

Spring Events

By John Petrin, Town Manager

Town Election is scheduled for Tuesday, May 18. The polling locations will be located at the Middle School on West Union Street (for Precincts 1 and 2) and the High School on East Union Street (for Precincts 3 and 4). The ballot will include the various offices of the Town to be elected. There are only two contested races, Board of Selectmen and School Committee. This compares to five contested races two years ago. There is also one race, Board of Health, with no declared candidates. There are always ways for additional candidates to run on a write-in basis. That does happen from time to time. The polls will open at 7:00 am and close at 8:00 pm on May 18. The polls will be run by your fellow residents who gladly make their precious time available so that our democratic process can run smoothly. We offer our sincerest thanks to these people. I hope that you offer your thanks as you pass through the polls that day. Please come out and vote at your local elections. Hopefully we do better than what we are seeing in local communities with turnouts as low as 3%.

The Annual Town Meeting this year will take place on Wednesday, May 5 in the Auditorium at the High School and will include 32 articles. The Town budget of approximately \$54.6 Million will be presented. In addition to budget articles, voters will be asked to approve annual authorizations for items such as revolving accounts and actions that Selectmen may take without Town Meeting approval. There will be seventeen articles addressing zoning and two articles seeking street acceptances. Town Meeting is the Town's legislative body. The Finance Committee has been working on a forecast discussing the Town's financial future. They are hoping to focus the discussion on the strategic financial view. The Town has had to eliminate and reduce for the last five years. This is in response to expenses increasing faster than resources. Hopefully, Ashland residents will turn out in numbers to vote this year. This is your opportunity to have a say in the direction of the Town government.

Spring has sprung with plenty of water. In the big picture, Ashland fared better compared to some communities in the area. Some of these towns had new waterfront property pop up. Some of our residents certainly had issues with their basements and the Fire Department was kept busy assisting the worst cases. This is one of those services that the Town provides that benefits its people. As always, thanks to the DPW and Police and Fire Departments for their diligence and hard work. We certainly had some concerns, particularly with some bridges where the rushing water was hitting the decking of the bridge. Department of Transportation engineers responded immediately to assess conditions of these bridges. We were fortunate that damage did not occur.

By the time this article is printed, the Boston Marathon will have occurred on Monday, April 19. We will once again have over 25,000 runners passing through Town with many spectators lining Route 135. This is a major undertaking in which our departments take a lot of time to prepare for. I wish all the runners the best and hope that they have a safe run.

Please remember that Memorial Day is fast approaching as well. Please remember to mark your calendars for Monday, May 31 for Ashland's Annual observance. Our veterans groups do a great job in organizing this event. It is one of those events that define the character of our community.

Please remember the Food Pantry for donations of food and household goods. Donations can be made by dropping off items at public buildings such as the Post Office. Your consideration is appreciated. Please also consider a financial donation to **The Ashland Emergency Fund, at P.O. Box 112, Ashland, MA 01721**. The Fund supports residents in need and the Food Pantry.

To follow what is happening in your community, follow the events and happenings in the MetroWest Daily News and WACA-TV as they provide superb coverage. Our website at www.AshlandMass.com has been recently revamped. There is much information on the site for you to peruse. We are the recent recipient of the Common Cause Massachusetts 2010 e-Government Award with Distinction for our website. We are proud recipients of their highest award.