



## Franklin Express Line

Volume 2, Issue 3, 03/23/11

### Welcome

Welcome to this month's Express Line. We welcome all opportunities to bring your local government to you, to answer questions, address rumors, and explain our financial situation. Feel free to contact me any time to schedule a time to chat or to set up something more formal.



### Downtown Project - Phase 1



The Town will be opening bids for street and sidewalk improvements on Emmons Street (East of Main) and portions of Dean, Depot, and Ray Streets as well as the Municipal Parking Lot (Commuter rail lot on Depot Street). The construction is scheduled to start in April and last until the fall.

**As a result of the construction, a portion of the Town's parking lot will be closed to commuters during this time. Parking will be available at Fletcher Field on Peck Street and five designated spaces at the Old Municipal building.**

Please watch our Website for details and updates!

### Let It Snow, Let It Snow, Let...Enough Already!

Our winter weather operations began early in the morning on November 8, 2010 with a snow/rain event that took three and a half hours, 7 employees, and 6 sanders to treat all of the major roads in Franklin. The cost for that event was \$1,266.30. It should not be a surprise that the Snow Budget is over-budget or "in the red". We started the fiscal year, July 1, with \$750,000 in the Snow and Ice Budget. Since that early storm and into March, we have spent over \$1,150,000 from the Snow and Ice Budget. That number includes sand and salt costs, employee and equipment costs, and contractor costs. Costs are impacted by such things as the timing of the event, the duration, and the severity. A storm that begins or runs into non-regular business hours will cost more in overtime pay. We did set aside \$500,000 in anticipation of a shortfall, so if we do not get much more snow, we should be able to cover the expenses. Brutus Cantoreggi, Director of the Public Works department made a presentation to the Town Council on October 20, 2010 about snow removal operations. You can view the presentation on the Town's website by clicking on Meeting Videos. For more helpful information go to [www.franklin.ma.us](http://www.franklin.ma.us) then select "Departments", then "Public Works". A big THANKS to the DPW for "GETTING IT DONE" this very challenging winter!

### Solid Waste and Recycling News

The Recycling Center will be open on Tuesdays from 12:00 to 3:00 beginning on April 5.

### Change to the Winter Parking Ban:

This past fall, the Town Council adopted Bylaw Amendment 10-651, amending the winter overnight parking ban to a Winter Storm Overnight Parking Ban. The amendment changed the ban from no overnight parking between November 1 and April 15 to a ban that goes into effect only when snow is forecast, or if it is snowing and it wasn't forecast (we do live in New England). We have come through the first winter (and a tough one at that) with few parking problems. The change appears to have worked well.



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Volume 2, Issue 3, 3/23/11, Pg 2

### FY 2012 Budget

We are working hard to balance the FY 2012 proposed budget. We are still awaiting more information on State Aid and Health Insurance Premiums. Once we have a firm handle on those items, we can finalize the budget. It certainly appears, at this point in time, that we will have the difficult job of having, for the third year in a row, to eliminate jobs to balance the budget. As it looks now, it will take the elimination of at least another 25 school/municipal positions to balance the budget. Stay tuned for up-to-date information.



Spotlight

### High School Renovations - Update

A High School Building Committee Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday March 30 at 6:00 pm at the Municipal Building. The meeting is to hear initial cost estimates for the three plans required by the Massachusetts School Building Authority. The Architect, Kastle Boos Associates, and Daedalus Inc, the Project Manager, are working on those estimates which will outline the cost of a new school and two estimates of renovations to the existing school. It is hoped that a plan can be approved by the School Building Committee and the Massachusetts School Building Authority and then brought before the citizens for a debt exclusion vote in November.

#### [What is a debt exclusion?](#)

A community can assess taxes in excess of its levy limit (Proposition 2 ½ Override) for the payment of certain capital projects or the payment of specified debt service costs. A two-thirds vote of the Town Council is required to place a ballot question before the voters. A majority vote of approval by the voters is required to pass. Debt exclusions do not become part of the tax base and only last until the debt is paid.

### Open Space Funds - DelCarte Property

Upon his death, Ernest DelCarte donated 130 acres of land to the Town of Franklin to be preserved as open space and conservation land. The land has seven dams with ponds of varying depths surrounded by trails, plants and trees, and wildlife. The town recently purchased the house that remained on the DelCarte property that was owned by Mr. DelCarte's daughter. The purchase of the house with Open Space Funds from the Hotel/Motel Tax will help us better access the property and eventually provide recreation opportunities for the residents. Currently, there is an engineering study underway to determine how best to repair the dams on the property. Funds in this account can not be appropriated for any other purpose than open space and recreation purposes.

### Community Gardens

A group of citizens are asking to start a community garden at the King Street Recreation Area. They are finalizing plans and hope to get going in May. Stay tuned for more information. The garden would be beside the basketball courts near the exit. Stay tuned for more information.

#### [Some Good News:](#)

Spring is officially here! Spring weather can't be far behind, can it?

