

Budget 7/7/93 heads for third vote

By JUNE PETERSON
Register Citizen Staff

WINSTED — After about 45 minutes of debate over the education budget and the merits of a town meeting vs. a referendum, about 50 residents last night agreed to a July 17 referendum to adopt the fiscal 1994 spending plan.

Despite the debate, all citizens could do last night was adjourn the meeting to a referendum, and set the time and place for the vote.

The vote will be from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Isabelle M. Pearson School.

In a town where people are not shy to voice their opinions, several at the budget meeting packed up to the microphone to speak.

Elbert G. Manchester, a Gilbert School trustee, called the series of budget referendums a "farce" that are costly to taxpayers.

The Winchester Taxpayers Association has successfully spearheaded three petition drives to bring the budget to referendum. The group opposes the \$20,620,586 town budget, especially the \$12,624,033 school plan and the town's \$30,000 donation to the Winsted Area Public Day Care Center.

Rose LaGueux, a member of the taxpayers group, responded that people are not always comfortable voting at a public meeting. "The budget is always very volatile. It turns neighbor against neighbor," she said.

If voter turnout is low, community lawyer Charlene LaVoie said elected officials are to blame for failing to encourage participation.

School board member Virginia Dethy said those people who fail to vote at referendum may be sending a message that they are satisfied with their elected officials' decisions.

Before the meeting, selectmen voted to

See IN WINSTED, page 12