

Andrea Miles, Chair
Jeff Cyr, Vice-Chair
Christopher Geraghty, Clerk
Sarah Etelman
Bruce Forcier

Michael J. Sullivan
Town Administrator

May 17, 2019

Honorable Selectboard;

Please accepted this condensed version of the activities and efforts performed by myself and other municipal employees on behalf of the Town of South Hadley.

Thank you for your patience and support.

Annual Town Meeting: The general consensus in regard to Town Meeting is it did what it was supposed to do - allow the people to have a voice. New and old members alike took their responsibility of representing constituents from their respective precinct earnestly.

The attendance at the reviews and other public meetings in advance, the questions asked via email and Town Meeting Members' attention to material which was sent electronically was a contributing factor to success of the meeting.

It was an interesting collection of perspectives on the topic of initiative petitions related to issues seen as beyond the normal focus of traditional South Hadley Town Meetings, and may be a tocsin of future meetings. I believe this is a fundamental question of policy which will be guided by Town Meeting in the future. There are provisions in the law which rightfully allow subject matter to be brought before the body by petition, but there are those who fear it will affect the attention of TM and move it away from the "business of the town" which has been a mantra for SoHa. I had heard more than once we do not want to become Amherst. I am not sure what that means, so I will leave it to you.



Single-payer health Insurance, regional mosquito control and the feeding of wild animals elicited the greatest debate, sans the zoning articles. There was a lot of great points made on these articles and if nothing else each caused important community dialogue and self-reflection. This comes at an important time as so many are diligently working on a refresh of the master plan.

The coincidence of having this discussion on the first ATM in a long time without the presence of Ed Ryan, who espoused the concept of Town Meeting being purposed for conducting the “business of the town,” was ironic or prophetic or both, but was not lost on many.

Thank you to the Selectboard for your guidance, commitment and encouragement to make Town Meeting productive and professional. It is not always the case in towns across the Commonwealth a Selectboard displays such a level of professionalism. I would also congratulate John Hine for being the Lion’s Club Citizen of the Year and for his inaugural performance as Moderator.

Bynan & Bachelor Benches: You may recall there was a bench dedicated to Lin Pickle near the end of Lyman Terrace near the pond at the Bynan Conservation Area. The bench has disappeared. It was a metal bench dedicated to a long-time Conservation Commissioner by his family. This is most unfortunate and if anyone knows anything about it we ask you to call the South Hadley Police Department and ask for the Detective Bureau. The town and family would appreciate it.

We also found some construction debris left at the Bachelor Brook parking area on two occasions in April, along with the stone benches being toppled there as well. These senseless and expensive acts of vandalism have a chilling effect on initiatives. We have stepped up patrols and are placing temporary hidden cameras in both areas to help stop these unfortunate incidents. Again, please come forward and let us know when you see suspicious activities in neighborhood.

PBE Season: I and my department head colleagues are doing the end of year reviews and getting ready to set new goals for employees for the new fiscal year. I am always impressed by the length and breadth of projects and initiatives the departments are engaged in each year.

While this process can be time consuming and some may regard it as tedious, the benefits are significant. The most import reward for me is by way of the activity I get to know more about the work and challenges of each department. This experience allows me to consider how we may add or subtract from responsibilities born by each department. Each of the departments have such different skill sets it never ceases to amaze me. I am very fortunate to work with so many talented people.

Workmen’s Comp, Injured on Duty: You may recall in a very recent TA report I made mention of the fact ATA Wolowicz and I would be taking a very detailed look at Workmen’s Comp (WC) and the police counterpart Injured on Duty (IOD), and like someone waved a wand the issue has been moved to the top of the pile.

We received notice Cook & Company our Third Party Administrator (TPA) is getting out of the business by July 1. Was it something I said? Truthfully, they had been a great partner and wonderful to work with for the ATA.

We have quickly shifted gears and will have MIIA step in to provide TPA services for both WC and IOD for at least the next year. MIIA has a lot of experience as IOD TPA, but will be relatively new on the very similar WC side of the industry. They have been offering premium-based solutions to WC for decades. This experience and deep understanding of the industry gives them the leg up on applying their industry experience to WC self-insurance communities as the WC administrator.

We will continue to explore the economic and risk viability of a premium based solution to WC and IOD. Presently it still remains a long shot to demonstrate a savings by making a change. We do engage excess or stop-loss insurance to reduce our exposure to large claim risk. That will not change with a new TPA.

Thank you all for your guidance and leadership, it is appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael J. Sullivan
Town Administrator, South Hadley