

Ira Brezinsky, Chair
Andrea Miles, Vice Chair
Jeff Cyr, Clerk
Sarah Etelman
Bruce Forcier

Michael J. Sullivan
Town Administrator

September 28, 2018

Honorable Selectboard Member:

Please accept this report as an abridged accounting of activities I and the hardworking town employees have been addressing in South Hadley Town Hall on your behalf.

This has been an abbreviated period between meetings, I will do my best to reflect that fact in my remarks.

Fall Municipal Update; Char Ira Brezinsky, SB Member Jeff Cyr and I attended the MAPC Fall Update at Holy Cross College in Worcester. It was day packed with information about best practices. The conference focus was on climate resiliency, housing, economic development and innovation. Governor Baker, Lieutenant Governor Polito and most of the administration secretariats were in attendance for the event.

There were Mayors, PHDs, CDC Execs, RPA Directors and a host of others populating the panels, speaking proudly and passionately about their accomplishments. I attended "Housing Strategies" and "Economic Development".

In the ED workshop, I was very much interested in how North Adams has used the arts to create an impressive change in that 16,000 population community. Galleries to festivals to public displays to an eclectic retro motel, art was at the heart of the movement. This is certainly not the first time we have seen the creative economy be unleashed on the urban demons of blight and disinvestment to benefit a city or town.

The Housing Strategies focused very heavily on aging communities and the need for suitable and adaptable housing for seniors. The Governor had mentioned in his remarks one of the challenges for growing the economy was the cost of housing and how it was stunting the necessary growth in the work force. The findings by Mass Housing Partnership for population trends is very interesting. <https://www.mhp.net/>

63 Bridge Street ; I am aware there has been several complaints about the condition of this commercial property at Lamb and Bridge. I have been insistent with the property owner requesting he clean the property up and bring it into a presentable state.

This is a key intersection and would make an appreciable difference in how the area looks. There are more cars than allowed and the lack of effort is apparent. In a letter to the owner I

have stated I would lobby the SB heavily not to renew this license if some minimum level improvement does not occur by December 1.

There can be and are other properties we need to address, this property is presenting an opportunity now and we will continue to gain compliance at a variety of other properties. The bottom-line this is in the best interest of the Town of South Hadley to address properties when we can give our bandwidth.

FY 2020 Budget ; It is that time of the year when we need to address the upcoming fiscal year budget. I will be sending out the annual guidelines on or about October 15th, the request will include a directive to review and update Capital Planning requests for projects, consider costs and review revenues for those departments which generate funds.

The economy has been very robust, but we must hold on for a period of inflation. To position the municipality for that seeming inevitability there will have to be a re-doubling of our frugality. Since 85% plus of our budget is personnel we will have to be creative on that side of the budget to weather this storm.

I still believe the Town of South Hadley is in a very strong financial position, but if we are, and I suggest we should and can forge ahead with an aggressive investment in the town, then we must be creative in delivering services.

Special Town Meeting ; I have discussed with the Chair the need to consider a Special Town Meeting. There are a number of budgetary adjustments I will recommend you consider to supporting, all of these issues were uncertain at the time of the budget process.

There are a number of retirements which may cause some additional money being placed in the Compensation Fund, The Ledges budget needs be adjusted moving appropriated finds from personnel and retained earnings to support the service contract. The new inter-municipal agreement with NoHo for Sealers of Weights and Measures services will require a budget shift from "personal services" to "other expense", as well. We are working to ensure these changes are done with in previous appropriations to the greatest extent possible. I will also recommend an adjustment to our expected revenue from the state Unrestricted Local Government Aid was slightly higher.

A few articles will which will require additional funds will be the repairs to the sewer line in Town Hall which has caused the basement flooding and damage the under carriage of the elevator according to the latest state inspection. We will ask for a \$25K match in order to apply for a grant to develop a dog park. I will try to keep you and the Town Meeting Members informed about other issues or articles which may be appropriate as I become aware.

The date I will be requesting the SB to set the STM will be November 7, the day after the State Election. I have spoken with the Town Clerk and she understands the reasoning why this date makes sense. I do expect it will be a reasonably small warrant. The meeting needs to be held after Unreserved Free Cash is certified (late October) and before the tax rate is set to allow an adjustment of revenues, mix in holidays and winter blowing our way, it seems like the date works.

Service Kiosk ; We are very excited about taking delivery of our new service kiosk. IT Coordinator James Doolittle has been working on this for some time and it has just arrived. Do not rush down to Town Hall to apply for permits, pay with a credit card and print-out the permit (automatically printing will not apply to all permits, sorry), get property information, or



a host of other features, as it is not yet installed or operational yet. It will take several weeks before we fire this machine up, but at last it is here. I am sure I will be talking about it in the future. It will be placed just outside the auditorium. This will alleviate in some case when offices are closed for training, sickness or other issues. Depending on the success and after we are more familiar with the expected glitches we may asking the SB to support another kiosk in the PD lobby for 24/7 Town Hall service, but we want see if we can get this one to walk before we start to run. Our own R2D2. Oh yeah the phones have been delivered!

Thank you for your support and attention,

Respectfully submitted,

Michael J. Sullivan
Town of South Hadley, Administrator