



August 16, 2013

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.

Lower Level Conference Room; We have added another conference room in the lower level of Town Hall across from the Veteran's Office. ATA Jennifer Wolowicz coordinated the effort and there was significant support from IT Specialist Jamie Doolittle. I thank them for their efforts as related to this project. This room will also act a training room for new and/or updated systems, small seminars and small meetings. Scheduling for the room will be through the Selectboard Office.

It is equipped with video, connectivity and the furniture is adaptable to be configured to meet the needs of the various meetings. This is another improvement and by the way the ceiling fans in the auditorium have been cleaned.

SEC; In a recent meeting with SEC Chair Dan Whitford, Russell Fluery we had discussion about sustainability and the measurable indicators. It was still to be determined what indicators would be most valuable to benchmark energy and other resource consumption.

There was commitment made to give them read only access to the Facility Dude so they may review municipal consumption and a suggestion that they use the Mass.gov to seek some of the demographics they were hoping to use in their analysis. They also indicated they would be approaching SHELD for some of the overall town use statistics.

They continue to be an energetic group whose work and research will undoubtedly produce some useful and valuable information to help us be a more sustainable community. I did mention to the attendees there is some discussion around food security beginning to emerge and the possibility of a more focused conversation on a Coop Food Marketplace in South Hadley.

Art Show/ Selectboard Meeting Room Improvements; Well as you can see the transformation is near complete of the meeting space. Jennifer Wolowicz did an excellent job, coordinating both work and colors. The addition of the shades are greatly enhance the décor and were less expensive then replacing the curtains and have a lower maintenance cost.

Thank you to the Selectboard and others who got the word out about our "Art Shows ion SoHa". You can see with the first show the level of talent in town is inspiring. We are now booked until 2017 for this six month rotating show. Unfortunately Anne Mueller the present artist will not be available for Tuesday Night's meeting. In the future we will plan a small opening reception prior to the Selectboard Meeting to greet the artist. I appreciate the Selectboard embracing this idea and you have truly unleashed a torrent of talent which we will work to use as a catalyst to position SoHa well as part of the "Creative Economy".

Texon Building Demolition; You must get tired of hearing it is going to happen only to catch a glimpse of the still decaying, threat to public safety, behemoth known as the Texon Building, I do think we are nearing the end of the long road. This embodiment of blight will be razed through the incredible cooperative efforts between the Army Corp of Engineers Paul Sneeringer, Karen Adams, Congressman Neal and his Chief of Staff Bill Powers, The South Hadley Public Library Trustees and the Holyoke Gas and Electric management and staff.

The roster of participants is not the usual partners, especially the Library Trustees. They however were critical in adding the additional public access needed to meet the mandates set forth in the memorandum of agreement crafted by the ACOE.

There will be some review by the South Hadley ConsCom and I have advised the Director that approval is said to be eminent. This will bulldoze a path to another recreational asset for South Hadley Falls. We may have to have the town owned sewer line videotaped, but it is the type of nominal cost that bickering over would be wrongheaded. Ultimately we will recover those types of costs with dividends.

Small Claims Court/Newton Street Pothole; We are awaiting a judgment from a pothole claim that has drained an appreciable amount of time from many off us here in Town Hall. Atty. Ryan, our insurance company's Attorney Fred Frangie, our DPW Superintendent Jim Reidy, Water District Superintendent Jeff Cyr and the district's Attorney Mark Beauregard, all of whom with the exception of Attorney Ryan were in court.

Just to be clear we were subpoenaed or ordered by the court to appear. We had previously asked that the case be dismissed as we felt it violated a Mass General Law that states that damage due to any defect must be reported within thirty days, this was reported three months later.

We will have ruling whether this will move to a formal hearing by next week, our expectation is it will be discharged from Belchertown District Court due to the limitation of filing. It did give us however an opportunity to review and improve how we are handling property damage claims and will be bringing to you some best practices that will be implemented in the not too distant future.

Water District/DPW Management Meeting; Superintendents Cyr and Reidy along with Town Engineer Daniel Murphy met to discuss upcoming and on-going projects and how we may better coordinate communications. The tenor was professional and each party had respect for their colleague's responsibilities.

It was great to see that the conversation was centered on how we can in the future look to reduce costs overall for our joint constituency. I felt that conversation was useful and I am hopeful that it will lead to more participation.

Leave Procedure Implementation; Recently ATA Wolowicz and I had the opportunity to discuss with Linda Monahan (Payroll Specialist) and Jo Lyn Bookman (Human Resource Officer) from the School Department our expectations of the schools in implementing the new procedure. It was an opportunity for them to see how some of the modeling of leaves was non-compliant and in some cases added extra cost to our healthcare insurance.

It was made clear that these changes are necessary and will not be relaxed. This seemingly hardline is necessary to ensure that we are using taxpayers' money for the intended use as budgeted.

Millennium Consultants; Administration has met with Art Bomengen and Gloria Congram. These two former Blue Cross Blue Shield employees have provided expert advice on controlling costs and administering benefits to employees. They have been successful in delivering compliance and avoiding costs due to missteps and penalties for over two decades. Wilbraham, Maynard, Hopedale and Sterling have all benefited from their experience and knowledge.

It is likely we will present Millennium as a component part of our payroll/benefits strategy as we build a better mouse trap. A trap that will avoid issues getting away and comprehensive auditing being performed continuously and thoroughly on one of you most costly departments ...Health Insurance (\$4.3 million). This can no longer be left to a less than comprehensive system of checks and balances. We must understand how we can control costs in the future and get the most for the taxpayers dollars.

Please accept my sincere gratitude for your patience as I work to engineer the organizational changes. There as you are aware a number of obstacles and nuances that make this far more complicated than it seems to the general public. Matching skill sets both internal and external to performance needs, within collective bargaining agreements and remaining consistent with legislation is a juggling act which needs a practiced approach before going on stage.

Qualified Energy Conservation Bond; with great help from Beth Greenblatt we have steered our QECB Department of Energy Resource (DOER) application into place at the DOER. This grant program could shave off \$200,000 over the life of the loan. If we, one get the grant and two, accept the grant we will have to commit to plowing the savings back into energy saving improvements. We ultimately will benefit from those savings, so this is a true exercise in sustainability.

This program is competitive, but we are doing everything we can to put the Town of South Hadley in a position to win this valuable grant. I would propose that at an October meeting we discuss where we are at in respect to energy reduction as it is related to our efforts.

I would like to thank DPW Superintendent Jim Reidy, Planner Richard Harris, Jim Mazak PVPC and Beth for their diligence and perseverance on this project and subsequent grant application. Thank you!

Fire Alarm Systems: Simplex Grinnell has completed a courtesy review of the fire suppression and fire alarm systems in Town Hall, the Police Station, Olde Firehouse Museum and the Senior Center. Some buildings are better equipped than others, but we do have some needed upgrades which should be considered.

We also met with Monahan Group of Worcester that reviews both fire and security systems. There are some gaps in our security systems to say the least. The ATA and I will continue to develop an improvement plan to meet the needs. It will need to be discussed by the Capital Planning Committee and the Selectboard once it is more molded into a workable strategy and we have greater sense of the cost related to such an undertaking.

Thank you all for your guidance and support as we jointly work to deliver service to the public in the most efficient and affordable manner.

Respectfully,

Mike Sullivan, Town Administrator