



January 7, 2014

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. Welcome to 2014, it has started off very fast and I expect will roll at this pace right through June, there is a lot of excitement for the New Year.

Police Department Frozen Sprinklers; On Saturday January 4th at 8:08 AM the fire sprinklers were activated in error at the Police Department due to the extreme cold. The Chief took the appropriate, immediate and necessary steps to deal with the situation. The water was shut off, a restoration specialist was called and they took steps to prevent any further damage.

Representatives from Siemens were contacted, as well as MIAA. There is an insurance adjuster coming in this morning to assess the damage and help with developing a repair strategy. Dean Development our building management contractor will be on-site tomorrow to weigh in on the strategy. There was moderate damage to the community room and more significant (but not catastrophic damage) to the some computers and the Chief's Office.

This was a weather related event, but we have identified some areas where we may make some simple changes to add protection. There was a short period where the PD computers were not operating, but the phones and other communication equipment remained operational throughout with no loss of service. I would like to thank the Chief for keeping me updated over the weekend and doing a great job in responding to the event.

Budget Process; The meetings with departments about the FY 15 budget have commenced. It is far too early to make any predictions or presumptions as to where we will end up in respect to costs and somewhat early as to revenues. I had sent an upside down version in pdf about how state revenues were trending, which on its surface seemed positive.

It will be an interesting time for the Commonwealth as Governor Patrick presents his final budget. Over his tenure he has been reasonably sensitive to the challenges faced by local governments, so I would expect cities and towns will be able to count on amounts reflective of the past. I am sure we will hear more January 24th at MMA.

SEC Bike/Pedestrian Paths; Recently I met with Mellissa O'Brien and Dan Whitford about their committees and other citizens desire to develop a bike/pedestrian path that serves the citizens of South Hadley , as well as encourages others to witness the natural and man created beauty that is SoHa.

The discussion centered on the need to first, get some level of consent from Town Meeting and then to develop a more comprehensive plan. The plan should include long and short term measures to add this recreational amenity to the "things to do in town" list, it also should a how will we pay for this stratagem. I expressed that starting slow should not preclude thinking big, but building advocacy was necessary to make this (or any) endeavor a reality.

Farmer's Market; It was a pleasure to recently meet with Ann Pemberton to discuss the Farmer's Market and possible ways of improving the experience for both customers and farmers. She was accompanied by Selectboard Member Etelman who you all know has been a tireless promoter of the market.

We discussed a variety of ideas including Selectboard Member Brezinsky's "SoHa Coop" Market concept. It was concluded that such a market would be a natural outflow of the Farmer's Market, but remains a long term goal. In the short term the Farmer's Market is considering mini-markets (smaller versions held on other days at various locations), regional partnerships for market management, advertising opportunities and partnerships, both new and revisited.

Again the catalyst for this initiative is the wonderful people that passionately believe in the idea, I was honored to have Ann even consider reaching out and giving me a chance to discuss the market and look forward to helping in some way to make it better.

Snow Removal; There were a few hiccups in the snow removal over the succession of storms that has befallen us since the beginning of the Holiday Season. The unpredictability of temperatures has added a complexity to making the roads, but particularly the sidewalks ice free. On January 6th the expected, but surprisingly precipitous drop in temperature created a dangerous situation on Mosier Street. The drop unfortunately occurred just as buses were beginning to arrive. The challenge is to apply the salt and sand mix just prior to the temperature change, if you apply it too early and the precipitation is still primarily rain, it washes away, if you apply it too late the freeze is already settled in. This was a case where the temperature dropped so fast and right at the most active time the worlds collided and there were some unfortunate occurrences. There were no serious injuries and all departments including the DPW worked to get the hill back to a state of manageability and safe access.

The sidewalk clearance continues, we are trying to be cognizant of the challenges and work with people when there are issues. We do however appreciate any assistance people can offer, clearing sidewalks (even their neighbors), removing ice from catch basins and clearing snow from hydrants. These "good citizen" actions not only help the town, but help the town's people.

We have been helping with unique or hardship cases as they present themselves, we do have a breaking point as far as capacity goes and we want to stay a distance away from that point.

As you are aware we did close early on Thursday (3 o'clock) and were closed on Friday. We do take seriously our responsibility to be open for business, but we also take seriously the need to have people stay off the roads. Staying open on such an inclement day sends a mixed message, we hope citizens understand and I believe they do.

This is not an easy job, but hats off to DPW Highway Foreman John Broderick, Superintendent Reidy and all the crew. Great job!

PVPC; I did travel down to Springfield on Thursday afternoon to work with Jim Mazik on some close out documents and other outstanding issues. We will discuss some of the items this evening with Jim, but it is helpful to have the regional planning agency working closely with us on so many issues.

I hope you all are enjoying the New Year and look forward to working with you this year!

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Sullivan

South Hadley, Town Administrator