



Town Meeting 2008

A special section of
The Andover Beacon

TOWN MEETING SPECIAL EDITION

By Charlie Darling
Beacon staff

This month, voters in Andover are called upon to make important decisions that will set our taxes and guide our town for the coming year. We'll elect over a dozen of our neighbors to positions in Town and School District governing bodies, and we'll close the books on 2007 with the annual Town Report.

This month's *Beacon* coverage of this very important season includes:

- The budgets we'll vote on at School District Meeting and Town Meeting, with an analysis of their impacts on our 2008 property tax bills – see "2008 Budgets Set For Annual Meetings" on this page.
- A facsimile of the ballots for Town and School District positions – Page 5.
- Summaries of the interviews conducted by Andover Cable TV with each of the candidates for Board of Selectmen and for Road Agent – Page 6.
- The School District Warrant we'll vote on at School District Meeting, annotated to make the official language easier to understand – Page 10.
- The Town Warrant we'll vote on at Town Meeting, annotated to make the official language easier to understand – Page 11.
- An article by our Town and School

District moderators explaining the rules they follow in conducting the annual meetings – Page 13.

- Reports on 2007 from many of the organizations that serve our community, rounding out the annual "snapshot" of Andover that appears in the 2007 Town Report – Page 14.

Important Dates

Here are the dates you need to keep in mind in order to participate fully in this important time of year:

- Saturday, March 1** – Supervisor of the Checklist available to correct the checklist, Town Hall, 11 AM
- Monday, March 3** – Andover School District Meeting, AE/MS Gym, 7 PM.
- Monday, March 3** – Andover Village District Annual Meeting, Andover Town Hall, 7 PM.
- Tuesday, March 11** – Voting, AE/MS Gym, 11:30 AM to 7:30 PM.
- Tuesday, March 11** – Andover Town Meeting, AE/MS Gym, 7:30 PM.
- Tuesday, March 18** – East Andover Fire Precinct Annual Meeting, East Andover Fire Station, 7:30 PM.
- Wednesday, March 19** – Andover Fire District Annual Meeting, Andover Fire Station, 7:30 PM.

For more info, contact the Town Office at 735-5332 or AndoverNH@tds.net.

2008 Budgets Set For Annual Meetings

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Budgets for 2008 for the Andover School District, the Town, and the Fire Departments have been finalized by the Budget Committee and will be presented to voters at the annual meetings. The finalized budgets are the same as discussed in detail in the front-page article in the February issue of the *Beacon*. [Every issue of the *Beacon* ever published can be read online at Andover-Beacon.com.]

Andover School District Budget

The proposed 2008 budget for the Andover School District is for a total appropriation of \$4.066 million.

This proposed 2008 budget represents an increase of \$293,000 over the appropriation of \$3.773 million voted for 2007. When expected revenues to offset taxes are taken into account, it is estimated that the tax rate (per thousand dollars of assessed value) for the school portion of the tax bill will go up from \$9.84 in 2007 to \$10.77 in 2008, an increase of 9.5%. This represents about 70% of the estimated 2008 total tax bill.

Writing in last March's issue of the *Beacon*, Ed Hiller of the Andover Budget Committee had this to say about the importance of the school budget:

"The school budget is a subject in which *all* Andover residents should take interest, be they parents with school children, school staff, 'empty nesters,' retirees, and all others. Education is very important to our community and our future. But education is expensive, and growing more so every year as new requirements and concepts evolve. It is not easy to strike a reasonable compromise between the desire for a better and more expensive educational system

and the ability to afford the taxes that result."

To be a part of the decision process regarding our school funding, plan to attend the annual Andover School District meeting on Monday, March 3, at 7 PM in the Andover Elementary/Middle School gym.

Andover Town Budget

The proposed 2008 Town budget is for a total funding of \$1.325 million. War service credits of \$65,400 and contingency funding of \$17,000 (the so-called "overlay" recommended by the New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration) increase the total amount to be raised to \$1.41 million.

Revenues in 2008 to offset taxes are presently estimated at \$800,000. Unexpended funds from prior years of about \$150,000 will also be available to reduce the tax rate.

The resulting amount to be raised through taxes for 2008 is estimated to be approximately \$375,341, compared to \$424,000 in 2007. The resulting tax rate for the Town portion of the tax bill should go down from \$2.01 in 2007 (which reflected unexpected cost overruns in the 2007 Maple Street drainage project, Elbow Pond Road project, and Highland Lake dam project) to \$1.61 in 2008.

Despite \$8,000 to \$10,000 increases in each of the following budget items this year:

- Police salaries and benefits
- Highways and bridges
- Town Office repairs

the Selectmen were able to reduce the Town's portion of the 2008 tax rate by postponing approximately \$177,000 of highway projects that were slated for this year.

The annual Town Meeting is Tuesday, March 11, at 7:30 PM in the Andover Elementary/Middle School gym. Again, all voters are urged to attend this meeting to participate in the discussions and to vote on the appropriations.

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