

The following Meeting was video and audio recorded for Airing on Channel 9

**BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

**Regular Meeting**

Wednesday, September 27, 2023 6:30 p.m.

**Hybrid Meeting**

Old Town Hall, 1111 Somerset Avenue, Dighton, MA

And via Zoom

**RECEIVED**

Town Clerk-Dighton, MA

OCT 23 2023

Time: 10:14 AM

By: Re

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Caron at 6:30 p.m. He gave instructions to the public for logging into the Zoom portion of the meeting and for providing public input.

**Roll Call:**

Chairman Caron, present

Selectman Mello, present

Selectman Hull, present.

**Pledge of allegiance**

The pledge of allegiance was recited.

**Scheduled Appointments**

**6:30 p.m. Acting Police Chief, George Nichols**

**Environmental Concerns at Firing Range**

Acting Police Chief George Nichols gave an overview of the procedures at the firing range in Dighton. He stated that the department currently uses ammunition with reduced amounts of lead. He said there are also other options, all at an increased cost.

Selectman Hull motioned, Selectman Mello seconded and it was **VOTED** to postpone the scheduled appointment for the Historical Commission until later in the meeting.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Chairman Caron, aye.

Selectman Hull, aye.

Selectman Mello, aye.

**Announcements**

Announcements were read by Selectman Mello.

**Town Administrators Report**

**Update on Municipal Fiber Grant Project**

Mr. Mullen said that the town received a \$200,000.00 grant in 2022. He said we have been working with National Grid to gain access to the telephone poles. Mr. Mullen said we have not heard back from National Grid at this time, but about two weeks ago, we reached out to the contractor who we will be working with. Mr. Mullen said that the state contract that we had engaged his firm under, had expired. He directed us to a new contract. Mr. Mullen said he would be sitting with officials from TMLP to discuss this. He said he will also report to our grant manager about the hiccups that have been encountered. Mr. Mullen said we have a pathway forward and there would be more information to follow.

Mr. Mullen said he also wanted to update the board on the creation of a town e-newsletter. He said this will be a collaboration of all town departments and everyone will be kept up to date with everything that is going on in town.

### **Selectmen's Reports**

#### **Peter Caron**

Chairman Caron said we haven't had an Open Space Committee meeting in over a year and our first meeting will be Oct 4, 2023.

Chairman Caron also said the next Solid Waste Committee meeting will be held on October 12.

#### **Nicole Mello**

##### **Board of Health**

Selectman Mello said she did not attend, but in that meeting she said they finalized the position of Health Director. She said Mr. Aguiar has been getting involved in the Public Health Grant meetings.

Selectman Hull asked about the Health-Director position. Mr. Mullen said in the long term he may have to back away from the Health Inspection aspect of the job. Mr. Mullen said this is still an issue in the long term.

Selectman Hull said his understanding was that there had to be one title for both positions. Mr. Mullen said that was not the case. Mr. Mullen said at the October meeting we will present a request for Mr. Aguiar to be appointed as a Special Municipal Employee.

##### **Agricultural Committee**

Selectman Mello said she attended, but no one else did. She said the meeting was not held, due to not having a quorum.

#### **Selectman Hull**

##### **Open Space Committee**

Selectman Hull said the first Open Space meeting will be a good one. On Monday night the DDIC reviewed initial plans for an Economic Development plan. He said there was a suggestion for the formation of sub-committees that would reach out to developers. He said there is a big need for community involvement. He said one of the things that the DDIC does is, they bring a lot of expertise to the town.

Selectman Hull mentioned that the Dighton Development and Industrial Commission had the business expo coming up at Bristol County Agricultural High School.

##### **Conservation Commission**

Selectman Hull mentioned that there is an opening for an associate member.

He said the goal of the Dighton-Rehoboth regional school district to create life long learners. Selectman Hull said there had been a negative impact due to the mass exodus of students from the district. He said this has an impact on the budget. Selectman Hull said the more students who stay in the district the more money that becomes available.

Selectman Hull said Superintendent Bill Runey would be coming to a future Board of Selectmen's meeting to introduce the firm of TMS, who will be taking over the finances of the school district.

**Water District**

Selectman Hull said that the Water District had a special meeting. No residents attended the meeting. E said there were two articles on the warrant.

Selectman Hull said the Fire Department Feasibility Study Committee is in a good place. He said they are going through the process of awarding a bid for on call architectural engineering firms and they would conduct interviews on Monday evening for four finalists.

Selectman Hull motioned, Selectman Mello seconded and it was **VOTED** to open the Agenda Item for the scheduled appointment for the Historical Commission.

**Roll Call Vote:**

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

**Patricia Gales-Historical Commission Chair**

Ms. Gales said she had a plan for the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of America celebration to present to the Board of Selectmen.

She said she was also proposing the organization of a committee as follows:

- One member of the Dighton Historical Commission
- One member of Dighton Historical Society
- Town Historian
- Veterans Agent or designee
- One member of Dighton Community Church- designated by the church
- One member of the Board of Selectmen – designated by the board
- One member of the local re-enactors Minutemen as designated by the group
- One town department head to be named by the Board of Selectmen
- Three at large community members as appointed by the Board of Selectmen

Selectman Hull motioned, Selectman Mello seconded and it was **VOTED** to establish the Dighton 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary committee as presented.

**Roll Call Vote:**

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

**Old Business:**

**Fiscal Year 2024 Hiring Freeze**

Mr. Mullen said the hiring freeze would include all full-time benefited positions. He said excluded would be call fire personnel, dispatchers and reserve and special police officers. It would also exclude

board and committee members. He said if a department head really did have a need to hire, they would be able to come before the board of selectmen for a decision.

Selectman Hull motioned, Selectman Mello seconded and it was **VOTED** that the Board of Selectmen institute a hiring freeze as presented to begin on September 28, 2023.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Chairman Caron, aye.

Selectman Hull, aye.

Selectman Mello, aye.

**Recommend Award Letters for On Call Architectural and Engineering Services**

Mr. Mullen said we have a few ongoing projects for which we are in need of these services. He said we put out the bids in August and received 13 proposals. Mr. Mullen said the screening committee then met three times and whittled it down from 13 bidders to 6. He said, at this time, we are recommending that the board enter into contracts with 4 of the 6 firms.

Selectman Hull motioned Selectman Mello seconded and it was **VOTED** to award letters of approval to the following companies:

GHD

Granite City Partners

McKinnell, McKinnell and Taylor, Inc.

Woodard and Curran

**Roll Call Vote:**

Chairman Caron, aye.

Selectman Hull, aye.

Selectman Mello, aye.

Selectman Hull motioned, Selectman Mello seconded and it was **VOTED** to take New Business, Item J, out of order.

**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 Police Department list of items to be declared as surplus as presented.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Chairman Caron, aye.

Selectman Hull, aye.

Selectman Mello, aye.

**Special Town Meeting Draft Warrant - Review and Place Articles**

Selectman Hull asked Mr. Kevin Smith to speak on behalf of article 20 and 21 to express his concerns.

Mr. Smith was not available via Zoom.

Selectman Hull said Mr. Smith has asked that in Article 20 and 21 the full text of the bylaw be included for transparency purposes.

Selectman Hull motioned, Selectman Mello seconded and it was **VOTED** to amend article 20 and 21 to include the existing bylaw with the proposed amended changes.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Chairman Caron, aye.

Selectman Hull, aye.

Selectman Mello, aye.

Selectman Hull motioned, Selectman Mello seconded and it was **VOTED** to accept the draft Special Town Meeting Warrant with Article 20 and 21 as amended this evening and to place the articles as proposed this evening.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Chairman Caron, aye.

Selectman Hull, aye.

Selectman Mello, aye.

**Resignation of the Chief of Police – Shawn Cronin**

The resignation letter was read by Chairman Caron.

Selectman Hull motioned, Selectman Mello seconded and it was **VOTED** to accept the resignation of Police Chief Shawn Cronin effective September 23, 2023.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Chairman Caron, aye.

Selectman Hull, aye.

Selectman Mello, aye.

**Chief of Police Job Description and Hiring Process**

Mr. Mullen said in the past we have reached out to firms offering the services of assessment. He said it was a very healthy and transparent process. Mr. Mullen said there are a handful of firms that do this. He thought it would be helpful in moving forward. Mr. Mullen said he hoped to have quotes and proposals before the board at the next meeting.

Chairman Caron asked about costs for these services. Mr. Mullen said 11/2 years ago, we paid about \$5,000.00, but they could go as high as \$20,000.00.

Selectman Hull asked about procurement law.

Mr. Mullen said anything over \$10,000.00 and we have to have a written scope. He said under that, we have the ability to form an arrangement that best suits our needs.

Mr. Mullen said over the next two weeks, he could see what the options are.

Selectman Hull motioned, Selectman Mello seconded and it was **VOTED** to table the Police Chief Job Description and posting until the next meeting.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Chairman Caron, aye.

Selectman Hull, aye.

Selectman Mello, aye.

**Contract between Horsley, Witten Group and Town of Dighton**

Mr. Mullen said it is actually a \$90,000.00 grant and the town has provided a match. We need to have this done by June of 2024, so we will need to get moving on this.

Selectman Hull motioned, Selectman Mello seconded and it was **VOTED** to enter into a contract with Horsley Witten Group regarding the design, engineering and permitting services of Accessible Trailheads for the Taunton River Trail.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Chairman Caron, aye.

Selectman Hull, aye.

Selectman Mello, aye.

**Conservation Commission Permit Notification Policy**

Mr. Mullen said this is a broad effort to bring additional coordination to all processes, which is good news.

Selectman Hull asked the chairman of the Conservation Commission to speak on this proposal.

Mr. Digits came forward to say that there have been some issues with residents that have violations that they did not know about. They are requesting that a process be put in place to say that these permits be pre-approved, so that this does not happen in the future.

Mr. Digits said they want to avoid legal action in the future.

Chairman Caron said he was not in favor at this time because all parties are not present.

Mr. Digits said they are trying to offer solutions. He said they are having a problem and are just suggesting that a process be developed to deal with the problems.

Selectman Hull said Mr. Mullen has addressed many of the growing pain within the town by creation of policies and the creation of PACT meetings in which departments work very closely to resolve problems. Selectman Hull said this is step one in moving forward. He asked if the Building Department is on board with this.

Mr. Mullen said, yes, this is what was intended all along with the acquisition of Permit Link.

Selectman Hull said he thought it would be best that we take this step by step.

**Nancy Goulart – Stormwater Committee**

Mrs. Goulart said the Stormwater Committee was formed in 2018. She said, in order to make sure that all boards were involved, a form was developed with all the signoff committees. She thought the Board of Selectmen should review that document. She gave an overview of how the signoff sheet worked. Selectman Hull asked if the Building Department was okay with this policy. Mr. Mullen said this worked perfectly for the building department

Selectman Hull motioned, Selectman Mello seconded and it was **VOTED** to approve the building permit review process as presented this evening, with amendment that all building permits (paper or permit link) would be reviewed by Conservation within 10 days.

**Roll Call Vote:**

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

**Facilities Request-Poppasquash Community Club Board Meetings**

Mr. Mullen gave the details of the request.

Selectman Hull motioned, Selectman Mello seconded and it was **VOTED** to approve the request for use of Old Town Hall by Poppasquash Community Club for board meetings.

**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 request to waive the rental fees.

**Roll Call Vote:**

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

**One Day Liquor License for Araujo’s Barbecue**

Selectman Hull motioned, Selectman Mello seconded and it was **VOTED** to approve the application for a one-day liquor license for Araujo’s Farm Barbeque on November 4, 2023.

**Roll Call Vote:**

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

**One day Liquor License for Araujo’s Arts Festival**

Selectman Hull motioned, Selectman Mello seconded and it was **VOTED** to approve the one-day liquor license for Araujo’s Arts Festival on November 5, 2023.

**Roll Call Vote:**

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

**Warrants**

Selectman Hull motioned, Selectman Mello seconded and it was **VOTED** to approve Warrant #13A-24 in the amount of \$120,881.25, Warrant #13B-24 in the amount of \$1,554,686.36, Warrant #13C-24 in the amount of \$3,979.54 and Warrant #13D-24 in the amount of \$7,598.00 all dated September 21, 2023.

**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 #14A-24 in the amount of \$144,208.83 and Warrant #14B-24 in the amount of \$252,827.78, both dated September 28, 2023.

**Correspondence**

None.

**Minutes**

Selectman Hull motioned, Selectman Mello seconded and it was **VOTED** to approve the minutes of the Board of Selectmen’s Regular meeting of September 13, 2023.

**Roll Call Vote:**

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

**Public Input**

Mr. Robert Woods echoed the comments of Mrs. Goulart with regard to the permit review process and said that it was very important that the Sewer Commissioners be informed of new buildings as well and hoped to be included in the process.

**Executive Session**

Selectman Hull motioned, Selectman Mello seconded and it was **VOTED** to enter into Executive Session under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(2)(7)

- 2. To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with non-union personnel.



a. Chief of Police

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

a. Executive Session minutes

**Roll Call Vote:**

Chairman Caron, aye.

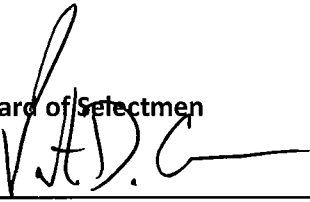
Selectman Hull, aye.

Selectman Mello, aye.

The regular meeting ended at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**Karin L. Brady  
Executive Assistant**

Board of Selectmen  
  
Peter Caron, Chairman

  
Nicole Mello, Clerk

  
Leonard Hull, Member

- Documents Reviewed:
- 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of America Proposal
  - Dighton Public Library Book Club Flyer
  - Family Fair and Car Show Flyer
  - Council on Aging "Silver Prom Flyer"
  - Fiscal Year 2024 Hiring Freeze
  - Recommendation Letters for On-Call Architectural and Engineering Services
  - On Call Architectural and Engineering Services RFP
  - Special Town Meeting Overview of Articles
  - Draft Special Town Meeting Warrant
  - Resignation letter of Police Chief Shawn Cronin
  - Horsely Witten group Contract for Services with Town of Dighton
  - Conservation Commission Letter to Request Implementation of Policy Change
  - Request for Use of Old Town Hall – Poppasquash Board Meetings
  - One Day Liquor License Application for Araujo's Farm Barbeque
  - One Day Liquor License Application for Araujo's farm Arts Festival
  - Dighton Police List of Surplus Items
  - Minutes of the Board of Selectmen's Regular Meeting of September 13, 2023

