

Town of Franklin

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OFFICE OF THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

June 10, 2020

Honorable Karen E Spilka	Rebecca Rausch	Jeffrey N. Roy
Senate President	State Senator	State Representative
Room 332, State House	Room 218, State House	Room 43, State House
Boston, MA 02133	Boston, MA 02133	Boston, MA 02133

Dear Franklin Legislative Delegation:

We write on behalf of the Town of Franklin and the Franklin Public Schools to urge your support of preserving as much local aid in the FY21 state budget as possible. As we approach many of the economic realities ready to set in as this crisis unfolds, it is clear that any cuts will have a devastating impact in the quantity and quality of the services Franklin residents require.

In short, the staff of the Town of Franklin and Franklin Public Schools are on the front lines of managing this pandemic. The overwhelming majority of our staff have shown incredible bravery, creativity and dedication to the work we do. Any substantial cuts to local aid, through Chapter 70, UGGA and so forth, will unquestionably result in personnel reductions and reduce our ability to safely navigate the many challenges stemming from this pandemic. In other words, cuts to local aid are cuts to the very lifeline and response network the state is mandating we do. It makes absolutely no sense. Navigating the challenges of the pandemic is on top of the already demanding work of our staff including educating children, protecting the community, emergency management, maintenance of roads and facilities, and support services for residents through our library, Veterans' Affairs Department, Recreation Department, and Senior Center.

As noted at last week's Town Council meeting, the Town of Franklin has the second lowest infectious rate of any municipality with a population over 30,000 in the Commonwealth. We are only behind the Town of Amherst. While many factors contribute to this data, we believe our staff have done an incredible job managing the response *with* the community and have been very effective in these times. Local aid cuts will only make our jobs increasingly difficult and dangerous. At some point, we may be simply asking our staff to do too much. Cuts of the magnitude outlined below will hinder our ability to respond to this crisis across the board.

As part of the FY21 budget, The Town Administrators' Recommended Budget accounts for a near \$2 million loss in revenue from local sources with respective cuts in services. If state aid gets cut at a certain percentage (outlined here), these are the additional revenue reductions the Town could see come Fall 2020 in the FY21 budget:

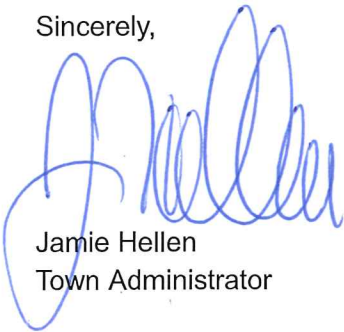
- A 5% cut in state aid would result in a reduction of \$1,617,929
- A 10% cut in state aid would result in a reduction of \$3,235,858

- A 15% cut in state aid would result in a reduction of \$4,853,787
- A 20% cut in state aid would result in a reduction of \$6,471,716
- A 25% cut in state aid would result in a reduction of \$8,089,645

There is no other way to put it: if state local aid is cut by any of the amounts above, additional cuts to education, schools, public works, library services and public safety will likely be substantial and deeply impactful.

We recognize every community in the Commonwealth is experiencing equally challenging times. We also recognize every community has their own unique financial strengths and weaknesses. That said, though our professional networks, one thread remains common: cuts to local aid will be devastating at the ground level and will unquestionably hinder our ability to respond to this pandemic. Difficult choices will require difficult decisions. We hope for your support and leadership in preserving as much local aid as possible to cities and towns.

Sincerely,



Jamie Hellen
Town Administrator



Sara E. Ahern, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Cc: Town Council, Town of Franklin
Franklin School Committee
Geoff Beckwith, Executive Director & CEO, Massachusetts Municipal Association
Tom Scott, Executive Director, M.A.S.S
Glenn Koocher, Executive Director, M.A.S.C.