

Worthington ponders revaluation cost

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By LUCY WHITMARSH

WORTHINGTON — The Board of Selectmen last night discussed adding an article to the May 3 annual Town Meeting warrant "to see if the town will vote to appropriate a sum of money for revaluation of the town," after accepting a report from the assessors presented by Assessor Robert Mason.

The town has to be assessed at full and fair market value. Mason said that the state Department of Taxation will check real estate sales against assessed values. If a piece of property valued at \$30,000 sells for \$50,000, the state will know that the property was not assessed at a fair market value and will ask for a reassessment, he said.

Mason said he feels that revaluation will hurt the large landowner because each acre of land will have to be valued at fair market value and land that has been selling at over \$500 an acre is presently valued at only \$30 an acre.

Mason also said that he, as an assessor, will be willing to conduct the reassessment instead of hiring an outside firm.

Selectman C. Kenneth Osgood suggested that personnel funded by the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) program might be available to assist the assessors in the revaluation.

Mason said that if he did the assessing himself, he would be fully aware of all factors that might be raised in an appeal.

The selectmen discussed what

the expected response of the Town Meeting might be to having an outside firm do the revaluation. They said they felt the response would be mixed and noted that it would be less expensive to have the assessor do the revaluation. They also said that anyone who thinks that his property has been assessed unfairly has a right to appeal.

Osgood questioned the fact that a person who has a well-maintained home would have a higher assessed value than those who have let their property deteriorate.

Selectman David Tyler stated that the assessment is based on specific measurements, and not on appearance, so if the two houses were structurally identical, the assessments would be identical.

The selectmen met with Winston Donovan, building inspector, and discussed the issuing of occupancy permits which are required by the new state building code. Before a buyer can gain title to a home, the bank must have on record an occupancy permit which states that the building inspector has inspected the house and found that it meets state minimum sanitary and safety standards.

Above and beyond these standards, the building inspector makes note of the condition of the plumbing, wiring and heating systems so that the buyer is aware of what he is

purchasing. The seller does not have to make improvements, but the buyer must be aware of deficiencies in the house.

It is the responsibility of the seller to notify the building inspector of the necessity of an inspection. But an inspection does not have to be made until the buyer is ready to approach a bank for financing.

The building inspector is not sure of the fee for an occupancy permit inspection because the rate has been set by the state and he has not been informed of the amount.

Osgood said that he thinks that an occupancy permit is a "good idea."

The selectmen received a letter from the Gateway Regional School District stating that the school appropriation for fiscal year 1976 has been reduced to \$294,721 for the town of Worthington. The figure is a reduction of \$16,704 from the original request.

Selectman John Ryder proposed that an article be added to the warrant for the Town Meeting which would ask if the town will vote to appropriate a sum of money for public use of swimming facilities at the Worthington Swim and Tennis Club.

Ryder, as a member of the recreation committee, was approached by the swim and tennis club with a proposal that the pool at the club be open to the public two days a week if the

town assumes two-sevenths of the weekly operating expenses.

The amount would include the expense of the regular lifeguard, but if another lifeguard became necessary as a result of public use, the town would have to assume the additional cost. The selectmen agreed to place the article on the warrant.

The selectmen discussed the addition of another article to amend the protective zoning bylaws in relation to regulation of flood hazard areas. The selectmen decided to consult counsel before wording.

The board also discussed a hearing to be held Friday at 7:30 to discuss the proposed bylaw changes concerning the national flood insurance act.

The selectmen decided that articles to be posted on the regular Town Meeting warrant cannot be accepted after April 18.

The board found that it is not required by law to have town bridges rated for posting by an engineer. They are willing to do the rating with the help of the superintendent of highways, but they decided to leave the request for funds for professional help in the Town Meeting warrant so that the voters can decide if they would rather have the rating done by engineers, or by the selectmen and superintendent of highways.

The selectmen issued permits to Mrs. Albert Nugent, Huntington Road, for a gift shop; to Mr. and Mrs. James Pease, Worthington Golf Club, for a common victualler's license; to Bradford Fisk, Corner's Grocery Store, to stay open on Sunday; to the Rod and Gun Club on Route 112 for a shooting range; and to the recreation committee for a dance to be held Friday night at 8 at the Town Hall.

The selectmen set April 29 at 7:30 p.m. as a hearing date on the application of Robert Cook, Bashan Hill Road, for a 550-gallon above ground gasoline storage tank permit.