Run For Town Office In 2009!

By Charlie Darling
Beacon staff

With Town Meeting coming up in March, it's time to think about who's going to fill all the positions in town government that keep the wheels turning smoothly.

The following is a run-down of what offices will be on the ballot in March and what the incumbents may be planning.

Town Officers

Selectman for three years – Roger Godwin is the incumbent.

Budget Committee for three years (two positions) – Sharon Darling and Carroll Gautreau are the incumbents.

Library Trustees for three years (two positions) – Eileen Neville and Diane Rice are the incumbents. Eileen does not intend to run for re-election.

Trustee of the Trust Funds for three years – Janet Moore is the incumbent and intends to run for re-election.

Cemetery Trustees for three years – Susan Schnare is the incumbent.

School District Officers

School Board for three years – Robin Boynton and David Powers are the incumbents. David intends to run for re-election.

Moderator for one year – Bill Bardsley is the incumbent.

Clerk for one year – Christie Coll is the incumbent.

Treasurer for one year – Shirley Currier is the incumbent and intends to run for re-election.

How To File

Filing to run for office is very easy, as you can see from the filing form, below.

The filing period for these positions is 10 days long. It begins on Wednesday, January 21, and ends on Friday, January 30. The filing form can be obtained at the Town Clerk's office in Town Hall during her normal business hours:

Mon. and Wed., 9 AM to 2 PM

Tues. and Thurs., 1:30 PM to 6:30 PM

There is a $1 filing fee for each paid position. There is no filing fee for unpaid positions. The paid positions up for election this year are:

Selectman – $1,500 / year
School Board – $100 / year
School District Moderator – hourly
School District Clerk – hourly
School District Treasurer – $840 / year

For more information, contact the Town Office at 735-5332 or TAdmin@TownOfAndover.org.

Asa Gilman (right), daughter of Sarah and Brian Gilman of Andover, appeared in this *Concord Monitor* photo on Election Day helping to get out the vote. Asa and her friends (l-r) Elliot, Deacon, and Mika "met" at birthing class in Concord a year ago. Photo: Liz Poinier Clendenning

Tax Bills *from page 1*

ing winter combined to drive expenses higher than expected.

The second half of the one-two punch came in the form of lower-than-anticipated revenues. The slowing economy hurt receipts from vehicle taxes, and FEMA delayed about $60,000 in reimbursements for the Highland Lake dam project until 2009.

The shortfall in receipts came to about $107,700 by the time it came time to set the Town tax rate.

The money to run the town has to come from somewhere, and the Selectmen only have two choices – raise the Town tax rate, or take money from the prior year surplus fund. As they did last year, the Selectmen used a combination of the two tools at their disposal to balance the books: a $.14 increase in the Town tax rate, and $270,000 from the prior year surplus fund.

Tax Rates In Surrounding Towns

New London	$15.18
Grantham	$15.46
E Andover	**$16.25**
Andover	**$16.57**
Springfield	$16.59
Danbury	$16.97
Salisbury	$17.82
Franklin	$17.98
Wilmot	$18.26
Sutton	$18.33
Webster	$18.71
Hill	$20.84
Boscawen	$23.58
Warner	$23.72

Fire Department Tax Rates

The East Andover Fire Department tax rate (which appears on the tax bills of residents who live in the East Andover Fire Precinct) was up a penny at $.33, and the Andover Fire Department tax rate (which appears on everyone else's tax bills) was down a penny, coming in at $0.65 for 2008.

School Tax Rates

The school tax rates, which account for about two-thirds of our total tax rate, are up by just over 11% this year. Most of that increase was forecast in the budget process last year, which identified almost $250,000 in increased spending. That overall increase reflected higher MVHS tuition costs; higher staff salaries and benefits; and increases in the SAU assessment, in food service, and in transportation costs. It also included spending *decreases* from reducing teaching staff and from budgetting less for building repairs.

But not all of the actual increase for this year could be foreseen during the budget process last year. Neither the big problem with the AE/MS roof last winter nor the beginning of the recent rise in fuel and electricity costs were factored into the budget. Paying those unanticipated expenses reduced the unexpended surplus for 2007-2008 to $208,739, down from over $265,000 the year before. With less unexpended surplus available to reduce this year's school tax rates, the final rates came in at $10.93 per $1,000.

(The "State Education Tax" that you see on your tax bill is just part of the way our School District is funded and is therefore subject to all the factors discussed above. The words "State Education Tax" are perhaps a bit misleading, as it's money raised in Andover to be spent by the Andover School District, which is why, for the purposes of this article, we've just lumped it in with the "School District Tax" and called the result the "School Taxes.")

County Tax Rate

Our County tax rate is up this year about 16%, to $2.84 per $1,000. The increase is due to the added costs associated with the new County nursing home and the new jail facility, as well as a decrease in the amount that Medicaid is reimbursing the nursing home.

Assessment Changes

Are you seeing a rise in your tax bill greater than about 10%? If you are, then check your assessment. About a third of the properties in Andover were inspected earlier this year to verify the accuracy of the Town's records.

If yours was one of those properties (and you would have received a letter from the Town in the spring if it were), then the change in your tax bill from last year will be a combination of the approximately 10% rise in the total tax rate, plus (or minus) any increase (or decrease) in your assessment.

Penalties

Does your tax bill include a $10 penalty? If it does, it's because you didn't return your inventory form to the Town Office by the April 15 deadline this year.

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TOWN of ANDOVER

Filing Period for Andover Town & School District Officers

Jan 21 to Jan 30

File at Town Clerk's office
Mon & Wed, 9 - 2
Tue & Thur, 1:30 - 6:30

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