

Bayside wants more \$ back

Waldo Ind.
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By Toni Mailloux

Gauging from the applause, voters in the Northport Village Corporation, commonly referred to as Bayside, believe they should be receiving back more than \$25,000 of the taxes they pay to the town.

Sid Block asked the overseers at the annual meeting Tuesday night if they believe that is "a fair and equitable" amount based on the high amount of taxes the town collects from village residents and the services they don't have to provide there.

When overseer Judy Metcalf said the overseers see \$25,000 as the bottom of what they should ask for but feel that may be the most they can ask for as a practical matter, Block replied, "Maybe Bayside should consider seceding from the town of Northport." That statement was met with widespread applause.

Josiah Huntoon, president of the corporation, said when the village looked into the issue a few years ago, the problem was the cost of education. He said one or two special education students could drive the cost out of

sight.

Overseer David Crofoot said the percentage of Northport taxes paid by village residents is about 5 percent higher than it was before last year's revaluation. He said there is nothing to keep the overseers from engaging in a dialogue with the Northport Selectmen on the issue. "There's nothing to prevent us from asking a larger sum," he said.

Block said he has no problem paying for education but said

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Bayside adds very few students to Northport's education burden.

He said considering the economic circumstances of the village, "It might be a good idea to try and engage the town for a fairer reimbursement for the services we provide," he said to more applause.

Ed Williams said the contribution should be indexed for inflation and not kept at the same level for years. He added that the overseers used to attend selectmen's meetings and a selectman used to attend the overseers' meetings. "It that still happening? And if not, why not?" he asked.

Overseer Marge Brockway said she attended one selectmen's meeting and it is on the agenda to discuss making that a priority.

Later in the meeting, Block said the village is providing utilities to many of its residents, which makes property values go up so the town collects more taxes. He said that's to the town's benefit and they should be willing to share more of the proceeds.

Voters approved borrowing up to \$500,000 for repairs and improvements to the current sewer system and to authorize the overseers to accept any federal or state grants for that purpose.

Crofoot, who is also chairman of the utility committee, said the \$500,000 will likely not be spent for two or three years and only "if and when the state has money available."

Ken Vlodek, a former president of the corporation, said while he commends the board for the work it's done on utilities, he said in the past before borrowing was authorized, the project was outlined in detail before a larger crowd. He said he would be uncomfortable voting for borrowing \$500,000 and not knowing what the money will be used for.

"I don't see the rush to do this this year. Come back next year with an actual plan," he said.

"The DEP (Department of Environmental Protection) wants to see if we're serious," in case they find some grant money, said Metcalf.

Crofoot said the three priorities are: reducing inflow and infiltration; upgrading the existing wastewater treatment plant; and replacing and/or extending the outfall pipe. He said the total cost of those will be between \$2 and \$2.5 million. "We have to

show we're serious about attacking the problem," he said. He said sewer rates just went up, which will generate more than \$30,000 a year. He said when grant money becomes available, that amount would pay the debt service on the \$500,000.

Bill Cressey said he was on the utility committee this year and Bayside has turned around a relationship with the DEP that was extremely adversarial until recently to one that is somewhat adversarial now. He said the relationship might move toward a more cooperative one if the village is willing to allocate the funding. "The funding is critical to keep the relationship moving in the right direction," Cressey said.

Addressing an article put on the warrant at a citizen's request, voters approved calling for the overseers to appoint an ad hoc committee to evaluate proposed solutions for and obtain cost estimates for the remediation of surface water runoff issues. Originally the article applied only to Bay Street.

Block said there has always been runoff from the park onto Bay Street but residents were able to keep it under control by erecting barriers or digging a deep pit. But he said after a recent sewer project was completed, it "severely worsened the problem." He said the flooding of water and mud has been so bad that residents who used to rent out their properties to help pay their property taxes and utility bills haven't been able to.

Block said there have been a series of floods of water and mud since the new road was constructed and it is even undermining the underpinnings of the cottages.

He said he wants the overseers to come up with a workable plan to address the situation and to look into the possibility of restitution for his neighbors who lost rental opportunities.

But another resident asked why the study was being limited to Bay Street. She said there are serious problems in other parts of the village as well.

"We need to get a drainage plan," agreed Metcalf.

In other action, the overseers:

- approved a budget for fiscal year 2006 of \$157,176;
- reelected president Huntoon, clerk Ellie Lagner and treasurer Julian Sheffield;
- reelected as overseers Peter Allen, Peter Spollett, Metcalf, Crofoot and Brockway and added as new overseers Bill Cressey and Linda Holden.