

**TOWN OF DIGHTON
BOARD OF SELECTMEN
JANUARY 15, 2014**

Dean V. Cronin called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

Present: Dean V. Cronin, Thomas J. Pires and Patrick W. Menges

The pledge of allegiance was recited.

Approval of Minutes

Motion: Patrick W. Menges, seconded: Thomas J. Pires VOTED to approve the meeting minutes of January 8, 2014 – Regular Meeting.

Approve Warrants

Motion: Patrick W. Menges, seconded: Thomas J. Pires VOTED to approve the following warrants:

Warrant #029A-14	Payroll	\$	65,166.87
Warrant #029B-14	Vendor bills	\$	351,958.46

Vote: UNANIMOUS

Expenditure Detail

NONE

Correspondence

Annual Town Election is scheduled to take place Saturday, April 12, 2014 at the Dighton Elementary School 8:00AM to 6:00PM. Nomination papers are available at the Town Clerk's office on Thursday, January 2, 2014 through 5:00PM February 20, 2014. The deadline to return nomination papers to the Town Clerk is 5:00PM on Monday, February 24, 2014. For a name to be placed on the ballot, it is necessary to obtain at least twenty-eight (28) signatures of registered voters (MGL Ch. 53, Section 6).

Gil Lopes, Jr., extends his gratitude to the Town Departments for the support and assistance provided during Gilbert Lopes, Sr.'s funeral services.

The Board recognizes and congratulates Valerie Wilson and Heidi Swist for receiving an excellent report as the Acceptance Facility Oversight Program from the Boston Passport Agency.

The Town Clerk now has dog licenses available as required by state law. It was noted, all kennel licenses are now required to have the Animal Control Officer and/or Building Inspector inspect prior to issuance. Please note, on June 4, 2013 the Town accepted MGL Ch. 140, Sec. 139(c) for the purpose of no fee shall be charged for a license for a dog owned by a person aged 70 years or over. For more information please contact the Town Clerk at (508) 669-5411.

The Town of Dighton has received a second shipment of books commemorating its 300th Anniversary. Cost is \$10.00 per copy and are available at town hall or the public library during regular business hours. For more information, please contact Nancy Goulart at ngoulart@comcast.net or (508) 823-6179.

The Board was approached by a member of the Dighton-Rehoboth Regional School Committee wherein a statement was submitted. Said statement was read into record (Attachment A). Rest assured the Board will attend the January 28th presentation and work with all parties involved.

Announcements were read.

Review/Discuss/Act: Fire Chief Employment Contract

Fire Chief Antone P. Roderick, Jr., appeared before the Board to sign the recently negotiated one year Employment Contract. All parties signed and appropriate parties will receive a copy.

Review/Discuss/Act: Project & Design Grant for the Dighton Library

Jocelyn Tavares, Director appeared before the Board seeking approval and signature of the Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program 2013/2014 Grant Round Planning & Design Application which is due Thursday, January 16, 2014. Said grant has a community match requirement. The Library Trustees are working with the Community Preservation Committee relative to funding and the Historical Commission is looking into the historical status. Motion: Patrick W. Menges, seconded: Thomas J. Pires VOTED to sign the application pending review and approval.

Vote:UNANIMOUS

Status Update of 402 & 410 Spring Street Land Auction

Motion: Thomas J. Pires, seconded: Dean V. Cronin VOTED to table the matter.

Vote:UNANIMOUS

Discuss Parking Fine Violations & Littering Violations

Motion: Thomas J. Pires, seconded: Patrick W. Menges VOTED to table the matter.

Vote:UNANIMOUS

Read and Sign Special Town Meeting Warrant

Motion: Patrick W. Menges, seconded: Thomas J. Pires VOTED to approve and sign the March 4, 2014 Special Town Meeting Warrant as presented.

Vote:UNANIMOUS

The Board read the Warrant in its entirety (Attachment B).

Review/Discuss/Act: Verizon Licenses

The Board received a License Agreement from Verizon New England, Inc., and Massachusetts Electric Company proposing to place facilities in a corridor of rights secured by the Town for MassDOT Project #606374, Brook Street Bridge Reconstruction Project. Prior to execution the Board needs clarification if a public hearing was held or needs to be held prior to signing, per MGL Ch. 166, Sec. 22. Motion: Patrick W. Menges, seconded: Thomas J. Pires VOTED to table the matter until further information is received.

Vote:UNANIMOUS

Review/Discuss/Act: Technical Assistance with SRPEDD

The Board received notification that the District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) statewide funding program has been expanded for FY2014, to provide technical assistance to member communities with projects that: 1) plan ahead for housing; 2) plan ahead for growth, economic development, and resource preservation; or 3) support regional services and cooperative purchasing. Motion: Patrick W. Menges, seconded: Thomas J. Pires VOTED to apply for the 2014 District Local Technical Assistance.

Vote: UNANIMOUS

Review/Discuss/Act: Forestmaster Appointment

The Board seeks to appoint a Forestmaster to visit and inspect the town forests and make recommendations for their preservation from fire, blight, and ravagement; and to promote and coordinate with an arborist's acumen, measures for sustenance and conservation of Dighton's woodland legacy for the benefit, use and enjoyment of posterity. Motion: Patrick W. Menges, seconded: Thomas J. Pires VOTED to appoint John "Jack" Crawford of 1022 Center Street, Forestmaster of the Town of Dighton for the unexpired remainder of a term ending Wednesday, 28 May 2014.

Vote: UNANMIOUS

Public Input

Nancy Goulart reported that a total of \$1,740.00 has been received in the sale of the Tri-Centennial book. Interested individuals my purchase said book at the Dighton Library or the Town Clerk's office. We should expect to see the last 400 shipment within the next two weeks. Mrs. Goulart further noted that the February Horizon publication from AAA is scheduled to run a story relative to recreation trails in Dighton.

The Board has been notified that a dog drowned at the damn located on Center Street by falling through the ice. The Board would like to remind dog owners to remain vigilant by keeping animals off the ice.

Reminder to residents to attend the Dighton-Rehoboth Regional School Committee Meeting on January 28, 2014 at the Dighton-Rehoboth Regional High School

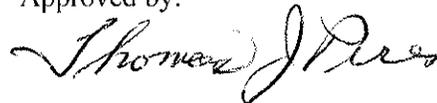
Adjournment

Motion: Patrick W. Menges, seconded: Thomas J. Pires VOTED to adjourn at 8:51 PM.

Vote: UNANIMOUS

Respectfully submitted,
Boards of Selectmen/Health
Kerrie J Easterday, Administrative Assistant

Approved by:



Chapter 70 Task Force public statement for 1/14/2014

This task force was asked to investigate the process of allocation of Chapter 70 funds (funds received from the state for education) in our regional school budget. We wanted to understand this work to ensure the public that each town was properly assessed and credited for its support of the school system. Once that had been investigated, the task force would offer a recommendation to the full school committee regarding the allocation of funds between the two communities. In addition to myself, the Task Force is comprised of the following School Committee members: Mr. Andrade, Mr. Barrett, Mr. Hebda, Mr. Katseff and Mr. Rapoza. The business manager for the district, Ms. Antonellis, as well as Interim Superintendent Mr. Malone, also worked on this project.

Ms. Antonellis was diligent in collecting the necessary Massachusetts state and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) regulations which were adopted in early 2007 and then spoke with those who could answer her questions concerning these regulations in conjunction with our regional agreement. Although we have one regional budget, it is composed of three budgets: Dighton K-8, Rehoboth K-8, and DRRHS. She then reworked our present FY14 budget using this information. Regional budgets can be developed two ways. First, budgets can be developed in accordance with the "statutory" rules - using state generated assumptions. Second, if a regional committee elects to do so, it may use an "alternative" method. The alternate method requires each town's specific approval and notice to DESE.

To educate ourselves on this process, we consulted Dr. Stephen Hemman from the Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools (MARS). He presented the task force with the Massachusetts and DESE regulations concerning regional school budgets and reviewed and compared our FY14 budget and the revised budget using the statutory method and the stipulations of our regional agreement.

In order to verify the conclusions of Dr. Hemman, we consulted Mr. Mark Abrahams of the Abrahams Group. Mr. Abrahams is an independent consultant who teaches, writes, and consults on governmental, financial, operational, and performance management and his services have been used by the district and many other school systems in the past. He reviewed the materials concerning our district budget.

Both consultants supported the regulated statutory method presented by Ms. Antonellis. They found inadequacies in past methods used in our budget process. This review revealed that there were discrepancies in the operating assessments to the towns between the FY14 budget and the FY14 statutory budget. The amount in question is \$1,073,919. We based this on an examination of Dighton's FY14 operating assessment which was \$9,021,253. The statutory method dictates that Dighton should have paid \$7,947,334 in FY14. Rehoboth's operating assessment for the FY14 was \$13,009,122. The statutory method dictates that Rehoboth should have paid \$14,083,040. We are looking at a swing of over one million dollars. The ramifications of such a swing in assessments could be very damaging to this school district.

As school committee members, we are publicly elected officials who are looking to do our best to keep our schools, our students, and our towns thriving. The schools are the heart of our communities and basis of our towns' property values.

To educate our townspeople, as we have educated ourselves, Dr. Stephen Hemman will be here January 28th to give the presentation he offered us. He will discuss the Massachusetts and DESE regulations pertaining to regional school budgets. He will also review the comparison of the FY14 budget and the statutory budget method in conjunction with our regional agreement. Finally, he will discuss any options we may have.

The Dighton Rehoboth Regional School Committee will be transparent throughout the FY15 budget cycle. To this end, we will hold open conversations with selectmen and finance committees as well as the general public. Most importantly, we are looking to keep this district moving forward.

We have a regional agreement that has not been reviewed for more than 25 years - not since 1987. We strongly recommend the towns open discussion to review our regional agreement, as important aspects of legislation, governing school district budgeting has been passed over these last 20+ years, and is not addressed.

Susan Lorenz, Chair Chapter 70 Task Force

Raymond Medeiros, Chair, Dighton- Rehoboth Regional School Committee

Attachment
B

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING

MARCH 4, 2014

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

BRISTOL, SS.

To either of the constables of the Town of Dighton in the County of Bristol,

Greetings:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts you are directed to notify and warn the inhabitants of the Town of Dighton qualified to vote in the elections and Town Affairs to meet in the Dighton Middle School, 1250R Somerset Avenue, Dighton, Massachusetts on Tuesday, the Fourth day of March 2014, at 7:00 P.M.; then and there to act on the following articles, viz:

ARTICLE 1. To hear the reports of town officials and act thereon.

ARTICLE 2. To see if the Town will accept the provisions of chapter 60, Section 3D of the Massachusetts General Laws, to establish an elderly and disabled taxation fund with voluntary check off donations, to wit:

“Chapter 60: Section 3D. City or town aid to elderly and disabled taxation fund; voluntary check off donations

“Section 3D. A city or town which accepts the provisions of this section is hereby authorized, subject to the approval of the commissioner, to design and designate a place on its municipal tax bills, or the motor vehicle excise tax bills, or to mail with such tax bills a separate form, whereby the taxpayers of said city or town may voluntarily check off, donate and pledge an amount not less than \$1 or such other designated amount which shall increase the amount otherwise due, and to establish a city or town aid to the elderly and disabled taxation fund for the purpose of defraying the real estate taxes of the elderly and disabled persons of low income.

“Any amounts donated to said fund shall be deposited into a special account in the general treasury and shall be in the custody of the treasurer. The treasurer shall invest said funds at the direction of the officer, board, commission, committee or other agency of the city or town who or which is otherwise authorized and required to invest funds of the city or town and subject to the same limitations applicable to trust fund investments, except as otherwise specified herein. The fund, together with the interest earned thereon shall be used for the purposes specified in this section without further appropriation.

“In any city or town establishing an aid to elderly and disabled taxation fund, there shall be a taxation aid committee to consist of the chairman of the board of assessors, the city or town treasurer and three residents of the city or town to be appointed by the mayor or board of selectmen as the case may be. Said board shall adopt rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this section and to identify the recipients of such aid.”

or act thereon.

ARTICLE 3. To see if the Town will approve the \$6,698,587 borrowing authorized by the Dighton-Rehoboth Regional School District, for the purpose of paying costs of making roof repairs

to the District High School, located at 2700 Regional Road in North Dighton, and for the payment of all other costs incidental and related thereto (the "Project"), which proposed repair project would materially extend the useful life of the school and preserve an asset that otherwise is capable of supporting the required educational program, and for which the District may be eligible for a school construction grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority ("MSBA"), said amount to be expended at the direction of the School Building Committee. The MSBA's grant program is a non-entitlement, discretionary program based on need, as determined by the MSBA, and any Project costs the District incurs in excess of any grant approved by and received from the MSBA shall be the sole responsibility of the District and its member municipalities, or take any other action relative thereto.

The approval of the District's borrowing by this vote shall be subject to and contingent upon an affirmative vote of the Town to exempt its allocable share of the amounts required for the payment of interest and principal on said borrowing from the limitations on taxes imposed by M.G.L. 59, Section 21C (Proposition 2½).

- ARTICLE 4. To see if the Town will approve the \$2,535,117 borrowing authorized by the Dighton-Rehoboth Regional School District, for the purpose of paying costs of making roof repairs to the Dighton Elementary School, located at 1250 Somerset Avenue in Dighton, and for the payment of all other costs incidental and related thereto (the "Project"), which proposed repair project would materially extend the useful life of the school and preserve an asset that otherwise is capable of supporting the required educational program, and for which the District may be eligible for a school construction grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority ("MSBA"), said amount to be expended at the direction of the School Building Committee. The MSBA's grant program is a non-entitlement, discretionary program based on need, as determined by the MSBA, and any Project costs the District incurs in excess of any grant approved by and received from the MSBA shall be the sole responsibility of the District and its member municipalities, or take any other action relative thereto.

The approval of the District's borrowing by this vote shall be subject to and contingent upon an affirmative vote of the Town to exempt its allocable share of the amounts required for the payment of interest and principal on said borrowing from the limitations on taxes imposed by M.G.L. 59, Section 21C (Proposition 2½).

- ARTICLE 5. To see if the Town will approve the \$1,565,282 borrowing authorized by the Dighton-Rehoboth Regional School District, for the purpose of paying costs of making roof repairs to the Dighton Middle School, located at 1250R Somerset Avenue, in Dighton, and for the payment of all other costs incidental and related thereto (the "Project"), which proposed repair project would materially extend the useful life of the school and preserve an asset that otherwise is capable of supporting the required educational program, and for which the District may be eligible for a school construction grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority ("MSBA"), said amount to be expended at the direction of the School Building Committee. The MSBA's grant program is a non-entitlement, discretionary program based on need, as determined by the MSBA, and any Project costs the District incurs in excess of any grant approved by and received from the MSBA shall be the sole responsibility of the District and its member municipalities, or take any other action relative thereto.

The approval of the District's borrowing by this vote shall be subject to and contingent upon an affirmative vote of the Town to exempt its allocable share of the amounts required for the payment of interest and principal on said borrowing from the limitations on taxes imposed by M.G.L. 59, Section 21C (Proposition 2½).

ARTICLE 6. To see if the Town will vote to transfer from the Veterans Hall Insurance Reimbursement Fund \$24,396.73 received of LaMarche Associates, Inc. from Lloyds's of London Insurance Company into 010-0-192-0000-70-5250, to repair and replace the roof and shingles on the Lance Corporal John Van Gyzen Hall at 495 School Street, North Dighton, or act thereon.

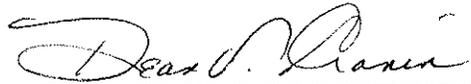
ARTICLE 7. To transact any other business that may lawfully come before said meeting.

And you are directed to serve this warrant by posting attested copies thereof at each of the post offices, at the Town Hall and at the main Fire Station, all in said Dighton, fourteen days at least before the time of holding said meeting. Notice of said meeting shall be published in one local newspaper and on the home page of the official website of the Town of Dighton seven days at least prior to the holding of said meeting.

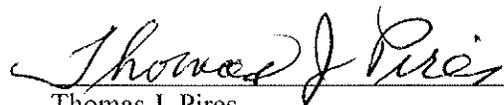
Hereof fail not and make due return of this warrant with your doings thereon to the Town Clerk at the time and place of meeting as aforesaid.

Given under our hand this 15th day of January in the year of our Lord the two thousand fourteenth, and of the independence of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts the two hundred thirty-eighth.

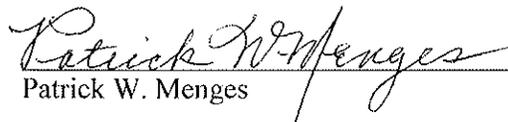
BOARD OF SELECTMEN



Dean V. Cronin, Chairman



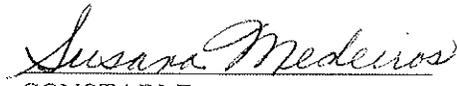
Thomas J. Pires



Patrick W. Menges

A true copy
Attest: 

TOWN CLERK

Posted as directed: 

CONSTABLE

Date: January 16, 2014