

# School District Meeting Results, Article By Article

By Charlie Darling  
Beacon staff

About 100 Andover taxpayers settled into the AE/MS gym on Monday evening, March 3, to hold the annual Andover School District Meeting. The meeting breezed through the first three housekeeping warrant articles, so we pick up the action with the annual budget.

## Warrant Article 4

**\$3,840,712 for the School Budget.** This amount does not include the amounts from other warrant articles that were adopted.

As is the custom, Moderator Bill Bardsley led the meeting through the budget section by section. Things moved along pretty briskly, with most of the questions being requests for the School Board to explain the often arcane terminology that the state requires the district use in naming the budget line items.

In discussing improvements made to the building over the past year, it was pointed out that Toby Locke and Joe Stearns donated their time to install all the new locks on the classroom doors.

The budget passed all but unanimously.

## Warrant Article 5

**\$94,093 for increases in salaries and benefits.** These increases are the result of the collective bargaining agreement reached between the Andover School Board and the Andover Education Association.

Toby Locke expressed concern about the impact of this increase on older folks who are on fixed incomes. "We always want to do more than we can afford, and it seems we're at that point," he said. Karen Brule echoed Toby's concern about the elderly, saying, "They need to be considered, too."

Robin Macy asked if the District was having trouble attracting qualified teachers. The Board professed to have had little experience in that regard.

Doug Boisvert, chair of the School Board, said that the increase in salaries and benefits started out "a heck of a lot bigger." He said that two teachers and two Board members negotiated hard for eight hours to come up with a number they felt they could all live with.

When the vote was called, the article passed.

## Warrant Article 6

**\$86,530 to replace/repair two roofs, concrete thresholds, and the**

**front entryway.** The roofs to be repaired are the flat roofs on the gym and on the first addition to the original building. After a little discussion, the article passed all but unanimously.

## Warrant Article 7

**To approve a 15-year tuition agreement with Merrimack Valley School District.** This article will have no financial impact this year.

There was much discussion as the meeting struggled to understand the details of the contract which, unlike the current contract, is based on the state-wide average cost of educating a high school student. When the vote was called, the article passed all but unanimously.

## Warrant Article 8

**\$10,000 for life safety issues.** The Budget Committee did not recommend passing this article, but only because at the time the Budget Committee had to decide, the School Board had not yet decided exactly what this money would be spent on.

The Board explained that based on the recently-received results of a Life Safety Inspection by SFC Engineering, the money would be spent on upgrades to the building's fire alarm system, for an estimated cost of \$9,585. The article passed unanimously.

## Warrant Article 9

**\$45,000 for a sidewalk from Main Street.** The money has already been raised by a grant from the state's Safe Routes to School program and therefore will not impact 2008 taxes. With little discussion, the article passed all but unanimously.

## Warrant Article 10

**To authorize the School Board to appoint a deputy treasurer.** The deputy treasurer is an unpaid appointment. The article passed all but unanimously.

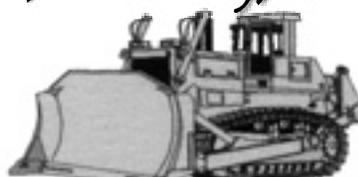
Under "other business," Toby Locke asked why the roof on the new addition was allowed to have so much snow on it that there was a problem with the trusses ... and wouldn't a metal roof be a better idea?

Superintendent of Schools Mike Martin replied that the school had been shoveling the roofs as needed, but that the storm that caused the problem was worse than expected. Metal roofs, he said, are expensive and snow falling from a metal roof causes its own set of problems. Also, the fire department doesn't like metal roofs.

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