

Andrea Miles, Chair
Jeff Cyr, Vice-Chair
Christopher Geraghty, Clerk
Sarah Etelman
Bruce Forcier

Michael J. Sullivan
Town Administrator

November 27, 2019

Honorable Selectboard,

Please accept the abridged accounting of projects and events related to our collective effort on your behalf. It is a time of year where things start to accelerate, as the days draw shorter the projects seem to come out the darkness.

Thank you for your support and guidance!

Special Town Meeting; Thank you for your leadership and civility at the most recent STM. There was generous discussion on a number of topics and polite civic discourse which added positively to this unique form of government.

There were several projects we are anxious to get started on forthwith, such as the street acceptance, firewall device and the owner unknown/land of low value projects. Again, thank you for your support!

Census 2020; Department managers and key staff were called together for a working lunch on Nov. 21 to learn about, and more importantly brainstorm about, Census 2020. There is rarely a grant program from the state or federal government which does not rely on the decennial census data making this a crucial every ten year exercise.

It is important we do everything we can to make sure we count every single person in South Hadley. “Undercounts” impact us in numerous ways, but particularly when the town is seeking its share of funding for the underserved portion of the community. This population also is the most resource intensive portion of the population.



We will be developing a strategy for South Hadley Census 2020, led by Town Clerk Hamlin. It will kick off on April 1 (no fooling) 2020. We will use both a scatter shot approach, by fully utilizing any and all traditional methods to inform the public, and by using “targeted” methods through events at grocery stores, the library, transfer station, Concerts on the Commons and other events throughout the town.

We will also be reaching out to Town Meeting members (again), boards/committees, churches, Chamber of Commerce, businesses, landlords, condo associations, the Lions, Rotary, on-line groups or any other entity who can help in this mammoth effort.

Anyone who is willing to help please contact Administration or the Town Clerk’s Office and we will line them up with an appropriate task for March through August. People can also apply on-line to be a “Census Taker” by going to the US Census website.

Financial Policies; I would thank Zack Blake and Melissa Ordway from the Massachusetts Department of Revenue for visiting us recently to start a foundation for establishing updated policies for the Town of South Hadley.

Town Accountant William Sutton, Treasurer Collector Donna Whitely, Deputy Administrator Jennifer Wolowicz and I were able to spend some time reviewing what we already have in place and where we thought we may have some weakness. Ms. Ordway was duly impressed with our **award-winning** website and pointed to much of the valuable information contained on the site.

The primary areas we would like to strengthen is setting annual levels for funding trust and stabilization accounts, defining the goals and reasoning for those funds and looking at the best ways to protect ourselves from ransomware and other cyber actors. Both DOR officials were complementary on what we have done and where our reserve funding is presently. They suggested we continue to be “conservative” throughout our budgeting.

MPIC Update; I recently met with Nate Therrien and Judy Gooch from MPIC. They are deeply involved in the Master Plan Update. The process seems to be going along at a reasonable pace.

There will be some changes as to the annual audit process and MPIC would like to come into a future meeting to discuss those changes and how it may affect the SB or other board/committees.

While this work is very tactile work MPIC is very much up to the task. This group led by Judy and Nate provide great counsel to me every time we meet, I appreciate their commitment.

Hampshire Christian Academy; I need to make you aware about an arrangement made of which there seems to be no copy available. Essentially, I am told the DPW accepted the responsibility for plowing the lot on Ferry Street in return for citizens being allowed to park in said lot.

As altruistic as this may seem on the surface, it is not legal for a municipality to expend taxpayer dollars on private property. Therefore, we will no longer be able to plow the lot. I did speak with

Marvin Hayle from the private faith-based organization and informed him we would no longer be able to plow.

We discussed further some options about licensing or the "town" accepting back the parking. Any of those options cannot be executed in time for this winter and would all have to discuss further and approved by Selectboard and or Town Meeting. I have reviewed this with Town Counsel and they will be crafting an opinion.

Again, congratulations to Kristin Maher and Jamie Doolittle for their website award from MMA! Yeah nerds! Kidding ...sort of.

Happy Thanksgiving.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael J. Sullivan
Town Administrator, South Hadley

