

Porter considering townwide reevaluation of properties

Town's current assessment stands at 61%

STAFF REPORTS

The Town of Porter disclosed Monday it is now considering a full reevaluation of properties in the town, including those in the Village of Youngstown

"We know it has to be done," Town Supervisor John "Duffy" Johnston said. He explained that, with neighboring towns in Lewiston and Wilson also considering property reevaluation – and the expected impact on county and school district taxes once such a project is complete – the town felt it needed to address the issue of equalization.

"The equalization rate, that's what it's for," said Gary Drake of the New York State Office of Real Property Tax Services. Drake vis-

ited the board meeting with Town of Porter Assessor Lena Villella to discuss the matter further.

Drake said the primary reason to perform a reassessment is that of achieving full equity within the town. "The longer you go without reevaluating all the properties, the more inequity creeps in."

Last done in Porter in the years 2005-06, the town's current assessment rate stands at 61% of properties, versus the ideal of 100%.

"If you don't reevaluate every so often, losing equity just keeps getting magnified," Drake said. He noted the state's recommendation is that reassessments should be done every five years. "I like to see towns get on a cycle"

for this.

Villella said the changes on the town's inventory of buildings, residences, farms, etc., has changed significantly over the past 15-plus years and, likewise, needs updating.

"It's so far removed from your last inventory it's really not as it should be," she said. "There's so much that's changed that you don't know about. When you do a reassessment, you look at every single property ... you physically look at every single property."

"This inventory is so old, a lot of that's not right."

Villella said an inventory of the town's land table, vacant and otherwise, likewise needs to be done.

She said reassessments are not based on a sale of a particular property. "You can't reassess just because something's sold. ... We want to equitably distribute the valuation, what is that house worth, what is the house next door worth."

She said the goal of reassessment is to "correct the inequities."

Drake said a town's tax rate would go down when its full taxable value (of properties) goes up – thus the need for reassessments. He said the focus needs to be on the amount of money a town would need to raise by property taxes – the levy.

"If that levy doesn't change, and the assessor adds millions and

millions of dollars in assessed value, the tax rate has to come down – it's just simple math," he said, and added equity is a key factor the county and school districts look at when determining the levy in a particular municipality.

It was learned the anticipation reevaluation effort would encompass some 3,500 parcels townwide when performed, including those in the Village of Youngstown.

The matter was left with the board approving a request for proposals process to enlist a municipal appraiser. Johnston said there could be potential grant money available as the town moves forward on the effort.

Red Cross testing blood donations for COVID-19 antibodies

Donor antibody levels may indicate ability to help some patients fighting coronavirus

√ \$10 Fanatics e-gift card, chance at trip to 2022 MLB All-Star Game for donors in March
Information provided by the American Red Cross

For a limited time, the American Red Cross has resumed testing all blood, platelet and plasma donations for coronavirus antibodies. Plasma from routine donations that have high levels of antibodies may be used as convalescent plasma to help meet the needs of COVID-19 patients with weakened immune systems.

At the same time, the Red Cross said its blood supply "remains vulnerable, and individuals are urged to schedule a blood or platelet donation. In the days and weeks ahead, it's critically important the Red Cross maintains a readily available blood supply so hospital patients can receive the care they need."

To make an appointment, use the Red Cross blood donor app, visit RedCrossBlood.org or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

The Red Cross first tested donations for coronavirus antibodies earlier in the pandemic to provide convalescent plasma for patients. When infection rates decreased and new treatment options became available, the Red Cross discontinued the program.

A press release said, "With the surge of new variants, hospitals began to seek out more treatments for their most vulnerable patients, and new clinical trial data has shown that convalescent plasma may benefit immunocompromised patients. The Red Cross is resuming this program to ensure doctors have every tool available to support treatment."

How It Works

Antibody testing will indicate if the donor's immune system has produced antibodies to this coronavirus following vaccination or infection, regardless of whether they developed symptoms. Donations will be tested using samples pulled at the time of donation and sent to a testing laboratory where they will also undergo routine infectious disease testing. A positive antibody test result does not confirm infection or immunity.

COVID-19 antibody test results will be available one to two weeks after donation in the Red Cross blood donor app or donor portal at RedCrossBlood.org.

The Red Cross is not testing do-

nors to diagnose illness, referred to as a diagnostic test.

Thanking All-Star Donors in March

All who come to give blood or platelets in March will get a \$10 e-gift card, thanks to Fanatics. Plus, donors will also automatically be entered for a chance to win a trip for two to the 2022 MLB All-Star Game in Los Angeles when they come to give in March. The package includes two tickets to 2022 MLB All-Star Saturday, the 2022 Home Run Derby, and the 2022 MLB All-Star Game, round-trip airfare to Los Angeles, four-night hotel accommodations (July 16-20), plus a \$750 gift card for expenses. Details are available at rcblood.org/team.

Upcoming blood donation opportunities, March 16-31:

Amherst

March 23: noon to 6 p.m., Boulevard Mall, 730 Alberta Drive

March 25: 10 a.m. until 2 p.m., Boulevard Mall, 730 Alberta Drive

March 30: noon to 6 p.m., Boulevard Mall, 730 Alberta Drive

Grand Island

March 22: 1-6 p.m., Grand Island Firehall, 2275 Baseline Road

Lewiston

March 28: 10 a.m. until 2:30 p.m., Lewiston Fire Co. No. 1, 145 N. Sixth St.

Niagara Falls

March 21: 1-6 p.m., Cristoforo Colombo Society, 2223 Pine Ave.

Wilson

March 22: 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Wilson High School Library, 412 Lake St.

Youngstown

March 29: 1:30-6:30 p.m., Youngstown Firehall, 625 Third St.

Blood Drive Safety

Each Red Cross blood drive and donation center follows a high level of safety and infection control, and additional precautions – including face masks for donors and staff, regardless of vaccination status – have been implemented to help protect the health of all those in attendance. Donors are asked to schedule an appointment prior to arriving at the drive.

Save Time During Donation

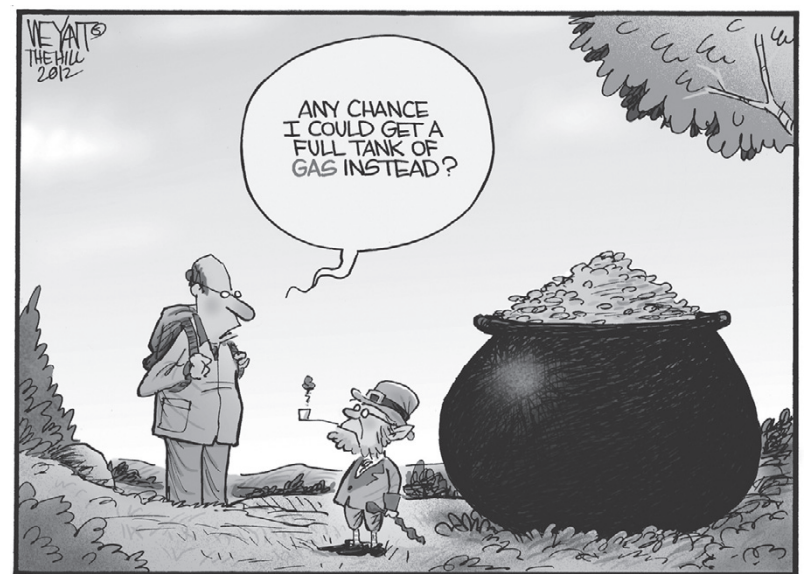
Donors can also save up to 15 minutes at the blood drive by completing a RapidPass. With RapidPass, donors complete the predonation reading and health history questionnaire online, on the day of donation, from a mobile device or computer. To complete a RapidPass, follow the instructions at RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass or use the Red Cross blood donor app.

To donate blood, individuals need to bring a blood donor card or driver's license or two other forms of identification that are required at check-in. Individuals who are 17 years of age in most states (16 with parental consent where allowed by state law), weigh at least 110 pounds and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school students and other donors 18 years of age and younger also must meet certain height and weight requirements.

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides comfort to victims of disasters; supplies about 40% of the nation's blood; teaches skills that save lives; distributes international humanitarian aid; and supports veterans,

military members and their families. The Red Cross is a nonprofit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to deliver its mis-

sion. For more information, visit redcross.org or CruzRojaAmericana.org, or visit on Twitter at @RedCross.



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