



December 2, 2016

Honorable Selectboard,

Please accept this as an abridged account of initiatives and activities performed by myself and town hall staff since my last report. Please note, this report is inordinately brief, largely due to the fact I have been away for several days during the last two weeks.

It should be noted it has been an exceptionally busy time period in Town Hall. There is a number of annual exercises which have begun, but not as far advanced as I think they need to be, so I appreciate the extra dose of patience. The Community Life Project will likely not see any attention until mid-January and I apologize I have fallen behind somewhat in regards to the columns (Reminder), I will catch up as soon as I am able. I assure you these and other initiatives are on my radar screen and I will do everything possible to get back to these projects as soon as possible.

However it has been necessary for me to take on some projects which unexpectedly are putting major demands on my time. Chief among them the very important General Code Project and secondly the Valley Bike Share. For various reasons this work would be unwise or insensible to delegate, so I will stay at it. Please do not misconstrue this as complaining, I love the work, but I want the Selectboard to be aware of the temporary bandwidth shrinkage.

Roof Leaks Town Hall; So we have sprung a new leak in Town Hall on the second floor it is believed to be somewhere along a seam on the twenty five year plus membrane. You may recall as part of a review of the roof conditions this section of TH roof was deemed to be beyond its useful life. The lower roof membrane is less than ten years old and still in great shape.



We will have technician here to patch the upper membrane and advise us of the overall condition on Monday, it was hard to get someone as with the recent rains roofers seem to be in high demand.

We have cleared all the roof drains about two weeks back and will do them once again in December weather permitting, so it was not the previous problem which caused damage in the auditorium two years ago. Preventative maintenance does work, but there is just so much you can do.

General Code Project, We have gotten great input from interested parties in regards to suggestion, concerns and clarification needs. I understand there remains a select few people who see something of this magnitude in a sinister light as being perpetrated by municipal government upon the citizens. Some

may even see it as call to action to stop what they see as a transgression, when no such action may exist. As anyone who has had any experience in public service will tell you while rarely is there a concerted effort to “fool” the public, the individual interest concern no matter how farfetched need to be considered and reasonably harnessed to improve performance and end product.

As I stated before General Code has been contracted to provide assistance to South Hadley to update the General and Zoning By-laws which had not happened since 2005, this project was started in 2013 after approval by Town Meeting as integral component part of the website update. We have to remind ourselves a municipal code is a “living document” subject to change, necessary change to meet the changing world.

Some have suggested there is a “better process” and this sentiment is true enough. We do however need to depend on best practices and systems which have been successful and tested in community not dissimilar to South Hadley recommended by the contractor. Systems which are recognized by the state to be necessary and prudent. The contractor needs to rely on the municipality to perform to the best of abilities, internally we have attempt to do just that, I can say we remain imperfect, but engaged.

I am hoping I will be able to post a meeting of the By-law Review Committee for the week of December 14 to further discuss the “General Code” and other By-law Review appropriate warrant articles. This meeting has been delayed as revisions are being made to the summary for the changes offered and accepted recently. An updated version of the final draft is made available (the updated codification has been placed on the website). As soon as I get the material I am will be making it available and sending it out to interested parties.

New Sunshine Laws, In January (there seems to be some question at the state level exactly when) the new “Public Records Law” will go into effect. While there are still details being worked out, South Hadley is forging ahead. The material will be the focus of our quarterly Professional Development Day January 13 with at least one of the authors of the bill, Atty. Matt Feher (not that he likes them, because every author has editors) and perhaps even a second attorney Atty. Bob Ritchie who was very much a part of the new design and has more experience in this field than most every other lawyer in the state. Bob is the former Town Counsel in Amherst. The Assistant Town Administrator has been working diligently to put together this presentation and we are all very excited.

Some of the steps which have been recommended forcefully at the trainings I have attended are, get rid of what you don’t need (something we had started last year), get better organized (continuing), pushing information to the website (continuing) and makes sure everyone knows their responsibilities (work in progress). We will be calling an internal meeting of Records Access Officers (RAO) in the next two weeks, honing our strategy. All this to be better prepared than the average community and eventually be fully competent to react to any request for information.

Acting Lieutenant PD, After a prescribed process Sgt. Christopher Luscomb was appointed to the position of Acting Lieutenant at the South Hadley PD. Lt. Luscomb began his career with the SHPD in 1988 and has distinguished himself throughout his service.

He will be relieving the Chief of some of the “double duty” he has been performing since former Chief Labrie’s retirement. The PD operation has been busy as of late, including some significant cooperative

work with other area departments to quickly solve a “drug deal gone bad” on Amherst Road in a few short days. The incident was reported in the papers recently.

Symposium of Human Understanding, Vice Chair Etelman and I have started to proceed to the next steps related to this initiative. Which will engage public safety (PD, FD(s), EMD etc.) to see what situations they find themselves in which could be enhanced by a better understanding of communicating with a diverse population. The things they see and deal with capture the breadth of diversity age, race, religion, culture, economic, different abilities and more all of which come in to play on each call. We want understand what training or information may better prepare the service providers when they open that door to the next house.

We all appreciate the work these public servants perform and we need to continue to work to make the proper investment in the most important tool ...knowledge.

Departmental Budget Discussions, Most departments have been scheduled and some have already come for a first visit to discuss the FY 2018 budget needs of their respective departments. We also continue to discuss the FY 17 PBEs during these meetings. I am very lucky to be working so many professional and attentive municipal professionals. It certainly helps operations to run smooth.

These meetings will continue through January and beyond, we are making great progress in using more and more technology to assist our functions, but we still have a long ways to go in that regard. There are no new increase ion positions anticipated, we will continue to look at streaming and reduction of duplicative action.

Special Town Meeting Warrant, The “draft” Town Meeting Warrant is part of you packet this week. It is a very rich document (sarcasm) which beyond some of the financial and acceptance articles contains some interesting warrants among the twenty one articles.

Some are really no change at all like how we do the accounting for PEG Access and then there are others like Article 20 which is a major progressive step towards protecting the environment. The BOH is supporting this article and it is interesting how times ages some concepts like wine. This was unheard of a decade ago, but now communities across the country and across the state are seeing how this benefits communities. It will be a interesting debate to listen to, if there is one.

The appropriation article for the Ted Belsky project will be the first article to be considered and I know many people would like to speak to not only the importance of the article, but also the man whose memory it honors.

TH/PD Elevators, I have had my up and downs with these elevators (see what I did there). We have received the latest bids for the elevator upgrades endorsed by Capital Planning and the Selectboard. But over the year since the estimate was presented costs and requirements have risen significantly. The end result is we are about \$13,000 short. If the appropriation for additional funds to the Public Building Maintenance Fund is approved we should be able to supplement the bonded amount and get the project done.

The Police Department budget has had a distinct odor related to off gassing of the hydraulic oil. It does not present any health threats which is good to hear. When Eagle Elevator inspected the hydraulic oil storage and it was determined the actual oil needs to be swapped out, as it may be causing damage to

some of the pumps (or could likely in the future). The best course of action is to address the problem and not wait, I have so directed the Chief to do so with our contractor Eagle Elevator. It will be paid for through the Public Building Maintenance account.

Thank you for your support and patience and if there are any additional questions please let me know and I will do my best to address them in short order.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael J Sullivan
Town of South Hadley, Administrator