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**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**Regular Meeting**

Wednesday, September 13, 2023 6:30 p.m.

**Hybrid Meeting**

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

**And via Zoom**

**Call to Order**

Meeting was called to order at 6:30 P.M. by Chairman Peter Caron.

Chairman Caron gave the public instructions for joining the meeting via Zoom and for providing public input.

**Roll call:**

Chairman Caron, present.

Selectman Hull, present.

Selectman Mello, present.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

The pledge of allegiance was recited.

**Moment of Silence**

A moment of silence was requested by Selectman Hull for Kathryn Duncan, Gary Mc Mann, Helen Midwood, George Simmons and Francis Soares.

**Proclamation: Constitution Week**

The proclamation was read by Chairman Caron.

**Scheduled Appointments**

**6:30 p.m. Interview Candidate for Open Space Committee**

**Danica Belknap**

Selectman Hull motioned, Selectman Mello seconded and it was **VOTED** to appoint Danika Belknap to the Open Space Committee.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Chairman Caron, aye.

Selectman Hull, aye.

Selectman Mello, aye.

**6:35 p.m. Recommendation to Appoint Senior Clerk, Offices of the Town Clerk and Treasurer/Collector**

Paul Reynolds came forward to speak about the interview process. He said that Ashley Daigneault was the standout candidate.

Selectman Hull motioned, Selectman Mello seconded and it was **VOTED** to appoint Ashley Daigneault to the position of Senior clerk Treasurer/Collector and Town Clerk's Office.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Chairman Caron, aye.  
Selectman Hull, aye.  
Selectman Mello, aye.

**6:40 p.m. Joint Meeting with Fire Station Building Candidates**

Fire Chief Chris Maguy opened the meeting of the Fire Station Building Committee.

Chairman Caron suggested that membership of the Fire Station Building Committee be increased to ten members and both candidates be appointed tonight.

Selectman Hull motioned, Selectman Mello seconded and it was **VOTED** to increase the membership of the Fire Station Building Committee from nine (9) members to ten (10) members.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Chairman Caron, aye.  
Selectman Hull, aye.  
Selectman Mello, aye.

Selectman Hull motioned, Selectman Mello seconded and it was **VOTED** that Robert Adams and David Araujo be appointed to the Fire Station Building Committee.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Chairman Caron, aye.  
Selectman Hull, aye.  
Selectman Mello, aye.

The Fire Station Building Committee meeting was adjourned.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Chairman Caron, aye.  
Selectman Hull, aye.  
Selectman Mello, aye.

**6:45 p.m. Kevin Smith- Parks and Recreation**

**Firecracker Festival Update**

Mr. Smith said the festival went well. The weather was hot. He said moving forward they would seek sponsorship for the event. He thanked all the committees and commissions that came out.

Mr. Smith also said that Parks and Recreation would like to do a certificate of recognition for someone that he felt has gone above and beyond for Parks and Recreation. He said the pickle ball people have

always gone above and beyond and has never been a burden for Parks and Recreation. He would like to recognize these kinds of efforts going forward.

Selectman Hull asked if individuals would also be considered for the award as well. Mr. Smith said of course.

Selectman Hull also asked if, with the possibility of the hurricane and the after effects, the event on Sunday would go on. Mr. Smith said the event is considered rain or shine.

Selectman Mello said she was grateful for the Firecracker Festival and the chance to meet everyone as the Town Nurse.

**6:50 p.m. Joint Meeting with the Commission on Disability Candidates**

No members from the Commission on Disability were present.

**Appointments to Commission on Disability**

**Donald Hirschy**

Mr. Donald Hirschy came forward as a candidate.

Selectman Hull thanked Mr. Hirschy for his service to the community and to the town. He said this is an advisory board and he asked Mr. Hirschy what he saw as the needs of the community.

Mr. Hirschy said for ten years he has assisted disabled veterans. He did not see any immediate needs, but would consider accessibility to the buildings to be an important need.

Selectman Hull motioned, Selectman Mello seconded and it was **VOTED** to appoint Mr. Donald Hirschy to the Commission on Disability.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Chairman Caron, aye.

Selectman Hull, aye.

Selectman Mello, aye.

**Michael Mullen**

Selectman Hull said Mr. Mullen has a great deal of experience in government, both local and state.

Selectman Hull asked what the role would be of the commission in this town. Mr. Mullen said we have an opportunity to further define the commission. He said before the KMA report, we have taken the beginning steps. He saw the commission as having more of a role in the recommendations. Also, he saw the Commission on Disability having a role in making sure that we are paying attention and have a plan to deal with these issues.

Selectman Hull motioned, Selectman Mello seconded and it was **VOTED** to appoint Michael Mullen Jr., as a member of the Commission on Disability.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Chairman Caron, aye.

Selectman Hull, aye.

Selectman Mello, aye.

**Appointment of Nicole Mello as a Voting Member of the Commission on Disability**

Selectman Hull said the commission could move forward in a more positive direction with the addition of additional people. He said Ms. Mello has served many roles in the community and she truly understands what is important to the community.

Selectman Hull motioned, Chairman Caron stepped down and it was **VOTED** to appoint Nicole Mello as a voting member of the Commission on Disability.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Chairman Caron, aye.

Selectman Hull, aye.

Selectman Mello, aye.

**Announcements**

Selectman Mello read the announcements.

**Town Administrator's Report**

**FY25 Budget Planning**

Town Administrator Mullen said Fiscal Year 2025 planning begins with the approval of the FY24 budget. He said we understand that there will be challenges going into Fiscal Year 2025 and they have already affected our Fiscal Year 2024 position. Mr. Mullen said with the zero-based budgeting process, we begin Fiscal Year 2025 planning with a deficit of \$395,000.00.

Mr. Mullen said we have to absorb an additional \$400,000.00 in an 8.6 million-dollar budget.

Mr. Mullen said he has reached out to D-R school officials for an honest discussion about our ability to fund any proposed items in Fiscal Year 2025. He said we are trying to spread out the impact, but it will be very difficult. Mr. Mullen said he hoped to have further discussion in the next few weeks.

Selectman Hull asked who was involved in establishing the necessary cuts.

Mr. Mullen said the cuts are based on the current budget and our Fiscal Year 2024 expenses.

Selectman Hull said it appears that public safety would take a large hit.

Selectman Hull said K-8 is still under the domain of the town of Dighton. He said the same discussions are going on in the Town of Rehoboth right now.

Selectman Hull asked what the required amount that Dighton has to spend on K-8. He wanted to know what the bottom line is.

**Selectmen's Reports**

**Chairman Caron**

Chairman Caron said the Historical Commission did not have a quorum last night. He said no votes were taken and no decisions were made.

Chairman Caron said one of the things discussed was the 50-year time capsule. He said they are still looking for items to put in it and the Girl Scouts have supplied some items.

Chairman Caron said they are still discussing the 250<sup>th</sup> celebration and they would like the Board of Selectmen to be part of that.

One of the members did a map of historical markers in town and made a presentation with several maps one on top of the others.

Selectman Hull asked about the location of the library. Chairman Caron said it will be inside the library in a plexiglass case.

**Nicole Mello**  
**Trails Committee**

Selectman Mello said she was not able to attend the Trails Committee meeting.

Selectman Mello said the health agent has started and she is settling in great.

Chairman Caron said he had the opportunity to meet the new health agent and was impressed.

**Leonard Hull**

Selectman Hull said the Dighton Development and Industrial Commission has a business expo scheduled for October 3 at Bristol County Agricultural High School. He said any businesses interested in participation should email chairman, Dan Higgins at [DDIC@dighton-ma.gov](mailto:DDIC@dighton-ma.gov). He said the Town of Berkley will be participating as well.

Selectman Hull also wanted to ask if the DDIC could come forward at some point to explain the new businesses. He said there are some new businesses coming in and they are very important to the community.

**School Committee**

Selectman Hull said the Dighton-Rehoboth School Committee had a very important meeting with the MSBA board. He said in the last few months we have gone from the top 64, to the top 17 on the list.

Mr. Mullen said they met with superintendent Runey and his team, and a team of architects from the MSBA. He said the statement of interest was submitted by the school district at the end of May.

Mr. Mullen thought that Dighton Elementary School has a very compelling case to get some assistance. He said we don't know yet what type of assistance that would be. He thought the take-away issues that came out of the meeting, was that we have growth issues going on at the moment and that the modulars that we do have, do not have the ability to keep up with enrollment. Mr. Mullen said we have had a tremendous increase this year alone.

Mr. Mullen said that based on the core building being a 1953 building, we have a small ability to address issues and needs. He thought the MSBA had noticed as well. Mr. Mullen said there are accessibility needs in many areas of that school. Mr. Mullen said we have accessibility needs, enrollment issues and trends and special education needs. He hoped MSBA will pay attention to all of those needs.

Selectman Hull said in 1994, before solar, the master plan committee put together projections over a 20-year period. They said that in 2014 that the town should be looking at a new school. He said the plan further stated that by 2024, this community would be looking at the need for a new school.

Selectman Hull said remodeling will not take care of the issues in the long term.

Selectman Hull said the school district business manager Bob Baxter has submitted his resignation and that was a big blow. He said the committee last night voted to appoint the firm TMS to fill Mr. Baxter's role. They will see if they can acquire a good candidate at a price that they can afford, and in the interim, the firm will assume the duties of Mr. Baxter.

Selectman Hull said that the school has not has a Human Resources position in the past and recently posted the position for a Human Resource Manager.

### **Water District**

Selectman Hull said the Water district has promised to fix the speed bump at culvert one. He said If you have a telephone pole problem, please contact the Board of Selectmen's office or the Highway Department.

Selectman Hull asked Mr. Mullen to extend thanks to the Highway Department.

Selectman Hull announced that on September 25 at Dighton Middle school there will be a special meeting of the Water District, where they will vote to refurbish the Cedar Street well.

Selectman Hull said negotiations for the Somerset well are still ongoing.

Last week, Mr. Hull attended a forum with Jake Auchincloss. He said in the future he will hold a forum for community leaders in his region.

### **Old business**

None.

### **New Business**

#### **Proposed Budget Bylaw Draft**

Mr. Mullen said as a result of the Financial Management Review, the DLS suggested that the town have a policy for budget creation. In continuing to implement the recommendations, they suggest us crafting a budget bylaw to present at town meeting. He said over the last few months, we have had the opportunity to work with Abigail Eckerson who was a fellow with the DLS and we have created a proposed budget bylaw. We are looking for input from the Board of Selectmen.

Selectman Hull motioned, Selectman Mello seconded and it was **VOTED** to accept the budget bylaw draft as presented this evening.

### **Roll Call Vote:**

Chairman Caron, aye.  
Selectman Hull, aye.  
Selectman Mello, aye.

**Facilities Request - Prince Henry Society**

Selectman Hull motioned, Selectman Mello seconded and it was **VOTED** to approve the Prince Henry Car Show at the Karl Spratt Athletic field, condition of approval by the Board of Health for a Food Permit.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Chairman Caron, aye.  
Selectman Hull, aye.  
Selectman Mello, aye.

**Facilities Request - Dighton Rehoboth Volleyball Car Wash**

Selectman Hull motioned, Selectman Mello seconded and it was **VOTED** to approve the use of the Dighton Town garage for the D-R Volleyball Carwash on Sunday September 23, 2023.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Chairman Caron, aye.  
Selectman Hull, aye.  
Selectman Mello, aye.

**Agreement between the Town of Dighton and the Town of Berkley – Access to the Town of Dighton Gun Range for Training**

Mr. Mullen Said that the range would only be used when officers from Dighton are there as well. He said that Berkley has also pledged to buy additional ammunition for Dighton’s use as well.

Selectman Hull said his concern was that some of the neighbors are complaining that we are increasing the use of the gun range. He asked what restrictions or provisions would be in place for use.

Mr. Mullen said the only time that Berkley will be able to use the range, is when the Dighton Police Department is already there and using the range as well. He said Berkley does not have the ability to use the range on any other days.

Selectman Hull motioned, Selectman Mello seconded and it was **VOTED** to approve the agreement between the town of Dighton and the Town of Berkley for use of the gun range.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Chairman Caron, aye.  
Selectman Hull, aye.  
Selectman Mello, aye.

**Fiscal Year 2024 Hiring Freeze**

Chairman Caron would like to postpone this agenda item until the 27<sup>th</sup> of September.

Selectman Hull asked if there has been any discussion with the unions regarding this. Mr. Mullen said this would not affect any current employment.

Selectman Hull motioned, Selectman Mello seconded and it was **VOTED** to table discussion of the FY24 hiring freeze until the next meeting on September 27.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Chairman Caron, aye.  
Selectman Hull, aye.  
Selectman Mello, aye.

**Warrants**

Selectmen Hull motioned, Selectman Mello seconded and it was **VOTED** to approve Warrant #10A-24 in the amount of \$140,315.27 and Warrant #10B-24 in the amount of \$546,163.01, both dated August 31, 2023.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Chairman Caron, aye.  
Selectman Hull, aye.  
Selectman Mello, aye.

Selectman Hull motioned, Selectman Mello seconded and it was **VOTED** to approve Warrant #11A-24 in the amount of \$114,879.00 and Warrant #11B-24 in the amount of \$72,463.77, both dated September 7, 2023.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Chairman Caron, aye.  
Selectman Hull, aye.  
Selectman Mello, aye.

Selectman Hull motioned, Selectman Mello seconded and it was **VOTED** to approve Warrant #12A-24 in the amount of \$118,421.99 and Warrant #12B-24 in the amount of \$52,112.35, both dated September 14, 2023.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Chairman Caron, aye.  
Selectman Hull, aye.  
Selectman Mello, aye

**Correspondence**

Selectman Hull motioned, Selectman Mello seconded and it was **VOTED** to accept the resignation of Jen Duczowski from the Commission on Disability.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Chairman Caron, aye.  
Selectman Hull, aye.  
Selectman Mello, aye.



## **Minutes**

Selectman Hull motioned, Selectman Mello seconded and it was **VOTED** to approve the Board of Selectmen's Regular meeting minutes of June 20, 2023.

### **Roll Call Vote:**

Chairman Caron, aye.

Selectman Hull, aye.

Selectman Mello, aye.

Selectman Hull motioned, Selectman Mello seconded and it was **VOTED** to approve the Board of Selectmen's regular meeting minutes of August 23, 2023.

### **Roll Call Vote:**

Chairman Caron, aye.

Selectman Hull, aye.

Selectman Mello, aye.

## **Public Input**

Kevin Smith 1147 Center Street, thought it was great that the town will share the gun range with town of Berkley. He said at some point, there may be a need for lead remediation. Mr. Mullen said he has asked that question, and the range is raked and metal detectors are used to pickup all the metal after each use.

Kevin Smith said he was speaking of the lead that is going into the embankment.

Kevin Smith said he wanted to thank Selectman Hull for his comments regarding Dighton Elementary School and accessibility issues. Mr. Smith said he did not want to scare the public. He asked if we enter the MSBA program, the feasibility study would come at no cost. Mr. Mullen said we will be reimbursed for half of the cost of a feasibility study.

Mr. Kevin Smith said he was excited to see the Commission on Disability stay in-tact and continue to do the work that they are meant to do. He said there is a lot more to be done than just addressing the KMA report. He said the KMA report is just the bare minimum.

Selectman Hull said in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the use of lead bullets is no longer permitted. He thought we could reach out to conservation for assistance to look into Mr. Smith's concerns.

Kevin Smith said we are moving toward lead-free ammunition, but the majority of ammunition is lead based.

Selectman Hull said he would like to see the Commission on Disability come out and outline services that can be provided for disabled or elderly residents and where they can obtain those services. He hoped other committees would come and spotlight their committees and commissions or departments. He said we were looking at Capital Stabilization as a way to help and it would maybe relieve some fears about how we will pay for some of these things.

**Adjournment**

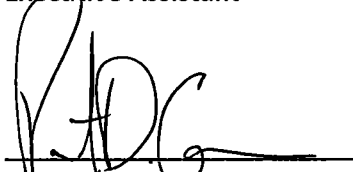
Selectman Hull motioned, Selectman Mello seconded and it was **VOTED** to adjourn at 8:21 p.m.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Chairman Caron, aye.  
Selectman Hull, aye.  
Selectman Mello, aye.

Respectfully submitted,

**Karin L. Brady**  
Executive Assistant

  
Peter Caron, Chairman  
Nicole Mello, Clerk  
Leonard Hull, Member

**Documents Reviewed:**

- Constitution Week Proclamation
- Volunteer Application Form – Danika Belknap
- Danika Belknap Resume
- Recommendation Letter from Town Clerk and Town Treasurer/Collector regarding Appointment of Ashley Daigneault as Office Assistant, Treasurer/Collector and Town Clerk’s Office
- Email from Robert Adams regarding Position on the Fire Station Building Committee
- Volunteer Application Form – David Araujo
- Volunteer Application Form – Donald Hirschy
- Donald Hirschy Resume
- Volunteer Application Form - Michael Mullen Jr
- Friends of the Dighton Public Library 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Golf Tournament Flyer
- Dighton Historical Society, “Mill Girls of Lowell” flyer
- Dighton Public Library Book Club Flyer
- Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Planning Memorandum and Backup Information
- DLS Financial Management Review Document
- Facility Reservation Request for Car Show/Family Fair
- Facility Reservation Request for D-R Volleyball Carwash
- Agreement between Dighton and Berkley for Use of Firing Range
- Fiscal Year 2024 Hiring Freeze Memorandum
- Email Resignation - Jennifer Duczkowski from the Commission on Disability
- Minutes of the Board of Selectmen’s Regular Meeting of June 20, 2023
- Minutes of the Board of Selectmen’s Regular Meeting of August 23, 2023