

Rome voters approve budget of about \$688,000

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ROME — Voters at Town Meeting on Saturday adopted municipal budget of about \$688,000, approving all 74 warrant articles in three hours and 10 minutes.

Voters also approved three ordinances — a Board of Appeals Ordinance, a Planning Board Ordinance and a Wind Energy Facility Moratorium Ordinance — with little discussion.

In the Friday election, incumbent Third Selectman Malcolm Charles beat his opponent, Larry DiPietro Jr., 82-39. First Selectman Kelly Archer and Second Selectman Richard LaBelle, running unopposed, were returned to their seats, as were Treasurer/Tax Collector Tammy Lyons and Town Clerk Lois Stratton. Carroll Bubar was re-elected Road Commissioner.

Residents by secret ballot on Friday voted 91-34 to appropriate \$225,000 to pave and rebuild 1.14 miles of Watson Pond Road and appropriate \$21,323 — the money received from the local road assistance program — to offset the project's total cost.

They voted 96-28 to authorize selectmen to use a credit card system for receipt of town revenue, under which any fee associated with credit card use is to be assessed directly to the card-holder at the time of transaction. Also, voters decided 115-9 to authorize the town sexton to post all cemetery cleanups at all town-maintained cemeteries, May 1 to Oct. 15 each year.

About 70 people turned out Saturday at the Rome Community Center where Peter Schultz, chairman of the Board of Appeals & Fair Hearing Authority, moderated the Town Meeting.

Selectmen nominated two people — Richard Greenan and Alan LaBelle — for the Spirit of America Award for their outstanding volunteer contributions to the town. Both received standing ovations.

The budget voters approved Saturday is down about 5 percent from the budget they approved last year and includes about \$19,000 more in salaries for municipal officials. The \$95,923 in salaries approved Saturday includes a \$500 increase for the first selectman, for a total of \$6,000; \$1,000 more for second selectman, for a total of \$5,500; and \$1,500 more for third, for a total of \$5,500. Other items approved Saturday include \$30,000 for repair of town-maintained roads and bridges, \$63,836 for snow plowing and sanding, \$50,580 for buying and stockpiling 2,500 cubic yards of sand and 420 tons of salt, \$28,000 for insurance premiums, \$41,000 for solid waste disposal at Waste Management Inc., of Norridgewock, \$28,853 for FirstPark, and \$35,300 for the Fire Department.

By a show of hands, voters approved reappointing Schultz's wife, Hillary Schultz, as well as Sandra Phillips and Debbie Henry, to the town Budget Committee. They reappointed Kimberly Brooks, Tammy Lyons and Peggy Griffin to the Recreation Committee. Rhoads Miller and Lincoln Nye were appointed as new members on that committee.

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