

## TOWN OF WILLIAMSBURG



**Coming Soon!  
Watch for our New  
Town Web-Site  
coming in March at**

**[www.burgy.org](http://www.burgy.org)**

### COMMITTEE OPENINGS

The following Committees are looking for members:

Capital Planning Committee – charged with developing a 5 year capital plan for the town that plans for and prioritizes anticipated expenditures for all equipment or projects that cost at least \$10,000 and have a useful life of at least 5 years. The Committee makes recommendations to the Finance Committee for consideration at the Annual Town Meeting.

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### **WINTER EMERGENCY!**

December has not been kind to us this year, with three major storms hitting the region in the span of 10 days. The ice storm that began on December 11<sup>th</sup> resulted in over \$150,000 in damage to utilities and to one of our fire engines when it was hit by a tree limb, and \$65,000 in personnel costs for debris removal and added public safety (damage to private property has not been reported to the Town). Members of the Williamsburg Fire, Highway and Police Departments went door to door in the Town's hardest hit areas to check on the well-being of residents and direct them to the services they might need.

### Emergency Shelter

As soon as the extent of the damage and the loss of electricity from the ice storm became known, an Emergency Shelter was set up at the Anne T. Dunphy School, open to anyone in the Hilltowns needing assistance. The Town plans to open the Emergency Shelter whenever a state of emergency is declared for the Town; when the shelter is open, it can be called at 268-8800.

The shelter will be available for people needing to stay overnight as well as to those who just need a hot meal, a place to warm up for a short time, or are in need of drinking water for themselves, their families or their animals.

You do not need to stay overnight, be a senior or be from a low-income household to take advantage of these services.

During the ice storm the shelter was open from Friday until early Monday morning when the last overnight guests left. The shelter actually lost power early Sunday morning, and while the Town does own an emergency generator that could have provided the necessary electricity, we have so far been unable to secure the funding to install the switching equipment required to connect the generator to the Dunphy School's electrical system. We are hoping the fact that we needed to reduce services at a regional shelter during this emergency will shake loose some federal or state money.

### Special Thanks

A special thanks is owed to several area restaurants, notably the Kitchen Table from Williamsburg and Smithsonian from Hatfield, that provided lunch and dinner for the shelter. The Red Cross provided high energy snacks, sandwiches, bottled water and energy drinks, and both the Red Cross and Medical Reserve Corp provided staffing for, and the Williamsburg, Chesterfield and Cummington Police Departments provided security at, the shelter.

We would like to acknowledge the efforts of the School Department and in particular Fred Venne, who was invaluable in  
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### TOWN BUDGET

The current economic hard times are affecting not just the budgets of individual households, but that of the state as well. At the moment the Town seems to be on course to collect the local property tax revenues that were estimated at the time the current Fiscal Year's budget was developed, but the same is not true of the state. Officials in both Governor Patrick's administration and the Legislature are warning that towns will almost certainly see cuts in both local aid and in school aid in the budget that starts July 1st. The recent announcement *(Continued next page)*

## SIDEWALK CLEARANCE

Town bylaws require that all sidewalks be cleared of snow and ice within 24 hours of the end of any storm. Clearance is the responsibility of the tenant, occupant, and in the case there is no tenant, the owner of any property with such a sidewalk. Failure to clear the sidewalk is punishable by a fine of \$50.00. Complaints about sidewalks that have not been properly cleared can be made to the Town Administrator (268-8418), Police Department (268-7237), or Highway Department (268-8405).

*(Openings cont.)* Shade Tree Committee – charged with protecting shade trees located along town roads, prioritizing the pruning or removal of hazardous trees, and replacing town trees.

Americans with Disabilities Act Committee – insures compliance with the ADA and assists the disabled find and receive needed services and supports.

*(Emergency cont.)*

getting the Dunphy School open, turning on heat, and setting up the dedicated shelter phone line. Superintendent Barbara Ripa also spent time helping at the shelter.

Thanks also to those of you who volunteered the use of your homes (and particularly your washers and dryers) to those who were without power.

Last, but certainly not least, Fire Chief Don Lawton, Highway Superintendent Bill Turner, Police Chief John Cotton, and their staffs worked long and difficult hours to clear our roads, check on our neighbors, and staff the Emergency Shelter and Operations Center. The word “thanks” is not adequate to express our gratitude for all their hard work, long hours and unwavering dedication.

## WINTER PARKING BAN

Residents are reminded that overnight parking is prohibited on all Town roads, sidewalks and rights-of-way from midnight to 6:00 a.m. between December 1<sup>st</sup> and March 31<sup>st</sup>. Winter can be an obstacle in and of itself. By keeping your cars off the streets, you will make it easier for the Highway Department to plow and sand thoroughly, allow police, fire and ambulances quick and safe access to any emergency, and ensure more travel room on our streets for daily use. Please remember that violators are subject to a fine and also may be towed if their vehicle interferes with snow plowing or access by emergency vehicles.

*(Budget cont.)*

of further state revenue shortfalls may mean an announcement later this month of cuts in local aid, which would reduce the amount of state aid received by Williamsburg, of 10%-20%.

This fiscal year, the Town’s budget included almost \$411,000 in general local aid revenue and another \$562,000 in education related aid. The potential cuts would necessitate a reduction of anywhere from \$40,000 to almost \$200,000 (depending on whether both local aid and school aid are affected) in expenditures between now and June 30, 2009.

Our options for making these cuts in expenditures are limited. Only about \$1.3 million of the Town’s \$5.4 million annual budget is spending made at the Town’s discretion. This \$1.3 million includes the budgets for police, fire, and highway; all other departments, boards and committees; salaries for town employees other than teachers; operation and maintenance of town buildings, grounds, vehicles, and street lights (including vehicle fuel, heat and electricity); the transfer station; and the library. The bulk of any cuts in general local aid will have to be absorbed within these lines of the town’s budget.

Of the remaining \$4.1 million of the Town’s budget, over \$3 million is dedicated to the schools, with most of the rest going to other expenses the Town is legally obligated to pay, such as debt service, insurance, retirement and regional assessments.

In order to prepare for these potential cuts the Board of Selectmen has asked each major department to identify portions of their budgets that might absorb cuts now, and be prepared to implement them if needed.

CONTACT	PHONE NUMBER
Emergency Fire or Police	911
Emergency Shelter at the Dunphy School	268-8800 (only when shelter is open)
Highway Department for road conditions	268-8405
National Grid	1-800-322-3223
Northampton Emergency Dispatch	(413) 586-1508
Water & Sewer Commission to report broken pipes	268-7579
Town Administrator	268-8418