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Carol Constant, Clerk
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Town Administrator's Monthly Report
April 2025

Administration, Finance and Operations

● **Administration:**

- **Budget/Town Meeting prep:** The TA is continuing to work with Capital, Appropriations and Bylaw Review to prepare the articles for the annual town meeting
- **State/Federal Funding:** Two students and a teacher provided testimony at the April 8 Ways and Means Public Hearing on the state budget. The TA and superintendent worked with regional towns to submit testimony as part of the March 24 hearing on local aid. The TA will attend the monthly partnership meeting with the NLC to discuss federal funding.
- **MMA-Suffolk Certificate Program on Leadership:** The TA will be a guest speaker during the program's class called Foundations of Local Government Administration. We are talking about the differences between managing in a town with a town meeting and a city with a council. South Hadley is sponsoring a staff member through this program this year!
- **Community Compact Grant:** The town has been awarded \$100k for the two districts water metering project.
- **Meals on Wheels:** The TA joined the Police Chief and Friends of the COA to deliver meals.
- **Procurement:** The TA is working on recertification prior to this June 30. The procurement designation is every three years and requires credit courses as well as a formal recertification training program.
- **Transportation:** The town will host one of the upcoming Pioneer Valley Transportation Authority's public hearings about route changes. The changes pertaining to Rt. 116 bus routes will be Wednesday, May 7 at 10am in the Selectboard meeting room.
- **Elementary School Building Project:** The TA is working with the committee on the selection of a designer/architect to conduct the feasibility portion of the project.
- **Housing and Homelessness:** The TA is part of a group of cities and towns in western mass that work on housing and homelessness. The TA will attend the upcoming Western MA Task Force for Housing First's legislative meeting at the end of the month.
- **Open Meeting Law:** The legislature has extended the allowance of remote and hybrid meetings until June 2027.

- **Accounting:**
 - The accounting department continues to work on and update the various budget documents and projections for the next fiscal year.
 - The accounting department is working on preparing the FY26 Budget Book.
 - The accounting department assisted with all financial information for the auditors during their fieldwork for the FY24 audit.
- **Assessor:**
 - Processed and submitted the fiscal 2025 motor vehicle reimbursements to the Department of Revenue.
 - Processed and submitted the fiscal 2025 personal exemption (for property tax) reimbursements to the Department of Revenue.
 - Starting to update Personal Property accounts for businesses for Fiscal 2026. There are approximately hundred eighty-three (483) accounts currently.
 - Continue review of fiscal 2026 property data changes including permits, sales and inspection related data.
 - Updated the Local Option Exemption spreadsheet for South Hadley with new local options as well as Fiscal 2025 expenditures and reimbursements.
 - Worked on regressivity analysis through the Lincoln Land Institute's Vertical Equity application.
- **Cable**
 - Cable staff have been instrumental in supporting many community meetings. Get up to speed on all the Town Meeting prep and tune into Good News by BHMA online at: <https://shctv15.com/>
- **IT:**
 - New user setup
 - Configure cordless phones for Cable Studio
 - Work with Schools for HVAC web access
 - Roll out Shopping Cart feature in Opengov - policy re: turnovers
 - Remove Abutter's List Application from Short term Rental
 - Update Short Term Rental application for Renewals.

Building and Zoning

- **10th edition:** Concurrency period expires 6/30. Short pamphlet (one-pager) has been created to provide to homeowners and contractors to help all understand the changes. Information will be posted on the building page as well.

- **Certificates on Inspection (3 families and above):** Inspections are ongoing throughout town. We are nearly at 30% of buildings in town now compliant (from just over 10% when we started) with numerous more close to compliance. Goal of over 50% compliance by the end of May. Any non-responders (more than 60 days with no response) from our mailing list will have accrued fines added to tax bills similar to zoning violators below.
- **Problem Properties/Zoning Violations:** Accrued fines for violators that refuse to comply (6 months or longer with no response/action) will be added to upcoming tax bills. This list includes 6 properties currently with violations dating back to as early as September 2023 with no response or action.

Clerk

- **Annual Census:** The census has been sent to every residence in South Hadley and processed. It is not too late to submit your 2025 census. Registered voters who do not return their census will be put on the inactive voter list. Information about inactive voters can be found here:
<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/divisions/elections/voting-information/inactive-voters.htm>
- **Town Election:** The Town election was held on Tuesday, April 8, 2025 at the High School from 7am to 8pm. The two districts also held their annual election at the same location and same time.
Election results can be found online:
Town of South Hadley: <https://www.southhadley.org/186/Election-Results>
District 1: <https://www.shdistrict1.org/district-government/pages/election-results>
District 2: <https://www.shdistrict2.org/district-government/files/election-results-04-08-2025>
- **Town Meeting:** The Attorney General's office just approved Article 5 from the November 2024 Special Town meeting - Unhitched trailer bylaw. The Clerk is working with Administration on this year's annual warrant.

Collector/Treasurer

- Real Estate and Personal Property 4th Quarter bills were mailed on April 1st and are due May 1st.
- Sewer bills covering 1/1 - 6/30/25 were mailed April 1st and are due May 15th.
- The 1st 2025 Motor Vehicle Excise commitment of 14,608 bills was due last week.

Department of Public Works

Center/Warner/Grave: Professional services agreement with PVPC approved. RFQ for engineer services for construction management in progress. Bid opening: opening date March 28, 2025: awarded to BETA Group, Inc..

- **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 late April (weather related issues). Fuss & O'Neill Dam Inspection Report completed; Maintenance and Operation Plan (MO) and Emergency Action Plan (EAP) being developed by Tighe and Bond.
- **Pearl Street:** Pre-construction meeting completed; Material submission reviews underway; traffic plan approved, involved parties notified; tree work, mobilization and start date: mid April.
- **Buttery Brook Park:** underground utility plans developed for electrical and communications with SHELd; installation started 3/26/25; waiting to complete upon Omasta/Engineer grade set plans.
- **Trash/Recycling Carts:** Resident mailer information completed for distribution with The Recycling Partnership: with April 2025 Tax Invoice mailer. June 2025 assembly and distribution by contractor, Rehrig. Contract completed.
- **Main Street TIP Project:** 2025 TEC updated and submitted; 75% submittal due from Tighe and Bond to MassDOT; Easement review in progress by MassDOT; public hearing date TBA. February 2027 advertising date.
- **DPW:** Stanton Avenue drainage install; easement approved with MHC. Scheduling for construction summer 2025.
- **Spring road paving and pavement preservation:** Project requests approved by MassDOT; April 2025 start for both projects.
- **WWTP:** Plant natural gas generator install completed; Thickener Room heating unit installation in progress; CWMP in progress.
- **Arbor Day Celebration:** Friday April 18,2025 at 9:30am at the George Hahn/Edwin Warner Arboretum located behind Michael E. Smith Middle School. All are welcome!
- **YARD WASTE CURBSIDE COLLECTION:** 1 collection in Spring: April 21-May3 on collection day.
- **Capital:** truck #35 dump body installation completed; excavator Steel Wrist attachment in progress; 2 dumpsters for trash and recycling collection: contract signed; delivery mid: May 2025; #26 Sewer Vac Truck: delivery May 2025.

Emergency Management

- **Quarterly drill Public Health Emergency Preparedness: Completed for Hampshire County.**
- **WebEOC information:** updated
- **Emergency Management Requirements for a Large Scale Event:** Policy completed and shared with Town Administrator.
- **Department of Conservation & Recreation's:** Flood map program for Emergency Management Directors.
- **FEMA - (BRIC) Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities grant application meeting:**

The grant application for a Generator for FD#2, contingent on the Hazard Mitigation Planning Grant (HMPG), which is currently under FEMA review, will need to be submitted next year.

- **Emergency Management Planning Grant:** Close out of the grant for the Lithium Battery response for FD#1.
- **Road Sign Message Boards Usage Request for:** University of Massachusetts, Voting, Shredding Day/Public Safety Fair, and Drug Take Back.

Facilities

- **High School:** The accessible pathway project contractor has submitted the required bonds and a preconstruction meeting is scheduled for mid-April. Replacement of the failed hood vent fans for the cafeteria kitchen is in process. We are seeking competitive bids for the landscaping services.
- **Library:** We are meeting with contractors to seek quotes for duct cleaning and interior cameras. Failing lavatory faucets have been ordered and received and will be installed in the near future.
- **COA:** We are reviewing options for an outbuilding to provide storage as there is very limited space in the building.
- **MS:** We are in process of preparing an IFB for the elevator replacement project should it be approved with the hopes of completing the project over the summer break.
- **Plains Elementary:** We are currently seeking bids for the BDA system that has failed and consulting with FD and PD to satisfy requirements. We are seeking competitive bids for the landscaping services.
- **Mosier:** Multiple roof leaks over the kitchen and library have been repaired.
- **Capital Planning:** The Capital Planning Committee has voted on the proposed FY 26 capital requests and is in the process of preparing the report for recommendations.

Human Services

- **Recreation:**
 - Construction has started at Buttery Brook Park. The “ground breaking ceremony” on April 8 was well attended and included the state delegation, friends of Buttery Brook Park and many community members.
 - Gardner+Gerrish and Golf Business Advisors have started their work evaluating the Ledges Golf Club. The survey has been released and there have been over 400 responses.
 - Spring activities have started and most of our youth sport teams are practicing. Fall and summer activity registrations are currently open and include spring sports, summer

programs, James Taylor at Tanglewood on July 4, and log cabin and pavilion rentals at Buttery Brook Park.

- Concepts for the Human Services Council have started.

- **Veterans:**

- VA Accreditation Training - State submitted paperwork for accreditation to VA on 4/2/2025- Waiting on VA approvals.
- **Past Events** - 27 Mar Vietnam Veterans Day event put together by American Legion at the library was very well attended around 80 attended maybe more -Dignitaries in attendance included Senator Jake Oliveira, Representative Homar Gomez -Five Vietnam veterans attended for the first time, and were each given their lapel pins. -Five Gold Star families were also represented, and presented with lapel pins.
- 29 Mar- Vietnam Veterans Day - Flagging at Vietnam Veterans bridge 1 Bridge Street replacement of US Flag and adding Vietnam Veterans service Flag was donated by SHELD- Plan is to be an annual event- Flag is to be flown for approximately a month.-Going forward maybe looking to replace the flag each month with a military service flag (Army, Navy etc..) and or POW/MIA or Purple Heart flag- still undecided.
- **April Events-**
 - April is Month of the Military Child in Massachusetts proclaimed by Gov Healey
 - 6 April Sunday 1 pm -American Legion - Medal Of Honor ceremony at Notre Dame cemetery at the grave site of US Army 1st Lt. Raymond Beaudoin of Holyoke buried in Notre Dame Cemetery
 - 17 April Thursday 6 PM - American Legion- Memorial Ceremony for the 250th anniversary of our country at Evergreen Cemetery, honoring the Revolutionary war veterans buried there. So far the American Legion has located 54 Revolutionary war veterans buried in South Hadley.
- **May Events-**
 - Memorial Day Cemetery Flagging scheduled for May 17 thru 22nd. 6 cemeteries with approximately 4500 veterans graves.
 - Memorial Day dinner scheduled for Thursday 22 May 2025 from 430 to 630
 - 23 May Friday 6 pm - American Legion B24 crash memorial will be held at Skinner State Park
 - 26 May Monday Memorial Day - American Legion and Sons of the American Legion Civil War Memorial on the town common & Town Hall War Memorials
 - Holyoke Rotary Club Flags for Heroes - Individuals can sponsor a US flag which will be placed around the perimeter of the town common park to be flown from May 17 to July 5. Each flag will have a medallion on it with the hero's name on it to be

read during a ceremony still working the details. Sponsorship application now available.

- **Council on Aging:**

- Aging in Place Fair - Plans are in process for our June Aging in Place Fair. It was amazing to have so many Town Departments participating last year and we hope to have even more join us this year. The event will take place June 25th from 9:30-2:00pm
- The Senior Living Options Fair is scheduled for April 24th 2:00-6:00pm.
- During the month of March, the Friends of South Hadley Seniors sponsored free coffee. In the end patrons consumed more than 2,000 cups!
- The AARP Tax appointments are wrapping up for the season. More than 200 individuals were provided free tax preparation through the program's amazing Volunteers.
- The Senior Farm Share program will once again be taking place at the COA. This program provides fresh, local vegetables over a 10-week period for a one-time payment of \$10. Individuals must be over the age of 60 and meet income guidelines.
- Occupational Therapists from WNEU will be at the COA on Friday, May 2 to facilitate the CarFit program. This program allows the students to offer consultations and recommendations for older drivers, helping them improve their comfort, safety and driving health.
- Fuel assistance application season is open now and runs through the end of April.

Human Resources

- **New Employees:** Please welcome Christian Santiago, who started on March 17 as a new Police Officer! Christian comes to the SHPD as a trained candidate, most recently as an Officer in Leverett/Wendall, and prior to that at Springfield Technical Community College as a Police Officer. For a list of open positions and how to apply, visit <https://southhadley.org/jobs>
- **Open Enrollment:**
 - The upcoming Health Insurance **Open Enrollment period is April 17th through May 9th** for plan changes effective July 1, 2025. New rate charts and other information is posted on the [HR page on the Town website](#), and more information will be posted as available.
 - **Health Fair:** The Town held an [in-person health fair](#) for employees on **April 8, 2025 from 12:00 to 3:00pm** at the Middle School, that hosted representatives from the various employee benefit vendors, as well as some community wellness resources. Approximately 50 employees dropped in to learn more about the benefit offerings, and several won door raffle prizes provided by the Hampshire County Group Insurance Trust's wellness program and Altus Dental!

- **Opt-Out Program:** Beginning in FY2026, this new program provides eligible employees with the opportunity to receive an annual financial incentive in exchange for opting out of the Town's health insurance coverage and enrolling in outside, comparable coverage. To learn more about the full program details, eligibility criteria, and required documentation, please [click the link to view the full program regulations](#).
- **Staff Development:** the first training session in a three-part series was held for a small group of department heads, focused on building resilience, improving communication, and enhancing performance under pressure. This interactive program is being led by executive coach [Jon Wortmann](#), who has worked extensively with municipalities across Massachusetts, including leading the Communication workshop at South Hadley's Master Plan forum last year.
- HR Staff recently attended the joint Massachusetts Municipal Managers Association/ Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources Association [meeting](#) in Wrentham, MA, which featured **Psychological First Aid Training**, teaching strategies for providing initial emotional support to individuals experiencing distress after a traumatic event or a difficult situation. The meeting also featured timely updates on various legal and legislative topics affecting local governments and the public sector employment environment.

Library

- **Grant Cancellation:** The library's \$7500 grant for a preservation assessment of historical materials has been canceled due to President Trump's [Executive Order](#) eliminating the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services. Additional statewide library services are at risk.
- **Grant Received:** The library has received a \$2,000 Collection Improvement Grant from the Network of the National Library of Medicine, Region 7. We will use the funds to update our collection of health, wellness, and medical books for all ages and add Memory Kits to our [Library of Things](#).
- **Spring Planting:** Did you know there is a Seed Library at the Gaylord Memorial Library? We're participating in this year's [UMass Common Seed Project](#). You can pick up your Provider Bean seeds (and others) at Gaylord, Thursday-Saturday.
- **Book Bingo:** An all-ages, intergenerational morning of fun! Teens and adults, kids and families, are invited to play bingo and win books! Everyone wins a book to take home when you join us, on Saturday, April 26, from 10:00 - 11:00 in the library Community Room.
- **¡Bienvenidos! Kids' Beginning Spanish:** Join South Hadley High School Spanish Honor Society students to sing songs, hear stories, and do creative projects! Kids in first, second, and third grade are welcome to join on a first-come, first-served basis. [Check the calendar](#) for dates.

Planning and Conservation

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- **Routes 202/33 Corridor:** The Planning Board has begun discussion of the zoning recommendations.
- **Business A-1 Design Guidelines:** The Business A-1 zoning district was amended at Town Meeting in May 2024. Per the amendment, there is a temporary moratorium on permitting new projects until June 1, 2025 for the adoption of design guidelines. The design guidelines are under development in coordination with the design guidelines for Routes 202/33. The Planning Board is currently on schedule to meet the 6/1/25 deadline.
- **ADUs:** Chapter 255-50 amendments on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant. The new ADU law (part of the Affordable Homes Act St. 2024, c. 150, § 8) went into effect on 2/2/25 and at this time, our local bylaw is not fully in compliance with the new Regulations as promulgated under 760 CMR 71.00. The Planning Board held a public hearing on amendments to 255-50 Accessory Dwelling Units on 3/24/25, and will be sending a Report to Town Meeting for the warrant article.
- **Affordable Housing Trust:** The committee held a strategic planning session on February 27, and is working on the draft strategic plan identifying goals and actions for the Trust as well as funding sources. A bylaw to create the Trust will be sent to Town Meeting in May. One seat on the Trust Board is still open for a person currently or formerly living in Affordable Housing.
- **Sign Zoning Bylaw Amendment:** The Sign Bylaw is currently out of conformance with 1st Amendment rights, as well as has some other issues. Planning Consultant Richard Harris has prepared a detailed review and recommendations. The Planning Board will begin discussion in June with the intent to send amendments to November Town Meeting for adoption.
[Sign-Bylaw-Review-and-Recommended-Amendments](#)
- **Agricultural Uses in Zoning Bylaw Amendments:** Agricultural uses within the zoning and general bylaws, as well as Board of Health regulations, are in conflict. Planning Consultant Richard Harris has prepared a detailed review and recommendations. The Planning Board will begin discussion in June with the intent to send amendments to November Town Meeting for adoption.
<https://southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/13675/Agricultural-Uses-Review-and-Recommended-Amendments>
- **Tree Planting Program:** Spring kicks off the Shade Tree Challenge - to plant 400 trees over the next two years. This is possible by the funding from two grants: DCR's Environmental Justice Tree Planting Program is funding the first 100 trees. These will be planted in the town's two Environmental Justice Neighborhoods: in the Falls and near MHC. The remaining 300 trees are funded by EEA's Cool Corridors Grant and will be planted town-wide. Trees must be planted in the front or side yard of a property and the property owner must commit to watering the trees for the first two years. Residents can learn more and apply online.
<https://www.southhadley.org/1063/Tree-Planting-Program>

- **MVP FY26:** has submitted an application for the FY26 MVP Action Grant. This project proposed to restore Titus Pond Conservation Area, create a viewing platform for recreational use, and complete downstream design work for future culvert replacement at Mountain Ave.

Public Health

- **April is Oral Cancer awareness month:** Oral cancer, also known as [mouth cancer](#), is cancer that starts in the mouth, including the lips, tongue, gums, and inner lining of the cheeks. It's a type of head and neck cancer. Some of the main risk factors for oral cancer include tobacco use (smoking or chewing), heavy alcohol consumption, and infection with the [human papillomavirus \(HPV\)](#). Information is being posted at Town Hall, Council on Aging and the South Hadley Library - in English and Spanish. The information is also available on the Town website.
- **Behavioral Health 360:** South Hadley Health Department is investing in this software in order to provide additional resources to South Hadley residents. Regional grant funding was secured for South Hadley and additional funding was secured also for Holyoke and Chicopee Health Departments. Contract was written for the three (3) communities.
- **Hampshire HOPE (Heroin/Opioid Prevention & Education):** Met with Coordinator, Lauren Kelly to talk about opportunities for collaboration.
- **Blood Drive:** Currently working with Baystate Medical Center to sponsor a blood drive in South Hadley. This blood drive is now scheduled for May 27, 2025 from 10:00 am - 2:00 pm and will be held at the South Hadley Library. The COA will also have sign-ups.
- **Massachusetts Virtual Epidemiology Network (MAVEN); an integrated web-based disease surveillance and case management system:** Attended the Mass Department of Public Health monthly meeting.
- **Viral respiratory illness (COVID, RSV, Influenza)** is on the decline.
https://www.mass.gov/info-details/viral-respiratory-illness-reporting?_gl=1*8r8lr2*_ga*NTIxNzA0MTQ2LjE2OTUwNDc3MTM.*_ga_MCLPEGW7WM*MTczNjk3NDE2OS4xMi4xLjE3MzY5NzQxODguMC4wLjA
- **Informational Message Boards:** Message boards(10) were put together to include resources (domestic violence, mental health support, veterans hotline, Narcan, substance use hotline, etc.). These boards have been placed in the restrooms at Town Hall, COA and the Library. Information from these boards are being accessed by the public! The information most widely used are the 988 Mental Health Lifeline, Fentanyl test strips and their use, HIV information, and the Massachusetts Substance use Hotline information.
- **Mount Holyoke College Energy Center:** Site Plan reviewed and attended an on-site meeting.

- **Massachusetts Municipal Association:** Webinar on **Citizen’s (or Civics) Academy**, a program typically organized by cities/towns, designed to educate and engage residents about how local government works. This webinar introduced the program, already in place in Danvers, Pittsfield and other communities as a means to provide citizens with a deeper understanding of municipal operations, services, and decision-making processes.
- **Water Equity Summit Steering Committee:** Request by Massachusetts Rivers Alliance to be on the Steering Committee. The first meeting will be held at the end of April.
- **ADU Department of Environmental Protection seminar:** Public Health review of ADU’s with Septic Systems, will be considered “new” construction and ADU’s as rental needs to meet the [Massachusetts State Sanitary Code](#), specifically [105 CMR 410.000](#), which sets the minimum standards for housing in Massachusetts.
- **Department of Mental Health Site Board meeting:** this meeting was held at the Odyssey House in Holyoke.

Public Safety

- **SCAM:** BITCOIN SCAM AVERTED THANKS TO GOOD TIMING, AND AN ALERT CLERK. On 04/05/25 Det. Roberts was at Cumberland Farms when a clerk informed him that he thought that an elderly person was falling victim to a bitcoin scam at the ATM in the store. Det. Roberts engaged the citizen and did learn that she was about to deposit \$4000 into the machine, with the offender on the phone with her at the time! Great job to all involved!
- **Activity:** March-2025: 68 incident reports assigned, 23 arrest reports assigned. Of the 23 incidents that resulted in criminal charges, an overview include: ; Operating under influence/3; Abuse Protection Order Violation/1; Domestic A&B/1; Assault and Battery/3; Possession of Child Sexual Abuse Material/1; Failure to Stop for Police/1; Larceny/2; Motor Vehicle Offenses/10. Incidents either open or closed with no criminal charges include: Missing Person/1; Unattended Death/2; Threats/3; Fraud and Larceny/5; Sexual Assault/1; Person at Risk/2; Assault and Battery/2. [Police Logs can be found here.](#)
- **New Hire:** Officer Christian Santiago joined the South Hadley Police Department, see Human Resources notice above. Overseen by Ofc. Corey Whelihan, Officer Santiago is currently in this 16 week field officer training program.
- **Motor Vehicle Enforcement:** April is [National Distracted Driving Awareness Month](#), a time to raise awareness about the dangers of distracted driving and encourage safer driving habits, particularly in Massachusetts, where **over 17,000 crashes involving distracted drivers occurred between 2020 and 2024**. Funded by a grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety, South Hadley Police Officers will be working overtime enforcement to educate/enforce safe driving practices.

- **Protect Children from Abuse:** April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. On April 3rd the Children's Advocacy Center of Hampshire County and the Northwestern District Attorney's Office hosted a flag-raising ceremony at the South Hadley Police Department. This prevention month is held to acknowledge the vital role everyone in a community plays in working together to prevent child abuse and neglect.
- **Public Safety Day:** Save the DATE, Jun 1, 2025 at the Michael E. Smith Middle School. Several public safety partners will be in attendance. 10am.
- Prescription Drug Take Back Day: Apr 26, 2025 10:00am to 2:00pm at the South Hadley Police Department, with partners from the South Hadley Health Department, South Hadley TRIAD and the South Hadley Criminal Justice Program at the High School

Selectboard

- **Budget Task Force:** The Selectboard will be considering the creation of a budget task force with duties that include forecasting, recommending funding sources and prioritizing programs.
- **Reorganization:** The Selectboard will be voting on their reorganization after the annual town election.
- **Board and Committee members:** The Selectboard is seeking applications for various board vacancies that can be found online: <https://southhadley.org/692/Board-Vacancies>