

Village Voice



FEBRUARY/MARCH

Barrett F. Pedersen
Mayor

Village of Franklin Park
9500 Belmont Ave.
Franklin Park, IL. 60131
Ph: 847-671-4800
villagevoice@vofp.com

Mayor's Desk

Dear Neighbor,

As you may have heard, my Administration inherited some significant financial challenges. Your village owes the Tax Increment Finance Funds millions of dollars and was left with a \$2.5 million budget deficit for this fiscal year (May 1, 2009 to April 30, 2010). That deficit climbed to \$3.3 million when the Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) came out several months ago and condemned major portions of our police station requiring that we find, purchase or lease, and build out a new police station.

The village was in jeopardy of failing to have the necessary funds to pay its employees; a sum of \$450,000 is required every two weeks. To avoid a failure to pay our employees, budget cuts were necessary. An incentive to encourage non-union personnel close to retirement was offered, layoffs of non-emergency personnel were made, and elimination of non-essential positions was accomplished. The village reduced the number of cell phones used and consolidated phone service for a savings of \$30,000/annually.

We (the taxpayers) are moving our emergency dispatch center to the Mannheim Road location of Norcomm, our emergency dispatch service. That move, in January 2011, will save us \$198,000.00 annually. Fleet maintenance saved money when it sold or moth balled 6 vehicles and a review of village vehicles taken home by essential personnel was conducted. The village opened a fuel depot, purchases fuel at wholesale cost avoiding fuel tax previously paid to retail fuel suppliers and has resulted in savings of more than \$60,000 a year.

Expenditures for critical computer software and hardware were delayed until funds are available. Programmable thermostats were installed to save energy. Accrual of overtime for labor in all departments was scrutinized and reduced where it did not affect vital emergency services.

The vehicle previously driven by the Mayor prior to my term was given to the Community Development Department to replace an aging, high maintenance vehicle used by that department. I drive my privately owned vehicle to mayoral events and functions, saving the village tens of thousands of dollars in fuel, insurance, and maintenance.

The village newsletter, previously mailed out separately four times a year, at great expense, was replaced with a newsletter mailed out with water bills 12 times a year with no additional postage necessary, saving 75% of the previous cost and getting more information, sooner, out to our residents. We have consolidated purchase of office supplies and purchase from a wholesaler, eliminating costly purchases at retail prices.



Need help paying utility bills?

Every Wednesday evening from 4:00 p.m.–6:30 p.m. at the Village Hall LIHEAP provides a one-time payment to the utility companies on behalf of recipients. Residents may fill out an application. Please bring the following documents:

- Social Security Card
- Photo ID
- Current NICOR bill
- Current COMED bill
- Proof of gross income for 30 days
- 2009 Social Security letter

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The village has dramatically reduced expenditures for special events and is seeking funding and fees to pay for events such as Railroad Daze. The village is creating a new website capable of handling payments for water bills, vehicle stickers, parking and code enforcement citations and service requests providing savings by automating these processes to avoid having to hire administrative personnel to replace those that have retired or positions that have been eliminated.

The villages present annual waste removal costs amount to \$1,537,736.00 The number of homes that receive village waste removal is 5,134. We arrived at your \$24.96 monthly garbage fee by dividing \$1,537,736 by 5,134 and then dividing by 12 to get a monthly fee. Senior citizens who are eligible for the Senior Freeze Exemption on their real estate tax bills will pay only \$5.00 per month.



REMINDER

Railroad Daze was moved from May to June 4th, 5th and 6th. Railroad days was inadvertently not added to the village calendar we apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.

**FRANKLIN PARK
CALENDAR OF
IMPORTANT DATES**

- **March 14, 2010
Daylight Saving Time**

**Franklin Park Blood
Drive at the
Community Center
3:00 – 7:00pm**

**VILLAGE HALL
CLOSING DATES**

- **February 15, 2010**

The village made further modifications to fees and fines to avoid drastic cuts to vital emergency response services. Over the last ten years the Administrative Department personnel has been cut by 50%. Over a number of years the Street and Water Department personnel have been reduced by 64%, including six that are expected to retire this year. The Community Development Department (includes Building, Planning and Zoning etc.) has reduced its personnel by 35%. A consolidation of the Zoning, Planning, Permits, and Inspections departments has saved over \$100,000.00 alone. We eliminated all maintenance or repairs that were not absolutely necessary to vital services. We settled needless litigation and legal fees for litigation corporate purposes went down substantially. After all cost cutting measures, revenue enhancements, and cuts of personnel to all departments except Fire and Police, your village still had an annual deficit of approximately \$1.4 million with no options for borrowing.

The Police and Fire Unions were asked to participate in the process of finding cost cutting measures in their departments. 73% of all salaries and benefits go to Police and Fire personnel (not 73% of the budget as I erroneously stated at the Town Hall meeting.) I believed it was important to work with our emergency response union bargaining units instead of dictating to them what cuts should be made. After long and patient negotiations, the village and Fire Union were able to secure a fair contract that included the important cost reductions that the village required and a raise for the firefighters without any layoffs of the firefighter personnel. The village and Police Union were also able to secure important cost reductions without any layoffs. We continue to meet with the Police Union and, through fair and patient negotiations, I am optimistic that a contract can be completed shortly.

On Thursday, January 28, 2010, I held the third Town Hall meeting of my Administration. I will hold quarterly Town Hall meetings with our residents to provide answers to you about your government and create as much reform and transparency as possible. If you have a question, comment, idea, or complaint, don't wait for the next Town Hall meeting. Call my office at 847-671-8235 and schedule a meeting to meet with me personally.

Sincerely,
Barrett F. Pedersen
Mayor



Reuse, Reduce, Recycle

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