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Carol Constant, Vice-Chair
Nicole Casolari, Clerk
Jeff Cyr
Renee Sweeney

Lisa Wong
Town Administrator

Town Administrator's Report to Selectboard December 19, 2023 (Mid Year Report)

Administration, Finance and Operations

- **Personnel:** Welcome Sandra Blaney as the Human Resources Assistant. Sandra worked at Smith College as a faculty recruitment and appointment specialist.
- **Tax Bills:** The tax bills going out in January will reflect the average commercial/industrial increase at \$79.29 (FD#1) and a decrease of \$24.95 (FD#2) and the average single family increase of \$351.31 (FD#1) and a \$255.73 increase (FD#2).
- **Buttery Brook PARC Grant:** The Town will receive a \$500,000 grant to make improvements at BATTERY BROOK. The full funding, including the match, was approved at the 2023 Annual Town Meeting. The next step is to form a Building Committee.
- **Mosier School:** The Massachusetts School Building Authority voted to move the Mosier school project into the next phase. The Town will need to form a building committee and approve additional funding for the Feasibility Study at the next Town Meeting.
- **Veterans District:** The Town is continuing to work with Holyoke and Granby on forming a district for FY2025. The details of the district and vote will be on the January 16 Selectboard agenda.
- **Whiting Street Fund:** The Town is the recipient of a will from over 100 years ago that formed the Fund and to be used for the "relief and comfort of the worthy poor of such towns and cities." Northampton and Holyoke received \$25k; Chicopee, Amherst and Easthampton received \$6k; South Hadley received \$5250, and numerous other communities in the area received smaller amounts. 5 commissioners are appointed to a one year term, and it appears the committee has been inactive for at least 8 years. According to a letter from the Commission to the Selectboard in 1989 "the principal is never to be used and that only the interest earned is to be given out." The Commissioners also distribute funds from the Joanna B. Judge Fund that was assigned to the Commission in 1975. "Over the years, the income has been distributed in small gifts of money or food baskets in increasing amounts of \$30 to \$50 each to individuals who are temporarily in difficulty because of low income, sickness, or family problems." The Commission votes on requests and the names are kept confidential. "Emergency gifts, in larger amounts, are given to people who have larger problems such as fire, abandonment, sudden sickness, or other types of calamities." Referrals are made by "church leaders, The Council on Aging, word-of-mouth, Social Services, etc. and then are investigated by our Commission before the fit is sent."

Community

- **Neighbors Helping Neighbors:** Here is a partial list of most needed items - canned meat, hot/cold cereal, tomato products, soup, shampoo, women's hygiene products, toothbrushes, toothpaste, deodorant, dry pasta, canned fruit, coffee, granola bars, diapers. Donate: <https://nhnfoodpantry.org>

Facilities

- **Town Hall:** Contracts complete for mini-splits in remaining offices. The Town will receive a 15k rebate. Card readers installed at both main entrances for employee access. Met with the window contractor for window replacement in the Treasurer's office, obtaining a quote for the whole building replacement. School Dept. administration heating issue fixed and Preventative Maintenance done for the building, fire alarm system now wireless and with new vendor at lower cost, elevator inspection passed.
- **Buttery Brook Park:** abatement complete, permitted, waiting on date from contractor
- **DPW:** roof top unit replaced.
- **Police Department:** finally repaired drinking fountain drain. New contractor for fire and sprinkler inspections at lower cost. Preventative Maintenance done for the heating system prior to winter.
- **Library:** repaired HVAC issues including gas leak, rooftop unit supply fan, and pump for heating replaced at much lower cost than BG quote. New fire alarm/inspections company at lower cost.
- **Ledges:** part of insulation repair complete, balance next week, pumphouse contracted, roof leaks repaired, plumbing leaks in kitchen repaired
- **Wastewater Treatment Plant:** met with two contractors for roof repair/replacement
- **Senior Center:** resolved the alarm issue and set up Preventative Maintenance for grease traps
- **High School:** roof repairs completed yesterday, need thermal imagery study and cost for restoration. Boiler controller being installed today, failed recently, no heat. Changing boiler maintenance vendor. Test carpet installed in library before full replacement, no issues. Replaced display modules at great savings. Redid floors in four bathrooms. All locks completed. Roof top fan repairs and replacement in process, ongoing BMS issues repairs in process. Scoreboard for football field funded. Discuss walk-in freezer and cooler replacements with the contractor.
- **Middle School:** contracted for elevator upgrades, hot water cross contamination fixed, met with vendor to discuss Boiler Maintenance service changeover (like high school, working to improve service and be cost effective)
- **Mosier School:** handrail at loading dock replaced, boiler expansion tanks replaced
- **Plains School:** extensive HVAC and boiler repairs complete, contracted for skylight replacement, elevator inspection passed.
- **Green Communities:** Working with Pioneer Valley Planning Commission and AEG to prepare ERP for hopefully a March submission. If the designation is successful, the Town will be able to apply for significant grant funding to assist with projects. The Director of Building Operations is lining up projects that would be eligible and will begin to prioritize them upon designation.

Planning

- **The Falls Business Improvement Grants:** The Town has \$15,369 available from the Regional Economic Development Opportunity Grant and will be offering up to \$1,500 grants to Property owners of commercial buildings and nonprofit and commercial business owners located in South Hadley Falls for facade improvements, memberships to business organizations and other projects that support growth. First come first serve. Work must be completed by June 30, 2024. To apply: www.southhadley.org/1299/South-Hadley-Falls-Business-Improvement-
- **CDBG:** The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission manages Community Development Block Grant projects related to the Town. Selectboard will vote on extending the FY2020 grant cycle from Dec 31, 2023 to March 31, 2024 to finish a remaining project. The Town currently has a FY21 housing rehabilitation program jointly with Hadley, who is the lead town. A required performance hearing will take place at 6:00 PM on Wednesday, December 20 in person at the Council on Aging, 46 Middle Street, Hadley, MA 01035. Questions or comments can be submitted up until and through the public hearing to John O’Leary at joleary@pvpc.org or 413-781-6045. Anyone needing special accommodations should contact the Town of Hadley at 413-586-4023.
- **DLTA:** The Town has submitted proposals for District Local Technical Assistance. This annual source of assistance is through the regional planning entities. Proposal #1: review the Falls 40R Smart Growth Zoning District Bylaw and design standards to seek ways to encourage development aligned with the community’s goals. Proposal #2: review the existing 40R district for potential re-delineation. Inventory properties beyond the Gaylord Mill complex to see if additional parcels should be included. Proposal #3: After receiving positive feedback on the 3 part housing speaker series that just concluded, we would like to add a fourth webinar showcasing the lived experience of individuals and families from different housing developments to share stories about what housing means to them.

Public Health

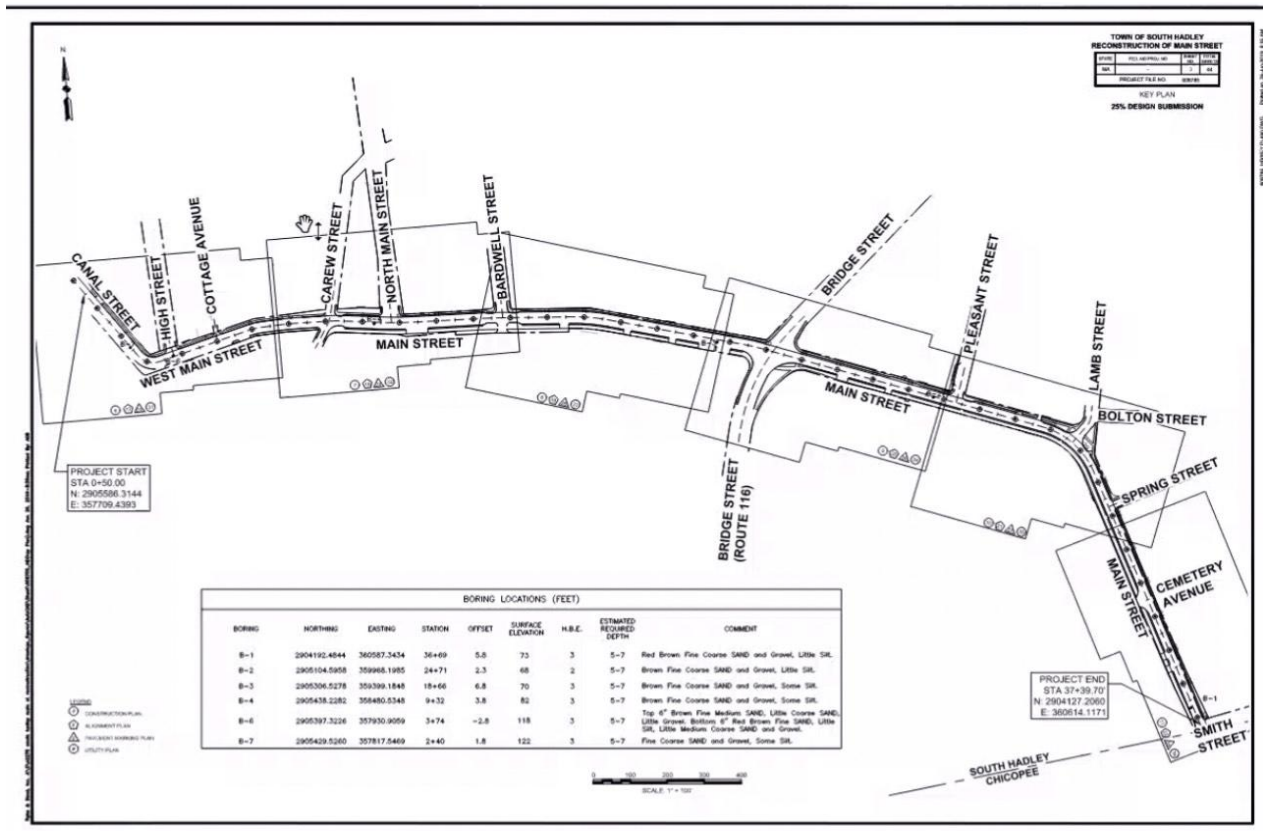
- **OPIOID Settlement:** On December 4th, 2023, Governor Healey signed [Chapter 77 of the Acts of 2023](#). Section 9 of the law provides, in part, for an exception to the legal requirement that all receipts are to be recorded as general fund revenue per [G.L.c. 44, § 53](#) for Opioid Settlement Receipts. Municipalities now have the option to account for these receipts in a special revenue fund. In South Hadley, Town Meeting would have to vote to eliminate the Stabilization fund already approved to allow the town to set up the special revenue fund. The Stabilization fund requires a Town Meeting vote to expend funds, the special revenue fund does not. This is a policy decision that will require significant further discussion.

Public Safety

- **House Numbers:** Contact the Fire Departments or Council on Aging if you need a house number flag. House numbers that are visible from the street at night as well as during the day. The numbers should be at least 4 inches in height and be seen from both directions.

Public Works

- **Main Street (TIP):** Road reconstruction from Chicopee line to Canal Street (Library). MassDOT @25% design. Plans to bid in February 2026. Original plan called for 10 foot lanes and 5 foot bike lanes on each side, parking and shared use paths. One of the goals is to reduce truck traffic and keep on Bridge Street. Concern over 10 foot lanes being too narrow and considering 11 foot lanes as there is parking on both sides and need to consider car doors opening. MassDOT is going to look at scenarios and come back to the Town. There will be a 25% public hearing once the design. Crosswalks are still being looked into as well. The Town has also made clear that economic development and streetscape is important. Here is the project area, but the design is not accurate as this does not take into consideration some of the issue discussed above:



- **Paving:** completed. Delayed Burnett and Wright waited for water district to finish work so it will be done in spring.
- **Parks:** winterized sprinklers, mowers getting winter maintenance

- **Wastewater:** The Comprehensive Wastewater Plan is out to bid. \$450k was approved. Anticipate the project to be within budget. Working with MIIA to close out 2 projects as part of the insurance claim from fire in 2021.
- **Channel grinder:** Funded at recent Special Town Meeting. Being installed now.
- **Rt. 116:** MassDOT working on second drainage area. Working on sewer, Finishing up before winter. Kendrick to Campden - sidewalk, signs. Other half of project should be done by June 30 Campden to state easement. grind, raise structures, sidewalk, guardrails.
- **Judd Brook:** Installing matting, conducting camera and cleaning work for first phase by Berwin Street. Next step: manhole rehabilitation including manual rout work, spray concrete, epoxy coat.
- **Culverts:** Working on the environmental filing for the New Ludlow Road culvert
- **Trees:** John and Rebekah have passed Mass Tree Warden certificate class. Consultant BETA has finished tree inventory that was funded by Town Meeting on major roads, almost at 50% on minor roads part of tree inventory. Will be done by spring - harder with leaves falling.
- **Compost:** Grinding done (wood from residents, storm damage). Town keeps 25% material to mix with leaves and grass for compost that still needs to be screened. Mixed with sand for loam to be used for town projects. No charge yet for leaves drop-off or brush drop off. Costs 50k to the town.
- **Trash/Recycle:** In talks with Republic about next year of contract. Looking at fees. For example: Mattresses are \$100 to dispose if soiled/\$25 if clean not including hauling. Town charges \$25.
- **Landfill:** Looking to renew oversight and post closure contract for the next year (Tighe and Bond)
- **DPW Building:** HVAC unit is in, garage doors in
- **Vehicles:** all purchased except 2 dumpers to be procured in next few months. Street sweeper has been ordered and will arrive by spring. Town Meeting approved 385k, should be under budget.
- **Center/Warner/Graves:** This is a CDBG funded project managed by PVPC involving roadway resurfacing, sidewalk removals and restoration, and drainage upgrades. District 1 replaced the water mains recently. Design is done and PVPC will apply for construction funds in the next CDBG round. The max award is \$950k, enough to cover construction. PVPC would need to survey residents in the area to ensure area meets the income restrictions required for these funds. This was done prior to the design but the survey has to be done at least every 3 years.
<https://www.southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/11707/Center-Warner-and-Graves-Streets-Neighborhood-Infrastructure-Improvement-Plans---June-2022>

Schools

- **SRO:** The School Committee voted to support a second School Resource Officer. The Police will identify and train an existing officer to help provide additional resources to the schools.
- **Curriculum:** The Superintendent provided updates to literacy and curriculum in the school district. At the preK to 4 level, highlights include a literacy coach, establishing a District Literacy Committee, and establishing data teams to monitor progress and inform instruction.
- **High School Assistant Principal:** Candidates are being interviewed.