

## **Running up to Marathon Day and Baseball Season**

### **By John Petrin, Town Manager**

We can only hope that we have left the snow season and are finally going to enter spring without having flooding issues. This winter was brutal from the snow cleanup perspective. We have had problems that have not been seen in decades as to the removal of snow and ice. That is why I am looking forward to spring baseball and the Boston Marathon.

To me, baseball brings a sense of renewal in life. It is the first sign that spring and warm weather is around the corner and that the flowers and trees will return to life by showing their brilliant colors. Pitchers and catchers reporting to spring training in the third week of February is the first notice of this renewal period.

After baseball opening day, we are then faced with the Boston Marathon cutting through Town. Having more than 25,000 runners whizzing past you in flash is an incredible sight. This year, the Town can thank and celebrate twenty very special runners who have taken on the task of running to raise money for the many great activities that occur on the Town. Help these gracious runners give something back! Help them make a difference in our community and help them keep these programs alive in these trying economic times. Every dollar you give means something. If you would like to sponsor these runners, please go to [www.Ashlandmass.com/community/boston-marathon](http://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.

The Department of Public Works will begin their spring cleanup as soon as we can guess when the snow will no longer be a factor. With the mess from this winter, I envision it will take a little longer than normal to clean up the roadways, just as it may take longer for some of you to clean up your yards. The DPW has rotating schedule as to road cleanup and will work hard to accomplish as much as they can.

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.

At this point, we are discussing a deficit of approximately \$1,000,000. To balance that, we are considering using up to \$500,000 from the Stabilization Fund which has a current balance of \$1,313,000. We are looking to our other revenue accounts to see if we can project use of these funds. If not, the other options are to look at cutting service areas. Both the schools and general government have seen cuts to its level of services over the last five years. The question is always what is acceptable to you as the citizen. What level of class size is reasonable and how many firefighters and police officers we have on per shift in order to ensure proper safety levels. These are decisions that need to be made when balancing revenue with needs. The Board of Selectmen, School Committee and Finance Committee are meeting to finalize a recommendation for the Annual Town Meeting.

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.

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](http://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.