



August 29, 2013

Honorable Selectboard;

Please accept this as an abridged accounting of recent activities of the Town Administrator on your behalf and related to various projects and initiatives.

Hampshire County Group Insurance Trust; Recently both ATA Wolowicz and I had the opportunity to meet with our Group Health Insurance Representative Joseph Shea. I was frank in my conversation in explaining that it was our intent to proceed with forming a South Hadley Municipal Insurance Advisory Committee to use as a tool to educate union representatives, retirees, non-union employees and to facilitate possible future changes including carriers. At this time I want to state we are not making any changes to what is provided to employees, however an IAC, as prescribed by state law will give us a mechanism to navigate the marketplace and determine if we are receiving the appropriate value for our investment.

This \$4.3 million dollar is one of the largest municipal departments in that regard. I believe we are working towards several controls and implementing strategies which I expect will produce a modest level of savings. To say there is more to consider would be a significant understatement, but we are moving towards complying with all the various requirements and performing the due diligence necessary to comprehensively look at the cost of health insurance.

Harper's Payroll Service: Harper's has begun the planning stage to prepare for a migration to their cloud platform. This phase will take several months and we do not expect a full implementation until January 1, 2013. Again this along with other changes will result in a system with substantially greater controls and therefore savings to the town. Like any change it will not be easy and there will be some slippage, but I assure you we will be in a better position at the end of the process.

We will be holding a key meeting with stakeholder personnel on September 10 to discuss what is expected of Harper's and what is expected of us as we move forward.

Pancake Breakfast; Congratulations to Superintendent Nick Young for a very successful "back to school" experience for teachers, staff and students. I admire his ability to coordinate the various needs and systems while making it seem easy.

The Pancake Breakfast was well attended and thankfully no one reported any food poisoning considering the servers who were drafted into service. I am calling for a by-law to require School Committee members to wear hair nets at all of their televised meetings. It was great to see people from the Fire District, Police Department, Municipal Offices and the schools breaking bread ...err pancakes.

Progress on the roof and related projects have had few bumps in the road, but with Building Commissioner Church intervening to ensure safety and the cooperation of the schools in that regard added to the smooth opening. Best of luck to all!

South Hadley Falls Neighborhood Association; Gillian Woldorf was gracious to meet with me and discuss the group she leads. She also invited me to their next meeting on Saturday September 7th at the South Hadley library.

There was much agreement on some of the issues that the town faces in regards to blighted and decaying structures in the South Hadley Falls area, many which are being addressed (FibreMark, Texon, 50-52 School Street). We also discussed the Carew Street property and the challenge of balancing use for a community garden and use in the future to bring development and investment to the Falls.

We also discussed how we need to explore other transportation options for persons living in the Falls and the want to create economic options in the neighborhood, such as food coop, as suggested by Selectboard Member Brezinsky and others. I was particularly appreciative of Ms. Woldorf's understanding that communal change is not a sprint, but a very slow marathon.

Holyoke Gas and Electric, Paul Ducheny; The HG&E are anxious to move on the Texon project as Mr. Ducheny expressed in a recent meeting. I was also very happy to hear from the SH Library Director that working with our neighbors across the Connecticut has been a professional pleasure.

He did indicate to me that time was running out and the "official" letter from ACOE indicating that all the dots and crosses have been made is needed, sooner than later, to remove the Texon Building. It has been a couple of weeks now that we first heard from both Congressman Neal's Office (thank you again to that office) and the ACOE liaison that a final determination was forthcoming in a formal letter which would allow the demolition within the plan as submitted and revised, we await that missive.

Adult Task Force, Youth Commission, Youth Commission Director; This week we performed an exit interview with the outgoing Director as part of the task of puzzling together the past, present and future needs of the Youth Commission. I want to personally thank Barry Waite who has been exceptionally helpful in smoothing the waters and giving solid perspective on the position and needs. There was some concern when I informed the parties that clearly with the change in the position of the Town Administrator's role in town government it will be I who is tasked with appointing the next Director. I assured all parties that I am more than willing to be cooperative in finding a good fit, but that I also need to ensure that fit is good for our management capacity and structure.

We will meet again next week and with Barry's levelheadedness and positive approach I am confident we will be able to gain consensus, but ultimately I will do what I see as best for South Hadley. In conversations with the Adult Task Force Chair we discussed a feasible and executable sense of an interim plan which likely will lead to a longer term solution. I am hopeful there will be more to present at the next SB meeting.

Landfill Update; There is continued dialog about both closure process and the possibility presented by BOH member Cordes at a recent management meeting for possibly locating an anaerobic digester at the Solid Waste facility to meet a need to dispose of food waste in the future which will be mandated for large producers in 2014. This new science is in a very infantile stage according to some industry insiders, but has great promise.

We will be looking at the possibility of changing access routes to the landfill to solve some of the neighborhood concerns and I will be spending some time to understand both the negatives and positives the benefits and the challenges of anaerobic digestion which use microbes and organisms to breakdown food waste ...anybody else hungry.

IGM; I had the opportunity to meet with the liaison for IGM recently and discuss a myriad of issues concerning both the maintenance manager and the town. Mr. Fontaine presented his position in regards to the future of the course and we discussed some of the capital planning that he was undertaking with the Golf Advisory Board. I inquired about cart path restrictions, use of the driving range and the general conditions at the course. He had reasonable solutions and replies to all the inquiries. Mr. Fontaine seemed positive about all aspects of the operation and was very complementary towards the course manager Doug Juhasz.

Mr. Fontaine assured me that he would supply the course manager with a complete accounting of the “lightning strike” pump repair and in reviewing the costs verbally quoted it was clear that all cost (approximately \$31,000) were properly procured and well below the prescribed thresholds. An insurance claim has been filed and we await their determination.

Laura and I are presently working on a revised “Pothole Claim” process, beginning our prep in anticipation of a Special Fall Town Meeting and a review of the local liquor license regulations. We hope that these will be presented in the September and October to the Selectboard. Thank you for your support and guidance, it is critical in navigating these changes.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael J. Sullivan

South Hadley Town Administrator