



February 14, 2014

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.

Snow Storm South Hadley; Well here we go, the snow portion of winters program has arrived, crews are doing their best to address the concerns and issues are drifting into the SB Office via phone. The safest advice we can provide is to stay home and only go out if you absolutely must during weather events. The cost of the February 13 storm will likely be slightly over \$40,000.

There has been some requests for additional sanding on side streets and dead ends. I reviewed the policy with the DPW and their policy is to treat hills, primary roads, some secondary roads and other areas where ice creates some dangerous situations. The DPW does review the requests, but will adhere to this well thought out policy.

Adding streets outside the specific criteria has its challenges, among them are capacity, cost and damage to the environment. As you are aware the DPW not only must put the sand out, but to pick it up later and dispose of it, the damage to lawns and seepage into water sources is a concern for all of South Hadley and we receive claims in the spring to address lawn, fence, sidewalk or wall damage. There is also a false sense of safety as streets narrow and from high snow piles, sanding sometimes increases speeds, while simultaneously enticing residents to walk on side streets without sidewalks. One can see that this not a good combination.

The nice thing about snow and ice is that it will melt and spring will come, I empathize with citizens frustration, angry about being cooped up, suffering from a cold, the children or pets contained in 1500 square feet, icicles, ice, snow, expensive vegetables, it certainly loses its appeal in February, warm thoughts hopefully brings warm weather.

Public Properties; I have provided the Schools and responsibly parties with a MIAA advisory as to steps we should be taking to ensure the least amount of damage to our public properties and buildings. I have sent that document as well. Emergency Management Director Hart and the Building Commissioner have also been copied as the greatest concern is load bearing capacity on roofs.

If a contractor is brought in to remove the snow from roofs or other areas and the work is over the limits the work must be bid according to the IG, as in previous storms some communities did not take this step and were faced with penalties. Regardless we need to evaluate the situation to ensure load capacity, icicles, snow sliding of roofs and do our best to avert the problems which will ensue if we do not take precaution.

Patriot Care; As many of you are aware Patriot Care has cleared its final hurdle at the Planning Board and their site plan review has been approved. I have spoken to Mr. Mayerson and he is resubmitting his dispensary application for locations in Dukes, Nantucket, Berkshire and Franklin counties. They can only be granted two more dispensaries locations and those are the only counties left unserved.

The Selectboard is required by the by-law to be a final sign-off. The responsibility I believe for the SB is to ensure that the local standards have been met, the state is satisfied with the applicant and that Police Chief Labrie in particular is confident that the safety and security plan is adequate for the operation.

As you know some communities are asking for a host community agreement to be formalized. There have been many iterations of the host agreement across the state, but there are some things that should be considered. First of all the dispensary outlets are difficult to move after the application is approved, the cultivation center is much less so. Many of the communities who are seeking agreements have dispensary outlets assigned to their city or town and making claim there is an impact. Most importantly Patriot establishing a cultivation center here is important to stabilize the Gaylord properties, without tenancy there is little chance for investment and is less attractive to other possible industries. The economics of full occupation of space works well for the owner, the community and the tax base. It also makes good economic sense, jobs, mortgages, property taxes, SHELLED, local businesses all will benefit from maximizing the use of the property. I believe that Patriot Care will be a great corporate citizen and understands the value of involvement, I expect they would be open to considering a reasonable agreement, but most of all we need to make sure they are a success. Through all mine and Town Planner Richard Harris's interactions we have found the principles to be the consummate professionals.

Budget FY 15: The budget process continues and progress is being made. The most significant issues to address from a cost side will be the additional \$317K request from the schools, the nearly \$150K increase in required retiree contribution cost and wage and salary adjustments, both union and non-union. I am confident these adjustments will be within our reach, thorough reductions in other line items (i.e. Health Insurance, P&C), increases in revenues (i.e. taxation, fees, improved collection and enforcement) and considerably less demand on free cash as Ledges financial picture continues to improve measurably. Early indications are that the revenue and reductions will benefit the budget by approximately \$950,000.

It is still early in process, but the budget needs and capacity are becoming clearer. There does not seem to be any drastic measures needed to balance the budget for FY 15 and to meet any unexpected needs for the final months of FY 14, unfortunately the picture is forever changing. We will review a draft timeline on Tuesday night.

AFSCME 1033 Mediation; There has been substantial time spent in the last week spent in trying to resolve issues related to the 1033 A&B Units CBU. The good news is that there was a resolution, the bad news was setbacks for management or compromise if you are an arbiter. Personal Time and Vacation Time will now be allocated in 2 hour increments, the February 13 was anticipated and we were required by the agreement to pay union personnel for the closure, the upside was that we are able to make the Payroll Specialist position confidential and therefore extract it from the union and we are not incurring additional costs for additional proceedings. All in all it was not an experience that left me feeling good, but I respect we have stopped the bleeding, albeit temporarily.

There was also three employees who we have been instructed to return vacation or personal time to their accruals. The impact of these will be costly, but will bring the contractual requirement of using carry over time and increments for personal time to a close ...hopefully.

Town Clerk and Treasurer's Upgrades; As part of the annual improvements we have been making throughout Town Hall this long weekend there will be crews in all weekend installing new carpeting, there will be some painting and counter upgrades done in the near future. Normally the carpet is the last thing in reno projects, but because of how the work needs to happen while the offices operate this was the most functional approach.

The present carpets have been in place long past their useful life and this project as whole will allow us to have the office be more efficient and functional, from counter space to voting areas to new alignment of furniture it will be a substantial and needed improvement.

Managers and staff have been helpful in giving their input to both the design and execution of the renovations. I want to thank Debbie Baldini, Carlene Hamlin, Mike Fitzsimmons, Jen Wolowicz, Claudia Frappier, Julie Gentile for their cooperation, Jim Reidy for helping with the moving and Dean Marrinello for coordinating the work.

Let's all hope for warmer weather and better understanding, it will make the budget more palatable.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael J Sullivan

South Hadley, Town Administrator