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Town Administrator

Town Administrator's Monthly Report
October 2025

Administration, Finance and Operations

● **Administration:**

- **Superintendent Swearing In:** There will be a swearing in ceremony for the School Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent on Wednesday, October 29 at 6pm at the Senior Center. All are welcome!
- **Budget/Town Meeting:** A Special Town Meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 5 at 6pm at the High School to review financial articles and bylaw changes. The Selectboard will vote on the warrant at their October 21 meeting.
- **Funding:** The MMA recently released a Fiscal Crisis Report outlining the problem facing towns. www.mma.org/new-report-from-mma-documents-a-fiscal-crisis-in-cities-towns. A second report focusing on ideas and solutions will be available in November.
- **Elementary School Building Project:** The Town is working with the designing on educational and space planning, site options=. Members of the committee are also touring similar projects in Ludlow and Easthampton. The third workshop for educational visioning will take place in person from 3:00-6:00 PM on Thursday, October 23 , 2025, and will explore:
 - • Guiding Principles for the design of the renovated and/or new facility
 - • Blue Sky Ideas for the design of the renovated and/or new facility
 - • Bubble Diagramming of conceptual design ideas for the renovated or new facilityPlease contact Kiesha Keitt at kjkeitt@shschools.com if you would like more info.
- **Budget Task Force:** The group has formed two subcommittees - finance and communication outreach in addition to their regular meetings held every other Monday.
- **Health Insurance:** The Town is working on a survey to gather data on the extent of the problems regarding insurance costs. The TA also attended a recent forum on the topic. www.mma.org/mma-forum-explores-health-cost-drivers-possible-remedies
- **Eversource:** The TA met the new community rep this month. Unfortunately the winter rate for gas will go up on Nov 1. The average total monthly bill increase is 17% or \$48.54 for a customer using 127 therms. www.eversource.com

- **Accounting:**

○ Free Cash: The Town was certified:	General Fund	\$5,584,552.00
	Ledges	\$277,120.00
	Waste water	\$1,749,838.00
	Landfill	\$732,653.00

- **Assessor:**

- Completed data entry of Fiscal 2026 property changes.
- Working on analysis reports for interim year valuation adjustments and finalization of Fiscal 2026 assessments.
- Working towards finalizing Fiscal 2026 new growth numbers and reporting.
- The Associate Assessor received a congratulatory letter from Senator Oliveira on her receipt of the Massachusetts Association of Assessing Officers Past President's Award!
- Worked with Fire District #2 on release of excess overlay for use at their Special District Meeting as a funding source.
- Staff working on follow up correspondence for Fiscal 2026 exemption applications that have not been received to date.
- Staff is currently processing the Fiscal 2026 boat excise commitment which will be issued on or about November 10th.
- Continue educating 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:**

- Studio Director attended TRIAD meeting to offer assistance in promoting their work.
- Attended meeting at Buttery Brook Park to identify livestreaming possibilities and help plan network infrastructure
- Assisted High School in identifying equipment for a grant opportunity
- Working with ATC to finalize Intercom Project at High School
- Getting quotes together to address audio system for hybrid meetings at Senior Center Multi-Purpose Room and will have an update within the next month
- Cable staff has continued to cover municipal meetings and working on editing Showcase South Hadley footage as well as the Q&A from "The Town with the Band" Documentary

- **IT:**

- Worked on Wifi Plan for BBP
- Continued to work on DR plan (offsite)
- Attended webinars related to municipal AI advantages.

Building and Zoning

- **Liquor License Inspections:** Notices to be sent to remind all certificate holders to reapply. Coordinate with the fire departments to schedule all inspections well before the deadline to ensure time to correct any deficiencies. Two remaining properties from last year that did not receive their certificate.
- **Certificates on Inspection (3 families and above):** Notices continue going out to non-responders (more than 90 days with no response) from the initial notice. We are approaching 75% of buildings in town now compliant (from just over 10% when we started) with numerous more close to compliance.
- **Problem Properties:** Resending all notices to properties with long-standing issues (unregistered vacancies, zoning/building code violations) throughout town. Fines will begin to accrue 30 days following receipt of notice. All accrued fines will be added to quarterly tax bills going forward.
- **Short Term Rental:** Awaiting 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.

Clerk

- **Learn About Running for Local Office:** Please join the South Hadley Board of Registrars on Thursday, October 23rd, from 6-8 pm in the Community Room at the South Hadley Public Library (2 Canal Street, South Hadley, MA) to learn more about how the town election and nomination processes work.
- **Town Meeting:** Several precincts have begun meeting leading up to town meeting. Check the website or contact the Town Administrator for more information. Precincts A and B may be hosting elections at 5:15pm on November 5 directly before town meeting for open seats.

Collector/Treasurer

- 2nd Qtr Real Estate, Personal Property and Sewer bills were mailed on October 1st. Real Estate and Personal Property are due on Monday, November 3rd. Sewer bills are due Monday, November 17th.

Department of Public Works

- **Center/Warner/Grave:** Project award to Castello by Selectboard 10/7/25. Contractor Notice of Award issued. Pre Construction meeting: October 2025. Hoping to get new drainage installed before winter.

- **Pearl Street:** Pearl Street closed to through traffic: road opening by October 31. Project in final stages of roadway reconstruction: guardrail (10/27), fence repairs, fine grading, erosion control, loam and seed, paving (10/20), line striping left.
- **Buttery Brook Park:** Project completed, except for pickleball court issue: engineering quotes in progress for new design. Spring 2026 construction.
- **Main Street TIP Project:** 2025 TEC updated and submitted; 25% REV3 submittal due from Tighe and Bond to MassDOT; Easement review in progress by MassDOT; Design Public Hearing date TBA. February 2027 advertising date. DPW/Tighe and Bond meeting on 9/30/25: to finalize correct town ownership names (titles) for properties within the project. Meeting 10/3/25 between Town and State Rep to try to move this project along and keep it on the February 2027 bid date. Meeting with DPW/T&B/DOT 10/9: punch list for review for 25% to DPH: utility pole move confirms, put on Right of Way plans, review by DOT, utility sight walk ASAP.
- **DPW:** Stanton Avenue drainage install; easement approved with MHC. Construction fall 2025.
- **Fall road paving:** Collegeview Heights/Greenwood Lane/Silver Street/Edison Drive/Fairview Street/Fulton Street/Easy Street/New Ludlow Road: ALL PAVING COMPLETED 10/9/25. Line Striping for Silver and New Ludlow this Fall.
- **RT 33 paving:** Waiting on MassDOT Boston, signatures on contract between state and Town: October 2025 construction expected. MassDOT will mill, adjust all structures, upgrade ADA transitions, repave, and install new recessed traffic markings, as well as install 2 solar X-walk crossing points as part of their Municipal Pavement Program, this fall. This project will be fully funded by MassDOT, and no Town money will be needed: Old Lyman Road to state easement line near Hollywood Street.
- **WWTP:** Security gate, mechanical improvements 90% completed. CWMP in progress.
- **Main Street pump station permanent by-pass project:** mobilization and start September 2025. Pipe sizes confirmed with excavation, parts ordered.
- **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.
- **Fall yard waste curbside collection:** November 3-29, on your collection day.
- **Rt. 116 brick sidewalk lighting upgrades:** in review with lighting consultant/engineers. Will provide a safer lighting environment.
- **NEW: RRFB installs:** A MassDOT grant has provided South Hadley with (4) sets of Solar Crosswalk lighted stanchions, to be installed by DPW in the following locations: Mosier School to MESMS, Park Street to Mosier Street, Brainerd Street to Lyman Street, and Main Street from Pleasant Street to the Beechgrounds. November 2025 installs expected.

Emergency Management

- **Tabletop Exercise:** Holyoke Gas & Electric sponsored a tabletop exercise designed to enhance preparedness and response strategies in the event of a dam breach within the region. This initiative brought together various communities, emergency services, and stakeholders to engage in proactive discussions. Participants (South Hadley EMD, FDistrict #1, MEMA, National Weather Service, Holyoke, Chicopee, Springfield EMS/Fire/PD) analyzed regional vulnerabilities and explored coordinated response efforts.
- **Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA):** South Hadley Emergency Responders will be participating in a State-wide Tabletop Exercise sponsored by MEMA on October 22nd. The scenario will be an extreme ice event in South Hadley.
- **Drones:** Two new drones were purchased for indoor response. Working with the Regional Drone Team to allow the South Hadley team to all be participants in the Regional Response Team.
- **MEMA quarterly meeting:** At the quarterly meeting, it was announced that the yearly Emergency Management Preparedness Grant(EMPG) funding has been cut substantially for Massachusetts. These grants may not go to the individual towns/cities but what funding is available may be used on a regional basis.

Facilities

- **COA:** Heat pump installed in the kitchen to provide cooling. Pad is prepped and are awaiting delivery of a new storage shed.
- **Ledges:** The floor for the driving range shed has been replaced. HVAC replacement and building envelope sealing will be done in the coming months.
- **MS:** The elevator modernization project will be done over the Christmas break. The building automation system replacement is underway.
- **Library:** Roof top unit fan replacement is scheduled for October 18-19th
- **PD:** Extensive repairs completed for the air handler and exhaust fans
- **Town Hall:** heat pump installation for school department second floor is complete

Human Services

- **Recreation:**
 - Fall activities are all up and running.
 - Planning for winter programs and registrations will open for basketball and wrestling now open.
 - NYC Bus Trip on December 13.
 - Working on band shell and pickleball courts at BATTERY BROOK PARK.

- Middle School Ski/Snowboard registrations open soon.
- **Veterans:**
 - Veterans Day Breakfast: Friday Nov 7 0830 at the COA
 - Veterans Day Grave Flagging: Preliminary Installation of flags from 1 Nov to Nov 10 then removal of flags from Nov 15 to be completed by weekend before Thanksgiving. Still trying to coordinate with cemeteries. Will be volunteer based on volunteers schedule.
 - Veterans Day Ceremony - Town Hall TBD still in planning stages.
 - Veterans Council - as of a week ago puts us 4 of 7 positions filled show we can start official meetings.
 - Clearing of dirt and grass and edging of veterans flat ground markers completed at South Hadley Falls (Village) Cemetery completed by senior tax work off.
- **Council on Aging:**
 - The COA continues to seek a qualified Programs Coordinator to fill the open position.
 - Open Enrollment will be running October 15 - December 7. All appointments at the COA have been filled for the Open Enrollment Period. For appointments, individuals are recommended to contact the Regional SHINE office at 413-750-2893 or call 1-800-Medicare directly to discuss plan availability.
 - Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS) recently sent out letters to participants who are on a very popular PPO plan stating that they would lose their plan coverage as of December 15. This is affecting 44,000 Massachusetts consumers. BCBS is requiring these individuals to call them directly to request to be placed into a comparable plan. This is causing a severe lack of SHINE appointments state-wide for individuals needing information regarding plan options. For anyone who receives this letter, they are recommended to contact BCBS directly to further discuss their plan options.
 - Fuel Assistance season is also starting November 1. Individuals who received benefits during the 2024/2025 season should already be receiving their recertification packet. While this program is not funded in the proposed Federal budget, the Fuel Assistance program has instructed us to move forward with recertifications and new applications as well. The program has remaining funds that will be applied where possible. Any further assistance will be determined once the budget is finalized.
 - The COA has partnered with the UMass Amherst Nurses to provide a new monthly series of educational programming providing support for dementia caregivers. The first meeting will take place on Thursday, November 20 at 1 pm. Space is limited.
 - TRIAD will be delivering Sand for Seniors again this year. Older adults can contact the COA's Welcome Desk to sign up to receive a delivery by November 17. Delivery is anticipated to take place on November 25, 2025.

Human Resources

- **Hiring/Staffing:**
 - Now hiring! The Council on Aging is seeking candidates for Program Coordinator to help plan, organize and coordinate daily activities, programs and special events at the Senior Center. Help spread the word and interested candidates are encouraged to apply at: <https://www.southhadley.org/Jobs.aspx?JobID=171>
 - For a list of open positions and how to apply, visit <https://southhadley.org/jobs>
- **Insurance/Benefits:** October 1st increases to employee health insurance began being deducted in payroll issued to employees in September. While the Special Open Enrollment period has closed, subscribers of town health insurance should note that voluntary terminations are permitted at any time throughout the year, and to do so please contact GCongram@SouthHadleyMA.gov or HR@SouthHadleyMA.gov.
- **Professional Development:** Town HR staff attended the Massachusetts Municipal Human Resources Association (MMHR) annual fall conference on September 18-19 in Springfield. Sessions included legislative updates, strategies for inclusive recruitment, strategies on employee wellness and morale, cooling hostility, and establishing employee resources groups.

Library

- **New Website:** A [revamped library website](#) was rolled out in early October, combining features previously found on multiple sites such as the homepage, library catalog, and event calendar.
- **MHC Outreach:** Adult Services Librarians Sarah Courtney and Desiree Smelcer visited the Mount Holyoke College Library during Banned Books Week to promote the library and register students for library cards.
- **Genealogy Series:** Genealogist Dave Robison will lead a two-part genealogy series over two Wednesdays in November. The class on 11/5 will cover [Understanding FamilySearch](#) while the 11/12 session is about [How to Begin Your Genealogy Search](#).
- **Poop Museum, Visit #2:** Last year's visit from the Poop Museum drew a standing room only crowd of families. On 11/8, Susie from [The Poop Museum is back](#) to tell us even more about the scoop on poop - don't miss this hilarious and fun event where solid science meets scatological silliness!

Planning and Conservation

- **Town Meeting:** The Planning Board has issued the Report to Town Meeting for the Route 202/33 Corridor rezoning:

southhadley.org/DocumentCenter/View/14421/Planning-Board-Report-to-Town-Meeting---w-All-Appendices

- **Routes 202/33 Corridor:** The Planning Board held a public information session about the final proposed zoning bylaw on Monday, 10/20 from 5-6pm at the Senior Center.
[Route 202 & 33 Corridor Re-Zoning | South Hadley, MA - Official Website.](#)
- **Sign Zoning Bylaw Amendment:** The Planning Board has withdrawn this from consideration for November Town Meeting and will continue to 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 Attorney General has approved the Trust Bylaw approved at Town Meeting in May 2025. The Selectboard is currently appointing Trust members.
- **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 Falls Business Improvement Grants [Falls Business Improvement Grant | South Hadley, MA - Official Website](#)
- **Master Plan Annual Forum:** Save the Date - Friday 12/12/25 - registration and details to come soon.

Public Health

- **Vaccine Clinic:** The Health Department's **Drive-thru vaccine clinic** will be held on **October 15, 2025 from 2:00 pm - 6:00 pm at Beers & Story**, 646 Newton Street, South Hadley.

Vaccines available: Influenza-High Dose (65+), Influenza- Trivalent, Covid-19(12+), Pevnar 20, TDAP, Shingrix, RSV, Hep-B, and Pneumovax 23.

- **Blood Drive:** **Blood Drive** is being provided by Baystate Medical Center and the South Hadley Health Department on October 20th, which is being held at the South Hadley Library from 10:00am - 2:00pm. To pre-register, please contact Fiona Cioch - email: fcioch@southhadley.ma.gov or call (413) 887-8008. Walk-ins are welcome!!
- **Internship:** The Health Department will be working with Rev. Tanya Wallace from the Human Rights Commission and a recent Master of Public Health (MPH) graduate from Texas to address the chronic health issue of Asthma. The frequency and intensity of wildfires have escalated due to climate change, causing poor air quality and significantly aggravating asthma. Working together, we hope to develop community outreach programs, increase awareness about asthma triggers, and provide resources for better management.
- **Rental Housing Seminar:** The Health Department hosted a seminar for landlords at the South Hadley Public Library, emphasizing the importance of compliance with current housing codes and to talk about the challenges of property management in today's housing landscape. Attendees were provided with an overview of essential housing codes, which govern aspects such as safety, sanitation and tenants rights. Landlords were able to pose questions and engage directly with health department officials.
- **Tapestry Mobile Unit:** The Health Department arranged for the Tapestry Mobile Unit to be set up at the South Hadley Library on October 1, 2025 from 11:00am - 2:00pm. Tapestry Health operates a Mobile Harm Reduction & Health Clinic van that provides services such as STI, HIV, and Hep C testing, treatment and education, overdose prevention training and supplies(like Narcan), Medical services such as blood pressure and blood sugar checks, wound care and referrals to medical specialist and treatment programs. **You can call or text (413) 270-3277 to arrange for in-home services** such as syringe delivery and pickup, testing, narcan training & delivery, safer sex and injection supplies.
- **Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD):** The Health Department is providing educational materials and a seasonal affective disorder light to the South Hadley Public Library and the South Hadley Council on Aging. Seasonal affective disorder is a type of depression that typically occurs during the fall/winter months when daylight hours are shorter. It manifests through symptoms such as fatigue, irritability, a persistent sense of hopelessness/negativity, low energy. By providing educational materials, the Health Department aims to raise awareness of SAD, helping community members recognize its symptoms and understand its implications. Light therapy has been shown to alleviate symptoms by compensating for the lack of natural sunlight during the darker months.

- **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.
- **Lunch & Learn:** The Health Department is working with the Council on Aging to provide talks on topics such as impaired driving and medication management, harm reduction, diabetes awareness.

Public Safety

- **Activity:** In September, Police personnel conducted investigations for 56 incident reports, and Dispatch personnel handled 1,893 calls for service. A summary of reported incidents includes: Sex Offense – 2; Larceny or Fraud (Felony) – 8; Assault & Battery – 1; Property Destruction (Felony) – 5; Threats – 4; Unattended Death – 1; Harassment – 2; Missing Person – 2
- A total of 17 individuals were criminally charged during the month. Summary of offenses charged includes: Abuse Prevention Order Violation – 1; Domestic Assault & Battery – 1; Motor Vehicle Offenses – 7; Warrant Arrests – 2; Assault & Battery with a Dangerous Weapon – 1; Assault & Battery on a Police Officer – 1
- **School Safety:** In partnership with the South Hadley Fire Districts and School Department, the School Resource Officers Josh Helems (SHHS/Skala) and Ray Faginski (MESMS/Mosier) conducted lockdown drills at all South Hadley schools during September.
- **Domestic Violence Awareness Month:** [October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month](#). Those experiencing violence can contact the South Hadley Police Department for help. During Fiscal Year 2025, officers responded to 109 domestic violence calls, compared to 139 calls in Fiscal Year 2024. While the number of calls has decreased, domestic violence remains a serious and ongoing concern—both for community members and for the officers who respond. SHPD continues to work closely with community partners to ensure survivors have access to the support and resources they need. [Safe Passage](#) is a local organization available to assist survivors of domestic violence.
- **Drug Take Back Day:** Join us for Drug Take Back Day on Saturday, October 25, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the South Hadley Police Department. This will be a drive-through event held behind the police station—no need to leave your vehicle, as volunteers will assist with collection. We are collecting unwanted medications only. Medicines can remain in their original containers. Please note: No liquids, syringes, IV equipment, or chemotherapy drugs will be accepted. We will accept prescription and non-prescription drugs, vitamins, and veterinary medications.
- On September 28th, Officer Alexandria Cebula delivered a presentation to members of St. Patrick's Church on the threat and prevalence of human trafficking within the local community and throughout the region. The presentation aimed to raise awareness, enhance community vigilance, and provide resources for recognizing and reporting suspected trafficking activity.

- **Chief's Community Office Hours:** [Police Chief Jennifer Gundersen](#) and Town Administrator Lisa Wong will hold the following office hours for community members to stop by and share questions, concerns, or suggestions:
 - October 14: 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. – *Lathrop Village* (with Town Administrator Lisa Wong)
 - October 24: 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. – *Council on Aging*
 - October 27: 5:00 p.m.–6:30 p.m. – *Public Library*
 - October 31: 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. – *Newton Manor* (with Town Administrator Lisa Wong)