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The moderator made it clear that the vote on this article had to be an up-or-down vote, because any changes to any of the amounts would have to go back to negotiation between the School Board and the teachers.

School Board member Katie Keyser pointed out that the main goal of the Board was to decrease the School District's contribution to health insurance, which had been 100% of a single plan, 90% of a two-person plan, and 85% of a family plan.

With no discussion, Article 5 passed on a voice vote.

Article 6: To fund a full-day kindergarten program.

The moderator determined that the petitioners who asked for a ballot vote were all present, so she announced that the article would be decided by a ballot vote.

Wood Sutton: "I'm all in favor of full-day kindergarten. I think it's a good investment in the children and in the families of this community."

Andy Guptill: "My only fear of this is that I don't think the School District is going to be sustainable into the future. The budget for the school has increased by 50% over the past 15 years."

"I appreciate what the School Board and the administration has done to keep the costs under control, but we have a very aging population, with a lot of people making \$10,000 or \$12,000 a year on Social Security, and a lot of other people making less than that."

"If we're going to sustain things as a community, we need to find ways to level things out. Right now, even as a parent, I'm looking at full-day kindergarten as being a luxury."

Don Gould, School Board chair, said that any educator he's talked to says that early education is where the kids learn fastest. "Vermont is way ahead of us on full-day kindergarten, and the feds are looking at it. Once they move, we'd better be ready."

Paul Currier: "Early education is an investment in our future. This is something we need to support. Andover is

in the top of the lower quartile as far as taxes go. If you want to blame something for high real estate taxes, don't blame your local government, don't blame your School Board. Blame the state government and the federal government."

Dean Barker, a high school teacher: "Educating a child is like building a house. If you cut costs on the foundation, you see the results later, and you pay for it later in social costs, jail cells, and so on. The more education you have, the more money you make, and the more freedom you have."

Arch Weathers, Andover Budget Committee: "The Committee members I've talked to aren't opposed to full-day kindergarten. They just don't think that this year is the time to pass it."

Steve Barton: "As a parent, I believe it's my responsibility to give my children the best education I can. But as a parent, it's also my responsibility to teach my child to read, to write, to count – all the things they're going to learn in kindergarten."

"I know it's only \$64,000 this year, but then it's something next year, and then it's this, and then it's that. We have to look at the town as a whole, not just the school. We have roads that are falling out from underneath us. We have bridges that are on the Red List and have been for 10 years that we can't afford to fix."

"I can't say I'm against full-day kindergarten. I can't say I'm 100% for it. I think we need to think about the town as a whole. I would urge people to think long and hard before they vote for a full-time kindergarten. Maybe parents should do a little more with their kids for now, and maybe next year or the year after will be a better time."

Chuck Keyser asked what would happen to the new kindergarten teacher if the number of kindergarteners the following year decreased. Katie Keyser explained that under the terms of the teachers' contract, the School Board can reduce positions.

With no further discussion, Article 6 passed on a ballot vote of 113 to 35.

School District Meeting: the School Board's View

By Andover School Board

The tone of the Andover School District Meeting was quickly set by the Cub scouts and Daisy Girl Scouts leading the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance and the Andover Elementary/Middle School (AE/MS) Eagle Code. This reminded all that the United States is a great place to live, and AE/MS is the best place to start a life of learning how to make oneself, each other, and the world a better place for all.

First-time moderator Betsy Paine, the School Board, AE/MS administrators, and SAU 46 staff were well prepared to answer all questions of the voters. Many of the questions were even better addressed by the voters themselves. These presentations added much valued information in the true purpose of School District Meeting.

Voters supported recommendations of the School Board by overwhelming approval of the budget proposed by the School Board and all articles. Consistent with the Long Range Plan, voters supported:

- Full-day kindergarten
- Three-year teachers contract
- Replacement of Reading Specialist position that had been cut three years ago
- An additional fourth grade teacher to accommodate increased student population

We are thankful to all who attended and participated. We always wish more could have been a part of this meeting to hear the presentations from fellow citizens of Andover and witness the courtesy and thoughtfulness of the voters. You can see video of the meeting on the Town's Web page at Andover.NH.us.

The Merrimack Valley (MV) School District annual meeting followed two days later. At this meeting, the budget proposed by the MV School Board was approved, following much discussion, and all other articles were passed with-

out debate. The International Baccalaureate program and other advanced projects will continue to enhance the public high school education of Andover students. This has been instrumental in curriculum improvement and provided a head-start toward meeting the Common Core Standards.

Andover Town Meeting and elections the following week provided another term for School Board member Charles McCrave, School District Moderator Betsy Paine, School District Clerk Christie Coll, and School District Treasurer Shirley Currier. Anne Swayze was elected to fill the School Board seat left vacant by Katie Keyser.

The School Board recognizes the contributions of Katie Keyser upon her leaving. Her selfless sacrifice of time and provision of thoughtful and innovative contributions served our students and community very well indeed.

Many thanks for the support and informational assistance of the voters of Andover. Don't forget that our School Board meetings are on the first Tuesday of each month, except July. The April 2 meeting will feature a technology status report at 7 PM.

It takes a strong community to build strong schools to educate children to meet the ever-increasing challenges of their, and our, new world.

YOUR FOR LIVING WELL

New London Hospital is pleased to announce **Brenda Foley, MD** has joined **Sarah Lester, MD** and **Aram Kalpakjian, PA-C** at the New London Pediatric Care Center.

For over 20 years Dr. Foley has dedicated her career to child-focused healthcare and has been practicing in New Hampshire for 13 years. She earned her medical degree from Tufts University School of Medicine and completed an internship and residency in pediatrics at USAF Medical Center Keesler AFB in Mississippi.

Call 526-5363 for an appointment with Dr. Foley.



 To learn more and to receive our e-newsletter Discover Health, visit www.newlondonhospital.org



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