



June 2, 2017

Honorable Selectboard,

Please accept this abridged accounting of activities and initiatives which have been occupying my time and the time of other public employees during the past weeks. Thank you in advance for your attention and interest.

Age Friendly Communities, there continues to be progress on “Age Friendly South Hadley”. Leslie Hennessey COA Director, Carol Constant (Loomis Communities) Kathy Bowler (Mass Elder Affairs Western Mass Director) and I met this week to review what we heard at the May Conference in Boston which we all attended.

A key component part of the conference addressed the importance of understanding that Age Friendly Communities is a way of thinking and planning so a community will look at all ages and generations when considering any planning or projects. It is somewhat similar to the “Complete Streets” philosophy when constructing streets, sidewalks or developing new sub-divisions. In both case you may not be able to accommodate all facets with in your means, but making sure you consider the elements can produce better plans and/or projects.

We have three main ideas for moving this forward in South Hadley, first we will be meeting with AARP Age Friendly Communities Coordinator Valerie Spahn as a group, second we will create a short presentation about the project and attempt to schedule meetings with key boards and commissions, (including Recreations Commission, Planning Board, Selectboard, Bike Walk Committee, School Committee, Conservation Commission etc.) to explain the Age Friendly movement, the main objectives. Look for ideas from the various stakeholders and catalogue programs or processes they have already adopted which would relate to the project. We will also like to meet with some external partners, (i.e. SH/G Chamber, NHN, PVPA, PVTA, PVPC, MHC, FD(s)) municipal departments (DPW, Library, Police) together more support and understanding. The third leg of the wobbly stool is we are considering a “September Saturday” Public Forum on the issue and invite the community to hear what it is about and ideas they may have to promote the concept.

As some of you may recall we first started discussing the importance and interest in this national movement when Selectboard member returned from the Annual January MMA Conference (2015). It is clear new initiatives need a great deal of runway to take off, especially ones which are more ethereal to some degree. Projects which are easy to visualize, like gatherings, food drives or barn raisings seem to be easier to rally people around, projects like this which attempt behavioral change or how we re-think

accepted norms/practices is always far more difficult. To have them hit their targets they are a marathon not a sprint.

Fire Notification System Upgrade, we have completed the installation of the system as agreed upon by Fire District 1 prior to the start of the project. The final inspection was done this week with the electrical contractor who was part of planning, design and present when we did a pre-project walk through of Town Hall, along with Fire District 1 personnel.

Fire District personnel informed the contractor the installation was insufficient and would require numerous additional devices to be installed before they would sign off. The extra work would add and estimated \$24K to the project. ATA Wolowicz at my instruction has asked for the additional requests be and violations resulting from the insufficiencies be sent to Administration in writing from the Fire District. It would be imprudent for us to move forward with any project or consider the demand until such time we have in writing what is being requested.

Elevator Upgrade Project, this project continues and again we are doing our best to comply with increasing requests for alterations to the original plan from the Fire District. Between the two projects we will be spending close to \$170K in making the 100 plus year old building safer. It is our solemn intent to do our best within reason to keep people safe when visiting any public building.

We apologize to anyone who has experienced any inconvenience. We continue to encourage anyone who is challenged by the elevator being out of commission (when it is), to please let us know and we will do everything in our powers to provide some relief.

Property Auction, We have tentatively schedule an auction for July 19 for 16 Ludlow Street, the East Street property previously auctioned which although the bid fell through generated a great deal of interest. We are confident the East Street parcel interest will regenerate at this auction and hopefully we will be able to return some funds to the municipality.

We are presently looking at parcels on Fairview and School to see if they can be included in the auction. In both case if they cannot be we may have to seek interest from abutters, which is a longer process and certainly does not normally have the return an auction of RFP may provide.

The Bardwell Street Library property continues to be a maze of legalese, surprises and unexpected challenges, but it seems realistic by the end of July we may be able to divest ourselves of that property. One Canal Street is actually moving a little faster and we could see our way to closing on the sale in the next two weeks ...let hope!

Gaylord Library Staffing (Becca Bastron, Emily Gallik), conditional offers of employment have been offered to two of the over 50 applicants for the part-time positions at Gaylord. The GML present Children's Librarian Emily Gallik applied for the position and clearly was the best candidate according to the vetting panel and was recommended to me for appointment. I proceeded with a conditional offer without further review confident the panel made the best choice. She is a graduate of Ithaca College, and is working towards a dual Masters in Library Science and one in Children's Literature from Simmons College. The master's program is actually offered on the MHC campus which makes for an easy commute.

There was no applicant from GML present staff for the Branch Librarian. However, again there was a number of strong candidates who applied. The Branch Librarian position was vetted by a panel and

Becca Bastron was recommended and has been given a conditional offer of employment. She has an undergraduate degree from San Jose State and a Master's Degree Library and Information Sciences from UCal Santa Cruz. She is presently working in the Springfield Library System at the Forest Park Branch. This is a very exciting time for library services in the Town of South Hadley and one I feel will produce a stronger system for all residents.

If these offers are accepted the candidates will need to submit to a criminal background check and other standard reviews before starting. They also will be subjected to new employee processes, including a six month probationary period. These are union positions.

Building Department, I am sorry to report we have lost the services of the part time Local Inspector Joseph Latronica, he was a pleasure to work with and added to the stability of that department. He has taken a position as the Goshen Building Commissioner. His new job is five minutes from his house in Ashland. We have already begun to look for a replacement.

These are not easy positions to fill as the certification requirements, along with the challenges of an "inspectional" position normally provides people would rather be librarians. We are reaching out to the state, but the problem is universal throughout the region. The Building Commissioner and staff will continue to do what they can to fill the void.

ACO, on another employment related note, we have brought Mac Mailhott out of a short retirement to become the Animal Control Officer. This is another difficult position for any city or town, but I hope Mac will be able to do 37 years as ACO, as he did as a police officer. This is a contract position with no benefits.

I would like to thank Sharon Hart who for the last three months has jumped in to fill the void left by the departure of the former ACO. Sharon has been out picking up dogs at midnight at two in the morning, has kept dogs until their owners could be located, worked with the police and citizens on related matters without a complaint and with her usual good humor. Thank you Sharon!

Regional Finance Project; I had the opportunity to attend the inaugural meeting in Hadley with our regional partner and PVPC about how South Hadley may all benefit from a regional finance director or municipal financial analyst.

This project is being funded through a DLTA grant from the state. There was no blanket solution happened upon at this first meeting, but there certainly were no shortage of interesting ideas. I am sure there will be more to follow.

Thank you for last weeks' vacation opportunity. It allowed me to get some domestic work done and to think up some ideas for us to explore. It is a pleasure to work for South Hadley

Respectfully submitted,

Michael J Sullivan

Town Administrator, South Hadley