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THE COURIER

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Voters balk at funding landfill cap

By MIKE DICKERMAN
COURIER STAFF

LITTLETON—Voters attending last night's first session of town meeting may have survived their initial flirtation with the nuances of a new meeting

format, but the same can't be said for a warrant article seeking funds for capping the community's old landfill.

In a decidedly one-sided vote, residents here all but scrapped a proposal to raise \$1.67 million for the purpose of capping the

landfill next to the industrial park access. As a token gesture, voters approved placing on the warrant an article that asks for a \$1 appropriation for the project. The article will be voted on by secret ballot April 8 when the second town meeting session is

convened.

The landfill issue took up more than an hour of discussion Tuesday, with sentiment split on whether or not the town should proceed with the landfill closure now or wait until later.

Town Manager Mike Farrell

said the state Department of Environmental Services (DES) asked the town to get the working done last year, and expects it to be closed in 1997, but Farrell added the state "hasn't drawn a line in the sand" yet.

All three town selectmen went on record as being opposed to the landfill closure, citing economics as their primary reason for not recommending passage of the article. "We think...it's too much money," said selectmen chair Steve Costa.

Despite the backing of the town Conservation Commission, which recently unanimously endorsed the project, voters amended the article to include the \$1 figure rather than the original \$2.1 million or the revised \$1.67 million figure proposed by selectmen. They also added language to the article stating that if and when the

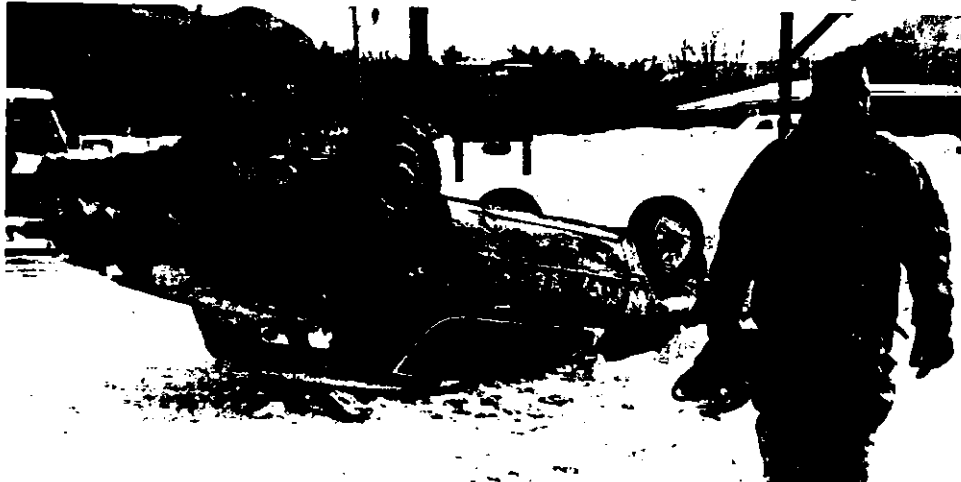
project is undertaken, the state and federal governments guarantee the town that once the capping takes place, the town's financial liability ceases to exist.

The amended article passed by a 112-51 margin.

The rest of the nearly four and a half hour meeting was taken up with discussion on about half of the remaining proposed warrant articles. There were also plenty of procedural questions linked to the way the first session of town meeting is run. Most of those had to do with what or what not voters could actually do at the session.

Unlike last year, when the electorate cut a quarter million dollars from the town budget, residents here last night were in a more giving mood. During discussion on the 1997 budget, they

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RESCUE BRIGADE—A Lincoln firefighter awaits the arrival of a tow truck to upright Mary Aylward's car Friday morning. Aylward lost control of her car when it hit a patch of ice that lay beneath the 22 inches of snow that fell last Thursday. (Photo by Lisa Connell)

Bethlehem dumps landfill expansion

By REBECCA A. BROWN
COURIER STAFF

BETHLEHEM—A contentious landfill expansion amendment was defeated by nearly 60 percent of voters, 423-301, in Tuesday's town elections.

Ray Bushway was returned to the Board of Selectmen, receiving 413 votes to George Manupeili's 247. Joel Goodell finished a distant third with 44 votes.

Voters also chose to enlarge the select board from three members to five. The petitioned article passed, 392-307.

Kenneth McCulloch was elected Constable, a dubious dis-

inction perhaps, as voters also chose to abolish the office. McCulloch received 347 votes to Richard Robie, Sr.'s 276.

George Tucker was reelected Road Agent with 447 votes to Walter Hodge's 238.

By a 493-190 margin, voters agreed to exempt all single family dwellings from the national building (B.O.C.A.) code.

In other balloting, Judy Wallace polled 103 write-in votes to John Wedick's 444 for Trustee of Trust Funds. Russ Bonnevie (451 votes), Maxine Jackson (415), and Nancy Stevenson (503) were all elected Library Trustees. Jannifer Kotok received 231 votes.

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Littleton town meeting

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actually amended the final dollar figure upwards by some \$13,000. The extra money will help cover a proposed \$5,000 salary increase for town clerk Faye White and pay for infrastructure improvements to the site once proposed for a new Knart store off Meadow Street.

The town clerk salary boost was raised from the floor by Ferne "Bud" Foster, the architect of last year's severe budget cuts. The infrastructure improvement project was proposed by selectmen, who revealed that a new unnamed retailer is now seriously looking at the Kmart site and considering establishing a store there.

Voters eventually passed on to next month a ballot article that will ask voters to raise \$3,943,585 to cover operating costs for the current year.

The only other warrant article amended as a result of action

taken Tuesday night was the article modifying the town's elderly tax exemption. At the recommendation of selectmen, voters boosted the allowable income figure or applicants from \$13,400 to \$18,400 for single persons and from \$20,400 to \$22,600 for married couples.

All other warrant articles will appear on the April 8 ballot pretty much as presented in this year's town report. Those articles include: a proposal to lease/purchase a new fire truck for \$25,000 a year; a proposal to appropriate up to \$151,000 for two new dump trucks, a replacement police cruiser and a 1 ton pickup truck; a plan to raise \$33,000 for the replacement of the library boiler.

A follow-up informational hearing on what last night's actions by voters will mean come April 8 will be held Monday, March 24, at 6 p.m. at the town building.