

## ***Town Administrator's Monthly Report February 2026***

### ***Administration, Finance and Operations***

- **Administration:**

- **Budget/Town Meeting:** Special Town meeting to discuss the budget/override on February 25, 2026. Warrant information: [www.southhadley.org/1480/2025-to-2026](http://www.southhadley.org/1480/2025-to-2026)
- **State/Federal news:** The Governor's budget provides a net reduction of ~\$6k to the town in FY27 compared to FY26. The House Ways and Means are now developing their budget. <https://malegislature.gov/Budget/FY2027/HouseWaysMeansBudget>
- **Elementary School Building Project:** The committee voted to recommend Option 5 - a 1 to 5 grade on the existing site.  
[www.southhadleyschools.org/our-schools/south-hadley-elementary-building-project/home](http://www.southhadleyschools.org/our-schools/south-hadley-elementary-building-project/home)
- **Budget Task Force:** Information including the final report and supporting documents are on the website: [www.southhadley.org/1504/Budget-Task-Force](http://www.southhadley.org/1504/Budget-Task-Force)
- **Needs Assessment:** The town is seeking volunteers to be part of the Needs Assessment advisory committee. Contact [Selectboard@southhadleyma.gov](mailto:Selectboard@southhadleyma.gov) for info. Project is 100% grant funded
- **Municipal Roundtable:** The town hosted a regional budget summit earlier this month. Video and presentations will be posted:  
[www.southhadley.org/1527/Western-Mass-Roundtable](http://www.southhadley.org/1527/Western-Mass-Roundtable)
- **MMA:** The Town Administrator has been newly appointed to the MMA's Fiscal Policy Committee and reappointed to the Women Leading Government Committee.

- **Accounting:**

- The department has prepared the December quarterly report.
- The department is updating the annual financial disclosure report.
- The department continues to work with the Budget Task Force and on the various budget information.

- **Assessor:**

- Continued work with residents and property owners to understand both the valuation (assessment) process as well as the related taxes and budget processes.
- Starting review of fiscal 2026 real estate abatement requests.
- Motor vehicle Excise - commitment 6 for 2025 was processed with an issuance date of February 9.

- Working with business folks on filing their fiscal 2027 Form of List (mailed 1/1 due 3/1).
- Closed out Fiscal 2026 database information. Worked with CAMA vendor on a few software patches.
- Working on calendar year 2025 parcel splits and combinations for vendor to update property maps for fiscal 2027.
- Continued work with IT on correcting the bridge between Vision (real estate data) and Open Gov (permitting software).
- Starting to review building permits from July 2025 forward for fiscal 2027 processing.
- Training office support staff provided through Administration.
- Participation in educational opportunities regarding laws and software processes.
- Department staff continue on working to restore, replace, update and streamline digital data and processes.
- **Cable:**
  - Completed Capital Project for three new Mac Studios and installed at SHCTV.
  - Completed Budget Task Force PSAs and shared as a Showcase.
  - Continued Municipal Meeting coverage along with special Public Hearings and Listening Sessions
  - Recorded Tour of Mosier Elementary for upcoming video
- **Collector/Treasurer**
  - 3rd Quarter Real Estate and Personal Property bills sent with a due date of 2/2/26.
  - FY26 Trash bills have seen an uptick in collections
  - Preparing FY25 data for auditors
  - Preparing to file annual Continuing Disclosure as required for debt service
- **IT:**
  - Work with vendors to update MAT report.
  - Continue Large Scale Event online application
  - Work on remote access
  - Replace Wireless Access Points at WPC.
  - Configure and install workstation at WPC for employee training.
  - Attend webinar and work with Town Clerk on ADA compliance platform.

### ***Building and Zoning***

- **Short Term Rental:** State has finally issued guidance related to short-term rentals. Training on 2/25 to be attended to ensure interpretations are well understood before moving forward with town properties. All 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

- **Certificates on Inspection (3 families and above):** Fines continue to accrue for any property owner which received a second notice and has 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 for several properties have been accruing daily.. All accrued fines will be added to quarterly tax bills going forward. List available to any/all parties interested.

### **Clerk**

- **Nomination papers available until February 20th:** Nomination papers are now available for this year's Annual Town Election scheduled for April 14, 2026. The deadline to pick up nomination papers is Friday, February 20th. Visit [southhadley.org/Elections](https://southhadley.org/Elections) for more information, including key dates in the election cycle and what positions are on the ballot.
- **Census- Still time to return your census:** Annual census forms were sent to every residence in South Hadley. Please contact our office with any questions. The office is currently updating thousands of returned census forms.
- **Vote by Mail Applications:** A vote by mail application was included in the census mailing. The application includes space for multiple voters from the same residence to complete the form. You can also apply online at: [Voteinma.com](https://Voteinma.com)
- **Dog Licenses:** Dog License renewal season is here 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 two more times before the renewal period ends. The annual census has a tear off paper application residents can also use to register their dogs. Residents can register their dog(s) online: <https://southhadley.ma.portal.opengov.com/categories/1084/record-types/6425>
- **Additional Liquor Licenses:** You can follow the progress of the Act submitted submitted by Representative Gómez here: [malegislature.gov/Bills/194/HD5438](https://malegislature.gov/Bills/194/HD5438)
- **Massachusetts Town Clerk Association Conference (MTCA):** The Town Clerk attended a conference hosted by the Massachusetts Town Clerk's Association February 4th and 5th.

### **Department of Public Works**

1. **Center/Warner/Graves Project:**All drainage, tree work, concrete sidewalks and granite curb completed. Spring 2026 road reconstruction and paving , loam and seed to complete project.

2. **Buttery Brook Park:** Project completed, except for pickleball court issue: engineering contract awarded to Levesque. Spring 2026 construction.
3. **Main Street TIP Project:** MassDOT approved all utility conflicts. Design Public Hearing date to be set late February after discussion with MassDOT. January 2028 bud date: PVPC.
4. **DPW:** Stanton Avenue drainage install; easement approved with MHC. Construction spring 2026.
5. **RT 33 paving:** Spring 2026, recessed markings and solar x-walk stanchion install, to complete project.
6. **Spring 2026 Ch. 90: Road Paving and Cracksealing Projects:** Prep work in progress for April/May projects to take place. Finalizing lists to budget funding.
7. **Main Street pump station permanent by-pass project:** Bypass work completed. Spring 2026 loam and seed to complete project.
8. **WWTP: CWMP:** Final Report presented to Selectboard, and filed with DEP. Next step, decide upgrade plan order, and choose a design engineer for phase 1 design work.
9. **WWTP:** Electric security gate completed.
10. **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 during 2026.
11. **Rt. 116 brick sidewalk lighting upgrades:** In review with lighting consultant/engineers. Will provide a safer lighting.
12. **Winter: Snow and Ice:** The winter costs are trending above average, with numerous small storms, requiring salt/chemical treatments, and 6 plowing events requiring contractors for plowing events. Reduced public works staffing and hired contractor lack of interest has resulted in longer clearing times, and increased costs. Salt supplies have been a challenge, due to 8 years of minimal winter weather.
13. **Landfill:** Contracted services required for gas well repairs, and run-off swale repairs from heavy rain events: Spring 2026.
14. **RRFB Installs:** MassDOT grant: Spring St. at Main St.: Spring 2026; ADA ramps installed.

## ***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.

- **Snowstorm** – Held virtual Emergency Operations communications with first responders/SHELD for the snowstorm.
- **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.

### **Facilities**

- **Ledges:** HVAC replacement and building envelope sealing is scheduled and awaiting equipment delivery
- **MS:** The elevator modernization project is still having supply chain issues but some work may occur during the February break. The building automation system replacement is underway.
- **PD:** Camera system is out for bid and bids due Feb. 19.
- **Capital Planning:** 5 year plan complete, Department Head continued February 3rd.

### **Human Services**

- **Recreation:**
  - Pickleball bid has been released and is due February 5.
  - Working on the summer schedule now!
  - Spring registrations are open.
  - Buttery Brook Park pavilion and log cabin rentals are open.
  - The grand opening event for Buttery Brook Park will be Saturday, May 16.
- **Veterans:**
  - Recertification period for Veterans Chapter 115 cases.
  - Two veterans on Chapter 115 passed away mid January.
- **Council on Aging:**
  - Our new Food Service Coordinator, Harold Dixson, started Monday. We are so excited to have him join the COA team!
  - The Artist of the Month, Orlando Santos, has work on display now at the COA. Feel free to stop in and see the amazing pieces before they're gone.
  - The students from MacDuffie had their annual Chair Volleyball game against the COA's team of older adults. The students experienced another devastating loss and are looking forward to their next rematch! Next month, highschool Seniors will be completing interviews with COA members who want to participate. The interviews will focus on the individual's heritage and will be written up as a keepsake for the participants.
  - AARP tax appointments are now taking place at the COA. All appointments are full at all local sites.

### **Human Resources**

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

P: 413.538.5030 ext.6136

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- **Welcome!** The Town is excited to welcome Harold Dixon to the Council on Aging team as Food Service Coordinator, who started on February 9, 2026. Harold comes to the Town with 20+ years of professional cooking and kitchen experience, and also social service experience at DMH and is a U.S. Army veteran.
- **Insurance/Benefits:** The Hampshire County Group Insurance Trust (HCGIT) is expected to set health insurance rates for FY27 (effective July 1, 2026) at the 2/25/26 IAC meeting. Once rates are finalized, updated rate charts and related information will be shared with employees and posted on the Human Resources page of the Town website. Employees with questions may contact [GCongram@SouthHadleyMA.gov](mailto:GCongram@SouthHadleyMA.gov) or [HR@SouthHadleyMA.gov](mailto:HR@SouthHadleyMA.gov). The Town is also planning to host a virtual open enrollment fair this year, with a tentative timeframe in early April. The virtual format is expected to include brief, scheduled presentations from health insurance carriers, benefit vendors, and other partners. Presentations would be recorded and made available online to ensure broad and convenient access. Employees are encouraged to share suggestions as planning continues by contacting the Human Resources Department.
- The Town spearheaded a working group of municipal officials from across Western Massachusetts to explore budget pressures related to rising health insurance costs. The group developed and distributed a survey to municipalities and public organizations to gauge the impact of health insurance on their operating budgets. The survey was open for about 1 month and a summary of results were presented at a [Western Massachusetts Municipal Roundtable](#) discussion on 2/6/25. The presentation of survey results [can be found here](#).

### **Library**

- **Children's Programs:** The cold weather didn't stop families from using the library last month. Almost 500 people attended Chess Club, Wildlife on Wheels, and weekly toddler and family programs.
- **Citizen's Legislative Seminar:** Library Director Joe Rodio has been nominated by Senator Oliveira to represent his district at the 91<sup>st</sup> [Citizens' Legislative Seminar](#) taking place in Boston from March 24-25.
- **Book Group Milestone:** The library's *Between the Covers* romance book club recently marked its second anniversary of happy endings. This popular multi-generational group meets on the second Tuesday of each month.
- **Pajama Drive:** We're once again participating in the Boston Bruins PJ Drive to collect new pajamas for local children living in low-income and homeless situations. New PJs can be dropped off in the Children's Room through March 15.

### **Planning and Conservation**

- **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.
- **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:** Applications are being accepted for the Falls Business Improvement Grants [Falls Business Improvement Grant | South Hadley, MA - Official Website](#)

### **Public Health**

- **Agricultural Committee:** BOH member, Chuck Scott and Public Health Director have been a part of the Agricultural Committee.
- **Public Safety Committee:** Public Health Director participated in the Public Safety Committee meeting.
- **Problem Properties:** Public Health Director continues to participate in the monthly meetings.
- **Hampshire Public Health Preparedness Coalition:** There have been some changes in the coalition. MDPH has changed the requirements for the grant, which was previously administered by the Northampton Health Department - now administered by Franklin Regional County of Governments (**FRCOG**). Amherst Health Department is stepping up to oversee the coalition to finish out this grant round.
- **Harm Reduction, Impaired Driving and Medication Management Presentation:** March 18, from 1-2:30 pm along with TAPESTRY, we will have a presentation on harm reduction, impaired driving and medication management at the COA, featuring an engaging activity with goggles.
- **Town Hall Building:** “walk-thru” with Massachusetts Department of Public Health(MDPH)
- **Childhood Immunization Webinar:** Director participated in.
- **SHELD new building:** Participated in the pre-permitting meeting.
- **Kratom regulation:** regulation written, approved by the Board of Health (BOH) and sent to Town Counsel for any edits. **Town Counsel approved.**
- **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 to control trades emitting noisome odors or harming health/property. **Town Counsel approved.**
- **NITROUS OXIDE Regulation:** A Nitrous Oxide Regulation was written and approved by the BOH. This regulation aims to reduce substance misuse, prevent associated health consequences, and support broader public health efforts in harm reduction. regulation

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written, approved by the BOH and sent to Town Counsel for any edits. **Town Counsel approved.**

- **Pilot Project:** The Health Department is continuing work 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 Mount Holyoke College. We hope to develop community outreach programs, increase awareness about asthma triggers, and provide resources for better management.
- **BIOBOT:** Biobot wastewater testing started in November and will continue for a year 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

#### **OPIOID -**

- **Report on Vape Detectors in South Hadley Schools** - Prepared brief report on the implementation and impact of Zeptive vape detectors in South Hadley Middle and High Schools, including data on student vaping behaviors from Prevention Needs Assessment Survey and trends in substance-use-related student disciplinary cases (provided by South Hadley High School).
- **SHPS Spring Health & Safety Events** - Preparing for outreach & education at School District Mental Health Committee film screening in March and SHHS Day of Safety in April. School partners have noted health topics to focus on, including social media use, self-harm, disordered eating, and specific substance use patterns, among others.
- **Harm Reduction 101 & Impaired Driving** - Facilitated by Tapestry Health and Public Health Department on Wednesday, March 18, 1-2:30pm at the Council on Aging. Will evaluate and plan to offer the program at other locations, too.
- **Regional Strategic Planning of Youth Health Priorities:** Attended Collaborative for Educational Services SPIFFY (Strategic Planning Initiative for Families and Youth) Full Coalition Meeting in January to review regional Prevention Needs Assessment data and coalition prevention priorities. Key opportunities for partnership in South Hadley particularly in the areas of prevention-focused parent/caregiver education, youth education, supporting policymakers with prevention-centered alcohol policy, and supporting youth leadership and health educators.

#### **Public Safety**

- **Activity:** In January, Police personnel conducted investigations for 44 incident reports that did not include criminal charges, and Dispatch personnel handled 1,666 calls for service. A detailed call summary can be [found here](#). Summary of reported incidents: Larceny or Fraud – 10 | Property Destruction (Felony) – 2 | Unattended Death – 4 | Welfare Check/Person at Risk/Involuntary Hospitalization – 6 | Burglary – 1 | Assault and Battery – 2 | Assault & Battery-Dangerous Weapon-- 1 | Motor Vehicle -Leaving Scene of

Crash – 1 | Civil Dispute-1 | Motor Vehicle Pursuits-- 1 | Other Civil Complaints-- 11 | Trespass with a Motor Vehicle-- 1 |

A total of 25 individuals were criminally charged during the month of January.

Summary of offenses charged: Abuse Prevention Order Violation –2 | Domestic Assault & Battery – 5 | Assault & Battery – 1 | | Assault & Battery-Strangulation-- 1 | Assault and Battery-Dangerous Weapon – 1 | Unarmed Robbery-- 1 | Motor Vehicle Registration and Licensing Offenses – 5 | Motor Vehicle, Leaving Scene of Crash-- 2| Operating Under the Influence – 2 | Negligent Operation of a Motor Vehicle-- 4 | Burglary – 1 | Malicious Damage to property- 3 | Obstruction of Justice-- 1 | Larceny under \$1200- 1 | Shoplifting-- 1 | Possession of Narcotics-- 2 | Warrant Arrests – 3 |

- **Recruitment/Community Engagement:** In January, the South Hadley Police Department welcomed student intern Jordan Wainwright. Jordan is a senior at American International College and has expressed a career interest in law enforcement following graduation this May. During the spring semester, Jordan will assist both Patrol and Administration with a variety of administrative projects. Questions regarding the internship program may be directed to [Lt. Mark Baran](#).
- **Training:** On January 28, 2026, all sworn members completed their annual Legal Update Training. Pursuant to Massachusetts General Law, all police officers are required to complete 40 hours of in-service training annually to maintain their certification with the Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Commission. The FY2026 In Service Training [Classes are available here](#). All in-service training topics and curricula are developed annually by the [Massachusetts Police Training Committee \(MPTC\)](#), a division of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety. Questions regarding SHPD training may be directed to [Sgt. Barry O'Connor](#).
- **Capital Projects:** On January 30, 2026, in coordination with Director of Facilities Scott Moore, Officer Anthony Chonmany and Sgt. Barry O'Connor assisted with a pre-bid walkthrough for the replacement of the Department's interior security camera system. The existing camera system, particularly within the holding facility, has proven unreliable and continues to operate on outdated analog technology. Security cameras within police departments are critical to ensuring accountability, transparency, and the safety of both personnel and the public. Questions regarding this project may be directed to [Officer Anthony Chonmany](#).
- **Winter Parking Ban:** The Police Department also appreciates residents' improved compliance with the Weather Parking Ban implemented by the Department of Public Works from January 25–27, 2026. Adherence to the ban is essential for DPW crews to efficiently and safely remove snow and maintain passable roadways. Time spent by police personnel enforcing the ban necessarily diverts resources from other police-related responsibilities.

- **Regional E911 Evaluation:** In January, Chief Gundersen, with Chief Stark/South Hadley Fire District 1 and Chief Moore/South Hadley Fire District 2, had several meetings to discuss the feasibility of South Hadley joining regional E911 Dispatch Center. These discussions began in late 2024 and are ongoing. Regional Dispatch Centers are becoming increasingly common. Communities are moving to regional or hosted 911 models for both financial and operational reasons. These models can be less expensive to operate and could provide improved dispatch services and greater depth of coverage.
- **Chief's Community Office Hours:** [Police Chief Jennifer Gundersen](#) will hold the following office hours for community members to stop by and share questions or suggestions:
  - February 19, 2026: 10:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m. – *Council on Aging*
  - February 24, 2026: 5:00 p.m to 6:30 p.m –*Library*
  - March 6, 2026: 10:30 p.m.-12:00 p.m. –*Council on Aging*