



# *Town of Natick* **Winter 2009-2010 Newsletter**

*Issued by Martha L. White,  
Town Administrator*

## **Natick Board of Selectmen**

John Ciccariello, Chair  
Joshua Ostroff, Vice Chair  
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### **January Special Town Meeting**

The Board of Selectmen has scheduled a Special Town Meeting to commence on Tuesday, January 26, 2010. The meeting was called at the request of the School Committee to provide an opportunity for Town Meeting to consider the **High School project**, specifically, to consider an amount to be borrowed to construct the project. While a specific request has not yet been made, it is anticipated that the **Community/Senior Center project** funding will also be included on the warrant.

While more discussion and decisions are required, it is anticipated that the Board of Selectmen will be asked to include debt exclusion questions on the ballot for the March 30, 2010 Town Election for both the High School and Community/Senior Center projects. At least 4 of the 5 members of the Board of Selectmen must vote favorably to include a debt exclusion question on a ballot.

Both the High School and the Community/Senior Center projects plans have been developing over several years and represent proposals for replacement of outdated facilities. Of course, each comes at a cost and, if debt exclusion questions are presented to and approved by voters, will result in tax increases for the 20 year term of the projects' borrowing. Definitive project costs – and resulting tax impacts – are still being developed. Voters are encouraged to follow the advancement of these projects over the coming weeks. The Board of Selectmen, School Committee, and Finance Committee will all be discussing these projects at their public, televised meetings leading up to the January 26 Special Town Meeting.

Other articles may be submitted for the Special Town Meeting warrant to the office of the Board of Selectmen. In accordance with the terms of the Charter, the time frame for submission of articles begins on December 29 and runs through 5:00 p.m. on December 31.

### **DPW Director Retirement**

Natick's long time Director of Public Works, Charlie Sisitsky, recently retired. Charlie was appointed as DPW Director in 1989, after having served as Natick's Planning Director for eight years. Charlie initiated and oversaw many changes at the DPW during his tenure, including consolidation of operations, technological advancements, cost-effective enhancement of services, and much more. Charlie consistently worked to enhance the level of professionalism and service throughout all divisions and all ranks of the Department of Public Works. Charlie will be missed, and we wish him all the best in his retirement.

DPW Business Manager Bill Chenard will serve as Interim DPW Director until a new director is chosen.

### **Budget Update**

The Administration is working hard to finalize the FY 2011 Operating Budget, which must be presented at the beginning of January, 2010. If all operations were to continue at current levels, and with normal inflationary measures factored in, current projections suggest a \$3.1 million deficit for FY 2011. As is customary for preliminary projections, this is a very conservative forecast and paints what is anticipated to be a worst-case scenario, barring any significant and unfavorable change in circumstances. Nonetheless, the upcoming fiscal year will certainly require creativity and fiscal conservatism.

The key objective to close this deficit involves changes to the Town's health insurance programs. It appears that the most favorable way to produce significant savings while providing high quality health care to employees and their dependents is to transition all employees to the so-called "Rate Saver" programs. These programs represent an innovative current trend in "consumer driven" health care – insurance that better engages the consumer in their health care decisions.

Changes such as this can only be implemented with approval of the Town's labor unions; there are 10 general government unions and 6 school department unions. The collective bargaining process with many of these unions has begun.

We are also evaluating opportunities to consolidate operations, share services with neighboring communities and other means to ensure maximum opportunity to continue to provide cost effective, quality services within the constraints of limited revenues.

It is important to note that the budget numbers will change frequently over the coming weeks; we will endeavor to make the most current information available through public meetings and the town's website [www.natickma.gov](http://www.natickma.gov).

### **Bacon Free Library Events**

Much has been happening at the Bacon Free Library, located at 58 Eliot Street. The famed mystery writer Sue Grafton recently visited the library and many area residents had the opportunity to spend a very enjoyable evening in her company. Their recent "Night at the Library" fundraising event was a huge success! And they are currently displaying an amazing selection of glass work by Michele Gutlove which must be seen to be believed. Remember that reduced-admission passes to Boston museums may be obtained at both of Natick's libraries!

### **Financial Assistance Summary**

A revised Financial Assistance Summary will be distributed early in 2010. This document will highlight many of the programs available to eligible Natick residents to help offset taxes, fees, housing, food and other living costs that affect individuals and families of limited means.

### **Upcoming State and Town Elections**

The Special State Election to fill the U.S. Senate seat held by Senator Kennedy will be held on January 19, 2010. The last day to register to vote for this election is Wednesday December 30, 2009.

The Annual Town Election will be held on March 30, 2010; if necessary, the Town Preliminary Election will be held on March 2, 2010. Nomination papers for Town elected positions, including Town Meeting membership, are available now from the Town Clerk's Office. Nomination papers for Town Office Candidates (not including Town Meeting) must be submitted for certification with the Registrars of Voters by 5:00 on January 12, 2010; certified papers must then be submitted with the Town Clerk by 5:00 on January 26, 2010.

Incumbent Town Meeting members have until 5:00 on February 2, 2010 to give written notice to the Town Clerk of their intent to seek re-election. Those seeking to be elected as a member of Town Meeting must submit their nomination papers for certification with the Registrars of Voters by 5:00 on February 9, 2010; certified papers must then be submitted with the Town Clerk by 5:00 on February 23, 2010.

For further information, including legal requirements for required signatures, other important deadlines and more, please see the 2009-2010 Political Calendar available on the Town's website or contact the Town Clerk's office at 508-647-6430.

### **Safety Issues**

Several issues to bring to residents' attention:

- A town employee was struck by a car in Natick Center recently. Please drive carefully and watch for – and yield to – pedestrians in crosswalks.
- Residents with disabilities are asked to contact the Commission on Disability so that they may best advocate for residents' needs and coordinate any special public safety or other needs. Please contact Maureen in the Town Administrator's Office at 647-6410.
- If you have a fire hydrant near your home, please shovel it out to ensure easy access in the event of an emergency.

*Whatever holiday you celebrate, please have a safe and happy holiday season!*