

Dear Reader,

Property assessment and taxation remain hot issues in our fair town. In fact, most towns in the state are asking the same questions as we are: Do we hire a professional assessing firm, and assure complete objectivity in revaluation of our land and buildings? Or do we attempt the revaluation ourselves, while continuing in our efforts to catch up on delinquent revisitations and rectify paperwork errors from the past?

There are no simple answers. The investigation process has been fascinating to me as a resident and selectman. The resident in me began by saying, "Let's not spend anymore tax money to hire someone to do a job that we've done fine all along by ourselves!" The selectman/assessor in me says, "I think it's money well spent to bring us up to a reasonable starting point from which we can continue to fairly assess properties town-wide." The selectman in me has been enlightened by this Ad Hoc Committee work.

Here is a brief (I promise) overview of the status quo:

- only one half of the dwellings in town have been visited in the last four years. The state mandates revisitations of every building every four years.
- one third to one half of the property record cards have inconsistencies in their listings (i.e., some are charged road frontage at \$10.00 per front foot, some at \$5.00, and some that should be paying for more aren't paying for any.) Many of these types of errors are easily fixed given time.
- there has been little progress to "catch up" since the taxes came out last winter. Fred has been unable to make the time, and I have felt strongly that as long as we were elected as a board, we should visit properties as a board.
- the State bases their valuation of us on market data- sales that have taken place in the past 12 to 18 months. We are valuing properties with numbers that were set 10 years ago.
- Realistically, it will take 25-30 eight hour days to visit all the properties that need visiting, and get the paperwork in line. This is a lot of time to ask of people who are already working full or part time.

My suggestion is that the Town listen carefully to the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Committee, and ask questions, or make further recommendations. If you are unable to attend the public forum discussed below, and have questions or comments, please contact one of the committee members. (Karen Robbins, Kris Coombs, Patty Olds, Nancy Brown Stump, Joe Tara, Don Hudson, Karen Pare, and Ken Textor).

As an intermediate measure, I will be sending out a property survey to all property owners. It will contain all of the information that we have on the property record cards. I ask that you fill out as much information as you can. This information will be transferred to your records at the Town Hall, in hopes that we can get a better idea of our total valuation. We will take the updated information, and then be able to give some idea of this year's tax outlook (together with the Ad Hoc Finance Committee) at Town Meeting in June.

The Arrowsic Ad Hoc Assessing Committee will hold a public forum Wednesday, May 25, on its proposals aimed at creating a fair and equitable property assessing system.

Among the topics will be the proposal to appropriate up to \$13,000.00 (about \$43.00 per property) to hire an assessing firm to revisit and revalue all the properties in town. The meeting will be at 7 PM in the Town Hall.

The committee has been working on the problems of fair property assessment since January. It has found, among other things, that all properties in Town have not been assessed in a consistent manner, creating a situation in which State Assessors may intervene.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For our second forum on the problem, the committee is recommending that:

- A) Building permit and subdivision information be automatically included in the basic assessing system;
- B) The assessors document clear assessing procedures, including the required quadrennial property revisitations;
- C) The assessors document a step by step procedure for annually updating and maintaining assessing records;
- D) A complete assessment and revaluation of all town properties be undertaken by a professional assessing firm as soon as it is practicable, under the guidance of the selectmen. To do this would necessitate passage of article #22 on the 1988

system that can be presented to them in written form. These procedures should include all state-required practices, such as the town assessors revisiting all properties every four years.

C) Assessing procedures for annually updating and maintaining records also need to be written down. This would guide future assessors in keeping the system fair and up-to-date every year, eclipsing the need for another expensive revaluation of the town in the near future.

D) The committee found that by several measures, the Arrowsic property assessing system fails to meet the Maine State Constitution's requirement that properties be "...apportioned and assessed equally according to the just value (of the properties)."

The Town is out of compliance with at least two state-required measures of fair property assessing. Also, the values on scores of town properties have not been adjusted in ten years, leaving those assessments, and others unrealistic. Moreover, current and past assessors have agreed they have neither the professional expertise nor the time to dedicate to rectifying the situation. Finally, if the situation goes unresolved, the town faces the prospect of state assessors coming down to bring assessment values back in line, paying for them to do so, and taking the Town's voice out of the entire process.

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C) The assessors document a step by step procedure for annually updating and maintaining assessing records;

D) A complete assessment and revaluation of all town properties be undertaken by a professional assessing firm as soon as it is practicable, under the guidance of the selectmen. To do this would necessitate passage of article #22 on the 1988 warrant, which appropriates up to \$13,000 to hire a firm.

REASONING

Reasoning for the four recommendations was developed over the course of nearly 20 committee meetings. The committee boiled down its reasoning for each recommendation as follows:

A) Since building permits and subdivision applications form the basis for assessing future property development in Arrowsic, it is critical that all that information reach the assessors in a timely and efficient manner.

B) Assessing procedures need to be written down in one easily accessible form so when new assessors are elected, they can pick up where the previous assessor left off. Moreover, property owners will more readily understand and appreciate a

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Thus the committee has concluded the only fair way to start "with a clean slate" is to hire a Maine-based assessing firm to work with the selectmen/assessors to bring all property values back in line. Once that is done, town assessors agreed that maintenance of the system could be done without further additional special appropriations. Any revaluation firm hired would be required to include a procedure by which individual property owners could question their new assessments. The new property assessments would be published in the Town Report immediately following the completion of the revaluation.

The forum is open to the public and any town property owners* may air their views on any of the proposals.

* or resident non-property owners

ARROWSIC FIRE DEPARTMENT NEWS

Well here I am again, although this time I promise not to be so long winded.

The members of your fire department wish to thank all those who were able to attend the open house on May 1. We hope you enjoyed the demonstration as much as we did setting it up. Credit and appreciation must also be extended to our mutual aid partners, Bath, Georgetown, West Bath and Woolwich for their assistance. We hope to make this an annual event.

The department has begun its annual fund raising efforts, starting with the raffle. This year's first prize is a VCR that has been donated by the Ladies Auxiliary, second prize is a pottery lamp, donated by Nan Kilbourn-Tara with third being a fire extinguisher, Rogers Hardware and a smoke detector from Heritiage Hardware. Tickets are \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00. See any fire department member. Come September, Labor Day, the annual yard sale will once again be held at the townhall. Please consider us when getting ready to discard usable items. That is also when we will hold the raffle drawing. We also hope to have a couple of car washes again this summer at Shaws.

The department would like to take this time to thank Frank and Bessey Carlton, Route 127, for their contribution. This will be put towards future equipment purchases.

Again, a reminder about Burn permits. State law requires a permit for any open burning. **Year Round!** See Bill Krachy, 443-6975, Tony Carey, 443-6254 or me, Ray Hutton, 442-7187.

And last, but as usual, the pitch for volunteers. Your Fire Department needs your support in any way you can. Please contact me or any member for more information.

Assistant Chief
Ray Hutton

***** NOTICE *****

The following positions are up for election this year:

- Selectperson
- Treasurer
- Tax Collector
- Town Clerk
- Fire Chief
- School Board member

Please notify Patty Olds via phone 443-4650; or drop a note in the mail slot at Town Hall if you're interested in any of these positions. As a courtesy to the townspeople, I'd like to print names in the next newsletter (June 13); however, this is not required.

The following positons are open for appointment by the selectmen:

- Zoning Board of Appeals member
- two " " alternates
- two alternate Planning Board members (one immediately)
- *Codes Enforcement Officer
- Health Officer
- Conservation Commission (2 members)
- two " " alternates
- *Animal Control Officer
- Dir. of Civil Emergency Preparedness
- Rep. of Coastal Economic Development
- *Election Warden

(* are paid positions)

Anyone interested in these positions may contact any of the Selectmen: Fred Kahrl, 442-8497; Ted Bertocci, 443-6523; or Patty Olds, 443-4650. Thanks.

June 14 is primary day in the State of Maine.

Voter registration can be done on that day, or sooner during regular Town Hall hours. Since this is a primary, only party members can vote. If you are not registered in a party, all you need to do to vote is declare a party. Absentee ballots are available to those--confined in a penal institution; physically unable to come to the polls; absent from Town or working while polls are open; resident of a nursing home; prevented from going to the polls due to religious reasons; call Prudy Foster 443-2114, if you need further clarification, or would like to fill out an absentee ballot.

*** * SPRING CLEAN UP * ***

I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their help and support during the annual roadside clean up. This year we were able to complete Old Stage Road because of the available help.

Also, remember to have all your brush and lumber at the roadside by June 2nd. PLEASE no stumps.

Thank you

Pat Hutton

Dear Townspeople,

As many of you already know, I have resigned from the position of Fire Chief in Arrowsic.

Tony Carey has accepted the appointed position for the remainder of my term which ends at Town Meeting this year.

Our Fire Department has pursued a course of action

The following people have auto registrations due in June:

- CAMPBELL, SONIA
- CHANDLER, AUDREY P
- DONAHUE, CHARLES
- DRESSER, ARTHUR E
- ELWELL, ETHEL H
- FOSTER, EDWARD E
- FOSTER, PRUDENCE
- GREENE, DOROTHY S
- JENKINS, CAROL A
- JENKINS, CAROL ANN
- KAHRL, KATHLEEN
- LEVESQUE, REBECCA
- MOORE, GEORGE
- NICHOLSON, ALLISON
- RICHARDSON, JOAN
- SULLIVAN, ELAINE

THANKS! to Lillian Gowen for her contribution. We are always glad to receive \$! NEXT ISSUE WILL BE JUNE 13 TH

On Tuesday, May 3, the Selectmen appointed an **Ad Hoc Finance Committee** to work on the Town Budget. The

Committee will be making recommendations and providing information at Town Meeting. Committee members are Kris Coombs, Chair; Pat Hutton, secretary; Joanne Burke; and Manli Ho.

H.E. Sargent, Inc of 101

idents and property the State Project or Mr. Harrison Burns tion activities or

Department needs your support in any way you can. Please contact me or any member for more information.

Assistant Chief
Ray Hutton

*** * * * NOTICE * * * ***

The Fire Department has received the authorization from the Selectmen, to offer for sale the 1948 Chevrolet Fire Truck. The apparatus will be sold to the highest bidder in "as is" condition, as a "restorable" vehicle, not as an operating Fire Truck. For more details, please contact Chief Tony Carey or Ass't. Chief Ray Hutton.

NOTICE: OUR NEXT SELECTMEN'S MEETING IS CHANGED FROM TUES, JUNE 7TH TO MON, JUNE 6TH

Pat Hutton

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As many of you already know, I have resigned from the position of Fire Chief in Arrowsic.

Tony Carey has accepted the appointed position for the remainder of my term which ends at Town Meeting this year.

Our Fire Department has pursued a course of action overwhelmingly supported by Townspeople as indicated by the 1986 Town Survey. As a result, the Town now has a mini-pumper uniquely suited to Arrowsic's needs. The effective use of this piece of equipment depends upon continuing town support in manpower, training and funding.

Within the local mutual aid system, we are no longer only taking; we have made a statement about our town responsibilities and are backing that up with action. We now control the costs of our emergency needs. Much thanks is due to those who participate in the department through their continuing faith, friendship, and generous volunteer effort.

With best hopes for the Town,
Ron Proctor

The 127 project contractor is H.E. Sargent, Inc of 101 Bennoch Rd, Stillwater Me 04489. Residents and property owners may contact Mr. Robert Dean, the State Project Resident Inspector at his trailer on 127, or Mr. Harrison Burns at MDOT 289-2171 regarding construction activities or information connected to this project.