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Town Administrator

***Town Administrator's Monthly Report
January 2025 - supplemental***

Administration, Finance and Operations

- **Administration:**
 - **Budget:** The state announced a revenue growth forecast of 2.2% for FY26. The Governor's budget will be filed by January 22.
 - **Chamber:** The TA was invited to be the keynote speaker at the recent Chamber dinner.
- **Assessor:**
 - 7,606 property record cards have been uploaded to the digital mapping platform displaying the fiscal 2025 data.
 - Still working on updating the Assessors webpages with Fiscal 2025 information now that the property record cards are completed.
 - Payment in lieu of tax (PILOT) letters have been issued for the town to three(3) entities totaling \$60,433.73 (Town portion).
 - Educating folks on assessments, taxes and correlation with budgeting and town meetings.
 - The office has received the first commitment of 2025 motor vehicle excise with bills anticipated to be issued mid-March.

Building and Zoning

- **Short Term Rentals:** Departments working together to try and ensure all active short-term rentals in South Hadley are properly registered as required under the Zoning Bylaw. Notices to all parties not in compliance will be sent starting the week of 1/27.
- **Liquor License Inspections:** Three buildings still have remaining issues to address before certificates of inspection will be issued.
- **Certificates on Inspection (3 families and above):** Mailings have started to dozens of property owners currently in non-compliance with state law. As of the start of our mailings there are more than 140 in non-compliance.
- **ADUs:** Public comment period has closed. First public hearings held on 1/10 with at least one more to be scheduled to try and finalize guidance prior to the February 2nd effective date.

Clerk

- **Annual Census:** The census will go out by the end of January. Dog licenses can be mailed, completed online or in person.
- **Town Election:** The last day to obtain nomination papers is February 13, 2025 at 5pm and the last day to submit papers is February 18, 2025 at 5pm.

DPW

- **Center/Warner/Grave:** Professional services agreement with PVPC approved. Working on RFQ for engineer construction manager.
- **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. Bid opening 1/29/25.
- **Buttery Brook Park:** Ongoing work weather permitting. Going out to bid for construction.
- **Trash/Recycling Carts:** Working on resident mailer information for distribution. June 2025 assembly and distribution by contractor.
- **Main Street TIP Project:** Expected to be put out to bid for construction in February 2026.
- **Morgan Street Bridge:** grant application due February 1: MassDOT Small Bridge Program
- **DPW:** Stanton Avenue drainage install; easement in progress with MHC.

Facilities

- **High School:** The second phase of the building automation project is in progress and mechanical repairs performed as they arise. Bids for the ADA pathway will be due in February.
- **MEMS:** Recommended repairs from the recent elevator inspection have been completed.
- **Ledges:** Tree maintenance along the course has begun. Parts have been ordered to perform the tee box irrigation repairs.
- **Library:** Circulation desk area carpet to be installed in February.
- **WWTP:** Roof replacements for two buildings at the treatment plant are still in progress.
- **COA:** Emergency lighting inverter replacement and automated lighting system repairs in progress.
- **Town:** Applied for state grant to install EV charging stations in the Falls district of Town.

Human Services

- **Recreation:** Ledges RFPs were rejected due to being over budget. An RFQ has been released and is due on January 21 at 12pm. Spring sport registrations currently ongoing. The RFP for the Buttery Brook Project will be released on Wednesday, Jan 15.
- **Veterans:**
 - About 80 % complete with 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 waiting on documents from 5 clients have been notified.
- 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 going to VFW meeting on Tuesday 1-14-2025 to request funds for the dinner.
- Veterans Real Estate Tax Exemption- was approached about supporting the doubling the tax exemption for disabled veterans in town. Will be writing a report by end of week or weekend giving details on how passing this will affect other veterans and dependents in town that include non disabled veterans, other disabled veterans, dependents of veterans, currently serving military members in the community that are not able to get this exemption.
- **Council on Aging:** The COA continues to have multiple open Companion Driver positions open.
 - The COA's "Warming Tree" was covered with hand-made and store bought donations from patrons this year. More than two dozen different cozy items were brought to Neighbors Helping Neighbors for distribution to community members.
 - As a reminder, Municipal Room Reservation information can be found on the Town's website, must be requested in advance and are for times outside of the regular COA operating hours.
 - Free AARP tax appointments are still available, however they are going quickly. The appointments will run from the start of February through April.
 - Fuel assistance application season is open now and runs through the end of April.
 - We are pleased to share that the Community Meal at the Center continues to flourish. If you know of any older individuals who are experiencing food insecurity, please share that the COA provides a lunch daily with a suggested donation of \$3.

Human Resources

- **Senior Tax Credit Workers:** there was increased interest in the program during the 2nd session of assignments (approx. Jan - May 2025), with 17 applicants, and 14 participants that have been placed for assignments! Assignments include the COA, Conservation, Public Works, and HR.
- **Hiring:** The Town is looking for qualified applicants. Visit SouthHadleyMA.gov/jobs to apply!
- **Health Fair:** The Town is looking to hold an in-person health fair for employees during the upcoming Health Insurance Open Enrollment period in Spring 2025. More details to come!

Library

- **Carpeting Project:** South Hadley Public Library will be closed to the public on Thursday, Feb. 6 and Friday, Feb. 7 for a carpet replacement project. Extended hours and services at the Gaylord Memorial Library branch will be available on those dates. Staff will be monitoring phones and email at SHPL.
- **Online Author Talks:** [Upcoming online author programs](#) include *Dystopian Tropes from an Indigenous Perspective*: In Conversation with Waubgeshig Rice and *I Am Nobody's Slave*: An Author Talk with Pulitzer Prize Finalist Lee Hawkins.
- **February Vacation Week:** There is a full slate of programs for kids and families happening the week of school vacation including a Toddler Dance Party, Rock-Paper-Scissors Tournament, and Art Workshop. More information (and more programs for all ages) can be found on [the library calendar](#).

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:** Pearl Street at Elmer Brook Culvert Replacement. Bids are due 1/29.
- **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 was held on January 14, 2025 and the recording can be viewed on SHCTV15.
- **MVP 2.0 Seed Project - Affordable Housing Trust:** The members of the trust were appointed and will hold their first meeting on January 29. There is one opening.

Public Health

- MassDOT Grant through the Office of Outdoor Advertising was applied for and accepted. Tobacco public awareness messaging to be posted on approximately 250 billboards across the state for the month of December and January.
- January is Cervical Cancer month. Cervical Cancer is the uncontrolled growth of abnormal cells in the lining of the cervix, which is mostly caused by Human Papillomavirus (HPV) infections. HPV is a group of viruses that are extremely common worldwide. 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.
<https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/features/cervical-cancer.html>
- ADA Improvement Grant Program, Massachusetts Office of Disability (MOD) was awarded. All equipment has been purchased and received. (Bariatric cots, All Terrain Wheelchairs, Transcending Chairs). Installation and training for the Transcending Chairs will occur in March.

- Survey created and distributed at Lathrop Village to identify the needs of the residents and how the Health Department can support them. Some related health topics identified included heart health, COPD, arthritis, depression/anxiety, eye & low vision services,....and BINGO!
- Another pallet (5568) of COVID tests were ordered, received and are being distributed. The Health Department put together bags of COVID tests and masks and distributed them to food establishments and retail. Also, COVID tests were distributed to the faith-based communities.
<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-reporting>
 Viral respiratory illness (COVID, RSV, Influenza) is on the rise.
https://www.mass.gov/info-details/viral-respiratory-illness-reporting?_gl=1*8r8lr2*_ga*NTIxNzA0MTQ2LjE2OTUwNDc3MTM.*_ga_MCLPEGW7WM*MTczNjk3NDE2OS4xMi4xLjE3MzY5NzQxODguMC4wLjA
- The Health Department has purchased eight (8) Fluentalk which is a handheld portable translation device that can translate in real time, offline and from images and includes a two-year cellular data plan.
 These translation devices have been distributed to the Council on Aging, Library, Police Department, School Department, Town Hall and Fire Districts #1 & #2 for use on the ambulances.

Public Safety

- January Office Hours for the Chief of Police will be as follows: 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 facilitator assessment was held January 14-16, 2025. This is a key part of re-accreditation under the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission every 3 years.
- Officer Murphy, the SHPD comfort dog, training will begin at the end of January, with a goal of his on the road assignment beginning in March. Follow him on [Facebook Page](#)

School

- **Budget Hearing:** The schools have set March 11 at 6pm as their budget hearing date, hybrid at the Senior Center.
- **MSBA Building Project:** The Committee is setting the process to select an Owner's Project Manager with proposals due January 22.