

The following meeting was videotaped and audio recorded.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, January 25, 2023

Old Town Hall, 1111 Somerset Avenue, Dighton, MA 02715

And via Zoom

Meeting called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Chairman Hull.

Present: Chairman Leonard E. Hull, Selectman Peter Caron, Selectman Kenneth Pacheco, Town Administrator Michael Mullen, Executive Assistant Karin Brady, Police Chief Shawn Cronin, Town Treasurer Paul Reynolds (via zoom).

Pledge of Allegiance

The pledge of allegiance was recited.

Moment of Silence

A moment of silence was requested by Chairman Hull for George Aguiar.

Liquor License Hearing

There were questions with the documentation contained in the packet.

Selectman Pacheco motioned, Selectman Caron seconded and it was **VOTED** to continue the hearing until the next meeting.

Roll Call Vote:

Chairman Hull, aye.

Selectman Pacheco, aye.

Selectman Caron, aye.

National Grid

Pole Hearing

Town Administrator Mullen said based on the infrastructure in the area and how the weight is distributed on the poles. The only option is to seek an easement into the front yard of the resident who lives across the street from the intersection of Main Street. the brace pole would need to go $\frac{3}{4}$ into the front yard of the residence on Williams Street.

Mr. Mullen said National Grid consultants, Highway Superintendent Tom Ferry, ADA Coordinator Jonathan Gale and I met with the resident and informed him that we explored all of the scenarios for the brace pole

Selectman Pacheco asked about pole #114 and if the cable would cut through the property of the resident on Williams Street. He asked where the cable would be going now.

Mr. Mullen said the anchor wire goes right through the middle of the yard. He said the poles are

predominantly in the right-of-way already. He said the infrastructure on the pole is supported by a brace pole that triangulates downward.

Selectman Caron said #114 was going to be pushed back due to ADA compliance.

Selectman Caron said Chairman Hull had questioned if the pole would be in the way of the arborvitaes and if they would be disturbed.

Chairman Hull said the trees would stay where they are and the ADA compliance issues would be resolved.

Chairman Hull asked Mr. Chandonait if he was satisfied with the direction that the project was going. Mr. Chandonait said he was, and thanked Mr. Ferry and Mr. Mullen for their assistance.

Selectman Caron motioned, Selectman Pacheco seconded and it was **VOTED** to accept the petition for 29 jointly owned poles on Main Street.

Roll Call Vote:

Chairman Hull, aye.

Selectman Pacheco, aye.

Selectman Caron, aye.

Old Business

“Opt out of Vote-by-Mail”

Chairman Hull said the Board of Selectmen held a public hearing last week and informed the public that the vote would take place tonight.

Town Clerk Mark Pacheco explained that a “yes” vote would allow the town to opt out of no excuse vote by mail.

Selectman Pacheco said he was opposed to taking away the right to vote by mail. He said our state and national elections would have “vote by mail” but we would be taking away that right for our annual election.

Selectman Pacheco said this works out to less than 1.00 per household. He thought it was worth the cost to allow the residents to continue to vote by mail.

Selectman Caron said he was not sure that the system is broken. He said for several years we have had voting with no issues. He said he would rather see that money spent on Annual Town Meetings. Selectman Caron did not think we should take the money and use it as an experiment. He said it is not in the budget.

Chairman Hull said \$3,100,00 was not in the Town Clerk’s budget. He said absentee ballots are in the budget and are available. Chairman Hull said absentee ballots will only be sent to those who ask for

them. We are not restricting people's right to vote. Chairman Hull said "no excuse" voting would cause extra work for the Town Clerk. He said this decision is not for political reasons but is based on sound principles.

Selectman Caron motioned to opt out of unexcused vote by mail, Chairman Hull stepped down to second.

Roll Call Vote:

Chairman Hull, aye.

Selectman Caron, aye.

Selectman Pacheco, no.

Motion passed.

FY23 Reserve Police Officer and Part-Time Communication Hourly Rates

Police Chief Shawn Cronin said he came in last week to start the discussion about what the part-time police officers and the communications dispatchers have to go through with regard to training and to propose an increase in hourly wages for part time officers and part-time communication dispatchers.

Chief Cronin said if we enacted the proposal in February, barring any emergencies, we would not exhaust that budget line.

Selectman Pacheco asked what the difference between bridge certified and POST-C certified was.

Chief Cronin said there is no longer a police academy. He said the bridge certification is just what it sounds like, it bridges the gap between their certifications and what the state requires. He said it is pretty intense. He said all of our officers gone through the bridge academy. Chief Cronin said if they did not attend and pass by a certain date, they could not be a police officer. He said for the POST certification you need to have 2500 of patrol time and it must be signed by a supervisor. Chief Cronin said the POST meets once a month to approve. He said in a small town, it is a pretty big commitment.

Chief Cronin said his fear is, if we don't have reserve officers, the full-time officers will get burnt out. He said the increase is to recognize what they have done for us, and bring them to an equitable place.

Selectman Pacheco said he would support the full adjustment.

Selectman Caron asked what the soft costs involved would be.

Chairman Hull said it was negotiated with two options. He asked for the recommendation of Selectman Caron and Town Administrator Mullen.

Selectman Caron said the budget can absorb it and the board approved an increase mid-year for Cable.

Chairman Hull said public safety is a major priority for me. He said having officers work forced overtime is not a good situation. He asked if the chief felt confident that the budget could support this full adjustment.

Chief Cronin said barring any emergency, yes.

Chairman Hull said during the last election, the police officers picked up the ballots at no cost to the town. He felt that the police officers cared about the town.

Chief said arbitrations have gone smoothly and there has never been a time when we could not sit down and figure out a solution.

Selectman Caron motioned to approve the full adjustment, Selectman Pacheco seconded and added a friendly amendment for the increase to be effective March 1, 2023.

Roll Call Vote:

Chairman Hull, aye.

Selectman Pacheco, aye.

Selectman Caron, aye.

Motion passed.

Communication Dispatchers

Chief Cronin said in the past we have had a hard time getting through training. He said everyone is not cut out for this and they do go through yearly certifications. He thought a \$3.00 adjustment was fair.

There was discussion regarding the rates of pay.

Selectman Pacheco motioned, Selectman Caron seconded and it was **VOTED** to approve the part-time dispatcher's fee.

Roll Call Vote:

Chairman Hull, aye.

Selectman Pacheco, aye.

Selectman Caron, aye.

Public Input

Chairman Hull gave instructions for providing public input.

Chairman Hull asked for a motion to allow Mr. Moore to go beyond the five-minute time frame.

Selectman Caron motioned, Selectman Pacheco seconded and it was **VOTED** to allow Mr. Moore to exceed the time limit.

Roll Call Vote:

Chairman Hull, aye.
Selectman Pacheco, aye.
Selectman Caron, aye.

Bill Moore, 1835 Smith Street, said he wanted to talk about the Senior Tax Exemption. He said the Board of Assessors is limited by law. Mr. Moore said the law allows a \$500.00 reduction in tax for income under \$6,000-\$7,000.00. He said we do not use this. The mass state legislature section 41B, which we do not use, has a 71 year-old limit. The limit has gone up.

Mr. Moore outlined income and age limits under sections 41B, 41C and 41C1/2.

Mr. Moore said less than 10 actually meet this requirement. He said there is a request to reduce the age, but you would still have to be destitute to receive the exemption.

Mr. Moore felt that seniors need a break. The amount we give seniors is very small. He said this is up to the voters. He said he would certainly lower the age and recommended accepting 41C ½

Selectman Caron motioned, Selectman Pacheco seconded and it was **VOTED** to take Brenda Ferreira's letter out of order.

Roll Call Vote:

Chairman Hull, aye.
Selectman Pacheco, aye.
Selectman Caron, aye.

Chairman Hull read Brenda Ferreira's letter into the record. He asked Mr. Mullen to define the legislative body of the Town of Dighton. Mr. Mullen said that is Town Meeting.

Chairman Hull asked what the deadline was for warrant article submission. Mr. Mullen said usually it is April.

Chairman Hull asked Mr. Moore his preference. Mr. Moore said 41C ½.

Chairman Hull asked Mr. Moore to put together a spreadsheet for the next meeting

Selectman Caron motioned, Selectman Pacheco seconded and it was **VOTED** to allow Mr. Moore to work on this and come back before the next meeting.

Roll Call Vote:

Chairman Hull, aye.
Selectman Pacheco, aye.
Selectman Caron, aye.

Announcements

Announcements were read by Selectman Pacheco.

Selectmen's Reports

Selectman Caron had no reports.

Selectman Pacheco had no reports.

Chairman Hull

MMA – Annual Meeting

Chairman Hull said he attended the meeting and it was an incredible experience. He said a series of proposals would be brought before the governor.

Dighton Water District

Chairman Hull said we are still looking for a superintendent. He said they do not have any applicants as of yet. He said Dighton residents received cards from the Dighton Water District to make appointments for them to come out and make adjustments to meters.

Chairman Hull said no progress had been made regarding the purchase Brook Street well from Somerset.

Chairman Hull said he received a number of complaints with regard to the Main Street Project. He said at this stage, it is the responsibility of the Water District. Chairman Hull said the skim coat that they put down is breaking up and he had requested the Water District to fix it. He said the project manager is Nick Winn and at the Water District contract Tina Bragga.

Chairman Hull said at Dighton – Rehoboth Green and Gold night they had an outstanding turnout and it has energized the students and faculty.

Chairman Hull said the D-R Financial Advisory Team had their first meeting and they will help set the budget. He said Superintendent Bill Runey is encouraging parent involvement.

Town Administrator Report

Town of Dighton Financial Dashboard

Mr. Mullen said over the next 5-6 months, we will be hearing about our financial position. He thought it was important to breakdown these issues.

Mr. Mullen reviewed the updated Town of Dighton Financial Dashboard with the Board of Selectmen.

There were no questions from the board.

Chairman Hull asked Mr. Mullen to explain how the budget process will play out over the next month.

Mr. Mullen said as we have discussed, we are going through a zero-based budgeting process. We are starting from zero and rationalizing each individual expense. He said we kicked that off in the beginning of December and we are asking all departments, boards and committees to have them turned in by February 2. He said in the month of February, the Town Accountant and I will be going over the budgets and will check for any errors. Mr. Mullen said we will be meeting with the Finance Committee next Thursday night to talk with them about a budget process that works, in a way that will be more manageable than in years past for everyone involved.

Mr. Mullen said we will spend the month of February getting a good idea of where we stand. He said FY24 will be the most challenging year that we have had in a long time. Mr. Mullen said based on static

revenues, we will have a lot of real challenges. Mr. Mullen said as we approach FY24, he hoped the decisions made for FY24 will impact FY25 as well.

Mr. Mullen said once we finalize the joint meeting with the Finance Committee, he hoped to have everyone involved in planning the schedule.

New Business:

Chairman Hull said in essence we are having two different School Committee elections. The new nomination papers would state that.

Selectman Pacheco asked if this was the Board of Selectmen who appointed Mr. Andrade and the School Committee was involved. He asked if the School Committee should be involved.

There was discussion about the School Committee involvement.

Selectman Caron motioned, Selectman Pacheco seconded and it was **VOTED** to amend the unexpired elected term of the member to end April 8, 2023.

Roll Call Vote:

Chairman Hull, aye.

Selectman Pacheco, aye.

Selectman Caron, aye.

Mr. Andrade said his concern was with the documents in the packet. He was pleased to continue his service with the town.

Selectman Caron motioned, Selectman Pacheco seconded and it was **VOTED** to make nomination papers available January 26, 2023 with the last date to obtain papers to be February 15, 2023 and papers to be returned by February 17, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.

Board of Selectmen FY24 Budget

Mr. Mullen said we are proposing the initial Board of Selectmen department request in the amount of \$168,925.66. He said it represents a decrease.

Mr. Mullen said the two salaries for administrative and executive assistant are contractual – with ½ executive assistant being represented in the Board of Selectmen budget and ½ in the Town Administrator budget.

There was discussion of the reclassification of the expenses in the Professional and Technical line.

Chairman Hull asked about Old Town Hall – and any upgrades to audio visual equipment. Mr. Mullen said that would come out of Budget #192 - Buildings.

Selectman Caron had no questions.

Chairman Hull asked about total percentage increase in this budget.

There were no further questions.

Selectman Caron motioned, Selectman Pacheco seconded and it was **VOTED** to approve the preliminary FY24 Board of Selectmen budget.

Roll Call Vote:

Chairman Hull, aye.
Selectman Pacheco, aye.
Selectman Caron, aye.

Appointment of James Aguiar as the Board of Health Representative to the Stormwater Committee

Selectman Caron motioned, Selectman Pacheco seconded and it was **VOTED** to approve the appointment of James Aguiar as the Board of Health representative to the Stormwater Committee.

Roll Call Vote:

Chairman Hull, aye.
Selectman Pacheco, aye.
Selectman Caron, aye.

Appointment of Paul Reynolds to the Dighton Industrial and Development Committee

Selectman Caron motioned, Selectman Pacheco seconded and it was **VOTED** to appoint Paul Reynolds to the DDIC Committee.

Roll Call Vote:

Chairman Hull, aye.
Selectman Pacheco, aye.
Selectman Caron, aye.

Council on Aging Declaration of Surplus Items

Selectman Caron motioned, Selectman Pacheco seconded and it was **VOTED** to table item 10E.

Roll Call Vote:

Chairman Hull, aye.
Selectman Pacheco, aye.
Selectman Caron, aye.

Planning Board Member

Declaration of Disposal of Surplus Items by the Planning Board

Selectman Caron motioned, Selectman Pacheco seconded and it was **VOTED** to approve the Planning Board request to declare surplus items and dispose of the equipment as outlined.

Roll Call Vote:

Chairman Hull, aye.
Selectman Pacheco, aye.
Selectman Caron, aye.

Chairman Hull announced the open positions for the upcoming Annual Town Election.

Warrants

Selectman Pacheco motioned, Selectman Caron seconded and it was **VOTED** to approve Warrant #29A-23 in the amount of \$115,970.48, Warrant #29B-23 in the amount of \$360,476.41 both dated January 18, 2023.

Roll Call Vote:

Chairman Hull, aye.
Selectman Pacheco, aye.
Selectman Caron, aye.

Selectman Pacheco motioned, Selectman Caron seconded and it was **VOTED** to approve Warrant #30A-23 in the amount of \$126,707.63, Warrant #30B-23 in the amount of \$15,886.93 and Warrant #30C-23 in the amount of \$81,291.41, all dated January 25, 2023.

Roll Call Vote:

Chairman Hull, aye.
Selectman Pacheco, aye.
Selectman Caron, aye.

Acknowledgements

Selectman Caron motioned, Selectman Pacheco seconded and it was **VOTED** to accept the donation of \$30,00 to Prime Time

Roll Call Vote:

Chairman Hull, aye.
Selectman Pacheco, aye.
Selectman Caron, aye.

Letter of Resignation of David Marvill form the Community Preservation Committee

Letter of resignation was read by Chairman Hull.

Selectman Caron motioned, Selectman Pacheco seconded and it was **VOTED** to accept the resignation of David Marvill with sincere thanks and appreciation.

Roll Call Vote:

Chairman Hull, aye.
Selectman Pacheco, aye.
Selectman Caron, aye.

Chairman Hull said we currently have 2 vacancies on CPC. The applications should come to the office of the Board of Selectmen and then the CPC will conduct interviews and make a recommendation for both vacant at large positions at the Board of Selectmen’s February 22.

Minutes

Selectman Caron motioned, Selectman Pacheco seconded and it was **VOTED** to approve the minutes of Board of Selectmen’s regular meeting of January 11, 2023.

Roll Call Vote:

Chairman Hull, aye.
Selectman Pacheco, aye.
Selectman Caron, aye.

Executive Session

Selectman Caron motioned, Selectman Pacheco seconded and it was **VOTED** to enter into Executive Session under Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(3)(7)

3. To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares

a. Dighton Clerical Union

3. To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares

a. Town of Rehoboth vs. Dighton-Rehoboth Regional School District

7. To comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements.

a. Minutes of January 11, 2023

Roll Call Vote:

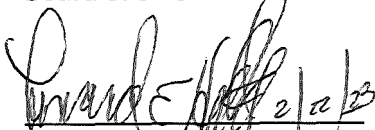
Chairman Hull, aye.
Selectman Pacheco, aye.
Selectman Caron, aye.

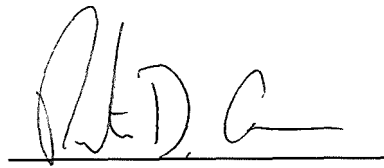
The Board of Selectmen’s regular meeting ended at 8:23 p.m.


Respectfully Submitted,

Karin L. Brady
Executive Assistant

Board of Selectmen


Leonard E. Hull, Chairman


Peter D. Caron, Clerk


Kenneth J. Pacheco, Member

Documents Reviewed:

Liquor License Application Dave's Fast Mart
National Grid Pole Hearing 29 poles Main Street
Public Hearing Request – Town Clerk
Vote By Mail Application
Request by Police Chief to Increase Wages for Reserve Police Officers and Part Time Dispatchers
Parking Ban Notice
2023 Dog License Application
Notice CPC Members needed
FY 2023 Financial Dashboard
D-R School Committee – Vote to Modify Term of Christopher Andrade
Letter from Town Clerk to Christopher Andrade
Appointment Letter from Christopher Andrade
Letter from Gay & Gay Regarding Procedure for Filling Vacancies on D-R School Committee
Pages from D-R Regional Agreement Regarding D-R School Committee Appointments
Board of Selectmen FY24 Proposed Budget
Recommendation Letter from Board of Health to Appoint James Aguiar as BOH Representative to Stormwater Committee
Recommendation from Dighton Development and Industrial Commission Regarding Appointment of Paul Reynolds
Request from Council on Aging to Declare Surplus Items
Memorandum from Planning Board to Declare Surplus Items
Request from Council on Aging to Accept an Anonymous Donation of \$30.00
Letter from David Marvill Regarding Resignation from the CPC Committee
Letter from Dighton Resident Brenda Ferreira Requesting Warrant Article for Property Tax Exemption for Seniors
Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes of January 11, 2023