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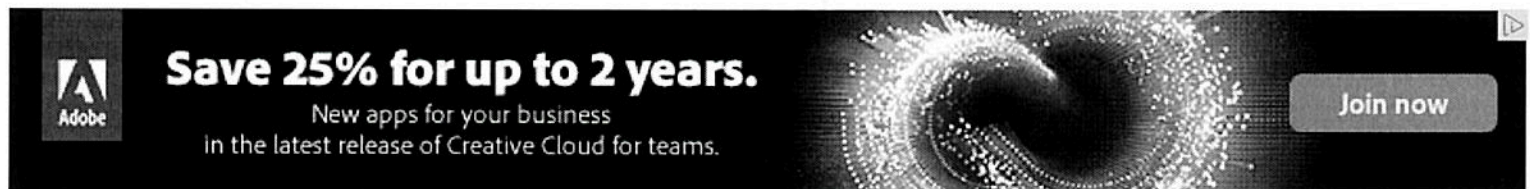
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### **Belmont voters chose not to renovate historic mill**

**By DAN SEUFERT**

**Union Leader Correspondent**

BELMONT – Residents resoundingly voted against renovating the historic Belmont Mill building for use as town officers Tuesday, and also voted in favor of keeping their current SB2 form of town government.

The mill renovation article garnered just 164 votes in favor, with 467 voting against the plan.

The town has been eyeing the historic mill building as a new home for the town offices for the past several years. Town historians, meanwhile, were working to preserve the 1833 former hosiery plant building that was the "economic heart of Belmont village," according to the town's heritage commission, until it closed in 1970.

The mill was saved in the 1990s with the help of a government grant, which expires in four years. Town officials had initially thought the cost of repairing and renovating the building would be about \$2.7 million, and were surprised when a contractor informed them the cost would be about \$3.3 million.

The mill, which is currently occupied by businesses, has structural and interior problems, particularly on its fourth floor, officials said. The high cost of repair is due in great part to the building's age.

The mill article called for \$3,357,250 in funding. The proposal was supported by the selectmen and the budget committee.

Also defeated was an article calling for \$300,000 for purchasing and equipping a used ladder truck for the fire and rescue department. The article would have withdrawn the money from the Fire and Ambulance, Equipment and Apparatus Special Revenue Fund. The article was recommended by the selectmen and the budget committee, but voters chose against it, with 315 votes against it to 286 votes in favor.

Voters approved an article raising \$750,000 to be placed in the Highway Reconstruction and Maintenance Capital Reserve fund, 408-204. In another article, by a vote of 383-287, residents approved \$536,556 for the operation and maintenance of the town's sewage collection and disposal system.

The town also voted against rescinding the SB2 form of government, adopted in 2006, which replaces the town meeting form of government with ballot voting. The article failed, 157-453.

By a vote of 330 in favor to 275 against, voters passed the proposed \$7,257,691 budget.