

Snow Season to Budget Season

By John Petrin, Town Manager

This will certainly be a winter to remember. The amount of snow has not reached record levels as of yet but the way in which the storms it has certainly affected us. The snow storms came weekly with no opportunity to melt in between. The accumulation of plowed snow has grown in many areas.

In last month's column, I praised the work of DPW Director Doug Small and Foreman Ben Bonavire. Their crews performed above and beyond during the month of January. I need to add to that praise from last month. It was the toughest situation they have had to face in years. Doug Small has stated that this is the worst he has ever seen it. The crews have had to work additional night hours in order to move snow from hazard areas and to make room for more snow that was coming.

The Town did receive some phone calls due to operations in the middle of the night. We apologize for the inconvenience but needed to address some of various areas for public safety purposes. Snow had to be removed and relocated to other areas. This can only be accomplished in many areas at night so as to avoid traffic concerns. Typically, we have only had to clear a few areas such as downtown. This year, we had to address many neighborhoods and intersections.

I particularly need to point out that our crews were tired and would have liked to avoid this work in the middle of the night but understood the need to get it done. They had plenty of hours from fighting the storms as they raged and would have liked some of these nights to try to recuperate. I appreciate their steadfastness and dedication but coming out at all hours to make our streets safe.

I also wish to thank our police and fire departments for being there during these snow storms. It is not easy to stay on the roads during these events but they are certainly there to respond to the emergencies that may arise.

Town elections will take place on May 17. There are positions open for Selectman, School Committee, Moderator, Board of Health, Library Trustees, Assessor, Planning Board, & Housing Authority. If you are interested in running, contact the Town Clerk's office for information on how to serve. Nomination papers are due March 29th.

Annual Town Meeting is scheduled for May 4, 2011. Please mark your calendar to be there at 7:00 pm at the Ashland High School Ruthfield Auditorium. Part of the Town Meeting form of government is to get citizens to attend to assist in the decision-making process. As you can see, the discussions on balancing the budget are difficult and may have impact on the services we provide.

There are twenty runners that will be running in the Boston Marathon to raise funds for great causes in the Town of Ashland. If you would like to sponsor these runners, please go to www.Ashlandmass.com/community/boston-marathon. The website will give some information on the runners. THANK YOU to the runners for putting their bodies on the line and for raising funds to help needy causes in Ashland. A special thanks to Dr. Leslie Marci for coordinating this entire operation. It took a lot of work to put this together.

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 recipient of the Common Cause Massachusetts 2010 e-Government Award with Distinction for our website. We are proud recipients of their highest award.