

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

Lisa Wong
Town Administrator

Town Administrator's Monthly Report December 2025

Administration, Finance and Operations

- **Administration:**

- **Budget/Town Meeting:** Save the date for a potential Special Town meeting to discuss the budget/override on February 25, 2026.
- **Municipal Empowerment Act:** Hearings are completed. Waiting to see if any of the committees will report this out including the Joint Committee on Public Service (Sen. Oliveira is a member) or the Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government (Rep. Gomez is a member) or the Joint Committee on Revenue (Rep. Gomez is a member). The act includes
 - Raising the 30B threshold for ALL municipal purchases to \$100,000
 - Exempting snow hauling from 30B requirements to match snow removal
 - Eliminating the COMMBUYS publishing requirement
 - Codifies existing allowance for remote public meetings set to expire 6/2027
 - Update enforcement mechanisms and removal procedures for double poles
 - Provides new or expanded local option revenues including:
 - Option to increase the meals tax
 - Option to increase the lodging tax
 - Option to establish a new motor vehicle excise tax
 - Longer borrowing terms for school projects
- **Elementary School Building Project:** The committee held a tour and community meeting on Dec 11.
- **Budget Task Force:** Over 60 residents attended the first Dec 8 listening session and a second is planned for January 22 at the Senior Center. The survey has also launched on the town website and is being administered by Bridgewater State U.
- **Needs Assessment:** The town has formally kicked off the process at the Dec 12 master plan forum.
- **PVPC:** The regional planning council hosted a Municipal shared services meeting this month with many towns expressing interest. A follow-up meeting focusing on inspectional services is being planned.

- **Accounting:**
 - The department is finishing up and ready to submit the Schedule A financial report for the State.
 - The accounting department has finalized all information with the Assessors office and the tax rate recap for FY26 has been approved.
 - The department will begin preparing the journal entries for the revenue estimates.
- **Assessor:**
 - Presented at Fiscal 2026 tax classification hearing with enhanced data regarding the Residential Exemption.
 - Received Bureau of Local Accounts approval of Fiscal 2026 Town tax rate and Fire District #1 tax rate.
 - Continued work with the Town of Granby to ensure coordination surrounding Fire District #2 tax rate.
 - Associate Assessor received recertification of Massachusetts Accredited Assessor (MAA #898) designation. (2 year designation)
 - Collaborating with Administration for office support.
 - Testing the tax billing in Munis to ensure there are no software issues when processing.
 - Working with SHELD on timing for electric liens to be placed on the tax bills for January.
 - Prepared and manually balanced exemptions for board approval so they too can be placed on the January 1 bills.
 - Participation in educational opportunities regarding laws and software processes.
 - Staff is continuing work with IT to create digital exemption forms.
 - Continue to educate stakeholders on the role of the Assessors department as well as staffing and succession concerns.
 - Department staff continue on working to restore, replace, update and streamline digital data and processes.
- **Cable:**
 - Closed Captioning Funding: The director applied for and has been awarded the maximum \$35k in a municipal ADA grant to implement closed captioning. Great job Dan!
- **Collector/Treasurer**
 - Preparing to send 3rd Quarter Real Estate and Personal Property bills prior to 12/31/25 with a due date of 2/2/26.
 - Final Notices for FY25 Trash and Sewer delinquents were sent. Any outstanding amounts from FY25 not paid will be liened onto the 3rd Quarter Real Estate tax bill due on 2/2/26.

- FY26 Boat bills were issued 11/10/25 and are due 1/10/2026.
- **IT:**
 - Worked on Exemption Database replacement
 - Update Well permits
 - Update Munis for 1099 creation
 - Continue testing alternative hypervisor options

Building and Zoning

- **Liquor License Inspections:** Annual inspections are nearly complete with only 2 businesses left to inspect. Coordinating with landlords/tenants to correct any deficiencies prior to the end of December. Two remaining properties from last year that did not receive their certificate are still in non-compliance. One is currently shut down while corrections are being made.
- **Certificates on Inspection (3 families and above):** All second notices have been sent to delinquent responders. Fines have begun to accrue for any property owner which received a second notice and does not respond within 30 days (about 20 properties currently.) We are over 75% of buildings in town now compliant (from just over 10% when we started) with nearly a dozen more working through final details.
- **Problem Properties:** All notices have been resent to properties with long-standing issues (unregistered vacancies, zoning/building code violations). Fines will begin to accrue 30 days following receipt of notice. All accrued fines will be added to quarterly tax bills going forward. List available to any/all parties interested.
- **Short Term Rental:** Still awaiting state guidance as to whether they will officially modify the code to exclude any short term rental with 5 rooms or less from the sprinkler provision. Any newly registered properties which will need to comply immediately. We are investigating dozens of properties throughout the town to have visual confirmation of these properties in operation that are not in compliance with the local or state regulations. To date, no new properties have been registered with the town

Clerk

- **Nomination papers available:** Nomination papers are now available for next year's Annual Town Election scheduled for April 14, 2026. Visit southhadley.org/Elections for more information, including key dates in the election cycle and what positions are on the ballot.
- **Board of Registrar's 'Running for Local Government' Guide:** The 2025 guide to running for local government is available in the Town Clerk's office and online at southhadley.org/Elections. This guide provides an overview of South Hadley elected offices, Town Meeting and information on how to run for office in South Hadley.

- **November 2025 Special Town Meeting:**
 - Representative Homar Gomez submitted the home rule petition for an increase of liquor licenses to the Office of the Clerk of the House. Next steps will begin once the Legislature is back in session on January 7, 2026.
 - Notification of accepted laws, articles 5 and 6, were submitted to the Secretary of the Commonwealth's office.
 - Paperwork for articles 7, 9 and 10 were submitted to the Attorney General's Municipal Law Unit. Their decision is due to the Town by February 16, 2026.
- **Census:** Annual census forms will be mailed to every residence in January 2026. Returning the census keeps registered voters on the active voter list. The data is also used for grant applications, creating the annual street list, helping the school district project upcoming enrollment, and connecting veterans and surviving spouses with our Veterans Agent. Massachusetts is the only state in the nation that conducts a mandatory annual municipal census.
- **Dog Licenses:** Dog License renewal season begins January 1, 2026 and ends March 31, 2026. Dogs registered after March 31, 2026 are subject to a \$5.00 late fee. All dogs over 6 months old residing in the Town of South Hadley must be licensed annually. Owners who registered their dogs in 2025 and have an OpenGov account will receive email reminders to renew their license between January and March. The annual census will have a tear off paper application residents can also use to register their dogs. Residents can register their dog(s) after January 1 online:
<https://southhadleyma.portal.opengov.com/categories/1084/record-types/6425>
- **Petitions for 2026 & 2028 ballot questions:** December 3rd was the deadline for petitioners to submit certified signatures to the Secretary of the Commonwealth. Any petitions that are determined to contain a sufficient number of certified signatures will be sent by the Secretary's office to the Massachusetts Legislature in January. If the Legislature does not pass an initiative through the normal legislative process by May 5, 2026, petitioners can begin collecting the additional 12,429 needed to place the question on the November 3, 2026 State Election ballot.

Department of Public Works

- **Center/Warner/Graves Project::** Drainage completely installed on Graves Street. Road paved for winter. Tree work on Graves completed, Warner tree work scheduled. Granite curbing install week of 12/8 (weather permitting)
- **Buttery Brook Park:** Project completed, except for pickleball court issue: engineering contract awarded to Levesque; contract in progress.. Spring 2026 construction.
- **Buttery Brook Park:** Santa's Land: in progress 12/13-12/15 and 12/20-12/23.
- **Main Street TIP Project:** MassDOT in review of utility and right of way plans.

- **DPW:** Stanton Avenue drainage install; easement approved with MHC. Construction spring 2026.
- **RT 33 paving:** Paving and temporary road markings in place. Spring 2026, recessed markings and solar x-walk stanchion install, to complete project..
- **WWTP:** Plant backflow repair, completed.
- **WWTP:** Security gate, mechanical improvements 90% completed.
- **WWTP:** Channel grinder replacement in progress: approved capital funding enterprise funds.
- **Main Street pump station permanent by-pass project:** Bypass valves and taps completed. Accessories work in progress.
- **WWTP: CWMP:** Draft presented to Town; in review status to mark up and finalize.
- **2025/26 Sidewalk Program:** new sidewalk installations: plans in progress for new installations on : Park Street, Brainerd Street, Hartford Street, Lathrop Street, bidding/oversight/construction as funding allows. DPW removal of existing sidewalks: Upper Prospect Street, Bombardier Street, Douglas Street, Berwyn Street, Camden Street.
- **Rt. 116 brick sidewalk lighting upgrades:** in review with lighting consultant/engineers. Will provide a safer lighting environment.
- **NEW: RRFB installs:** ADA ramps completed; bases installed; pole install and solar/mechanical installs to be completed by January 15, 2026.
- **Ledges cart paths:** Paving completed on holes 2,3,4,9.

Emergency Management

- **Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA):** To provide for future matriculation into senior emergency management positions, the South Hadley Emergency Management Director is working with MEMA to put together workshops that will focus on upskilling first responders.
- **Drones:** Drone team (PD, FD1 & 2) continues to train on the drones. The Regional Drone Team will be participating in an exercise with MHC this month.
- **Warming Shelters - Times and Locations/Winter Storm Safety Guidance:** Educational materials were sent out on shelter time and locations and on winter storm preparation for before, during and after.
- **Message Boards:** Message boards placed by DPW at Fire Districts with Holiday Safety Messaging.

Facilities

- **COA:** Storage shed power and lighting is complete

- **Ledges:** HVAC replacement and building envelope sealing is scheduled and awaiting equipment delivery
- **MS:** The elevator modernization project has delays in shipping which may push the project to February break. The building automation system replacement is underway.
- **HS:** Ground fault condition in the fire alarm system has been located and will be repaired on 12/29. HVAC repairs ongoing.
- **PD:** Camera system should be out to bid in January

Human Services

- **Recreation:**
 - Basketball practices started 12/1. Wrestling to start next week.
 - NYC Bus Trip on December 13.
 - Working on band shell and pickleball courts at Buttery Brook Park w/ design firms.
 - Middle School Ski/Snowboard has a few remaining spaces.
 - Santa Land at Buttery Brook Park December 11th-14th & December 18th-21st from 5-7pm.
 - Working on the summer schedule now!
- **Veterans:**
 - Turkey and food box delivered to 10 veterans and dependents enrolled in Massachusetts Chapter 115 Veterans program on Saturday Nov 22.
- **Council on Aging:**
 - If you stop by the COA, make sure to meet our new Programs Coordinator, Brandon Dumas.
 - Open Enrollment for Medicare has now ended. There were additional plan cuts by some of the larger insurance companies and individuals may still be looking for guidance on these plans. The COA has a volunteer SHINE counselor at the Center every other Monday.
 - We are continuing to process Fuel Assistance applications as the season started November 1 and runs through April 30, 2026.
 - Many individuals are still facing food insecurity and with food prices continuing to rise, even more people are at risk. The COA is always accepting non-perishable and unexpired food donations in the front foyer of the Center. These items are brought to the Food Pantry at Neighbors Helping Neighbors every week.
 - The COA once again has a Warming Tree in the cafe area. This tree is used to collect donations of unused, handmade or store bought items (ex. Gloves, hats, scarves, blankets, etc.) that provide warmth during the cold winter months. All items collected

between now and the first week of January will be brought to Neighbors Helping Neighbors to be given out to recipients.

- On Christmas Eve, the Council on Aging will host a holiday breakfast for members. Our guest servers will be Lisa Wong and Danielle Rossoni (Volunteer Coordinator/Receptionist). We are looking forward to spreading the holiday cheer!

Human Resources

- **Hiring/Staffing:**

- Senior Tax Credit Workers: Over 10 applications were received for the Senior Tax Credit Work program for the work session starting 1/1/26. The HR Department will be working on making placements with departments over the next couple weeks and will notify applicants accordingly. Thanks to all those who applied!
- For a list of open positions and how to apply, visit <https://southhadley.org/jobs>

- **Insurance/Benefits:** Retirees enrolled in Town-sponsored Medicare coverage will see new rates for coverage effective 1/1/26 applied to their pension checks in the month of December. Retirees with questions can contact GCongram@SouthHadleyMA.gov or HR@SouthHadleyMA.gov. Visit [the HR Department page](#) for more information including new rates and more.

Library

- **State Certification:** South Hadley has maintained certification by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners for FY26. This includes an initial State Aid Award to Public Libraries in the amount of \$32,185.56 and retaining interlibrary loan privileges from across the state.
- **Busy Saturday:** Both libraries were open the Saturday after Thanksgiving and had heavy foot traffic from regulars and visitors. Staff checked out 380 items in 3.5 hours and a children's music program at SHPL had over 30 people dancing and stomping.
- **December Programs:** Upcoming programs include [Wassail! A Victorian Holiday](#) on 12/17, all ages [Book Bingo](#) on 12/23, and families with young children can countdown the new year at a reasonable hour with [Happy Noon Year](#) on 12/31.
- **Holiday Schedule:** *Christmas* (Wednesday 12/24 closing at 1:00; Thursday 12/25 closed both buildings, Friday-Saturday 12/26-27 open normal hours at SHPL and GML). *New Years* (Wednesday 1/31 closing at 6:00; Thursday 1/1/26 closed both buildings; Friday-Saturday 1/2-3 normal hours at SHPL and GML)

Planning and Conservation

- **Routes 202/33 Corridor Rezoning:** Passed by Town Meeting exceeding a $\frac{2}{3}$ vote!! Bylaws submitted to AG's Office for review.

- **Master Plan Annual Forum** - Friday 12/12/25 - Register [HERE](#)
- **Sign Zoning Bylaw Amendment:** The Planning Board will work on this over the winter for possible submission for May Town Meeting.
- **Agricultural Uses in Zoning Bylaw Amendments:** The Planning Board will continue to work on this over the winter for possible submission for May Town Meeting. An advisory committee is being formed as well.
- **Floodplain Bylaw Update:** The Town is required to update their Floodplain Bylaw. The Planning Board will begin work on this and attempt to get it to Town Meeting in May 2026.
- **Subdivision Regulations Update:** The Planning Board will finalize and adopt updates this winter.
- **Affordable Housing Trust:** The first AHT board meeting is 12/4/25.
- **Tree Planting Program:** The Shade Tree Challenge is accepting applications on a rolling basis from now until June 2026.
<https://www.southhadley.org/1063/Tree-Planting-Program>
- **Planning Board Permit Applications:** Current applications under review by the Planning Board may be viewed online: [Permit Applications | South Hadley, MA - Official Website](#)
- **Conservation Commission Permit Applications:** Current applications under review by the Conservation Commission may be viewed online here: [Project Plans | South Hadley, MA - Official Website](#)
- **Redevelopment Authority:** The October edition of the Falls Digest can be viewed online: [SH redevelopment nl 929](#) ; Information about how to make a donation to the Frank DeToma South Hadley Falls Memorial Fund can be viewed here: [Frank DeToma South Hadley Falls Memorial Fund | South Hadley, MA - Official Website](#) ; Applications are being accepted for the FallsBusiness Improvement Grants [Falls Business Improvement Grant | South Hadley, MA - Official Website](#)

Public Health

- **Diabetes Awareness:** Jennifer Jernigan, Assistant Director, gave a diabetes awareness presentation complemented by Dr. Walter Wolf's footcare insights, at the COA on November 20th. A variety of educational materials were provided: Diabetes Management Guides, Meal Planning Resources, Blood Sugar Monitoring Tools, Exercise Recommendations, Footcare Guidelines, Long-term Complication Awareness, etc.
- **Impaired Driving and Medication Management Presentation:** We are organizing a presentation on an impaired driving and medication management along with a Harm

Reduction Presentation (from Tapestry) for the COA, featuring an engaging activity with “impairment goggles”.

- **Pilot Project:** The Health Department has been working with Abigail Jeyaraj, a recent Master of Public Health (MPH) graduate to address the chronic health issue of Asthma. We are working on a Pilot Project, creating a survey and providing air purifiers to a select group of families whose youth are affected by this chronic illness. Also, we are working together with Yale (air sensors), the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and Mt. Holyoke College. We hope to develop community outreach programs, increase awareness about asthma triggers, and provide resources for better management.
- **Budget Task Force meeting:** Director met with Budget Task Force and discussed the various grants and regional collaborative, as well as coverage for animal control, emergency management and nursing.
- **Health Department Drop-in:** The Health Department is hosting a drop-in hour at the South Hadley Public Library on the third Monday of each month to give residents the opportunity to discuss their concerns, hear about new initiatives and learn about programs and services available.
- **Triad Stockings:** We purchased lip balm and sanitizer for the Triad Stockings and actively participated in the stuffing process to support this initiative.
- **BIOBOT:** Biobot wastewater testing started in November for
High Risk Substances (HRS): Cocaine, Fentanyl, Nicotine, Methamphetamine, Xylazine, Ketamine, Metedomidine, Alprazolam (Xanax)
Substance Use Disorder Treatment (SUD): Naloxone, Buprenorphine, Methadone
Opioids: Heroin, Morphine, Oxycodone, Acetyl fentanyl, Carfentanil, Codeine, Dihydrocodeine, Hydromorphone, Hydrocodone, Oxymorphone, Sufentanil, Tianeptine, Tramadol, Para-fluorofentanyl
- **NOISOME TRADE Regulation:** A noisome trade regulation was written and approved by the board of health and regulated under M.G.L. c. 111 s 143: the core law empowering local Boards of Health (BOH) to control trades emitting noisome odors or harming health/property.
- **NITROUS OXIDE Regulation:** A Nitrous Oxide Regulation was written and approved by the board of health. This regulation aims to reduce substance misuse, prevent associated health consequences, and support broader public health efforts in harm reduction.

OPIOID -

- **School Engagement:** Health Department tabled at several school district events for students and families to share resources related to mental health, substance use prevention and recovery support, and other family health information. Increasing local mental health and substance use support, recovery, and harm reduction information available at the South Hadley Health Department.
- **Meeting with SHHS Adjustment Counselor and Graduate Intern:** to review progress on a vaping cessation and support group that was piloted at the high school this fall and identified opportunities for collaboration.

- **Prevention Needs Assessment Survey 2025 Data:** Summary shared with facilitator of Peer Leaders at SHHS with invitation to review to inform areas of collaboration or programming this year.

Public Safety

- **Activity:** In November, Police personnel conducted investigations for 56 incident reports, and Dispatch personnel handled 1,808 calls for service. A detailed call summary can be [found here](#). Summary of reported incidents: Sex Offense – 3 | Larceny or Fraud (Felony) – 7 | Assault & Battery – 2 | Property Destruction (Felony) – 5 | Unattended Death – 1 | Welfare Check/Person at Risk/Involuntary Hospitalization – 5 | Burglary – 5 | Assault – 1 | Bylaw Citations – 3 | Motor Vehicle Incidents – 6 |
 A total of 29 individuals were criminally charged during the month of November.
 Summary of offenses charged: Abuse Prevention Order Violation –2 | Domestic Assault & Battery – 2 | Motor Vehicle Offenses – 8 | Warrant Arrests – 1 | Assault & Battery – 3 | Trespass – 1 | Operating Under the Influence – 6 | Reckless Endangerment of a Child – 2 | Burglary – 1 | Shoplifting – 1 | Disorderly Conduct – 1 | Vandalism – 1 |
- **Recruitment:** The South Hadley Police is accepting applications for a lateral transfer of a sworn police officer. [The hiring process is outlined here](#).
- **Community Outreach:** SHPD will be hosting a toy and food drive to support Neighbors Helping Neighbors. Drop off your unwrapped gift or non perishable food item by 12/20/25. The earlier the better!
- **Safety Reminder:** From the 1st snow storm of the season on 12/02/25, several sidewalks did not have the sidewalk shovelled and numerous bylaw tickets were issued. The South Hadley Town Bylaw § 315-2.3 requires the removal of snow from sidewalks. The snow must be removed within twenty-four (24) hours after a snowfall, a tenant or occupant (and if no tenant or occupant, the owner) of property abutting a public way shall remove the snow from the sidewalk(s) abutting such property. Failure to remove snow could result in a fine of \$100 each day the snow is not removed.
 § 315-2.4 Placement of snow on public streets.No person shall shovel, plow, blow, or otherwise place snow onto any public street. Any person found violating any subsection of this section may be subject to a fine not to exceed \$300.
- **Chief's Community Office Hours:** [Police Chief Jennifer Gundersen](#) will hold the following office hours for community members to stop by and share questions, concerns, or suggestions:
 December 16, 2025: 10:15 a.m–12:00 p.m. –*Loomis Village*
 December 22, 2025: 10:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m. – *Council on Aging*