



July 8, 2016

Honorable Selectboard;

Please accept this report as an abridged version and a sampling of some of the projects the Town staff is working on to make South Hadley a great place to live.

Fourth of July Fireworks, The fireworks have been lauded as a community success, congratulations to Recreation Director Andy Rogers and his staff for coordinating all the various individuals and departments, particularly DPW and Police who contributed to the success. The Fire Districts cooperation is also a great civic asset.

We have tried as best we can to address some of the issues which always arise post event, many of which a number of items will be included in next year's planning. The concerns range from parking/traffic issues to rocket debris to litter. There were some reasonable solutions which will be incorporated into 2017 discussions at the appropriate time, all in all it was an event South Hadley citizens can be very proud to call their own.

Quarterly Professional Development Day, Friday July 15 we will have our Professional Development and Town Hall will be closing at noon and we will all travel up to the Library (see AC). The focus of this seminar will coincide with Phase 2 of the King Information project. There will be presenters on relative subject matter, including the challenges of decluttering and "municipal hoarding". As we try to become a more streamlined organization it is an essential exercise to separate what we need or are required to keep from what we think is "neat" or "somebody" may be looking for in the future. We still have a pommel horse in the basement, I realize Olympic competition is upon us, but I do not think we will be capturing a spot on the team...at least I can assure you I will not be in Brazil.

The Selectboard is always welcome to attend PD Days, many of you have been able to attend various sessions and it is greatly appreciated. I thank ATA Wolowicz for organizing this important training tool. We will also be discussing projects and initiatives throughout South Hadley, to give the larger staff a general idea of all that is being done through their collective efforts.

Western Mass Developers Conference, The recent conference at the Mass Mutual Center in Springfield had strong representation from South Hadley. This showing speaks to the efforts on many to make sure this town is seen as part of the regional development map. Rich Himmelwright and Dominic Angelini from the Gaylord Industrial Properties hosted a table and reported they had a number of attendees express interest in their offerings.

Frank DeToma (SB,RD), Imad Zubi (RD, MHC), Ira Brezinsky (SB), Planning Director Richard Harris and I travelled to the conference together. We attended the Governor's luncheon and were impressed with his remarks with how he continues to grow business in Massachusetts and the programs which he sees as priorities.

Andy Yee, South Hadley businessman, and a well-respected regional "mover and shaker" in Western Massachusetts Development circles was also at the conference. He continues to build momentum on his Newton Street Plaza re-visioning. This was an excellent way to let people know, from Western Mass and beyond that South Hadley wants to be part of growing businesses.

COA Director Leslie Hennessey/Joanne Trybus Retirement, The transition strategy we used to welcome Leslie and say good bye to Joanne as COA Director seems to have worked very well. I delivered flowers and chocolates to Director Trybus on behalf of the Selectboard and Administration prior to the afternoon reception. We all understand how much Joanne's leadership of and dedication to the senior community was appreciated.

The transition model where the New COA Director Leslie Hennessey was afforded a three week period to overlap with Director Trybus before her departure, seems to have worked extremely well. It allowed Joanne to pass some of her knowledge on to Leslie and also allow Leslie to do some things she may not have time for once she takes the main seat.

We have been discussing some of the open positions and how we may realign responsibilities, reduce unnecessary steps and bring additional automation to the operation. There is no hard and fast time line on these adjustments and Director Hennessey is being very tactical in getting to know all the employees and their responsibilities which will be critical to any adjustments which may be made.

LHS Voting Tabulators, Town Clerk Hamlin and I have been having regular conversations with Jeff Silvestro of LHS Systems the group who sold us these new machines. You may recall we had some glitches with the machines at both the Presidential Primary and the Annual Town Election. While the Town Clerk did a commendable job making it through, we continue to be concerned about their operability and more so, the LHS tabulator's reliability.

The conversations have been professional and LHS represents they will stand behind their machines and they may have to do so literally to make us feel comfortable. We will be switching out all the machines and replacing the year old ones with new ones, at no expense to the municipality. We are still calling for an on-site tech during the elections. Obviously, this is more complicated than a town election, as other communities need to be served during state /federal elections and there is not enough techs to go around. But we feel South Hadley should go to the head of the line, as we have already experienced some challenges.

Whatever happens there will be two elections held in South Hadley and we will do everything possible to make it a smooth experience for the voters.

Library Integration, The Gaylord/Public Integration continues to proceed. We recently signed the FY 17 contract for library services with Gaylord which formalizes what we expect and what the taxpayers are paying for at Gaylord. The expectation is this model will work very well, I applaud Chris Quigley and Joe Rodio for their excellent professional working relationship.

Police Chief Update Interim/Retirement/Permanent, Lt. Steve Parentela has taken over as Chief with the retirement of David Labrie. It is a tough badge to fill, but Chief Parentela has hit the ground running. I saw him checking up a trouble spot one night on my way home that we had discussed earlier in the day. He is a professional who is dedicated to the South Hadley Police Department and making the town a better place.

Like Joanne Trybus it was sad to see Chief David Labrie leave, everyone wishes him all the best in his retirement. David Labrie left a proud legacy at the department, one of respect and professionalism, which is no easy task if we are judged by other recent Police Chief retirements in the area, best of luck to Chief.

We now have over twenty applicants for the Police Chief position. We will close the submittal time next week and the ATA/Human Resource will start to qualify the candidates, as to the stated requirements in the posting. The process is on schedule for interviews in August and a September appointment.

PBE Process, I am still working on the FY 17 PBE areas of opportunity with SB Members Brezinsky and Forcier. We have been working to strengthen our managerial capacity in recent years, with many of our managers having completed the Supervisory Leadership Development Program offered by MMA. As part of this year's goals I will be suggesting a more extensive review of the individual manager's desire and/or potential to take on more managerial responsibility.

I believe it is very important you the Selectboard to have a working knowledge of the potential we might have in house, if an opportunity to consolidate or there is a need to replace department managers. While each manager has an area of expertise, there has to be some allowance to try new things. This is a basis for transitional and long term organizational planning.

I hope to have the PBE tenants completed by August 2.

EDC Focus Group, Recently I was asked to participate in a regional focus group as the Pioneer Valley, Western Mass, Knowledge Corridor seeks to re-brand through the Western Massachusetts Economic Development Committee under Rick Sullivan (no relation).

The panel I participated in was very interesting, George Arwady the newspaper publisher, Rob Babcock the CEO for TD Bank for all of Massachusetts, Bill Pepin 22 News and Charlie Damour of Big Y were all at the table. It certainly was interesting and afforded me the opportunity to hear some very successful people express their views on where the four western counties are heading as they see it.

Holyoke Mayor Morse Meeting, This week I had the pleasure of lunching with the Mayor of Holyoke and discussing projects of mutual interest. He committed to me the City of Holyoke remains dedicated to helping SoHa secure grant money to improve South Hadley's accessibility by multi-modes of transportation to the train platform in Holyoke.

Having the added support from Holyoke is important, I also am going to be reaching out to Mayor Kos in Chicopee, although there is less natural synergy with that city, just by way of positioning in respect to the Falls, but the more support the better. We hope to file the MassWorks grant in two or possibly three weeks. It will be very similar to last year's filing with DHCD, but we will get better at it each time we go through the exercise.

HG&E Stakeholder South Hadley Meeting, Richard Harris our Town Planner will be meeting with Sarah Larose from HG&E in South Hadley Town Hall the day of the next SB meeting. As you are aware we both attended a partners listening session and this meeting is a continuation of the larger meeting.

The focus will remain on how we can work together, provide more accessibility to the river in South Hadley and cooperate in being the best co-stewards of the Connecticut River possible. This rekindled relationship I am hoping will pay dividends for both HG&E and South Hadley in the future.

Thank you for all your support and I hope you are enjoying the summer weather.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael J. Sullivan

Town Administrator, South Hadley