

Jeff Cyr, Chair  
 Sarah Etelman, Vice-Chair  
 Christopher Geraghty, Clerk  
 Andrea Miles  
 Carol Constant

Michael J. Sullivan  
 Town Administrator

## Town Administrator’s Report to the Selectboard April 29, 2021

### COVID 19 Update

#### Cases

We clearly see the cases have slowed. They should, as South Hadley has put forth an impressive effort to adhere to guidelines. It goes without saying there are outliers who challenge mask wearing and have a deep-seated disregard for the precautions suggested or demanded. Still, the majority of South Hadley citizens have been engaged and advocate for safe practices. The results are represented in saved lives.

It is becoming more promising that the end is in sight, but I would humbly suggest a continued effort is warranted. Is it really that hard to wear a mask when you are in a confined space or close to others, especially if it helps communal health?

LBOH Count - Events Per Disease and Classification in Jurisdiction

Event Dates from 03/01/2020 to 04/28/2021

Jurisdiction(s) selected: SOUTH HADLEY

Jurisdiction(s) used for report: SOUTH HADLEY

The data are current as of 04/27/2021

Disease	Status	Num of Cases	4/20/2021	4/13/2021	4/6/2021	3/30/2021
Novel Coronavirus	CONFIRMED	1024	1013	998	976	947
Novel Coronavirus	CONTACT	766	766	755	744	730
Novel Coronavirus	PROBABLE	84	82	80	77	74
Novel Coronavirus	SUSPECT	21	21	19	18	18

#### Vaccine

The Castle of Knights at 1599 Memorial Drive in Chicopee has opened as a regional mass vaccination site. It is a collaborative effort led by Chicopee Mayor John Vieu and serves the South Hadley, Granby and Holyoke communities, but is open to all. The link to the state site to sign up is <https://home.color.com/vaccine/register/chicopee> . If you have difficulty signing up, please call the South Hadley Vaccine Hotline at 413 538 5042 which is facilitated by the South Hadley COA staff.

There also is more opportunity now for anyone looking to get inoculated at area pharmacies, health centers, clinics and various “max-vax” sites. Appointments are available and there is more information on the town website about vaccines. We encourage everyone to consider getting a vaccine as soon as possible.



There is an active discussion to explore ways to safely hold concerts this summer. The Town Common and gazebo present a fairly restrictive space which is not conducive to social gathering provisions. Recreation Director Andy Rogers is looking at alternative venues.

A very heart wrenching decision was made at a recent Selectboard Meeting to forgo the Fourth of July fireworks. There was a brief discussion about moving it back to Labor Day, but the consensus was the reward did not equal the risk. This was a prudent decision as it is hard to predict where we would be in September, what a catastrophe it could be if the school re-opening was adversely affected by an outbreak due to such a large community gathering, and the simple fact that we need to sign a contract now with the pyrotechnic company for an event about five months away (if we had it Labor Day).

At the present time there are no substantial changes to how we do business at the DPW Transfer Station. The scheduling five days a week seems to be working well and returning to only being allowed to bring material in two days a week as it was before would seem to be a backwards movement. The restrictions on items accepted are in line with the market and the stricter adherence the policies have resulted in a Transfer Station which is more organized, efficient, and best of all producing a balanced revenue in respect to the budgeted costs.

Town Hall will continue to offer digital, curbside and drop-off services. Most departments also can provide limited in-person service external of Town Hall. Beginning July 1, we will open with restrictions for limited in-person access. The number of people will be limited, the visit will be limited, and you will have to sign up in advance. The details will be developed with the Health Department over the next month.

We will also be focusing our attention on what in-person public meetings will look like, how they will be facilitated and where they can be accommodated. Given many people have adopted (a forced adoption, I agree) we will have to develop accommodations for a hybrid where people can choose to be remote or in-person. Suffice to say I have not worked out the logistics on all those measures and accommodations, but we are working on it. I would encourage input to be sent to me from all interested parties at [msullivan@southhadleyma.gov](mailto:msullivan@southhadleyma.gov).

### **Deputy Town Administrator Jennifer Wolowicz**

Congratulations to Jennifer Wolowicz and to the Town of Monson. After almost sixteen years of serving the Town of South Hadley she will be taking the Town Administrator post in Monson. Monson will be very well served by their new TA; her experience and educational success will serve the citizens of that community well.

We are all thankful for her service and wish her well in her new post. Michelle Parent from the Human Resources Department will take on her duties and responsibilities on an interim basis as I review the position and make any changes to the responsibilities. At the appropriate juncture there will need to be appropriate staffing in HR as it has become a department of increasing complexity and reporting at all levels.

I will accept other areas of responsibility charged to the DTA to the best of my abilities and there will be no formal DTA at this time. The Town of South Hadley is blessed to have very competent and

experienced department managers who will through natural organizational flow also accept duties as assigned within their area of expertise.

### **Senior Center Update**

We received news this week that Representative Dan Carey was able to secure funding for a e-vehicle in the House Budget. Hopefully, it will make it past the meat grinder that is the state legislature used to make the sausage.... I mean budget. His efforts are particularly appreciated and sensible as Director Hennessey was able to recently secure a grant for a charging station at the new center.

This will allow the COA to have an additional transportation option which has a much smaller carbon footprint and will be a starting point for a better understanding for the municipal complex about e-vehicles. South Hadley has very few “muni-cars” as some cities and towns do. This year we hope to replace a few more cruisers with hybrid vehicles, but some day we hope we all will have the confidence to get electric with even cruisers and trucks. The sooner the better.

### **Age and Dementia Friendly South Hadley**

The efforts continue to present a plan for South Hadley to be an *Age and Dementia Friendly Community*. In a recent meeting it was apparent progress is being made and the plan is nearly finished.

This effort is a long time coming it seems. I can remember five years ago meeting with Rachel Tierney and Carol Constant and Loomis Communities to discuss the possibility of this designation and the work it will entail. Thank you Carol for your facilitation, but especially thank you Rachel for your tireless advocacy and for being a voice for those suffering from dementia and memory loss.

Through their perseverance and promotion and the recognition from others about the importance, it seems like the community is on the edge of a comprehensive strategy being unfolded. This was and is a very worthwhile endeavor and dovetails with efforts and investments South Hadley has and continues to make over time.

The opening of the Senior Center, the positioning and the offerings at that and the adjoining property will be a prime example of “Age Friendly” concepts. It will not only serve the mature population, but also the immature .... or maybe I should say youth Congratulations to everyone who has participated in the process.

### **Town Meeting**

Please mark your calendars. The Annual Town Meeting will be held June 9, 2021. St Theresa’s parking lot will be the location for the Annual Town Meeting. I am working on the warrant and even though we are working to keep this as a very tight agenda in anticipation of a time when we all can meet in safe manner to debate the changes and needs of the Town of South Hadley in the time-honored New England fashion of Town Meeting.

We are working on having handheld devices so Town Meeting Members will be able to cast their vote on the device and there will be instant tallying of the results. This equipment has been used for years in countless other communities and the Moderator has done significant research on the effectiveness and secure nature of the devices. They will be assigned to each member attending upon arrival and collected as the members exit. They will not have the capability to vote “remotely” (outside of St T’s).

We will have an area if weather permitting TMMs want to sit outside of their vehicle (weather permitting, with distancing) and will work to improve the opportunity to speak. We will also be looking at adding porta-potties. It seems reasonable to consider that this will be the last time such measures must be taken to allow Town Meeting.... at least for this particular pandemic. Thank you to St Theresa's for their hospitality and to all TMM's for their patience.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael J. Sullivan  
Town Administrator, South Hadley