



December 12, 2013

Honorable Selectboard;

Please accept this as an abridged version of the work being performed in South Hadley Town Hall by myself and more often by other dedicated employees. I particularly wanted to thank everyone involved in the very successful bond issuance David Eisenthal from Unibank Financial Advisors, Beth Greenblatt from Beacon, South Hadley Treasurer Deb Baldini, Town Accountant William Sutton and all others related to this successful process. I also would like to thank the Selectboard for their roll and support, I hope the carpal tunnel is clearing up from all the signage.

Snow and Ice Account; Annually the Selectboard must vote to authorize the DPW to deficit spend in respect to keeping the roads cleared during winter months. The Snow and Ice account has already been impacted by purchases of salt and sand and necessary tools from the anticipated weather. To avoid a last minute panic I have asked Superintendent Reidy to submit a request at the upcoming meeting. My reasoning is since there are no scheduled meetings during the next two weeks there is a likelihood of several storms which could quickly deplete the FY 14 appropriation.

With approximately 20% of the \$106K already spent, two elongated weekend storms could drain the rest. I would suggest that we allow an increase of an additional \$100,000, avoid last minute hysteria and whatever is not used will not impact a future appropriation. I would be the happiest person in SoHa if nothing is spent ...but it seems by the time I write this note we will have spent more of the account.

MMPPA; Assistant Town Administrator Jennifer Wolowicz and I attended a meeting of the Massachusetts Municipal Personnel Professionals Association in Charlton recently. It was a good overview of how the Affordable Care Act is changing the landscape for municipalities. The real budgetary challenge is how we will cope with non-traditional long term replacement workers. Anyone who works for us full time for over three months may be entitled to some health benefits.

It is not clear yet as to what will be allowed for these workers, but it is wise for the "town" and the schools to seek creative ways lessening the impact. It will require some out of the box thinking ...something I enjoy.

Ice Skating at the Beachgrounds; First I would like to thank Ted Hebert from Teddy Bear Pool, one call to this South Hadley business and he was on it like you read about! It is refreshing to hear in this day and age "however we can help". Parks Director Bill Simard was equally eager to make this happen with support from his manager Jim Reidy and cooperation from Rec Director extraordinaire Andy Rogers we will have skating January 17th through February 23. I hope that everyone spreads the word about this latest offering.

Jeff Cyr and District 1 also have been very cooperative and generous. We will hopefully be able to plan a winter event around the rink. The Falls Frozen Fest may be an idea or Cold Day at the Beach-grounds might work. Whatever we call it the offering is an addition to the activities advanced on behalf of the SoHa citizens.

MMMA; I attended the Mass Managers meeting in Sturbridge on December 12th and took a seminar on strategies to cope with stressful situations. Luckily, I have not experienced too many of those since coming to South Hadley, but I am sure in time they will come.

Ferry Street Neighborhood; On Wednesday evening I was asked to attend a neighborhood meeting of the Ferry Street residents at the PD Community Room. They requested I meet with them to offer my experiences and perspectives on 40B. Like everything in this world, Mike Sullivan has an opinion. It was clearly stated that my opinions were based on my observation and that I had little formal training or what one would consider institutional knowledge about 40B or Ferry Street for that matter.

Like all my encounters I found the residents to be well informed and committed to making the town a better place. Naturally they were frustrated and concerned about the turn of events at the state level. I did my best to explain the 40B reasoning (even if I did not agree with the statute) and how it was devised to increase availability of housing opportunities to all economic levels in the Commonwealth, that it did in fact lower local control and gave the developers the proverbial “ace in the hand”. I tried to make sure that at the end of this process no one on either side will feel vindicated and most will have a sense of “less than” about the end result.

I spoke to similar situations where communities fought against 40B (Boxborough, Sunderland, Bedford) and in the end no one has been able to stop or even restore the lost local control. It seems strange by the distilled issue becomes if you are against 30 market rate units then you are endorsing (even if that is not the intent) 60 Mass Housing approved units. Yes, it seems unfair from several perspectives, again no winners in this one. I for one, hope that whatever the course it moves swiftly so this can be put behind the community.

Granby Temporary Use of South Hadley Transfer Station; The final touches are being negotiated with DPW Superintendent Jim Reidy to allow Granby Residents to bring their “blue” trash bags to our transfer station twice weekly, Tuesday and Sunday. All costs associated with accommodation must be completely covered by the Town of Granby, including but not limited to staffing, hauling, tipping or fuel.

This is for a very short period and will hopefully encourage more cooperation between the towns.

Emergency Management Planning; Health Director Sharon Hart (soon to be EMD) and I had an opportunity to be introduced to John Burke who is a professor from Boston University who teaches graduate and post graduate course on emergency management, disaster preparedness and public safety.

The visit was very informative and assisted us as we move ahead to strengthen our emergency management. It was pointed out that first and foremost we need to get control of the standup process for the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). We have been in conversations with Chief LaBrie and the Districts to see how we should look to invest in an EOC that makes sense for South Hadley. The Chief and I have also discussed strategies to increase the grant application process. Even though one could argue SoHa is doing well getting public safety grants which is credit to Chief LaBrie and his staff.

Fibermark Walk Through: I conducted the Fibermark walk through on December 4th, what a spot that building is, we all should rejoice the day that place is felled. The good news is there is great deal of interest, five groups trudged through the watery floors and there are at least three more that expressed legitimate interest in securing the contract. The bids are due the first week of January.

It is very interesting that these very focused demolition companies have become creative and are looking for development partners in contemplating how future development may look on the site and how the largess from such a project may lower the initial price to the town. The bottom-line is the taxpayer has spent over \$800,000 on this and adjacent property, with over thirty thousand annually in utilities alone. The building demolition will cauterize the fiscal wound this building has presented, so even if we only end at zero, we are better off long term.

King Information Systems; Chris Chartrand from King was in for second to review the present space being used for storage of records by various departments. He will be giving us a quote to have a comprehensive assessment about how we can systemically improve the process for all involved. This would include a physical inventory of all records, their condition, the requirements for storage, interviews with each department and tutorials on record retention. The good news is he has seen worse, much worse, the Town of South Hadley it should be noted experienced a purge do to a flood in recent years and wisely used some of the insurance money to improve storage space.

Once I receive the quote I will decide based on the amount whether we will go forward with the comprehensive evaluation or wait until ATM for the program to be explained more in-depth. Certainly the SB will be asked to weigh-in on how to proceed as well when we have a greater sense of costs.

Siemens ESCO Project; There is a few items being completed by the contractors in respect to South Hadley's municipal energy and efficiency initiative. Some of the outstanding items are thermostatic controls in Town Hall that will significantly lower the amount of time the boilers are in high use. There will be an off peak control put in place, with a manual override control for people who need heat on late night or weekend situations. I have informed the school department and we are working together to meet their off hour needs as well.

Part of the new controls will include common area lighting shutdowns for after work hours. These will be motion activated and time sensitive. If they work as well as they do in my work area then we will be in the dark more often and thereby save energy. As we monitor energy consumption, it seems that we have been regularly exceeding the ESCO parameters. I would suggest that we have a more complete report readied for the SB and ATM in the spring so we have a longer experience to evaluate.

Great West Benefit/Smart Plan; Payroll and Benefits Coordinator Julie Gentile and I have started to meet with individual benefits providers to develop a strategy that lowers the town's exposure to risk and improves the matrix of offerings through consolidation. We have already instructed all the providers that we would be going to a single enrollment period for all plans and will be holding an "employee benefits fair" for everyone at that time. The enrollment will be a held in late May early June to coincide with the beginning of the fiscal year. We have gotten HCHIT to cooperate with changing their enrollment and will be demanding it from all other providers.

Having more than ten different programs and providers holding enrollment period at all various times during the year has caused additional work and opportunity for error. As these are voluntary deductions one might assume there is no risk or cost to the municipality when in reality we expend a

great deal of staff time from coordinating deductions to executing the payments to providers. It is essential for us to reduce both concerns and have a system that has low exposure and low “time –on” cost. There will also be a budgetary benefit by aligning the enrollment with the start of the fiscal year.

There will be no major adjustment to the Holiday Schedule Christmas Eve (December 24) we will close at noon, reopening at 8 AM December 26, the following Wednesday January 1, 2014 we will be closed. I do however, encourage people to call ahead to individual departments that you may seek services from as it is popular time for vacations. I should be readily available and anticipate no adjustments to my schedule during this period.

I want to thank the Selectboard for their assistance as I continue my South Hadley education. I have enjoyed working for you and your community immensely, it is wonderful place to live, work and grow. I wish you all a wonderful and healthy New Year. I have great some high hopes and aspirations for 2014 in South Hadley and if we are able to keep an even keel we will see substantial benefit from the changes you have funded and supported through the recent months. Again, it is a pleasure to work for and with you, thank you.

Respectfully and sincerely submitted,

Mike Sullivan

Town Administrator, South Hadley