



**SPECIAL TOWN MEETING
TOWN OF DIGHTON, MA
NOVEMBER 01, 2022**

The Special Town Meeting held on November 01, 2022, at the Dighton Middle School and was called to order at 7:04 PM by Gary Scott Dingus, Moderator. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was recited. The checkers were Sheila Neu, LeeAnne Kerwin, Joan Ready, Margaret Mullen, Kathleen Perry, Bridget Kenyon, Sue Carpenter, Jo-Ann Wilson, and Janet White. From the Finance Committee was Peter J. Roache Chair, Robert G. Rendon, Kevin J. Perry, David Carpenter, Sue Lorenz, and Rachel Dingus. Present and seated on stage from the Board of Selectmen was Leonard Hull, chair, Kenneth Pacheco, and Peter Caron. Also present and seated on stage was Michael Mullen Town Administrator, Matthew Costa Town Council, Mark Pacheco Town Clerk, and Pamela Tenglin Assistant Town Clerk. The Special Town Meeting Dissolved at 8:22 PM. Total attendance was 112.

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On Motion of Leonard Hull and Seconded I move that we dispense with the reading of the warrant.

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On Motion of Peter Caron and Seconded I move that we dispense with the reading of the articles, and that reference to them be made by number and content.

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On Motion of Kenneth Pacheco and seconded I move that the Town consider adjournment this evening at 10:00 P.M.

ARTICLE 1. *VOTED UNANIMOUSLY:* On Motion of Nancy Goulart that we hear reports of Town Officials.

Leonard E. Hull, Jr., Chair of the Board of Selectmen read the following statement:

Good evening, Mr. Moderator, Town Officials, and to the residents of Dighton gathered here this evening.

My name is Leonard Hull, Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, and I am honored to present tonight's report on behalf of the Board and my colleagues, Selectman Ken Pacheco and Selectman Peter Caron.

Since we last met at June's Annual Town Meeting, the Town has continued to see personnel transitions in a number of key town departments.

In early July, we welcomed new D-R School Superintendent Bill Runey to our community who succeeded Dr. Anthony Azar. I count myself as one of many officials in the community who is already tremendously impressed with Superintendent Runey's leadership, We welcome Superintendent Runey as a member of the Dighton community.

In the first part of July, we saw the retirement of longtime Prime Time and Council on Aging employee, Sheila Neu. All of us who know Sheila know how dedicated she was to Dighton and our senior community. We wish her nothing but the best in her well-deserved retirement.

We also welcome a new team under the leadership of COA Director Bela Powell that includes Trista Tate, Laura Medeiros and Kate Lawrence.

Last spring, we also began planning for the retirement of former Chief of Police, Robert MacDonald. Chief MacDonald, a 43-year member of the Dighton Police Department, not only served our community with honor and distinction, but is an institution and a friend to many here in Dighton. We thank Chief MacDonald for his tireless service to the Dighton Police Department and our town residents, and wish him the best of health and happiness in his well-deserved retirement.

In August, we also welcomed Police Chief Shawn Cronin to his new role leading the Dighton Police Department further into the future.

Chief Cronin has built a distinguished reputation as a leader not only within the DPD, but throughout our community. He is the Chief that meets the moment as we confront modern-day law enforcement challenges---and to understand that we don't have to look any further than to Oakie, Dighton's new Comfort Dog, who will be a huge help in assisting the DPD to confront those challenges head-on.

We very much look forward to working with Chief Cronin and seeing all the strides that the men and women of the DPD will continue to make under his command.

Last month, we also recognized the retirement of Captain Christopher Ready, a dedicated leader who held many roles in the Dighton Fire Department, including that of Fire Prevention Officer, during the last 36 years.

As a member of the Bristol-Norfolk Critical Incident Stress Management Team, Captain Ready, in 1999, reported to Worcester in response to the fatal fire at Worcester Cold Storage facility. He traveled to New York City shortly after the 9/11 terrorist attacks; and he responded to historic local fire scenes, including the Taunton Expo Center, Hillside Country Club, and many other emergency scenes within the Town of Dighton and surrounding communities.

Captain Christopher Ready, as a homegrown Dightonian, served our community with great excellence, pride, and distinction, and the Town is very proud to recognize and congratulate him upon the occasion of his well-earned retirement.

The Town also saw an additional transition in the position of Town Accountant, and we're proud to welcome Sirena Amaral to Dighton in August as our new Town Accountant. We have been truly impressed with Sirena's ability to hit the ground running during these last few months, and we are very excited to have someone of Sirena's caliber and expertise as our Town Accountant.

Speaking of town finances, in early June the state Department of Revenue presented the Financial Management Review completed during the early part of 2022 for the Town. The Review recognized the many changes that have been occurring with regard to our financial team personnel. It commended the Town and our ability to manage and build upon our fiscal management foundation through these transitions and made additional recommendations that will be considered by the Selectmen and Town Meeting in the coming months and years.

Since we last met, I am proud to also report that, thanks to the leadership of Selectman Ken Pacheco, Library Trustee Ron O'Connor, Town Administrator Mike Mullen, Library Director Jocelyn Tavares, and Building Commissioner Jim Aguiar, we were able to close on the acquisition of 207 Main Street to become the new home of the Dighton Public Library.

The acquisition of 207 Main Street was a significant step in securing a new home for the Library, culminating years of dedication and hard work. Now come planned renovations, which we expect to take approximately two years.

During the summer, we were excited to learn that, thanks to the efforts of Senator Marc Pacheco and Representative Pat Haddad, Dighton was awarded \$200,000 in state earmark funding to help make our renovation efforts possible.

This funding, together with an initial \$150,000 approved at Annual Town Meeting, will allow for significant improvements to the building's exterior, which were recently put out to bid.

In addition to benefitting from state grant funding which also helped us complete infrastructure and online accessibility projects, including last month's launching of the new Town of Dighton website, we also launched renewed economic development planning efforts in the late spring, together with the Dighton Development and Industrial Committee, which is also being grant funded.

We hope a renewed Economic Development Plan, informed by the priorities of all Dightonians, will serve as a blueprint for commercial and industrial development within the town to support local business growth and strengthen our local tax base.

As part of these efforts, the DDIC is holding an Economic Development Planning Forum at Old Town Hall on Monday, November 7th at 6:00 p.m. We very much encourage all interested residents to attend.

As we get into the financial-related articles on tonight's Warrant, I want to re-emphasize the points made at last week's Board of Selectmen meeting when we reviewed the priorities that shaped the goals of this evening's Special Town Meeting: that the Board of Selectmen maintains a top priority relating to the Town's fiscal discipline and operational sustainability to limit our taxpayer burden.

Included in the Warrant, you will note proposed uses of free cash to fund Police Station Debt Service and to reduce the tax rate, increase our Stabilization and Capital Stabilization fund account balances, and fund a number of capital investments.

I want to thank the Finance Committee for its continued leadership as well as the efforts of our departments, board and committees that have gone into making tonight's meeting possible.

I would also like to thank our Department Heads, our employees, and all of the residents of Dighton who serve on Boards and Commissions. Without your dedicated service, Dighton would not be the wonderful town with a big heart that we are.

The Board of Selectmen looks forward to this evening's discussion and is happy to answer any questions about any of the articles as we move through the warrants.

Thank you.

Nancy Goulart on behalf of the Dighton Board of Assessors;

Good Evening ladies and gentleman,

On behalf of the Board of Assessors, I submit the following report. Since the Annual Town Meeting, the board and its employees have been working on real estate property values and verification of Chapter 61 land. Sales information submitted to the Department of Revenue has been approved.

In cooperation with the tax collector and his staff, an audit of a delinquent tax account was conducted which verified the total outstanding tax liability of the property owner of record. This information was shared with the Zoning Board of Appeals because it was directly related with an open project. We express our thanks and appreciation to

our staff and that of the Tax Collector for taking on this additional research project while continuing to maintain the day-to-day operations of their respective offices.

Regarding land classified under Chapter 61A or B, it was voted that effective today, November 1, 2022 the board will use all legal means to verify Chapter 61 land including aerial inspection.

Following tonight's meeting, which will prepare for the Classification Hearing with the Board of Selectmen which will lead to setting the tax rates for FY 23.

Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted,

Eric Easterday, Chairman, Nancy J. Goulart, Clerk

William Moore, Member.

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On motion of Peter Caron and seconded , I move that the Town vote to accept the reports of the Town Officials.

ARTICLE 2. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On Motion of Peter Roache and seconded, Mr. Moderator, I motion that the Town vote transfer from Free Cash the amount of \$4,257.19 to pay prior year bills as listed in the warrant.

*Finance Committee Recommends
Board of Selectmen Recommends*

ARTICLE 3. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On motion of Peter Roache and seconded Mr. Moderator, I move that the Town will vote to transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$367,925 to make the payment on the Police Station bond and an additional \$230,000 from free cash to reduce the tax rate.

*Finance Committee Recommends
Board of Selectmen Recommends*

ARTICLE 4 VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On Motion of Kevin Perry and seconded Mr. Moderator, I move that the Town will vote to transfer from Free Cash a sum of \$16,786.16 for Fiscal Year 2021 and Fiscal Year 2022 personnel expenses and to raise and appropriate, \$15,921.70 for Fiscal Year 2023 personnel expenses for employees covered under the recently settled Dighton Dispatchers collective bargaining agreement.

*Finance Committee Recommends
Board of Selectmen Recommends*

ARTICLE 5 VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On Motion of Robert Rendon and seconded, Mr. Moderator, I move that the Town will vote to transfer from Free Cash the amount of \$150,000.00 to be expended by the Fire Chief to fund a Fire Station feasibility study.

*Finance Committee Recommends
Board of Selectmen Recommends*

ARTICLE 6 VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On Motion of David Carpenter and seconded, Mr. Moderator, I move that the Town vote to transfer from Free Cash the amount of \$75,500.00 to be expended by the Police Chief for the purchase of one fully equipped police vehicle including computer, firearm, radio, antenna and any related accessories.

*Finance Committee Recommends
Board of Selectmen Recommends*

ARTICLE 7 VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On Motion of Sue Lorenz and seconded Mr. Moderator, I move that the Town will vote to transfer from Free Cash the amount of \$30,000.00 to be expended by the Parks and Recreation Commission to install a new asphalt parking lot and all associated construction relative to the Tennis/Basketball court facility located at 1551 Somerset Avenue.

*Finance Committee Recommends
Board of Selectmen Recommends*

ARTICLE 8 VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On Motion of Rachel Dingus and seconded Mr. Moderator, I move that the Town vote to transfer from Free Cash the amount of \$15,000.00 to be expended by the Highway Superintendent to provide design and engineering services and related drainage upgrades on certain portions of Hart Street.

*Finance Committee Recommends
Board of Selectmen Recommends*

ARTICLE 9 VOTED: On Motion of Peter Roache and Seconded, Mr. Moderator, I move that the Town transfer from Free Cash the amount of \$105,000.00 to be expended by the Highway Superintendent to purchase one light duty dump truck with snow plow and any related equipment.

*Finance Committee Recommends
Board of Selectmen Recommends*

ARTICLE 10 VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On Motion of Kevin Perry and seconded Mr. Moderator, I move that the Town vote to transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$75,000.00 to be expended by the Town Administrator to install a railing system on the existing walkway at Town Hall and to construct a stairway from the parking area to the walkway.

Finance Committee Recommends
Board of Selectmen Recommends

ARTICLE 11. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On Motion of Robert Rendon and seconded Mr. Moderator, I move that the Town vote to transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$13,000.00 to be expended by the Town Administrator and/or Board of Health for a Point-of-Sale system for the Transfer Station and related functions.

Finance Committee Recommends
Board of Selectmen Recommends

ARTICLE 12 VOTED: On Motion of David Carpenter and seconded Mr. Moderator, I move that the Town vote to transfer from Free Cash a sum of money not to exceed \$267,000.00 to be expended by the Highway Superintendent for services related to Final Design and Permitting for the Pleasant Street Muddy Cove Bridge Project.

Finance Committee Recommends
Board of Selectmen Recommends

ARTICLE 13 VOTED: On Motion of Sue Lorenz Mr. Moderator, I move that the Town vote to transfer the amount of \$5,000.00 from the Municipal Waterway's account #240-3-295-0000-20-5961 to the Harbormaster's account #010-0-295-0000-70-5240 Equipment Repairs and Maintenance to be expended by the Harbormaster for required maintenance of the town patrol boat.

Finance Committee Recommends
Board of Selectmen Recommends

ARTICLE 14 VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On Moton of Rachel Dingus and seconded Mr. Moderator, I move that the Town vote to transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$90,000.00 to the "Other Post-Employment Benefits Liability Trust Fund" established to cover the unfunded actuarial liability for retirees' health care and life insurance benefits.

Finance Committee Recommends
Board of Selectmen Recommends

ARTICLE 15: VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On Motion of Leonard Hull and Seconded Mr. Moderator, I move that the Town vote to rescind the vote for Article 11 of the November 1, 2021 Special Town Meeting to transfer from Free Cash a sum not to exceed \$40,000.00 to be expended by the Dighton Trails Committee to fund a feasibility study to provide viable options and initial concepts to connect the future 2-mile DCR Sweet's Knoll Trail to the north and south with on-road and off-road trail options to connect the Town of Dighton to the Taunton River Trails network north across the Three Mile River to Taunton and south along the waterfront to Somerset.

Board of Selectmen Recommends

ARTICLE 16 VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On Motion of Peter Roache and seconded Mr. Moderator, I move that the Town vote to transfer from Free Cash the amount of \$650,000.00 to the Capital Stabilization Account.

*Finance Committee Recommends
Board of Selectmen Recommends*

ARTICLE 17 VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On Motion of Robert Rendon and Seconded Mr. Moderator, I move that the Town will vote to transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$392,292.14 to the Stabilization Account.

*Finance Committee Recommends
Board of Selectmen Recommends*

ARTICLE 18 TABLED; VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On Motion from the floor and seconded, Mr. Moderator, I move that the town vote to amend the Town of Dighton General Bylaws by adding a new Article after Article XXXVIII, as presented in Article 18 of the Special Town Meeting Warrant dated November 1, 2022.

Motion defeated: On Motion of Nancy Goulart and Seconded to Amend Article 18

ARTICLE 19 VOTED: On Motion of Ken Pacheco and seconded, Mr. Moderator, I move that the Town vote, consistent with Section VII and Section VIII of the existing Bristol-Plymouth Regional Vocational Technical School District Agreement among the Towns of Berkley, Bridgewater, Dighton, Middleborough, Raynham and Rehoboth, to approve the amendment and re-statement of the Bristol-Plymouth Regional Vocational Technical School District Agreement, to include the Town of Freetown as a member town as initiated and approved by a vote of the Regional School Committee and submitted to the Board of Selectmen of each member town.

Board of Selectmen Recommends

ARTICLE 20 VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On Motion of Mark Pacheco and seconded Mr. Moderator, I move that the Town will vote to amend the Town of Dighton General Bylaws by adding a new Article "General Bylaw Guidance," as presented in Article 20 of the Special Town Meeting Warrant dated November 1, 2022.

Board of Selectmen Recommends

ARTICLE 21. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On Motion of Kenneth Pacheco and seconded, Mr. Moderator, I move that the Town will vote to adopt Massachusetts Department of Revenue optional cost of living adjustments for surviving spouses and blind persons under clauses 17, 17C, 17c ½, 17D, 37 and 37A of M.G.L. Chapter 59, Section 5.

Board of Selectmen Recommends

ARTICLE 22: VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On Motion of Jeff Carvalho and seconded Mr. Moderator, I move that Town vote to delete in its entirety Section 4600. Ground-Mounted Solar Photovoltaic Installations and replace with a new Section 4600. Solar Electric Generating Facilities and to see if the Town will vote to amend Zoning Bylaws by modifying and adding the following terms and definitions in proper alphabetical order to SECTION VI. DEFINITIONS as presented in Article 22 of the Special Town Meeting Warrant, dated November 1, 2022.

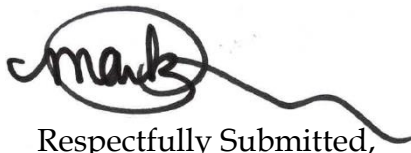
*Planning Board Recommends
Board of Selectmen Recommends*

ARTICLE 23: VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On Motion of Jeffrey Carvalho and seconded Mr. Moderator, I move that the Town will vote to accept as Town roadways known as Galway Drive, Waterford Circle and Kerry Lane as described in Article 23 of the Special Town Meeting Warrant dated November 1, 2022.

*Planning Board Recommends
Board of Selectmen Recommends*

VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On Motion of Peter Caron and Seconded Mr. Moderator, I move that the Town vote to dissolve the Special Town Meeting.

ATTEST:



Respectfully Submitted,
Mark L. Pacheco.
Town Clerk