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John Hine, Vice-Chair
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Town Administrator

January 12, 2018

Honorable Selectboard;

Please accept this report as an abridged accounting of projects and activities we are undertaking here in Town Hall on behalf of you and the citizens of South Hadley. It seems to be getting busier in each office every day, even with inclement weather conditions.

Town Hall Roof; Rivet Roofing has finished the last section of the roof project on the lower northeast corner (Pleasant Street side near Town Hall parking). They have been accommodating and professional in their work. Their site crew has been respectful of any requested accommodations we have requested.

Our property manager will inspect the work before we have a final sign off and then time and rain will tell. There is a limited warranty on the roof membrane and other related work. This was a difficult project in some very tough weather conditions. We will continue the roof drain maintenance program we began through the property manager four years ago as most issues prior have been suggested to be related to improper clearing of those drains.

This project was originally on the Capital Planning list at \$200K, after a roof evaluation by Trident the estimate was trimmed down to \$125K. Rivet was the lower bidder at \$98K, at this time we will likely close this article out to Unreserved Free Cash for \$25K in FY 2019. Thank you to everyone who had a hand in this successful project.

Special Town Meeting; Well one prediction came through, I was able to get the temperature to 70 degrees, no easy feat I assure you. I realize a week prior it may have been impossible to get to 60 degrees, I am thankful for the cooperation Mother Nature provided.

The actions of Town Meeting are critically important in providing administration and staff clear indication of what is important. I found it interesting on Article 18. In respect to the position taken at a previous TM. to Town Elections the Town Meeting decided to leave the "Town" elections as they are, the second Tuesday in April. You may recall it

was changed from the second Monday in April a couple of years ago, but otherwise this schedule has worked for South Hadley.

None of this discussion has any effect on the April 10, 2018 upcoming Town Election. There were good arguments on both sides. Proponents have consistently suggested the "State/Federal" Elections nearly always have more voters. There may be a chance for some savings. The opponents of the change reasonably suggested the saving may be minimal and may cause voters to not pay as close attention to candidates or ballot questions either locally or in the broader political landscape.

All of the positions were expressed in a civil and rational manner. In any of these situations there is never a "clear cut" singular answer, but through Town Meeting the wisdom of crowds is exercised and revealed.

Thank you to the Town Meeting Members for another successful meeting. Communally the members should be proud of the attentiveness they have shown in regards to their duties. Staying aware and taking the opportunity to attend presentations, public hearings and meetings, emailing questions, having discussion amongst yourselves and largely staying informed has greatly assisted the process.

The Moderator again showed experience and a consistently fair demeanor in managing this Special Town Meeting. It is incredibly difficult to be consistently fair over years of meetings and sometimes there are judgement calls about relevance of testimony in respect to articles, particular for non-Town Meeting Members, I commend the Moderator for his procedural knowledge and dexterity in such situations.

I would also like to extend my appreciation to the Town Clerk for her hard work at and leading up to the Town Meeting, the DPW for their work inside and out on set up and clean up. Thank you Cable Studio Coordinator Bob Smith for his work before, during and after the meeting, his media acumen is of great value to the Town of South Hadley. Lastly, thank you to Courtney Hummel the recently hired Administrative Assistant in the Selectboard Office. She actually asked if she could volunteer at the Town Meeting and like all assignments she has engaged herself in she proved to be of assistance to the Clerk and the Town Meeting in general. I applaud her for her interest and engagement, even if I may cause me to wonder.

2018 Census; The 2018 Census is underway, Town Clerk Carlene Hamlin is working very hard to make the data and process as successful as possible. Please help us, by returning your form as soon as possible.

It may help if I mentioned a few things, the form is a standard federal form. The Town of South Hadley is real just a cog in the wheel, if you are concerned about the wording,

the information being requested or you do not like the process we would encourage you to make those expressions to US Census Bureau or other federal officials or federal elected parties. It is not uncommon for residents to call and tell us they do not like the form, the questions or other related functions and sometimes are more frustrated when we tell them we are just doing what we are instructed to do by US Census. So, I am saying upfront, we encourage you to relay your issue to the parties who are empowered to consider change.

Please send the forms in as soon as possible so we can get this done quickly as possible. Thank you to so many of you who returned the forms within days of receiving the letter. It also helps if you could read the directions thoroughly as it should answer most questions and save us and you time on the phone.

CivicReady; You have heard this before, but we need to re-double, maybe quadruple, our efforts to get people signed up on CivicReady. Please go to the town website, scroll to the very bottom of the home page and look for the click pad as shown below, once on the site follow the prompts.



This is a very important communication tool especially in emergency situations, while we still use landline publicly available numbers we are finding more and more people have turned their back on this traditional mode or various carriers are not making the numbers as publically downloadable as in the past.

This platform has been a substantial investment, especially in regards to staff time and effort I feel the need to ask for everyone's help in getting people signed up for CivicReady. It is the best interest of the municipality in many different ways!

HCHIT IY 2019 Rates; I attended a meeting of the Insurance Advisory Committee (IAC) last week where the IAC voted to accept the Hampshire County Health Insurance Trust Executive Committee's recommendation on rates for Insurance Year 2019 (same as fiscal year, but that is what they call it, I guess it is all about them) the HMO and HMO+1 will increase 4.7%. These are the most used plans and due to experience they are the bulk of the premium. They also remain the lowest cost plans other plans are going up slightly less, but already cost considerably more. All rates are available through HR and will not go into effect until July 1, 2018.

There was an actuarial report presented which demonstrated the increase by the trust without the modest design plan would have caused an increase of approximately 10% or more for most of the plans.

There was some discussion of the devastating effect non-action has caused the Amherst/Pelham Trust to become nearly insolvent and how prudent steps to balance increase in an equitable way will once again leave HCHIT in a very solid position.

While health insurance markets remain in great price flux, I continue to look for opportunities. We are working with MIIA to provide a quote on health insurance you may recall the rate presented from MIIA last year was 8% higher for the same product as Hampshire. With the design plan changes and a better trend on SoHa's employee experience it may be more competitive this year, I still am concerned about some of the "self-insured" low cost for one year products available.

Dog Park Meeting; We will be holding our inaugural Dog Park gathering on Wednesday January 17 at 4 PM in the Selectboard Meeting Room. I have been clear to the four interested individuals this is a movement in the embryotic stages of development. There is no site, no organization formed, no approval from any part of government, but an idea which has a lot of potential.

In every discussion I make it clear this is not an opportunity to tell the town what should be done, but what we might do together. If you have any friends or neighbors who may be interested please ask them to attend or email me their thoughts. Also tell them it is time to renew their license☺

Collector Extended Office Hours; Just a reminder about the extended hours on Wednesdays and Thursdays through February 1, the Collector's Office will be open to receive payments. The office will also be open on Saturday January 27 from 9 until noon, as well. We continue to have the "drop box" behind the Police Station and on-line payments.

The first couple of nights have been slow, but it allows staff to attend to some other tasks related to their work which need to be caught up on. I thank Jackie Iskander, Gail Chadwick, Claudia Frappier and Lori Vautrin for their cooperation on the experiment in added convenience.

Mass Municipal Association; The Town of South Hadley will be well represented at the Annual Massachusetts Municipal conference. It is an indication of how South Hadley's leadership is seeking best practices and want to be amongst the leading communities in the Commonwealth in innovative practices.

As is always the case there will be a treasure trove of ideas, technologies and concepts brought back and I welcome the opportunity to consider those in a "South Hadley" context. Thank you for attending this important event, it makes a difference in moving the community forward.

BHMA Art Show; I have been working with Adrian Anderson from Berkshire Hills Music Academy to install the next show. It is now up in the Selectboard Meeting Room and available for viewing by the public.

It is a very interesting collection of prints from the students at Berkshire Hills. We are working on scheduling a pre-SB Meeting reception in February to give you an opportunity to meet the artists. This show is a little bit different than previous shows as Berkshire Hills will be swapping out piece over the six month life of the show, it will be interesting to see different work on a regular basis.

If you have any artists who are interested I would ask that you encourage them to send me an email, stop by or call me, as we have now hosted ten artists and the list is starting to thin out from the flood we had originally received.

Thank you for your support, I appreciate it and could not do my job without it!

Respectfully submitted,

Michael "Slacker Jack" Sullivan
Town Administrator, South Hadley