



March 13, 2014

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.

**Fibermark:** The staging for Fibermark Demolition is being put in place at this writing. The permit has been issued, the Verizon lines were removed (thanks to Representative Scibak) and the deconstruction will begin by March 24<sup>th</sup> or sooner. It will provide us with another opportunity to rebuild the Falls.

The Texon on building is at a very delicate stage and Jay-Mor is doing everything to protect the workers, protect the environment and meet the deadline of April 1<sup>st</sup>. Man and forces beyond have colluded to make this a difficult task. The riverside wall is the most difficult and dangerous of the entire process. It is not feasible to bring in additional cranes and the final wall must be virtually disassembled brick by brick.

The construct of the designed park is expected to follow as soon as the demo team is moving off site.

**Patriot Care:** I participated in a conference call with the communities across the Commonwealth staff and Director van Hunen. The highlights of the discussion was that all applicants will be reviewed additionally before moving from their "provisional" status to the final charter. There is an extensive verification process on-going with Medical Use of Medical Marijuana Program. It gives a citizen great confidence as one witnesses the diligence with which the state is pursuing this initiative.

The other development is the Town of South Hadley has been approach by another group which received a provisional license in the first round. They are interested in exploring the possibility of moving their cultivation to South Hadley as well. They would be willing to commit to a HCA as well.

**Berkshire Hill Music Academy:** Town Clerk Carlene Hamlin who has been a friend and advocate of BHMA for some time, coordinated a visit for me to meet with the Executive Director Michelle Theroux. Carlene was kind enough to accompany me on the trip which proved to be very informative.

The school houses 23 residents and works to fully develop skills in individuals with non-traditional learning styles. Some have bravura that express itself in music. The mission is to unlock the physical and/or developmental shackles as much as possible through music.

This is valuable resource far beyond the South Hadley borders, our inquiry was to how we can assist BHMA in their work, increase the communities understanding of their work and involve the residents of BHMA more robustly. The directors asked if there were some workplace opportunities paid or in some cases unpaid for the students, I let Michelle know that we would review and consider our workflow to see if we could accommodate some students.

**Mount Holyoke Finance Director Shannon Gurek:** Selectboard member was kind enough to coordinate a meeting between the new FD at Mount Holyoke. We had the opportunity to discuss the college's needs and where we could assist. We had a good conversation around transportation including the Five College Bus Service, bike paths, PVTA and pedestrian ways.

Like all South Hadley residents the convenience of the market on Newton Street is acutely missed. Frank and I initiated the conversation of a Coop Market and asked that MHC consider how they may participate in such a venture. All in all MHC continues to provide jobs, commerce and a positive atmosphere for the town and the region.

**Council on Aging "Get out the Vote":** Town Clerk Carlene Hamlin and I did some election outreach, of course everyone asked me what I was running for, to which I replied the "border". We encouraged the attendees to vote in the April election, handed out the reminder magnets. The Town Clerk is also doing outreach at the high school, library and through boards and commissions.

The Clerk and I have discussed some changes in election staffing, as the technical understanding changes for stave increase significantly there has to be greater training, which makes considering basic tech skills more important. You may have seen the new in-house voting booths being constructed in the Town Clerk's Office to accommodate the change in federal election laws which will come into play three years from now for the Presidential election where polling places will be asked to accommodate voters for five days before the election. Yes, as it stands now we would have to be open on Saturday and Sunday, but we will not develop a final strategy until the regulations are promulgated.

I appreciate the Clerk is attempting to increase the voting and approaching it with old and new ways. As the SB has always encouraged, more involvement helps provide a healthy democratic community.

**Pyrolysis @ Vetrolysis;** Recently a group of interested South Hadley residents and public were extend an invitation to observe a pyrolysis system under construction in a former detergent factory in Holyoke. Michael Garjian the managing partner of Vetrolysis, LLC read a newspaper article that South Hadley was researching the underlying science of pyrolysis, given that he had worked with me before on a bio-fuel project, he picked up the phone and asked if I would like to visit. I asked if I could extend to the offer to some others that may be interested and he agreed.

Selectboard member Frank DeToma and Board of Health member Suzanne Cordes came to mind as people who had both a deep interest and had an understanding of the process. Town Engineer Dan Murphy and Superintendent Jim Reidy in respect to their positions along with Town Meeting member and "renewable energy" advocate Christine Archambault were invited, as well. All arrived at the obscure hard to find location and were greeted by a passionate and knowledgeable host.

Michael Garjian was not trying to sell us a system, not trying to profit or did he ask to be a consultant, my observation was he is as passionate about pyrolysis as I am about ice cream. The difference is I have no idea how ice cream is created, he knew the science of this process from top to bottom and displayed a passion that was admirable.

If there are others who would like to go for the "3 credit course" on the science of pyrolysis I would certainly be happy to reach-out to Mr. Garjian. To be clear the type of feed stock that is being used at

Vetrolysis is a nuanced difference from a trash to energy process, That said, if managed properly the by-products from energy to char are worthy of consideration.

**Time and Attendance:** Assistant Town Administrator Jen Wolowicz and Payroll, Benefits Coordinator Julie Gentile, IT Coordinator Jamie Doolittle and I met with Bernie Keppler from Harper's to review time and attendance systems available to communities. It is our intent to have a more comprehensive time and attendance system in place by July 1, 2014.

As cost of labor increases and "time on task" becomes more and more critical, having a system in place which can monitor and record time is critical. Some of the areas we discussed were relative to how the employee will document their time in a database and how the supervisor will sign off, how people who have out of office (i.e. inspectors, drivers, IT, DPW supervisors) assignments on a regular basis sign out and most importantly how "time owed" can be accurately assessed and tracked.

It is very important that we tighten some of those issues, not only for the lost hours of productivity, but there is growing importance to know when people are at work or not from workmen's comp to exposure to liability. The systems we are looking at should will not be intrusive or complicated, but a benefit to manage in the new millennium.

**Bonding:** Treasurer Baldini, Town Accountant William Sutton and I met with our Bond Advisor David Eisenthal to discuss the future bond needs for the Town of South Hadley. Nick Macy and Ron Rickey from Arcadis attended a portion of the meeting to present cash flow schedules for the Plains School. We also discussed the final needs for borrowing at the Library. The strategy seems unchanged for us to continue to lower our originally projected cost by using bank qualified loans, more to come.

There was also a conversation about the sensibility of using a rolling debt schedule to meet some of the large capital needs. David will be crunching some numbers, but indicated that many communities are developing policies which utilize short term borrowing funded strictly from taxation to meet the large project needs. I believe this is a way to move ahead with investment in projects and spur private investment while remaining fiscally responsible.

**Budget:** The (still) draft budget will be posted on the web by Monday noon, there will be a Finance Committee meeting Monday evening where some of the adjustments will be discussed and the school committee budget will be presented. The major changes are as follows:

- Revenue increased to reflect the latest changes in the House/Senate Budget for Unrestricted Government Aid (\$60,000).
- The increases to Union positions reflective of the MOU and in anticipation of a ratification and signed agreement (\$156,000)
- Further reduction in the Health Care line item (\$40,000)
- Reduction of Capital Stabilization (\$10,000)
- Reduction of OPED (\$32,000)
- Reduction of Stabilization (\$5,000)
- Increase of FICA (\$5,000)

We are continuing to work on methods to communicate the budget intent and encouraging people to come in and make an appointment to discuss their ideas or concerns. The bottom line is even after a significant impact the budget is still has a small balance surplus with no reduction of services.

Thank you for your continued support and guidance and please call me with any concerns or questions. I have asked Superintendent Reidy to supply me with a “white paper” for Tuesday on the progress of the landfill to share with you and the public.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael J. Sullivan

Town Administrator, South Hadley