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Board of Selectmen

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Dear Dedham Town Meeting Members and Residents:

I have been asked to identify and briefly explain the Snow and Ice deficit for FY15.

First, the Snow and Ice annual budget is one of very few budgets which can be expended into a deficit in a fiscal year my Massachusetts municipal law. The DPW Director is authorized to spend the account into a deficit only by majority vote of the Board of Selectmen. Our intention is to fund the amount that is spent in deficit from Certified Free Cash – undesignated fund balance at the end of FY14.

Along with the availability to deficit spend the account; there is another unique characteristic of the Snow and Ice budget. The budgeted amount cannot be reduced in a future year. Most well-managed towns elect to budget at a number smaller than the rolling average, and manage the deficit accordingly. Dedham has begun the process of increasing the annual appropriation to a level that is closer to the average expended, but it will likely stay below the current average to allow the town reasonable flexibility with future budgets. The FY16 budget is proposed at \$700,000. The FY15 budget was \$650,000.

Our present snow and ice deficit is \$1,756,944. As most everyone knows, this winter broke all of the snowfall records in the Boston region. In addition, the majority of the snow fell in a period of a little more than 30 days, giving the snow no time to melt, and making the need for snow removal that much more pressing. There was also a large roof removal effort. A summary of the expenses in FY15:

Contractors Removal:	\$1,003,118
Contractors Plowing:	\$ 451,510
DPW, Parks, and Facilities O/T:	\$ 375,251
Snow and Ice Supplies:	\$ 237,394
Equipment Rental:	\$ 174,828
Fuel, Vehicle Maint., Technical Service:	\$ 100,092
Police Details:	\$ 64,751
Total:	\$2,406,944

As you can see, snow removal accounts for a very large percentage of Dedham's effort and cost. This removal requires many hours using heavy equipment to load and move the snow and then often re-positioning it in anticipation of the next storm, or to make way for the use of the storage areas in the spring. The primary areas requiring removal include the downtown streets and sidewalks and the sidewalks near the Dedham Public Schools.

Lastly, when communities experience exceptional storms, the Governor will often declare a State of Emergency and petition the federal government for relief through the Federal Emergency Management Agency. There have been two such petitions associated with the previous winter — the blizzard of January 26th, and an unusual application for the closely clustered storms in February. .

The declaration for the first storm has been accepted by FEMA. The reimbursement rate is typically 75% of the 48 hour period associated with the storm. The' decision on the second application is pending. 75% of the blizzard would be \$356,983. 75% of the February storms would be \$1,270,665.

Sincerely,


James Kern
Town Manager