



SPECIAL TOWN MEETING TOWN OF DIGHTON, MA NOVEMBER 06, 2025

The Special Town Meeting held on Thursday November 06, 2025, at the Dighton-Rehoboth High School and was called to order at 7:03 PM by Kevin Smith Jr., Moderator. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was recited. The Checkers were Rita Araujo, Ashley Daigneault, Jean Lahousse, Peg Mullen, Kathleen Perry, Joan Ready and Jo-Ann Wilson. From the Finance Committee was Chairman Peter J. Roache, Tracy Karolczuk, Susan Lorenz, Ronald McKay, Jacob Stebbins, and Douglas White. Present and seated on stage from the Board of Selectmen was Chairman Peter Caron, Mark Pacheco, and Nicole Mello. Also, present and seated on stage was Ralph Vitacco Town Administrator, Matthew Costa Town Counsel, Shara Costa Town Clerk, and Sirena Amaral Town Accountant. The Special Town Meeting Dissolved at 7:49 PM. Total attendance was 55.

HOUSEKEEPING ARTICLES. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY and SECONDED

On Motion of Mark Pacheco, Mr. Moderator, I move that we dispense with the reading of the warrant.

On Motion of Nicole Mello, Mr. Moderator, I move that we dispense with the reading of the articles, and that reference to them be made by number and content.

On Motion of Peter Caron, Mr. Moderator, I move that the Town consider adjournment this evening at 10:00 P.M.

ARTICLE 1. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On Motion of Mark Pacheco and Seconded, Mr. Moderator, I move that we hear reports of the Town Officials.

Chairman Peter Caron of the Board of Selectmen read the following statement:

“Good evening.

My name is Peter Caron, and I’m one of your three Selectmen. It’s my privilege to stand here before you, and on behalf of Nicole Mello and Mark Pacheco, your other two Selectmen.

This Special Town Meeting is to address several important matters that require your input and approval. These are significant decisions that will shape the direction of our town.

The Moderator will make sure everyone understands what we are voting on and why. He has asked that when you come up to the microphone, give your name and address, and if you could speak as loudly as

you can. The sound up here on stage isn't very good. We know everyone out there can hear you, but we can't always, and we want to know who you are.

On the agenda tonight, we have a police vehicle, a fire vehicle, and payments on a couple of other vehicles that we're hoping passes this evening, among other items.

Tonight is about listening to you. Please step up to the microphone if you have questions or concerns. Your voice matters—we want to hear from you before we vote.

Together, we have the opportunity to make thoughtful decisions that will serve the town for years to come.

Thank you for being here. We appreciate it."

Chairman William F. Moore of the Board of Assessors read the following statement:

"Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to this Special Town meeting. The Board of Assessors has followed up on the action taken by voters at the Annual Town Meeting in June. Tonight, you will vote on a number of warrant articles that will affect the town's financial position and provide us with the information needed to meet with the Board of Selectmen on November 19 to set the tax rates for Fiscal 2026.

When contemplating how you will vote on an article, please remember that the terms, "Raise and Appropriate" directly affect the tax rate. Articles that state they will be paid from "Free Cash or Available Funds" do not affect the tax rate but mean that you are still authorizing the expenditure of town funds. Money left in the Free Cash Account can be used if an emergency arises following this town meeting or it will be carried forward and be available in Fiscal 2027. We are still in difficult financial circumstances.

At the end of tonight's warrant is an article that asks you to accept the provisions of the MA General Laws regarding tax exemptions for disabled veterans. I will provide more information when this article is discussed prior to your vote.

Thank you for attending tonight's meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

BOARD OF ASSESSORS

William F. Moore, Chairman

Nancy J. Goulart, Clerk

Eric J. Easterday, Member "

ARTICLE 1 (Continued). VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On Motion of Nicole Mello and seconded, Mr. Moderator, 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 move that the Town vote to transfer from Free Cash the amount of \$1,106.08 to pay prior year bills.

*Board of Selectmen Recommends
Finance Committee Recommends Free Cash*

ARTICLE 3. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On motion of Jacob Stebbins and seconded, Mr. Moderator, I move that the Town vote to raise and appropriate the amount of \$24,819.19 to defray Town Charges and Assessments as considered by the Finance Committee

*Board of Selectmen Recommends
Finance Committee Recommends Raise and Appropriate*

ARTICLE 4. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On Motion of Ronald McKay and seconded, Mr. Moderator, I move that the Town vote to transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$106,146.76 to be expended by the Fire Chief as the fifth payment of a seven-year lease purchase of a new fire engine and any necessary accessories.

*Board of Selectmen Recommends
Finance Committee Recommends Free Cash*

ARTICLE 5. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On Motion of Susan Lorenz and seconded, Mr. Moderator, I move that the Town vote to transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$106,146.76 to be expended by the Fire Chief as the sixth payment of a seven-year lease purchase of a new fire engine and any necessary accessories.

*Board of Selectmen Recommends
Finance Committee Recommends Free Cash*

ARTICLE 6. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On Motion of Tracy Karolczuk and seconded, Mr. Moderator I move that the Town vote to transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$106,146.76 to be expended by the Fire Chief as the final payment of a seven-year lease purchase of a new fire engine and any necessary accessories.

*Board of Selectmen Recommends
Finance Committee Recommends Free Cash*

ARTICLE 7. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On motion of Douglas White, Mr. Moderator, I move that the Town vote to transfer the amount of \$53,000.00 from Free Cash and the amount of \$53,000.00 from the Ambulance Fund, for a total sum of \$106,000.00 to be expended by the Fire Chief for the purchase of a new Chief's Cruiser (Car 1) and any necessary accessories relative thereto.

*Board of Selectmen Recommends
Finance Committee Recommends \$53,000.00 Free Cash/\$53,000.00 Ambulance Fund*

ARTICLE 8. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On motion of Peter J. Roache, Mr. Moderator, I move that the Town vote to transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$31,094.29 to be expended by the Highway Superintendent as the third-year payment of a four-year lease purchase of an excavator and any necessary accessories.

*Board of Selectmen Recommends
Finance Committee Recommends Free Cash*

ARTICLE 9. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On motion of Jacob Stebbins, Mr. Moderator, I move that the Town vote to transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$31,094.29 to be expended by the Highway Superintendent as the final payment of a four-year lease purchase of an excavator and any necessary accessories.

*Board of Selectmen Recommends
Finance Committee Recommends Free Cash*

ARTICLE 10. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On Motion of Ronald McKay and seconded, Mr. Moderator, I move that the Town vote to transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$88,000.00 to be expended by the Police Chief for the purchase of one fully equipped police vehicle including computer, Firearm (Patrol Rifle), radio, antenna and any other related accessories.

*Board of Selectmen Recommends
Finance Committee Recommends Free Cash*

ARTICLE 11. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On Motion of Susan Lorenz and seconded, Mr. Moderator, I move that the Town vote to transfer from the Opioid Stabilization Fund the sum of \$2,000.00 to be combined with funds voted in Article 15 of the November 14, 2024, Special Town Meeting, to be expended by the Police Chief to purchase Violence/Drug Kits, to be utilized as a teaching tool for the school Violence/Drug Programs.

*Board of Selectmen Recommends
Finance Committee Recommends*

ARTICLE 12. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On Motion of Tracy Karolczuk and seconded, Mr. Moderator, I move that the Town vote to transfer from Free Cash the sum of \$35,000.00 to be expended by the Police Chief for the purchase, installation and 5-year equipment service contract for a new Call Logger/Recorder system and any necessary accessories, to replace the current communications recording equipment in the Communications Center, which is no longer supported by the State. Said system records radio and telephone communications for the Police, Fire and Emergency Management Agency (EMA).

*Board of Selectmen Recommends
Finance Committee Recommends Free Cash*

ARTICLE 13. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On Motion of Douglas White and seconded, Mr. Moderator, I move that the Town vote to transfer from Free Cash \$9,861.95 to be expended by the Police Chief for an engine replacement/upgrade for the Police Station HVAC system, which will include a new supervisory controller, required engineering, programming, setup, and a one-year software maintenance agreement.

*Board of Selectmen Recommends
Finance Committee Recommends Free Cash*

ARTICLE 14. VOTED AS AMENDED On Motion of Mark Pacheco and seconded, Mr. Moderator, I move that the Town vote to transfer from Free Cash a sum not to exceed \$175,000.00 to the Stabilization Account.

*Board of Selectmen Recommends
Finance Committee Recommends Free Cash*

ARTICLE 14. MOTION TO AMEND PASSES UNANIMOUSLY: On Motion from the Floor, Nancy Goulart and seconded, made motion to increase the amount to \$200,000.00 to the Stabilization Account

ARTICLE 15. VOTED AS AMENDED On Motion of Nicole Mello and seconded, Mr. Moderator, I move that the Town vote to transfer from Free Cash a sum not to exceed \$175,000.00 to the Capital Stabilization Account.

*Board of Selectmen Recommends
Finance Committee Recommends Free Cash*

ARTICLE 15. MOTION TO AMEND PASSES UNANIMOUSLY: On Motion from the Floor, Nancy Goulart and seconded, made motion to increase the amount to \$200,000.00 to the Stabilization Account

ARTICLE 16. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On Motion of COA Director Anabela Powell and seconded, Mr. Moderator, I move that the town vote to transfer from Free Cash the amount of \$35,000.00 to be expended by the Town Administrator for labor, materials and other associated costs to complete the parking lot at the Council on Aging/Prime Time Building, 1059 Somerset Avenue, Dighton.

Finance Committee Recommends Free Cash

ARTICLE 16. MOTION TO TABLE FAILS On Motion of Peter Caron and seconded, Mr. Moderator, I move that we table this article.

ARTICLE 17. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On Motion of Nicole Mello and seconded, Mr. Moderator I move that the Town vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to petition the General Court of the Commonwealth to allow retired police officers to work police details until age 70 provided that the General Court may reasonably vary the form and substance of the requested legislation within the scope of the general public objectives of this petition, as presented in Article 17 of the Special Town Meeting Warrant of November 6, 2025.

Board of Selectmen Recommends

ARTICLE 18. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On Motion of Mark Pacheco and seconded, Mr. Moderator, I move that the Town vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to file a home rule petition with the General Court seeking approval of the special act, and to authorize the General Court to make any revisions that are necessary or appropriate to the form of such bill as presented in Article 18 of the Special Town Meeting Warrant of November 6, 2025.

ARTICLE 19. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On Motion of William F. Moore and seconded, Mr. Moderator, I move that the Town vote to accept the provisions of M.G.L. c. 59, § 5 clause 22G, thereby allowing disabled veterans who place their homes into a trust, to continue receiving property tax exemptions under clauses 22A through 22F of said Chapter 59, Section 5. This will take effect for applicable exemptions granted for Fiscal Year 26 and/or take any action relative thereto

Board of Selectmen Recommends

Board of Assessors Recommends

ARTICLE 20. NO MOTION: To act upon any other business that lawfully may be introduced at said meeting.

MOTION: VOTED UNANIMOUSLY: On Motion from floor and seconded, Mr. Moderator, I move to dissolve the Annual Town Meeting

ATTEST:



Respectfully Submitted,
Shara A. Costa
Town Clerk