

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

Michael J. Sullivan
Town Administrator

April 28, 2018

Honorable Selectboard,

Please accept this report as an abridged accounting of activities taking place in Town Hall and throughout South Hadley executed by municipal personnel.

TA Review/Appropriations Hearing; As you witnessed on Wednesday evening, the TA Review was well attended and there was robust discussion on numerous articles and great dialogue between members and administration.

It all got started at 4 PM with the By-law Review Committee review of articles 11 and 16. There was a lively debate about the proposed annual third party testing. All parties had some genuine areas of agreement, first that the Water from District 1 and 2 was excellent, as demonstrated by the historical and continuous testing data compiled by both districts. Second, that everyone is dedicated to ensuring that the water quality in the schools is safe and meet all lead and copper restricted standards set forth by the MassDEP.

Where there was some concern from individuals was the possible escalating cost, the process for sampling, the number of appliances which need to be tested immediately, retesting of the same appliances, why the state legislature is apprehensive about moving similar statewide legislation forward and generally a sense this proposal needed more public debate.

Most participants in the debate seemed favorable to having the BOH oversee the testing, that some funding would be needed and were encouraging a greater dialogue between the proponents, BOH and the Water District 1 and 2.

In the end the By-law Review Committee voted to recommend to the Selectboard they not support the article, this vote was unanimous. There was some conversation about reconvening the By-law Review Committee to consider some adjustments or changes, no motion was made and the Chair made no indication he intended to call an additional session.

Article 16 to change the composition of the Board of Health was voted out favorably, again unanimously. I believe the committee relied heavily on the will of the voters on this matter.

ClearGov, I recently participated in a webinar about some changes and new services being added to the platform. I find it to be a very useful comparative tool for budgeting. Especially is making comparisons with "peer group" communities.

Peer Group communities are ones which have demographic similarities with South Hadley, including per capita income, geographic and population size, educational attainment of populous and numerous other indicators. Spencer, Ludlow, Easthampton, Ware, Oxford and Belchertown are some of the communities which are part of our peer group. These group is formed by an algorithm ClearGov uses with twenty one different data points.

There is some information (FY17, FY 18) which we are working with ClearGov to update and we are considering some refinements they are developing. It is a work in process, I would encourage any and all to use this tool to better understand the trends in government spending. An access button is at the bottom on any town web page or paste below to browser.

<https://www.cleargov.com/massachusetts/hampshire/town/south-hadley/2017/revenue/taxes>

Arbor Day, Jack Fleming was deservedly honored at an Arbor Day ceremony held at the Arboretum @ MEMS. The ceremony was well attended, students, ConsCom past and present administrators, ConsCom past and present members, Selectboard Chair Ira Brezinsky, as well as members Forcier and Cyr. Dennis Swarthout and other Tree Committee Members hosted the ceremony and George Hahn one of the founders of the Arboretum.

It was nice day for South Hadley!



Bartholomew, Dory Huard and Brian Jamoroz from Bartholomew came out to meet and review both our General Fund portfolio and OPEB Trust investments with Treasurer/Collector Donna Whiteley. As a former Treasurer/Collector and a regular lecturer at MMA and MTCA events it is a valuable introduction.

Over the four and half year relationship with Bartholomew. We have grown our annual earnings to over \$300,000 annually (all interest earned is return to the specific sub account). As we have consolidated bank accounts (which paid little or nothing) we also have increased the money on deposit in the investment accounts from \$8 Million to nearly \$20 million. This benefits the town through higher returns, but also scholarship funds, conservation, SHELD and other specific holdings.

T/C Whiteley has been a great addition to the team here in Town Hall and her experience has made me all the more confident we will continue to become a solid fiscal community, even more so than presently.

Drug and Alcohol Coalition, Health Director Hart asked if I could meet with her, Karen Walsh Pio (South Hadley Drug and Alcohol Prevention Coalition) Heather Warner from the regional coalition and two master degree candidates from UMASS School for Public Policy. The purpose of the meeting was to review present Local Licensing Authority policies regarding alcohol beverage licenses.

Some of the suggested changes are a more stringent "keg" registry policy which could include permission from the Town before a keg is sold to an individual, no instore sampling, no home delivery, reduced signage for off premise. For restaurants and bars, no BYOB permits, no shots, no pitchers, no servers under 21 (presently the state allows anyone over 18), no vending machines, no drive through, reduced or limited advertising and a number of other practices to curb underage drinking.

While this is interesting work and I appreciated having a meeting, I am not sure of their positioning. I would suggest the SB could consider a future agenda item and even perhaps invite the group in to speak to the reasoning and evidence for these changes. I do appreciate all efforts to reduce underage drinking, which through the hard work of Carol, Sharon and Heather there is significant evidence underage drinking has been reduced in the last decade in South Hadley significantly.

Professional Development Day, The topic was "Internal and External Communications", similarly this week's Healthy Workplace Luncheon discussed how we respond to colleagues. Is there a sense we consider each other's needs, workloads and responsibilities.

Both conversations were helpful in identifying out communication defects and reviewing what we do every day to support each other. At the Professional Development Day there was an interesting conversation about “Emotional Intelligence” and how some managers are “directive managers, those who are more prone to give an order and expect it to be completed or “informative managers”, who tries to encourage practices and cajole employees to be part of a bigger picture. Like most trainings, everyone is a little of each and some days more of one than the other.

However one manages it is important for them to know there are other styles. There also was discussion on how we communicate with the public and how we formulate opinions about people, issues and places. We rely heavily on past experiences and prejudices when we do make judgements, sometimes to our detriment.

River Roll and Stroll MassDOT Meeting, There was a recent meeting in Northampton in regards to the May 6 River, Roll and Stroll. Chief Parentela and I were in attendance from the TOSH and Fire District 1 was also at the meeting.

There was very little change in process, protocol or preparedness. Now we only have to hope for good weather. Thank you to Republic Services, E-Ink and all the other sponsors for their generosity.

Business West: Editor George O’Brien of Business West was in recently to do the annual piece on South Hadley, which should appear in May. I am so grateful Business West features South Hadley annually, there are only 12 of these editions and as a smaller community it sometimes is difficult to get you nose in the tent. After Springfield, Holyoke, Westfield, Northampton, Chicopee, Greenfield, Pittsfield, Agawam have their month, there is not much left.

This is a valuable way to get the good news of South Hadley out, we discussed Drunken Rabbit Brewery, MHC investments, expected business expansions on Gaylord Street, MassWorks improvements to the infrastructure to assist in those expansions, the growing demand at the Village Commons, Woodlawn Plaza improvements and generally the positive business climate in South Hadley. I suggested he have conversations with several other sources and supplied him with names.

I should have motions available next Thursday, it is important I get any changes which may be contemplated at you SB meeting May 1...May 1 can you believe it. Thank you for your support!

Respectfully submitted,

Michael J Sullivan
Town Administrator, South Hadley