



TOWN MEETINGS 2013

A special section of
The Andover Beacon

School District Meeting Results, Article by Article

Full-day kindergarten passes on a ballot vote

By Charlie Darling, *Beacon* staff

About 150 Andover taxpayers met on Monday, March 4, in the AE/MS gym to hold the annual Andover School District Meeting. Moderator Betsy Paine opened the meeting by introducing the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, who led the audience in the *Pledge of Allegiance* and then recited the AE/MS Eagle Code.

Betsy then introduced the Andover School Board: Don Gould (chair), Charlie McCrave, Katie Keyser, Michelle Dudek, and Kent Armstrong; SAU #46 Superintendent Mike Martin; and Andover School District Clerk Christie Coll.

Betsy reviewed the rules of the meeting and pointed out that one paragraph in the Moderators Rules printed in the Andover Town Report 2012 is wrong – anyone can move to restrict reconsideration of the budget, not just a person who voted on the winning side of the article.

The moderator also mentioned that she had received a petition for a ballot vote on Article 6, and that for it to be valid, all the people who signed the petition must be present when the article is moved.

Article 1: To accept the reports printed in the School District report.

With no discussion, the article passed unanimously.

Article 2: To authorize the School Board to use state and federal aid to education this year.

With no discussion, the article passed all but unanimously.

Article 3: To authorize the School Board to use private donations this year. With no discussion, the article passed unanimously.

Article 4: \$4,448,386 for the School Budget, as recommended by the Budget Committee. The School Board recommends \$4,515,386.

School Board Chair Don Gould moved to amend Article 4 to the School Board's recommended amount, not the Budget Committee's recommended amount. The discussion of the motion to amend Article 4 began with a detailed presentation by School Board member Kent Armstrong.

"We're not asking you for anything. We're presenting what we believe the community needs. It's your responsibility to decide what you – and us, collectively – want to do for the betterment of this town," Kent said.

He made a case for the school as an economic force in the community – through employing 15 or 16 Andover residents, through building permits, through providing an educated workforce for local employers, and so on.

Kent also praised Katie Keyser, who is leaving the School Board. She and Board member Charlie McCrave negotiated the teacher contract, which gets a higher contribution from teachers to

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teacher, and increasing the kindergarten from half-time to full-time.

As mentioned above, this appropriation is an increase of \$264,927 or 6.1% over last year's appropriation of \$4,351,029. State and Federal aid is expected to be down by about \$10,000. Estimates of current year expenditures suggest that little or no fund surplus will be available to reduce taxes for the coming year. As a result, the estimated school tax rate for 2013 is \$13.67. This is an increase of \$1.65 or 13.7% over last year's rate of \$12.02. This will increase the tax bill for a property assessed at \$200,000 by \$330.

Andover Town Meeting

The budget recommended by the Budget Committee and the Selectmen as printed in the Town Report had a misprint. The Police Benefits line, printed as \$51,309, should have been \$36,406. An amendment to correct that error was accepted.

The Andover Town Meeting then voted to accept the amended recommended budget. Then on reconsideration, the meeting voted to amend the Budget Committee's and Selectmen's recommended budget by increasing the Parks and Recreation budget by \$8,000 to allow completion of the Blackwater Park building facility in 2013. The total appropriation (net of pass-throughs that do not affect the tax rate) was \$1,502,583. This represents an increase over last year's appropriation of \$1,401,494 by \$101,089, or 7.2%.

The Board of Selectmen estimates that revenues available to offset taxes in 2013 will be up by approximately \$31,000 over last year. The resulting

Town tax rate for 2013 is estimated to be \$3.61, up \$0.26 or 7.8% over last year's tax rate of \$3.35. The Selectmen do not anticipate that any surplus will be available from 2012 to reduce this tax rate.

Andover Fire Districts

The Andover Fire Department voted a net appropriation of \$67,382, and the East Andover Fire Department voted a net appropriation of \$53,312, both slightly reduced from the previous year.

Tax Rate Estimates

The total net appropriation voted for 2013 at the various annual meetings is \$6,210,773. This is up \$360,461 from \$5,850,312 appropriated for 2012.

Assuming that the Merrimack County charge to Andover this year remains the same as last year, and es-

Appropriations (Net of Pass-Through Items)				
Department	2012	2013	Change	
School	\$4,351,029	\$4,615,956	\$264,927	6.1%
Town	\$1,376,164	\$1,474,143	\$97,979	7.1%
Fire				
Andover	\$68,926	\$67,362	-\$1,564	-2.3%
E. Andover	\$54,193	\$53,312	-\$881	-1.6%
Total	\$5,850,312	\$6,210,773	\$360,461	6.2%
Tax Rates ('12 actual, '13 estimated)				
School	\$12.02	\$13.67	\$1.65	13.7%
Town	\$3.35	\$3.61	\$0.26	7.8%
Fire				
Andover	\$0.64	\$0.64	---	---
E. Andover	\$0.35	\$0.35	---	---
County	\$2.66	\$2.66	---	---
Total Tax Rates				
Andover	\$18.67	\$20.58	\$1.91	10.2%
E. Andover	\$18.38	\$20.29	\$1.91	10.4%
Tax on a \$200,000 Property ('12 actual, '13 estimated)				
Andover	\$3,734	\$4,116	\$382	10.2%
E. Andover	\$3,676	\$4,058	\$382	10.4%

timating the amounts of expected offsetting revenues, the total tax rates for this year are estimated to be \$20.58 for the Andover Fire District and \$20.29 for the East Andover Fire District, both up about \$1.91 or 10.2% from last year.

The increase in the tax bill for a property valued at \$200,000 is estimated to be \$382. Of this amount, \$330 will go to increased School taxes, and \$52 will go to increased Town taxes.



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