



Trish Demers checks in Dennis Fenton (l) for the ballot votes on warrant articles 3 and 14 during Town Meeting, while Art Urie (r) hands a blank ballot for each warrant article to Dale Dukette. Photo: Charlie Darling

Town Meeting Results, Article By Article

By Charlie Darling
Beacon staff

On Tuesday night, March 8, about 200 Andover taxpayers gathered in the AE/MS gym for Andover's annual Town Meeting. As planned, the meeting started at 7 PM rather than at 7:30 PM, which had been the tradition for many years.

Bill Leber, president of the Andover Lions Club, thanked the town for the prominence afforded the club in the 2010 Andover Town Report. (See Bill's letter on the subject on page 7.) After moderator Ed Becker introduced himself and the Board of Selectmen, board chair Vicky Mishcon presented Ed Hiller, retiring chair of the Andover Budget Committee, with a plaque to commemorate his 24 years of service on the committee. (See the text of Vicky's comments on page 13.)

Ed Becker said that because of concerns about non-voters voting at Town Meeting in the past, everyone should plan to come to next year's Town Meeting early so they can be checked in by the supervisors of the checklist. To prevent any problems at this year's meeting, Ed had non-voters stand to be recognized by the audience and asked that everyone keep an eye on them to be sure they didn't vote during the evening.

Warrant Article 1

Election of Officers. In the Selectman race, Vicky Mishcon (221 votes) defeated George Crane (68) and Howard Wilson (48). Bill Bardsley (279) and Wendy Pinkham (258), both running unopposed, were elected to the Budget Committee. Marj Roy (359) was elected as a Library Trustee.

Joanne Edgar received 43 write-in votes and was elected to become a Trustee of Trust Funds. In the Cemetery Trustee race, Pat Cutter (181) defeated Steele Henderson (123) and Natalie Riker (14).

Everyone on the School District ballot – Kent Armstrong (283) for School

Board, Christie Coll (308) for School Clerk, and Shirley Currier (326) for School Treasurer – was running unopposed and retained their positions.

For School Moderator, Ed Becker received 45 write-in votes and Bill Bardsley received 32 write-in votes, but Ed stated publicly that he would not accept the position.

Warrant Article 2

Amending the Zoning Ordinance to allow up to 10 residential building permits this year. This was a ballot item during voting earlier in the day and so was not presented to Town Meeting in the evening. The article passed, 237 to 90.

Warrant Article 3 - Discussion

\$130,000 for a backhoe. State law requires a ballot vote, with a two-thirds majority in favor for the article to pass.

A motion was made to discuss together Article 3 and Article 14 (which proposed appointing a Road Agent rather than electing one), then vote on each article separately.

Toby Locke opposed the motion. "I don't want this to get rushed through. I think it's rash."

A voice vote on the motion was too close to call. The motion carried, 94 to 51, on a show of hands.

Vicky Mishcon, chair of the Board of Selectmen, started the discussion of Article 3 by explaining that the Board's plan was to either go with a lease/purchase arrangement or a bank loan, whichever offered the best deal. The Board chose a backhoe/loader to purchase because it is the most expensive piece of equipment to rent.

Peter Zak: "The figures the Board is presenting aren't positive. We have lots of people who make money renting equipment to the town, and this would mean they won't have the opportunity to do this."

Mark Thompson: "The Board estimates we'll use the machine about

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Andover Voters Reject Appointed Road Agent

By Karen Langley
Concord Monitor staff

From the March 9 *Concord Monitor*
Andover residents last night defeated proposals to expand their highway operation, deciding against purchasing a backhoe loader or allowing their selectmen to hire a full-time road agent.

The town currently elects a road agent and rents a backhoe and loader. Victoria Mishcon, chairwoman of the selectmen, told residents the town would save money over the long term by purchasing its own road equipment, and Selectman Donald Gross said an appointed road agent is "the ideal plan for a small town." Mishcon said her board had not asked for a full road department because such proposals had been soundly defeated at past town meetings.

Residents who spoke before the vote were skeptical that they were being told the full cost of buying a backhoe loader. Carla Levesque asked whether the selectmen had considered the cost of maintaining and operating the equipment, as well as purchasing it.

"If I write down at home an item on my budget, it doesn't mean that the money's there," she said.

After more than 1½ hours of debate on the two proposals, residents rejected the backhoe purchase by a vote of 119-

77, according to Janet Moore, a trustee of the town library. They denied their selectmen the power to appoint a road agent by a vote of 114-80, Moore said.

Voters went on to approve a \$1.27 million general operating budget, an increase of about \$75,000 from the previous year, as recommended by the budget committee.

In the proposal to purchase a backhoe loader, the selectmen had asked for permission to spend up to \$130,000. Mishcon said the town would pay \$25,000 annually for five years through a lease-purchase agreement.

The purchase would save money over the long term, according to information presented by the selectmen. If the town were to purchase a backhoe loader, it would pay \$35,000 each year in principal and interest, fuel, and maintenance during the first five years, compared with \$37,000 each year if it continued to rent the equipment. Mishcon said the real savings of the purchase would show itself in the next 10 years, when the cost of ownership would drop to \$19,000 each year.

"When you rent equipment, at the end of the rental you have nothing," Gross said.

Several residents worried that purchasing a backhoe loader would take in-

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