

# ISSUES AT TOWN MEETING

ing to Department of Revenue requirements, non-money articles must follow the operating budget and all other articles that raise and appropriate dollars.

However, this is a very important warrant article, and we ask that voters remain at the meeting until all articles are considered and voted on.

Warrant Article 14 asks the voters to give the Board of Selectmen the authority to appoint or hire a full-time road agent. This would not take effect until March 2012, when the current elected road agent's term ends.

The advantages of appointing or hiring a full-time road agent are many.

### Continuity:

There would be no two-year term (as is the case with Andover's elected road agent), allowing for greater continuity in planning, management, and personnel. Each elected road agent can have different methods, different priorities, and a different list of preferred contractors and laborers. Where is the continuity, the consistency in long-range planning? A hired full-time road agent could provide that.

**Qualifications:** The road agent would be hired based on qualifications alone, not popularity and qualifications. There would be an application process for the hired full-time position, allowing the Selectmen to choose the person most qualified to do the job.

**More Time:** A full-time person would have more time to devote to long-term planning, coordination among departments (highway department, solid waste department, town maintenance), and negotiating contracts for labor and materials. This leads to greater efficiency and savings.

**No Additional Costs:** The cost of salary and benefits would be offset by savings in the operating budget. Salary (\$45,000) and benefits (\$19,000) for the new full-time road agent would be approximately \$64,000. A full-time road agent would not only perform the supervision and labor that an elected road agent does (\$9,000). He or she would also perform duties that a part-time road agent doesn't have time to, thereby reducing winter labor (\$17,000), summer labor (\$32,000), Transfer Station payroll (\$5,000), and Town property maintenance (\$1,000) for a total savings of \$64,000.

Our past road agents have been dedicated and experienced and have done quality work for the town. However, all of our elected road agents in the past have also had their own businesses to run.

The Selectmen feel it is time to have a

road agent who can dedicate their time, full-time, to planning for and caring for Andover's roads and bridges. The continuity and efficiency of having a full-time person can only result in savings for the town.

### The Future Of The Road Department

Many people are concerned about the growth of Andover's Road Department. In the past, plans for creating a full-time Road Department have included the purchase of several pieces of heavy equipment, hiring a full-time department head and laborers, and constructing a highway building.

The current Board of Selectmen has spent considerable time looking at the needs of the town, both present and future; the state of the economy; and the ability of taxpayers to support those needs. Our plan is to take small and affordable steps to take us into the future.

This is our vision for the future of Andover's Road Department.

### Equipment

- Grader we already own
- Backhoe/Loader we hope to purchase in 2011 (see Warrant Article 3 on page 16)
- 1-Ton Pickup with plow and sander we hope to purchase in 2012

### Building

- Office in Town Hall if Warrant Article 14 passes (see Warrant Article 14 on page 17)
- No building is required for equipment storage
- Once single stream recycling begins, hopefully in 2012, most of our recycling can happen in a single outside container, and we won't need the bailers any more. At that point, the Recycle Building at the Transfer Station could be used for equipment maintenance and tool storage.

### Road Agent

- Appointed or hired by the selectmen in 2012 (see Warrant Article 14 on page 17)
- Full-time

### Sand and Salt Shed

- Determine site for sand and salt storage long-term
- Acquire site or establish long-term access to present site
- Build shed to cover sand and salt, maybe by 2013

Our plan is to take small steps as we can afford them and eventually get to a place where the town has more control over spending. The changes we are proposing are intended to be cost-saving implementations, or investments, with the intent to control ever-increasing budgets in future years.

Many towns around us have already

	Andover	Brookline	Hill	Springfield
<b>Miles of Road</b>	52	42	40	45
<b>Equipment Owned</b>	grader	none	grader 2 dump trucks w/ plow & sander 1 one-ton pickup 1 loader 1 backhoe 1 chipper 1 sweeper	grader 2 six-wheelers  1 one-ton pickup 1 loader 1 backhoe
<b>Town Employees</b>	Elected RA	Elected RA	3 full-time 1 part-time	2 full-time 1 part-time
<b>Operating Budget</b>	\$384,950	\$450,000	\$280,807	\$272,300

made these investments, and their highway budgets are smaller than Andover's. Consider the examples in the chart above.:

Comparing highway budgets is not always a clean process. There are differences in each town's highway budget. For example, Andover includes street lighting in our budget, and Hill does not. The miles of roads differs slightly from town to town. But the point is that

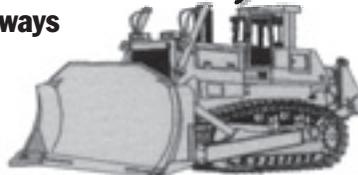
hiring full-time employees and purchasing equipment does not create an unreasonable budget.

Most people get nervous when changes are proposed. But these are tough times economically, and we have to look at new ways to do business to keep ever-rising costs in check. Please take the time to consider these proposals carefully. We are available to answer any questions and concerns.

**MARK E. THOMPSON EXCAVATING, INC.**

- Plowing & Sanding Driveways
- Septic Systems
- Site Work
- Sand, Gravel, and Loam

PO Box 1 • East Andover • 735-5581



## HAVE YOU THANKED YOUR ROAD AGENT AND HIS CREW LATELY?

Next time you see them in the store or the post office or on the street or maybe even give them a call on the phone, **thank** them for the *great job* that they have done on the roads and pushing back the banks at the intersections so that we can drive around Andover safely.

~ A Grateful Land Owner