



June 28, 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.

Property and Casualty Insurance; Donahue Associates through their P&C Evaluator Terry Curtin presented administration with the results of the recent insurance quote review. The good news is that we have received a quote from MIIA that is considerably less than budgeted for FY 14 and nearly fifty thousand or 20% less than the next lowest complete quote.

It also increases our coverage for different areas including the landfill and the skate park, as well introducing us to risk management control through the MIIA rewards program. This program will presents us with seminars and workshops which when we participate will lower our subsequent year premiums.

The former P&C agent did a great job for South Hadley and will be retained for some ancillary lines such as workmen's comp and USTI. We look forward to reducing cost through a better understanding of risk aversion.

Green Bag Shortage; you are aware and may have been a victim of the "green bag" shortage which is plaguing the community. It has caused a great deal on misinformation and for that I apologize. Superintendent Reidy and I have discussed the communication problem and he has been working diligently to correct the shortcomings. I appreciate his efforts greatly in that regard.

The Superintendent has created a memorandum with the accurate information, but I have witnessed some other flaws in our information dissemination process. There has been at least two cases of departments who are not related to this change giving out erroneous information. This has been addressed short-term, but we need to do more work on our information strategies long term and will do so immediately.

The increase in the bag fee will begin July 1 (Monday), the cost is two dollars for a large and one dollar for a small. The first per unit assessment (\$50 per) will be seen with the January tax bill. The date that the recycling center fee is set to begin is still in flux, but the Superintendent will get that information out as soon as it is available. Stores are being restocked as quickly as possible.

Personnel Policy Changes; I have instituted some changes to personnel policy which has caused some consternation. Chief among the concerns seems to be from a small number of employees who have been squirreling away vacation. One even comes in when on vacation, I suspect that some who are out when they are not on vacation, but that is another issue entirely.

The change states that we will no longer allow carry-overs for vacation time, this does not affect union contracts, but will suggest to them the direction we will be going in the future. It was revealed that some employees (department heads) are carrying as much as 12 vacation weeks from prior years. This would suggest that person has not taken vacation more than three weeks over the last three years, which is not healthy for the employee or the workplace. There has been far too many municipalities who learned of issues only after a person was forced due to illness or other matters to take time off about “problems” in the organization. I am not suggesting that is the case here, but the exposure needs to be corrected.

In conversations I have stated maybe people get more vacation than they need if they are not taking hardly any. Under GASB this outstanding liability may have to begin to be funded as soon as fiscal year 2016. We also have reduced the amount of sick time from 12 days a year to 10 days a year and the amount people can accrue to 100 days. These changes affect very few people, but I see as an invitation for abuse when an employee can have 240 days of sick leave in reserve. We have built in provisions for people to preserve what they have accumulated and to move from a “sick bank” system to a managed system where the Town Administrator can grant increases in sick leave up to fifteen days annually and the Selectboard can allow the TA past that amount. Thank you for your support in trying to control these cost centers.

COA Projects; COA Director Joanne Trybus (who is wonderful to work with) informed me that there was an air conditioner chiller which was not included in the recent upgrades which has been deemed by here HVAC advisor to be about to fail and beyond repair. This unit’s demise has been known to be eminent for some time, it is unclear why it was not included in the larger project. Since there is modest amount left over from the repairs and this work is within the scope I have authorized the replacement of the unit. It unfortunately may cause us to reopen a small part of the roof again ...yes I agree... but I feel it is better to do it now, have the roof company do the work so we preserve the warrantee and chock it up to understanding the need to do projects with forethought. Hopefully the structural review we will call for after the beginning of the fiscal year will shed some light on the needs of this and other buildings going forward.

We also met with Superintendent Reidy to find a way to properly and legally connect some roof drains to appropriate systems, this will include some rain barrels to collect run-off to be used in the flower gardens, while reducing the use of potable water. These types of resource recapture projects make a small difference, but send a big message.

July Hours; Please note that Board of Assessors did meet to ratify a vote of supporting the expanded service hours for Town Hall. I had communicated what we need to do in each department to make sure the public can utilize this benefit. I am however hopeful that I will be authorized to use the Blackboard Connect to communicate the change to the public next week. It will be on the website, we will have signage, departments will put it on their phones, we did a press release and I have asked everyone to reach out to clients we regularly serve on Fridays and ask that they come in late some night for us to help them with their needs.

This will be an interesting “test” in a number of ways, I cannot thank you the Selectboard enough for allowing this to happen. I appreciate the leadership and the chance for us to try something new. If the staff gets the message loud and clear that the town is interested in innovative thinking the sky is the limit.

Professional Development Day; Staying with innovation, we did hold our first PD Day. From all reviews it was well received well by Town Hall employees. We were privileged to have a Selectboard member in attendance. There were presentations on two new platforms, Cartographic mapping and Facility Dude. Our labor counsel gave a presentation on making the workplace better, by making it safer and more inviting. The topics included sexual harassment and workplace bullying.

Both ATA Wolowicz and I presented some concepts of how we would like to improve the workplace and some structural changes which will be part of the Clerk-Treasurer-Collector changes. I have also started to increase my meetings with staff from those respective offices.

The ATA did a great job organizing this day and it will help as we try to be more attuned to the changes need in our Human Resource repertoire, this forum will serve us well. We hope to have these events quarterly and we have already gotten three of four ideas for the next PD Day.

COA Luncheon; The COA invited me to bring the greetings of the Selectboard at their recent fete honoring citizens over ninety years of age. They were quite a number and spry seniors, with the oldest in attendance being 99. These affairs really speak to the growing need for senior's services and how the population will grow in the future. The party was held on June 19 at the center and cake was served and enjoyed.

SHELD; In a recent meeting with SHELD Manager Wayne Doerpholtz he notified me that the utility was proceeding with their plans to build a n new facility outside the falls. They have placed an advertisement in the Central Register for "requests for qualifications" for a design firms. It should be a fairly easy task since the SHELD Manager has a very clear understanding as to the needs of his organization.

We also discussed the fact that when we implement the changes in payroll the town will no longer offer weekly payroll. He reiterated that his union has in their contract that they get paid every week. I explained he would have to choices, either have to make third party arrangements for payroll or get it out of the contract, the time and cost savings are too great to ignore and if we plan on making a substantial change then this is the time to create a whole strategy, not piecemeal.

Siemens Greenblatt Upgrades; ATA Wolowicz and I had a conference call on July 26 about some the final upgrades and improvements. There has been some strategy adjustments and creative approaches to make sure we get the best result, results which will outpace the predicted savings is our new goal.

There were some small components (sensors, capacitors) which were in disrepair, but School Facilities Manager Bruce Mailhott had in stock, so that helped reduce the initial cost and the School Business Manager Candace Walszack devised a way to reduce the installation costs. The good news is there will be some school side money moved around within the contract which will satisfy the ESCO and meet the funding limits.

Heat wave; The Health Director and I are working on some strategies to improve our offerings to heat emergencies. We have the Library and the COA as resources for heat emergencies, the PD community room in extreme cases may be put into service as well as the Districts (if they so choose). We also have the Beachgrounds Spray Park, but we have begun to explore the possibilities of public/ private partnerships with Mount Holyoke College, Towers Theater, the Lady Bea, some of our great restaurants or the Odyssey Book Shop. We want to have people from all over the Valley to remember how "cool" it

is in South Hadley. We hope to have more on this in the future, but I love the idea of taking this serious issue and turning it in to a fun opportunity (idea welcomed).

FallsFest; Things seem to be shaping up for this event, the organizers have been inspiring, among those Selectboard Member Brezinsky. There are still opportunities to donate or volunteer for this event. Please invite all your relatives from outside of South Hadley (and in) to come to the celebration. They will bring their wallets and see some opportunities to spend now or invest later.

I would like to make sure you all know I will be taking a couple of days off, as my oldest son is getting married. In true Holyoke fashion the bride and the groom, born in raised in the Paper City have chosen a destination wedding. So of course the most likely “destination” is Hartford, Connecticut, therefore I will be Hartford vacationing on July 3 and 4. I will be in work July 1 and 2 and then will be back July 9 (Monday). Again thank you for your support and the opportunity to work for you and South Hadley.