

Ira Brezinsky, Chair
Andrea Miles, Vice-Chair
Jeff Cyr, Clerk
Sarah Etelman
Bruce Forcier

Michael J. Sullivan
Town Administrator

March 15, 2019

Honorable Selectboard,

Please accept this abridged accounting of the activities related to municipal work performed over the last two weeks on your behalf. As you are aware we are entering a very busy season: election, Town Meeting, end of year audits, and we always see an uptick in request for participation or attendance at meetings beyond the norm. Thank you for your patience and support always, but especially during this hectic season.

Town Counsel Interviews: On March 13, the chair and vice chair spent the better part of the day interviewing four very qualified firms to represent the Town of South Hadley in legal matters. This is an issue the Town of South Hadley has not dealt with for decades. With the passing of long time Town Counsel Attorney Edward Ryan there was a need to review legal services. I believe the Selectboard has proceeded in a professional and effective manner in respect to this responsible process.

As stated in the RFR seeking said counsel, South Hadley was looking for a firm which would represent both the labor and general counsel interests of the municipality. Having a full-service relationship is not uncommon in cities and towns throughout the Commonwealth. With the right firm I believe it will create a robust understanding of the town's needs. While no one lawyer can provide all the complex expertise necessary in our present litigious environment, equal consideration should be given to how familiarity with the larger municipal culture and legal conflicts in South Hadley can properly shape the demands for representation.

Each of the firms interviewed were impressive and have attributes which arguably could serve the town well. The interviews included Doherty Wallace, an incredibly well-regarded Springfield firm who have served other area communities in the role of town counsel with distinction. They do not provide labor counsel and as such may be considered a departure from the RFR, as published. Our present counsel arrangement was interviewed (Atty. Brian O'Toole General Counsel, Atty. Meghan Sullivan and Atty. Layla Taylor Labor Counsel) and they made a compelling statement in regard to their past performance and the present configuration.

The chair, vice chair and I are in agreement that given it was requested to present a full service (general/labor) and based on their experience and success in the municipal law space, it was decided to move forward with a second interview with Kopelman, Page and with Mead, Talerman, Costa. Both firms bring a full range of knowledge and experience to the discussion. They have each confirmed their attendance at the April 2 SB meeting for a final interview. If a decision is made I will ask the SB to instruct me as to a start date.

If you feel counsel should be in place for Town Meeting, we will have to make a quick but doable conversion or we could look at a fiscal year start. There are arguments for each. I have informed Atty. O'Toole of the decision to interview the previously cited firms. As expected and a testimony to his professionalism, he stands ready to assist as needed for a smooth transition.

Public Boat Launch: Canal Park Committee Chair Mitch Resnick, FD#1 Chief Bob Authier, FD Safety Officer Scott Walsh and I met on site to discuss the safety concerns of locating a public non-motorized watercraft launch (kayaks, canoes, paddle boats, row boats, sculls etc.). This idea is still in its infantile stages for a launch at the HG&E property just downstream from the Red Cliff Yacht Club on Canal Street.

As always Mitch Resnick has been helpful as we take a very tactical approach to considering this idea. You may recall we approached the HG&E last year. While we did not sign any agreement with them, they gave us the green light and a templated agreement if we were to proceed. The chief and Scott had some great points that should be considered going forward. They ranged from would we allow fishing off the nearby embankments or any dock that may be installed, to signage and access consideration for life-saving operations. They were appreciative that we asked for their involvement early on in the planning.

We will need to get input from abutters and consider our capacity to monitor and maintain a river access safely. There will also have to be consideration given to the costs associated with design, installation and ultimately with maintaining the access and surrounding property. As you are aware there is no plan - just an idea at this point. There are several answers which still need to be addressed. I wanted to keep you informed as this idea progresses and make sure you know we are a long way from a final plan to present to you and Town Meeting.

MHC/TOSH Traffic Safety Committee: Recently I reconvened the group of representatives from MHC and the town to continue the discussion on how to make the traffic corridor through MHC safer for all. Chief Gundersen had her first meeting with the group - Director of Operations Paul Breen, VP Kevin McCaffrey, MHC Chief Labroad, and myself.

The meeting was to serve as an introduction to the work the group is attempting for Chief Gundersen. She has some obvious skill sets and knowledge she brings to the table which will be valuable going forward. The chief's experience in a student-rich environment and her understanding of traffic from a law enforcement perspective was helpful.

Both the municipality and MHC will redouble efforts in respect to engaging the public about the need for pedestrian and driver awareness. As we head toward warmer weather (hopefully), in expectation of an increase in bike and pedestrian traffic, we need to count on public awareness. We did discuss the E'Hampton low tech orange flag program and Chief Gundersen agreed to reach out to Chief Alberti in E'Hampton about the initial acceptance and effectiveness of the program.

SHELD is working on a plan to increase lighting for crossing and other safety related issues. The traffic study will commence once there is a high level of confidence traffic counting equipment can be placed without fear of snow plows taking out the rubber devices stretched across the road. PVPC will be doing the study and has already done some field observations.

Laserfiche: As depicted, we recently met with General Code's Laserfiche Division to discuss a multi-year plan to digitize records and get them on our website. This would increase transparency and assist productivity when researching files.

We would like to thank Bruce Cadman and Tom Murato for bringing their expertise to the table. ATA Jennifer Wolowicz, IT Coordinator Jamie Doolittle, Town Clerk Carlene Hamlin, Building Commissioner David Gardner, Town Planner Richard Harris and I were on hand for the town.



The representatives from GC Laserfiche have been learning more about the municipal operations and are preparing a

cost estimate. This will be something, which if invested in now, will undoubtedly help to control personnel costs in the future.

Annual Town Meeting: I expect to have a draft of the warrant articles before the Selectboard for the April 2 meeting. I recently met with Commissioner Neva Campbell and Robert Pleasure to discuss a proposal they will ask the Planning Board to consider making adjustments to zoning bylaws related to quarrying operations and water protection. There is an upcoming multi-board meeting coming up where I hope some common and acceptable language can be developed.

It is important for this discussion be recognized as a policy for the town as a whole and not directed or caused by one operation. It was clear in my meeting the parties understood that and were looking improve the earth removal policies and zoning for the betterment of the town.

Thank you for your support and attention to these and other issues facing South Hadley!

Respectfully submitted,

Michael J. Sullivan
Town Administrator South Hadley