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once a year, but when you volunteer, you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in.”

- Marjorie Moore