



December 16, 2016

Honorable Selectboard,

Please accept this as an abridged account of initiatives and activities performed by myself and town hall staff since my last report. Please note, this report is inordinately brief, largely due to the fact I have been away for several days during the last two weeks.

**By-law Review Committee**, the By-law Review Committee held a recent meeting in anticipation of January 11 Special Town Meeting to consider the “acceptance” articles and the warrant articles envisaging changes to the General By-laws.

Jay Breuer attended and when asked at the conclusion, he stated he enjoyed it, we got him, and he is hooked! I believe he will be a great addition to this community, this committee and perhaps in the future to others. He did his research and was well prepared for the meeting. Chair Mike Wozniak oversaw the proceedings and Town Counsel Ed Ryan was in attendance.

The “acceptance” articles 9, 10, 11 and 12 were explained and met little resistance, as they are generally seen as prudent and positive measures for the municipality. Article 15 (fingerprinting ice cream mobile vendors) had comments from Chief Parentella, as way of explanation. It too was accepted and recommended for support to the Selectboard.

General By-law changes (articles 13, 19, 20) were all recommended to the Selectboard for approval as well. There was discussion on the General Code motion. I did my best to apologetically explain while it was not perfect in the presented form, it was a world better than what we presently have represented on the website for by-laws. It was one of the primary purposes of this initiative to have the General Code system be a component of improving accessibility to the by-laws (and other appropriate municipal policies) for the public. The sooner we can get even part of this up and running the better off access will be for the public.

While the living document known as the “General By-laws” still needs work, the By-law Committee recommended moving forward to seek a positive vote of Town Meeting. There was a companion motion made and seconded to encourage the Selectboard (you) to direct Administration (me) to do everything possible to improve the product and correct as many or the outstanding errors and/or inconsistencies by Annual Town Meeting (May). I suggested the Selectboard would concur with such a recommendation.

The committee also discussed both the Canal Park Committee recommended changes and the reduction of plastic bags by-law and spoke favorably on both issues. While both were accepted, the support and understanding of the “bag by-law” was significant and across the board.

**Capital Planning Committee,** I met with CPC to discuss the two articles they would be responsible for making a recommendation on to the Selectboard and Town Meeting. I have not been given a formal recommendation on articles 1 (Ted Belsky Lookout) or article 2 (cruisers), but I did not detect anything unfavorable in the dialogue.

We also had a discussion about the article 4 and the additional appropriation for Public Buildings. I hope and do believe the conversation served to better inform the CPC of some of the recent emergencies and on-going challenges of this 103 year old building. I included in the discussion the newest leak in the roof and ceiling outside the Planning and Conservation Office along with the \$8 K oil change required for the PD elevator, the rotting lower planes of doors at the OFHM and the shortage for the Town Hall elevator project all of which will be funded, at least partially through this appropriation article.

**Public Records Seminar,** While many communities are still trying to get the head around this ever changing change to the requirements and process respective of public records requests in the Commonwealth for 2017. South Hadley is establishing a protocol and working to understand the law. Our collective intent is continue to be as transparent as possible with all public records and to accommodate every request within the law and to the best of our municipal ability.

On December 14 we assembled all the key personnel and likely Records Access Officers (RAO), from various departments. The Building, School, Police, DPW, Health, Treasurer, Assessors, COA and of course Administration were in attendance for the PowerPoint. The Town Clerk, Rec Director and Town Planner were away, but will be updated on the meeting upon their return and will be integral to the anticipated and expected success of implementation.

The South Hadley Plan is to have a Primary RAO (Town Clerk) who will act as the “keeper of records”. This not a big change as the TC now acts in that capacity and is the most common point of contact for information seekers presently. Similar to how it works now the Primary will decide upon receipt who or what department should be the RAO for a particular request. The receiving RAO will immediately develop a strategy as to how the request will be fulfilled and commence the process. The RAO assigned will be responsible for the request until it is fulfilled. One point of concern at this juncture is anyone can be considered an initial receiver of a request, part time employee, board or commission members, contractors, I am anxious to see this worked out and narrowed.

We covered a number of other steps, what we can charge and time limitations for fulfillment of the solicitation for information. We will be having another Professional Development Training dedicated to this subject on January 13 for the entire staff, but I felt it was important to have a meeting for key people to begin planning how they will handle it in their respective department.

**River to Range Phase II Grant Application;** Pioneer Valley Planning called a meeting in South Hadley Town Hall to begin the process of writing a grant request for Phase II of the River to Range Trails Project (Ferry Street) accessible loop project.

This is a state grant is for an additional \$50K (grant limit) to complete the one mile accessible loop and create a reflecting area at the northwest corner near the brook. These were components which went beyond the funding previously granted. In this phase the municipal cash contribution will be \$20K (down from the previous \$25K).

I recently met with MHC to discuss the Phase II of the project and remind them of their \$25K commitment in Phase I and congratulate them on not being asked to contribute to Phase II. MHC continues to be supportive of these amenities and improvements. I have reached out to BWC to seek their support on this application.

Thank you for your support and suggestions, I would like to wish you all a healthy holiday season and I look forward to the New Year.

Respectfully submitted;

Michael J. Sullivan  
South Hadley, Administrator