



August 27, 2015

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.

New Building Permit Fees/ Building Department: The new fees for the Building Department have been posted in the office for contractors to review and will go into effect September 1 as instructed. The rate schedule has been placed on the website and discussed with contractors as available. As of this writing the Building Commissioner indicates there has been no adverse reaction, likewise in this office and all comments have been positive.

Early indications are it is a positive and clears up discrepancies in the previous rate schedule. We will continue to circulate the changes to the appropriate parties and discuss with the Selectboard any concerns or complaints related to the new schedule as they arrive for possible adjustments to consider.

In other Building Department news the candidates for Assistant Building Inspector were interviewed by the HR Director Jennifer Wolowicz, Town Planner Richard Harris and the Building Commissioner Charlene Baiardi. They have recommended to me the appointment of David Gardner. David is a part-time local inspector in Greenfield and also has related past experience in Easthampton as a member of the ZBA and Planning Board. He will be assigned work by the Building Commissioner and will be working on average ten hours a week.

Solar RFP Technical Assistance Grant: This is a very exciting opportunity which is the direct results of the Assistant Town Administrator Jennifer Wolowicz and the Golf Course Manager Doug Juhasz. This \$12,500 grant will be used to engage a solar expert to create an RFP in seeking a partner to exploit solar power opportunities at the golf course.

The residual income from this project is intended go directly back to the General Fund unless otherwise authorized by Town Meeting. This is an exciting step forward for renewable concepts in South Hadley. Reduced costs of electricity will hopefully offset some of the present or future subsidies to the course.

More Solar: Recently Green Harbor Energy requested to tour our present solar array at the landfill. They brought with them principals of their group from Florida, Ohio and Massachusetts. Superintendent Reidy hosted the meeting and gave of his knowledge and insight in regards to the existing array and the possibilities for additional capacity.

Our reply to their interest was, the Town of South Hadley is very attracted to exploring and siting renewables where appropriate and beneficial to the municipality as a whole. They were going to

continue their due diligence and circle back to us in the next few weeks. We hope the sun will keep shining on South Hadley as we gain understanding and ferret out these prospects.

Lady Bea/ Brunelle's Marina and the Chamber of Commerce: There a healthy turnout for this joint Chicopee/South Hadley Chamber Event. The Executive Director was busy clicking photos and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves a great deal.

Selectboard Member Sarah Etelman and Golf Manager Doug Juhasz were on hand. Doug was promoting the Ledges and as you might guess Sarah was promoting South Hadley, as per usual. I was inspecting appetizers.

Selectboard in the Community: Chairman DeToma and Selectboard Member Forcier and I paid an early morning visit to the Egg and I recently to allow residents to bring their concerns and questions forward in an informal session.

The restaurant was busy and there were a number of "thumbs up" expressed to the board members in attendance. The citizen discussion was centered on finding way to promote more through the arts. The idea of a "pop up" event was again discussed and accolades were presented in respect to FallsFest. It truly has become a signature event and a matter of pride for South Hadley and its residents. My compliments to the organizers and sponsors for making it possible.

The discussion did include how FallsFest is well done, but how it also represents a great deal of work, from planning to the day of the event. It was stated by all any additional events would have to be supported and coordinated by citizen volunteers, as we all know the road to disaster is paved with good intentions when it comes to event planning. The municipality will certainly do its part where appropriate.

Miscellaneous Updates: The Town Hall Boiler RFP is out and has created a great deal of interest. Some inquiries from out of the area were looking for design material. I explained there simply was no "design" and that we were looking for an efficient and effective way from both a practical and price perspective to heat the building. There was not going to be any elaborate re-piping or space age design to tie into the Stone Age infrastructure which delivers the heat throughout (on occasion) the 100+ year old building.

Any elaborate design would have surely increased the cost significantly. We need an efficient system, which can last about twenty years and if Town Hall moves from its present address sooner, units that we could take with us. Any investment beyond would be difficult to justify.

I also had a request to check into how we are faring on reducing our energy consumption in respect to the recent upgrades, I found some, but not all the answers. Unfortunately, Siemens has still not completed the project in the schools, the good news we are meeting the QECB reduction goal (20%) in town buildings and the schools, in most case exceeding the mark.

While electric rates have remained steady we are gathering information on natural gas prices. It is likely we will sign an agreement in September for a 36 month period with someone to provide us with the lowest possible rate.

Due to recent departures and our interns Nicole, Maeve and Ally going off to school (tried to get them to quit and just work here ...kidding) we are doing some revamping of workloads and adjustments to

schedules. The Treasurer/Collectors Office will not be open between 1-2 PM to accommodate lunches and to also have process time to increase accuracy. The Treasurer/ Collector has instituted a number of new procedures internally and is monitoring those changes as well. We are presently advertising for a Senior Clerk to be added to the Treasurer Collector's Office to fill a vacancy.

We also have had some changes in the DPW staffing and we are interviewing and considering reorganization options to best direct available human and fiscal resources. There are a number of moving parts to these personnel issues and I am committed to not just hiring people to positions just because some one left. HR, the TA and the department manager need to review each opening to find a way to better serve the public.

The FY 15 books are closed, there was money returned to the General Fund from various departments (amount to be determined), but it looks to be a very busy FY 16. Thank you for all your support and the vacation was enjoyable and other than a few leaks (second floor Men's Room) things were relatively quiet around Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael J. Sullivan
South Hadley, Town Administrator