

Worthington faces tax hike as TM votes higher budget

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By ALISON FOBES

WORTHINGTON

— Worthington voters raised and appropriated \$383,916 an increase of \$75,000 over last year at the annual Town Meeting at the Town Hall Saturday and thereby approved an estimated \$8 tax rate increase.

Finance committee member Grant Bowman estimated that the tax rate for this year will be \$48 per \$1,000 valuation.

The Gateway Regional School budget of \$294,721 will add an estimated seven dollars to this year's tax rate. The Town's share of the regional school budget is up about 15.7 per cent over last year. Blanche Demagall, Worthington representative to the regional school committee, attributed the increase to inflation, the new special education law, increases in transportation costs, and three contracts presently being negotiated.

The town in a five hour Town Meeting attended by 70 persons voted to raise and appropriate \$5,000 of the \$11,000 requested to

revalue all property and approved a \$3,500 appropriation from revenue sharing for the Worthington Health Center. The town also voted to appropriate \$5,200 from unappropriated available funds to develop a land use master plan.

Assessor Franklyn Hitchcock explained that the revaluation move is the result of the so-called Sudbury decision, which states that all cities and towns in the Commonwealth must tax their property at "full and fair cash value."

Hitchcock said that although the town has been given a tentative three year deadline to complete the revaluation, Worthington must "show good intent and progress." He recommended that the revaluation be done by the local board of assessors, rather than by an outside outfit, because the town would be able to exercise "more control and more common sense" in the assessments.

Hitchcock recommended that the town also formulate a tax map as an aid to future

assessments. Clerk of the Selectmen C. Kenneth Osgood suggested that the revaluation be performed first, and the tax map be considered at a later date.

In discussion of the budget, Osgood noted that the \$9,000 appropriation for the town disposal area is a \$1,000 increase over the appropriation at last year's annual Town Meeting but that \$2,000 was voted at a special Town Meeting during the year. He cited rising expenses as the reason for the increase, and explained that the town has to hire equipment to use in the area. He said that the present area is almost filled up and that the town is looking for a new area to operate as a disposal.

Land-Use Plan Okayed

In urging approval of a land use master plan, planning board member Robert Cook explained that there is an ever-present danger of uncontrolled growth and that the town needs more comprehensive planning. He

(Continued on page 17)