

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

Lisa Wong
Town Administrator

Town Administrator's Monthly Report
January 2025

Administration, Finance and Operations

● **Administration:**

- Budget development has started. The state is expected to release their budget by January 22, 2025 that will include the amount of state aid to the town.
- The RFP for the Community-Wide Needs Assessment will be issued in early 2025
- The website calendar has been updated to include curbside collection routes.
- BusinessWest journal has a feature article about South Hadley in their December 23, 2024 edition. <https://businesswest.com/blog/in-south-hadley-it-takes-a-village-literally/>

- **Accounting:** The office is working with staff on the start of the Fiscal Year 2026 budget. The office is posting the revenue budget to the general ledger in accordance with the tax rate being approved.

● **Assessor:**

- The tax rates were approved by the Department of Revenue without issue.
- Fiscal 2025 tax bills were processed on December 26th and 27th for issuance on December 31st.
- During the billing process, 236 personal exemptions (including senior work off) were added to the tax bills along with 212 sewer liens, 54 trash liens and 94 electric light liens.
- This month will be spent on educating property owners regarding assessments and the connection with budgetary spending.
- Working with IT to finalize transfer of property record cards dating back to 2008 into the record management system.
- Final testing for online certified abutters list requests will be completed.
- Working with Assessors organization to finalize Winter School, Winter conference, Spring Conference and Summer conference.
- Assisting other departments with property related data such as WWTP with sump pump and roof leader data to be added to their GIS program; health department with septic and ownership information etc.

- Currently running 7,605 property record cards to be uploaded to the digital mapping platform.
- Working on updating the Assessors webpages with Fiscal 2025 information now that the information is certified.
- **Collector/Treasurer:**
 - Unpaid FY24 Trash and Sewer will be liened to the February 1, 2025 Real Estate tax bill.
 - The Treasurer is the Town representative to the Hampshire Country Group Health Insurance Trust. The HCGIT anticipates a 12-15% increase in costs for the next fiscal year, and will continue to discuss this at their monthly meetings.
- **IT:**
 - TCM configuration for deployment of Property Record Cards from 2008-present has been completed. Working with Assessor for bulk import reports.
 - Moving ahead with Septic Installation permits online.
 - Working with schools to facilitate remote access for HVAC interfaces.
 - Will be testing public access to TCM in the coming months.
- **Cable:**
 - Finalizing scope for Multi-Purpose Room Hybrid project to send out to vendors this month.
 - Capital request for new field cameras has been purchased and waiting on final equipment to be delivered.
 - Donated older studio lighting that was unused after our lighting upgrade to the SHHS Auditorium. They were installed over Winter Break as part of a small project that was happening.

Building and Zoning

- **10 Edition State Building Code:** Current concurrency period set to end 6/30/25. Impacts to residents include energy updates, provisions for tiny homes, storage containers, upgraded deck/porch requirements, etc. so it will impact many projects.
- **0 West Main St:** Updated demolition order has been sent to all parties involved. No final determinations have been made in probate court, the will has finally been admitted to probate. The estate representative is still being contested and may take several months to determine.
- **Liquor License Inspections:** Inspections on all buildings have been completed in conjunction with each respective fire district. Five buildings still have remaining issues to address before certificates will be issued.
- **Certificates on Inspection (3 families and above):** Assessors have provided a list of all identified multi-families in town and enforcement letters to be sent starting the week of 1/7 for those not in compliance with state law.

- **ADUs:** Numerous trainings attended regarding the impacts of the new ADU bylaw from a building code perspective. A lot of unanswered questions remain. Public comment period is not open and set to close on 1/10. Public hearings to be held following to try and finalize guidance prior to the February 2nd effective date.

Clerk

- **Annual Census:** The census will go out the third week of January. Those that renewed dog licences online will also get an email reminder about renewing their dog licenses on January 1.
- **Town Election:** Nomination papers for the Annual Town Election are available. The last day to obtain papers is February 13, 2025 at 5pm and the last day to submit papers is February 18, 2025 at 5pm. The Annual Town Election is scheduled for Tuesday, April 8, 2025. Candidates must be 18 years old or older and a registered voter in South Hadley. Town-wide candidates need to obtain 50 certified signatures. Town meeting candidates need to obtain 10 signatures from their precinct. Candidates are encouraged to obtain additional signatures. All signatures must be returned to the Town Clerk's Office for certification. If the candidate does not obtain the correct amount of signatures, they cannot appear on the ballot.
- **Conflict of interest law education courses:** State law requires that all state, county and municipal employees, including members of boards and committees, complete two education courses on the requirements of the conflict of interest law. Automatic reminders should have gone out as a reminder.

DPW

- **Center/Warner/Grave:** The Town is waiting for clearance from the state to move forward and anticipates having the state contract as well as the professional services contract with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission completed by mid-January. The next step is to then put out a Request for Qualifications for an engineer to handle the construction management in February.
- **Joffre/Viviani drainage outfall for Queensville Dam/Mountain Ave. Conservation project:** DPW in-house work on Queensville Pond outfall behind 7/11 building scheduled for early January.
- **Pearl Street:** Bid documents finalized, and advertised. Anticipated bid opening 1/23/25.
- **Buttery Brook Park:** DPW completed tree removal for the larger project. Tree trimming, fence removal, excavation trenching and electrical/fiber conduit installs during January.
- **Equipment:** 2 Exmark mowers (Parks), and dump body install on truck #35 Parks: January 2025.
- **Trash/Recycling Carts:** Trash/Recycling carts ordered; grant requirement on-boarding with The Recycling Partnership January 9, 2025. June 2025 assembly and distribution by contractor.
- **Main Street TIP Project:** The state has completed a 25% design on the reconstruction of Main Street from the Chicopee line to Canal Street. A current site survey is due to Tighe and Bond by January 10, 2025, followed by a utility coordination site meeting with MassDOT District 2. A

Design Public Hearing will be held during March/April, barring any new unforeseen concerns. The project is expected to be put out to bid for construction in February 2026.

- **State Road Funding:** MassDOT will be setting up a meeting with town staff about the Municipal Pavement Program for Route 33 from Mile Marker 4 to Mile Marker 4.6. Work will include paving, manhole adjustments, line striping, bike lane, marking and crosswalks. This does not include any lights or signage: joint meeting and site visit: February 2025.
- **Morgan Street Bridge:** grant application due February 1: MassDOT Small Bridge Program, in progress.
- **8-14,16 Carew Street:** sanitary sewer issue resolved: new 6" sanitary sewer main and associated structure was installed on Carew Street, eliminating a service line through a non-easement on private property.
- **Capital/Budget:** Initial needs assessment: Truck #39 replacement (10 wheel dump/plow/sander, Truck #34: pickup/flatbed/plow/sander, Truck #31: pickup/plow, Truck #20: WWTP pickup/utility body/plow/liftgate, utility trailer (Parks).
- **WWTP:** annual Industrial Pre-Treatment Audit completed, and approved by EPA.
- **WWTP:** 5 year CMOM Plan (Comprehensive Maintenance and Operation Manual) submitted to DEP.
- **Traffic/Sign: 2024 Annual Report:** to be discussed at 1/7/25 Selectboard Meeting.

Emergency Management (not updated)

- **Hazard Mitigation Planning Grant:** Final public meeting was held on Dec 3. MEMA and FEMA approval are next before the Selectboard can vote on the final report.
- **EOPSS Deadly White Powder Symposium:** Certificate of Completion for an 8-hour class. Eight response kits which included Fentanyl and Cocaine test strips, gloves, etc. were given to the EMD at the symposium. The kits were then given to Chief Gundersen for the Police Department vehicles.
- **Emergency Management Preparedness Grant:** Grant was finalized and items purchased for Electrical Vehicle Response (lithium batteries) for Fire District #1.

Facilities

- **High School:** The second phase of the building automation project started during the Christmas break in should be completed by the end of March.
- **MEMS:** Quick connects installed for ovens. Repairs and troubleshooting are ongoing for the elevator.
- **Ledges:** We started the process for an energy project to replace the heating and cooling systems for the clubhouse.
- **Library:** Completed some major repairs and maintenance to the boilers.

- **WWTP:** Roof replacements for two buildings at the treatment plant are in progress.
- **Town Hall:** Performed major maintenance for the boilers and installed a new thermostat to provide remote access for the heating system.
- **Mosier:** Repaired roof drain issue causing leak in the gym.
- **COA:** Ongoing lighting and electrical repairs will begin on January 13.

Health (not updated)

- **COPD Awareness Month:** This month our health focus was on COPD or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, which is a condition caused by damage to the airways or other parts of the lung. This damage leads to inflammation and other problems that block airflow and make it hard to breathe. Message boards are set up at COA, Library and Town Hall in English and Spanish.
- **Paint Stewardship Legislation:** The Board of Health adopted the Resolution In Support of Paint Stewardship Legislation. This law would create a convenient and reliable collection network to properly manage paints discarded by business and residents and thereby reduce the amount of toxic chemicals entering the waste-streams, landfills and the environment.
- **Central Pioneer Valley Health District:** The Health Department would like to continue the BIOBOT wastewater testing for South Hadley, Chicopee and Holyoke. This would include three (3) different panels for a full year.
 1. **High Risk Panel(current panel):** Cocaine, Fentanyl, Methamphetamine, Xylazine and Nicotine, and their metabolites.
 2. **Substance Use Disorder (SUD) panel:** Naloxone, Buprenorphine, Methadone, and their metabolites.
 3. **Opioid Panel:** Heroin, Morphine, Oxycodone, Acetyl Fentanyl, Cargentanil, Codeine, Dihydrocodeine, Hydromorphone, Hydrocodone Oxymorphone, Sufentanil, Tianeptine, Tramadol, and their metabolites.
- **COVID:** COVID levels within Wastewater are online: southhadley.org/1026/COVID-19-RESPONSE
- **COVID TESTS:** Health Department has received 19,000+ COVID tests. These are being distributed at COA, Library, Neighbors Helping Neighbors, PD, DPW, Town Hall, Housing Authority, WWTP, and other community events. We also reached out to faith-based organizations and businesses to distribute masks and COVID tests. This has been successful.
- **Project IMPACT:** The Board of Health has signed the Project IMPACT Harm Reduction Pledge. <https://www.baystatecs.org/project-impact/>
- **Blood Pressure Clinics:** Held at COA and additionally at Lathrop Village Community Room.
- **South Hadley Housing Authority:** A survey was compiled and will be sent to members to help us better understand and support the residents' needs.
- **Department of Environmental Protection Grant:** Airsensors were received and sent to Yale to be calibrated. They were received back and are now connected to wifi and mounted at the Town

Hall, Library, Fire District #1, DPW, South Hadley WWTP (in Chicopee) and 3 other locations in Chicopee. You can follow them on

<https://map.purpleair.com/air-quality-standards-us-epa-aqi?opt=%2F1%2Fa10%2Fp604800%2Fc0#12.99/42.20416/-72.58806>.

- **State Drought Information:** Receiving and posting the state drought information on website for the community.
<https://www.mass.gov/guides/drought-management-in-massachusetts#-current-status->

Human Services

- **Recreation:** Ledges RFPs were received and are beginning to be reviewed. Applied for a Mass Cultural Council Facilities Grant for \$200,000 to support the new performance area/stage at Buttery Brook Park, will find out the results in May 2025. Buttery Brook Park bid will be released in January.
- **Veterans:**
 - About half way through online training for Veterans Administration training (To be able to submit VA disability claims) due date of 1 Feb 2025 for online portion
 - In process of working with Chapter 115 Clients for annual and 3 year recertifications by end of year waiting on documentation from clients.
 - Working with COA to have veteran evening hours on Thursday for individuals that work during the day to pass on information to the vets will be starting with a dinner on 30 Jan and then just have a 1 hour social hour for the younger vets to come in and talk.
- **Council on Aging:** The COA continues to have multiple open Companion Driver positions open.
 - Starting with the January 2025 meeting, the COA Board plans to hold hybrid meetings each month.
 - Hiring for the substitute receptionist position went well, so you may see some new faces filling in when our regular staff members are off.
 - Beginning in January, patrons with simple returns can sign up for free AARP tax appointments. The actual appointments will run from the start of February through April.
 - Fuel assistance application season is open now and runs through the end of April.

Human Resources

- **Welcome to the team!:** The Town has been busy hiring for various part-time, on-call and temporary roles. Please welcome:
 - Town Clerk's Office: Selena Garcia Rodriguez (PT Clerical Assistant)
 - Public Works: Shawn Schmitter (Temp HMEO)
 - Human Services/COA:

- Substitute Receptionists: Eileen Theroux, Laurie Mueller, Michelle O'Connell, Myla Brilliant
- Companion Driver: Douglas Bonafilia
 - Human Services/Recreation: Zachary Cote (Gym Supervisor/Scorekeeper)
- **Senior Tax Credit Workers:** there was increased interest in the program during the 2nd session of assignments (approx. Jan - May 2025), and HR has been working to find matches to department assignments. Most placements have been made, and those assigned have been contacted to coordinate work schedules with Site Supervisors.
- **Hiring:** The Town is looking for qualified applicants for positions at the Public Health and COA. Visit SouthHadleyMA.gov/jobs to apply!
- **Holiday Door Decorating:** Town Hall departments got in the spirit and participated in a Holiday Door Decorating contest. Winners included the Town Assessor's Office and the School Administration Business Office. Great job all!

Library

- **Circulation:** Circulation of library materials increased by more than 15% from 2023 to 2024.
- **2025 Reading Challenge:** The libraries are a Partner in the [2025 Reading Challenge from the Mass. Center for the Book](#). You can win free books by taking part and maybe discover some new authors. There is also a [Student Edition](#) of the Reading Challenge.
- **Carpeting Project:** The carpeting in the Circulation area will be replaced from February 6-7. There will be service disruptions with details to be announced.
- **Digital Signage:** The new digital sign in the library lobby is now operational and we've received very positive feedback from patrons.

Planning and Conservation

- **Routes 202/33 Corridor:** The next community meeting is January 16th at 6pm at the South Hadley Public Library to present preliminary draft zoning recommendations and design guidelines. Project website here: <https://community.innesassocltd.com/south-hadley>
- **MVP Action Grant:** The Town is receiving 50% of the \$1,283,063 award for the construction of the Pearl Street at Elmer Brook Culvert Replacement. Bids will be due in January.
- **Dry Brook Aquifer Study:** UMASS has completed an isotopic tracer study of the aquifer, online: [Geochemical-and-Environmental-Tracer-Study-of-Dry-Brook-Hill-Aquifer-South-Hadley-MA](#)
A presentation about the study will be January 14, 2025 at 6pm at the Council on Aging.
- **MVP 2.0 Seed Project - Affordable Housing Trust:** The Town has received 4 applications for Trust board members. Recommendations for appointments will be made to the Selectboard.
- **Lauzier Farm APR Complete:** The Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) for 205 acres of farmland at the Lauzier Farm on Alvord Street has been finalized with the Massachusetts

Department of Agricultural Resources and recorded at the Hampshire Registry of Deeds. The Town in partnership with Kestrel Land Trust raised the required \$190,000 match. \$40,000 of that came from the Conservation Commission's Land Fund which is supported through a \$10,000 budget appropriation each year. The protected farmland will be sold to the Barstow Family who will grow feed crops for their dairy farm operation based on Hadley.

[Lauzier-Farm-Protected-Forever---Press-Release-12202024](#)

- **Falls Facade Improvement Grants Complete:** Three small business owners in South Hadley Falls have completed facade improvements with ARPA funded grants: Ebenezer's Bar and Grill, 60 Bridge Street, installed a new sign (\$5,000); Ty's Body Shop, 3 Main Street, installed new storefront windows and a sign (\$5,100); and, Green Collar, 48 Lamb Street, installed new storefront windows (\$5,000) These grant awards were only a portion of cost of the total facade improvements each business invested in.
- **Frank DeToma South Hadley Falls Redevelopment Fund:** The Redevelopment Authority has officially established this fund in honor of Frank's vision for redevelopment, beautification and community engagement in the Falls. Projects to be supported by the Fund may include property acquisition and/or redevelopment, creation of housing, business growth and development, and public parks and recreation facilities. To make a donation: [Frank DeToma South Hadley Falls Memorial Fund | South Hadley, MA - Official Website](#)

Public Safety

- January Office Hours for the Chief of Police will be as follows: 01/09/25, Senior Center 10:00am-12:00 noon; 01/23/24, 5:00pm to 6:45pm, Senior Center with School Resource Officer Josh Helems; 01/29/25 12:00pm to 2:00pm, Neighbors Helping Neighbors
- Police Accreditation will be January 14-16, 2025. Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission has assigned the following facilitators: Lt Larry Bateman/Sturbridge Police Dept; Sgt. Josiah Morrissette/Uxbridge Police Dept; Sgt Jarad LaValle/ Belchertown Police Dept. As part of the assessment process, community members are invited to offer comments to the Commission about the Department as they pertain to accreditation standards. You may speak with the assessors directly during the visit or you may send written comments to the Commission prior to the assessment at the following address: Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission, 110 Haverhill/ Road Suite 397 Amesbury, MA 01913. Questions regarding the Accreditation process can also be forwarded to Accreditation Manager, [Sgt. Barry O'Connor](#)
- With the Human Resources Department, the Department will be interviewing candidates for an existing vacancy for police officer. 4 candidates that applied, who are currently trained law enforcement officers, have been invited to interviews on on January 8 and January 10, 2025
- Officer Murphy, the SHPD comfort dog, received a \$4,000 donation from Mt. Holyoke College in support of the program. Murphy has been coming to the station the past few weeks, getting to

116 MAIN STREET, SUITE M18, SOUTH HADLEY, MASSACHUSETTS 01075-2896

know the officers and learning his new duties. His training will begin at the end of January, with a goal of his on the road assignment beginning in March. Murphy has many followers on this [Facebook Page](#)

School

- **MCAS:** School Administration is planning to discuss the implications of the ballot vote in November 2024 at a School Committee meeting in late January. Discussion will include current requirements even if MCAS is no longer a graduation requirement.
- **Budget Hearing:** The schools have set March 11 at 6pm as their budget hearing date, hybrid at the Senior Center.
- **MSBA Building Project:** The next meeting is January 15. The Committee is setting the process to select an Owner's Project Manager in early 2025.

State and Regional

- **PVPC:** PVPC has completed a report about the District 1 and 2 efficiencies. The report will be discussed at upcoming district and town meetings.

Boards & Commissions

- **Historic:** The Historic District Study Committee is one of 6 pre-applications that has been invited by the state to submit a full application due Feb 3.

Community

- **Mt. Holyoke College:** Follow the latest news from the College at www.mtholyoke.edu/news. Recent news articles include a reusable stainless steel container company that was started by a Mt. Holyoke Alum that has expanded to other universities beyond MHC> www.mtholyoke.edu/news/news-stories/usefull-containers-are-go

Selectboard

- **Annual Licenses:** The Selectboard has voted on annual licences for 2025.
- **Dangerous Dog Hearing:** The December hearing was postponed. Town Counsel is working with opposing counsel, witnesses and the courts on a new date, tentatively for January 2025
- **ARPA:** The Selectboard conducted final votes for the ARPA funds including adding funds for Neighbors Helping Neighbors and new programs for Public Safety and Social Services.
- **Ledges:** The Selectboard reviewed financials for the 2024 golf season. Rates for the 2025 season will be voted on in January. The Selectboard will vote on the renewal of the management/operations contract before mid-January.

- **Affordable Housing Trust:** The Selectboard will interview applicants for the positions in the beginning of 2025.