

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

Michael J. Sullivan
Town Administrator

October 4, 2018

Honorable Selectboard,

It seems as though I have not penned a TA Report in days. This is certainly shaping up to be a very busy period. This report will briefly capture some of the issues and projects which have been occupying my time, as well as others in town hall, throughout the last two weeks.

Early Voting, Elections: Just a reminder that the Town Clerk's Office has absentee ballots available for those requesting one. Clerk Hamlin reports there has been a steady flow of absentee ballots and some very successful voter registration efforts. This suggests there is a great deal of interest in the upcoming Gubernatorial election.

As a reminder, there is an excellent opportunity to *vote early* in South Hadley beginning at 8 a.m. Monday, Oct. 22 and continuing Oct. 23, 24, 25, 26 (no voting Saturday or Sunday) Oct. 29, 30, 31, and Nov. 1 each day until 5 p.m., and on Nov. 2 from 8 a.m. until noon, in the Town Clerk's Office (Town Hall, 116 Main Street). Please take advantage of this convenient opportunity.

There will be designated voter parking on Pleasant Street from Oct. 22 through Nov. 2, and we encourage voters to use the new "Visitor" parking near the PD side of town hall

Special Town Meeting: As you can see from your packet and as I suggested at the last Selectboard meeting, I will be requesting the SB call a Special Town Meeting on Nov. 7 at 6 p.m. in the town hall auditorium. This STM will feature 12 articles - eleven of which are seeking funding and one to allow the SB to enter into a lease or license of land related to the proposed dog park.

While the articles seem to be nothing out of the ordinary from a fiscal point of view, this Town Meeting will be quite different from others with the loss of Moderator Ryan. The town clerk has researched how other communities, mostly recently West Bridgewater, have handled similar situations.

The clerk will open the Town Meeting once there is a quorum, and then ask for the chair of the Selectboard to lead the STM in the Pledge of Allegiance, read the preamble to the warrant, and then call for nominations for a moderator (for this STM only). If there is

only one person nominated at the close of nominations by the clerk, then the nominee can be elected by a simple majority voice vote of Town Meeting. If there are multiple nominations, then numbered ballots will be distributed. Once they are completed, they will be counted and the moderator will then preside.

In West Bridgewater, there were no nominees either by consequence or design. In that case, the assistant town clerk would become the clerk for the Special Town Meeting and the clerk would preside as the moderator over this STM.

There will be a TA Review and an Appropriations Committee hearing jointly on Oct. 30 in the Selectboard Meeting Room beginning at 5:30 p.m. It will be broadcast, and the recording will be played back on a schedule to be determined. I hope as many Town Meeting Members are able to attend or view the hearing/review as possible. I think everyone agrees the success of our Town Meetings over the last few years has been relied on the incredible engagement of Town Meeting Members - thank you!

Waste Water Treatment Plant Notice of Intent: South Hadley WWTP Manager Melissa Labonte, DPW Superintendent Jim Reidy and I recently met to discuss the recent annual filing for the WWTP and sewer system NOI with the DEP. We are fortunate to have Melissa leading the WWTP team and overseeing this process and filing. While Jim is very versed in sewer-related topics, he is Norton Dance when Ms. Labonte starts explaining the DEP process. I wish I was even up to the Norton Dance level. (Google it).

The concerning issue surrounding this, and why I am bringing it up, is the DEP requirements start to ramp up throughout the next few years - including but not limited to: community messaging relative to separation and other system functions, outfall identification/mapping, policy development and review, increased training, catchment surveys and more for both storm water and sanitary sewer systems.

There are some significant technical, mapping, and monitoring exercises which will likely need to be contracted throughout the coming years. These will be caught in upcoming budgets and we will address them in the most appropriate long term and affordable approach required. In this report I am simply making you aware this is looming.

ADA Self-evaluation and Transition Plan: The Americans with Disabilities Act is a civil rights law from the federal government. As such, the penalties for wanton neglect or witlessness of the requirements of the act have significant penalties. The standards and rewards related to the ADA is increasing.

South Hadley has taken steps to be compliant and continues to renovate and construct facilities and amenities. The accessible trail as part of the Bachelor Brook Nature Trail, the sidewalk improvements, acceptance of the "Complete Streets Program," and putting more services online all signify that South Hadley has not been negligent and does work to be an inclusive, accessible community.

However, it is becoming clear as the standards for compliance are being ratcheted up that we need an ADA Self-Evaluation and Accessibility Plan for South Hadley. Do not be fooled by "self-evaluation." This will require some significant capability outside of our field of expertise. Most communities are having this work done by subject experts, and I do not know of one that is truly doing an internal process. My guess is some of the larger cities will be able to do this plan internally through their compliance office. (We do not have a compliance office).

There are several grant opportunities which will require a certified plan in the next year to be able to apply for grants. I also think this will help with Capital Planning, and at the end of the day it is the right thing to do for an inclusive community. There is a request on the STM to fund this compliance study. I hope it receives the necessary support to fund the project.

MOLA Update: The Town of South Hadley has answered the preliminary questions through the law firm of Merrigan and Merrigan. As you know, this process only cost us staff time addressing the requests or gathering information. The annual claim is about \$130K for the last two years, we will see where it goes.

The case is spreading and more communities are hopping on. We can also amend the claim if we discover more costs related to either municipal interdiction or education about opioid use.

Website Update: Executive Assistant to Administration Kristin Maher has been making a great deal of behind-the-scenes progress. It has been a slow process and no change of pace is in sight. The process is laborious in respect to having to go page by page, and then often having to do research to make sure something has not changed affecting the content.

Some of the material on the website was migrated more than three years ago, and it is apparent on some pages there has not been an update since. We are still looking for photos which represent the town. It makes it more difficult if there are people who are easily recognizable in the pictures. Kristin recently took video of the TA out on his VBS headed to the Old Firehouse Museum to take a picture of the new doors.



There have been meetings with our web contractor CivicPlus, color palettes chosen, and there will be some functional graphic changes include in the refresh. Thank you for your continued support, input and patience with this project.

Old Firehouse Museum: They call that a segue in the business. The replacement of the doors at the OFHM has been completed. The new doors are insulated and made of a durable composite material. The Historic Commission chose a solid panel (no windows) to intentionally block light which may damage material over time.



The OLFH fund was entirely expended (\$3,500) and the balance came from the Public Building Maintenance Fund. The previous doors were not very old (10-12 years I am told), but were no longer able to be repaired due to rot and insect infestation. This will also assist in heat retention and sound proofing. I want to thank Diane Laroche for all her help with this project, as well as her dedication to the OFHM.

Symposium of Understanding: Thank you to Selectboard Member Sarah Etelman and Pat Greenfield for working with me on the symposium. It will be held in the town hall

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auditorium beginning at 6 p.m. on Oct. 18. This forum is intended to allow the public to express what is needed in a police chief for South Hadley in 2019. As the appointing authority, and with consideration given, the Selectboard must approve said appointment. The guidance provided by this meeting will be extremely helpful.

The vetting panel will interview the most qualified candidates, as reviewed by the assistant town administrator. That panel will be provided with suggestions and needs expressed by the symposium, and other comments sent to me or the ATA. Realizing we also are governed by the number of candidates applying for the position, we will seek the best candidate. South Hadley has a great department already in place. I am sure with the right leader it will remain a model department. Having worked with Chief Labrie and Chief Parentela, it is not hard to understand why the department functions so well. Big shoes to fill.

KYT Green Communities Forum: The SEC was invited to host a forum on Green Communities at the library for "Know Your Town." The SEC asked me to attend and I accepted. Selectboard Chair Ira Brezinsky was also in attendance. Michael Beauchmin, John Howard and Bob Berwick did an excellent presentation about the criteria for becoming a "Green Community" under MassDOER regulations, a history of past attempts to join, and progress made in respect to energy efficiencies in South Hadley public buildings already in place. They also spoke of opportunities going forward.

SEC Chair Bob Berwick also introduced the very interesting topic of sustainability. He spoke about how we might measure sustainability as an indicator of quality life in South Hadley. Measuring the "*viable, livable and equitable*" aspects of the town might be able to assist in planning and promoting SoHa. I hope there is more consideration and discussion on this very important and forward-thinking topic.

Community Compact IT Grant: Congratulations to our IT Coordinator James Doolittle. He recently applied (successfully) for a \$17K grant to up-version our ViewPermit system. The latest version will allow us to increase our capabilities and coordinate the process of applying for permits online. Thank you to Associate Assessor Melissa Ribold for her assistance on this grant, as well.

Thank you, as always, for your support and patience on all matters South Hadley!

Respectfully submitted,
Michael J. Sullivan
Town Administrator, South Hadley

