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BOARD OF SELECTMEN

TOWN CLERK
DIGHTON, MA

Dighton-Rehoboth Regional High School Media Center, 2700 Regional Road, Dighton
7:30 P.M., Wednesday, 24 September 2014
REGULAR MEETING

Chairman Dean V. Cronin convened the regular weekly Wednesday night meeting of the Dighton board of selectmen in the Media Center of Dighton Rehoboth Regional High School, 2700 Regional Road, Dighton, at 7:33 P.M. on Wednesday, 24 September 2014, with Selectman Thomas J. Pires and Selectman Patrick W. Menges, Clerk of the board of selectmen, present; also present were Mac Reid of the Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools, Selectmen Chairman Michael Costello and Selectman "Skip" Vadnais of the Rehoboth board of selectmen, and Regional School Agreement Revisionary Committee At Large Members Glen Jefferson (appointed by Dighton selectmen) and Fire Chief Antone P. Roderick, Jr., (appointed by the Dighton-Rehoboth Regional High School Committee). John Meagher was present as videographer of the proceedings. Chairman Cronin made introductions.

Mac Reid and the Rehoboth Selectmen and Glen Jefferson sat before the board, others in the audience.

Chairman Cronin led all present in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Mac Reid stated that revision of the Dighton-Rehoboth Regional School District Agreement has three basic goals: (1) To bring forward into a new regional agreement important provisions of the original 1958 regional agreement omitted from a revision adopted in 1987 at the time grades K thru 12 were regionalized in addition to the high school, and to forge a regional agreement that fully incorporates changes to state law, especially the 1992 education reform act; (2) To find a way to make assessments to the member towns more equitable (the finance committee was not present tonight) than under the present agreement and/or "statutory method"; and (3) any other concerns that come before the revisionary committee. He stated that the process (of revising the regional agreement) should take about one year. He predicted that assessments to the towns will not be affected by the agreement revisions until Fiscal Year 2017.

Mr. Reid had talked to Chris Lynch of the Department of Education earlier today, he said. In answer to the question, "If nothing is done, is the 'statutory method' a 'default method'?", the comment came, "If everybody is a little bit happy, that's probably the best we can hope."

The process was outlined. (1) Participants submit ideas in writing. (2) Three (3) piles of written comments: 1. Things done easily. 2. Non-money things. 3. Assessment issue comments. (3) Committee action, public forums. (4) Regional school committee action. (5) Town meeting ratification in both towns.

Mr. Reid said to the selectmen, "I'm interested in hearing your views."

Chairman Cronin said that he would like to know, concerning Mr. Reid's conversation with Mr. Lynch, is it in question, that the statutory method of assessments by the region, not the statutory method?

Selectman Menges advocated a unitary budget with one total for operation of all of the region's schools, high school and grammar schools, assessed to the towns, and no separate budget for each town's grammar schools.

Glen Jefferson asked if that were something that can be looked at? Mr. Reid responded that the regional agreement can be written any way, and that there is some flexibility. He said that he agreed with a comment that Mr. Menges had made, that if finances favor one town or another from year to year, "over time things 'even out'".

Chairman Cronin said, "This is one issue that will be talked about within this committee -- " the towns' relative financial conditions could be changed in two years as Dighton's population increases. He asked, how do districts handle this? We'll have good access to other regional agreements, Mr. Reid, consultant to the revisionary committee, assured him.

Selectman Costello thanked the selectmen of Dighton for inviting the Rehoboth selectmen to come to tonight's meeting. He stated that the Rehoboth delegation to the revisionary committee would include ~~George Shoulis~~, Selectman Skip Vadnais, Rehoboth Finance Committee member George Solas, Sue McBride, Bill Dealpe, and School Committee Member David Katseff.

Mr. Reid stated that the first meeting of the revisionary board would be on 30 September. Selectman Costello said, "I know I want both towns to be satisfied -- " both towns treated equally and fairly. If Rehoboth's vote is to minimally fund its grammar schools and Dighton wants to spend extra for its grammar schools in a particular year, then Dighton should be able to funnel extra money to its grammar schools. Selectman Costello said, "The assessment formula needs to be hammered down and straightened out." He added that the regional school committee must adhere to the regional agreement. He hopes that the towns of Dighton and Rehoboth can continue their cooperative partnership in areas other than education, as well.

Selectman Pires said that there is nothing better than equity between the two towns. He said to the selectmen of Rehoboth, "I respect you for bringing forward 'there's a problem' here, even though it hurt the town of Rehoboth." He said that we must bring the regional agreement into conformity with the 1992 education reform act, &c. The sticking point, he said, is of course going to be the assessment formula, and asked if changing or adjusting it will require an act of the legislature. Mr. Reid said, No, just the approval at the end of the revisionary process, of the Department of Education. Selectman Pires said that "It kind of caught me off guard with this item being here tonight but when all is done, we can only present it to the voters and let them decide." Selectman Costello said that we must "find the answers that will be equitable to both towns."

Glen Jefferson noted that it will be important to get the community involved.

Selectman Cronin said, "There's no doubt in my mind it can be done."

Mr. Reid said that in Boxborough, they were happy, but that Acton felt that Boxborough had gotten "too good a deal". It's not just a twelve people committee, he said; it's got to be the community. Selectman Vadnais said, "We have a legal and moral obligation to educate our children, and a legal and moral obligation to fund services to our communities. There has to be a balance

Mr. Vadnais noted that there has to be a balance that is struck. A community must not sacrifice its ability to meet its needs to a process.

Glen Jefferson asked, Would Dighton's schools be adversely impacted if Rehoboth disapproves the regional budget? Selectman Costello began, "Both towns release their schools... . Our school committee needs to be educated, on assessment, on capital projects, &c. A lay person shouldn't have to come in and tell the school committee 'you're doing things wrong'... ."

Selectman Vadnais stated that deregionalization is off the table. We have to keep the selectmen updated on state mandated changes, &c School board? The school committee should communicate with the towns and with the people who put them (elected) in that position.

Selectman Costello stated that he wanted a complete sit down with the school committee -- "What are you going to ask for/need this year? If that negotiation takes place before town meeting, no override/major cuts/&c."

Selectman Cronin, "I urge both sides to try to get the community involved." Selectman Vadnais said that we should provide contact info so that the public has advance notice and ability to communicate with the revisionary committee. He said that if meetings are held in the High School Media Center, they can be televised (and videorecorded for rebroadcast).

This raised a point spoken by Selectman Costello about how Dighton and Rehoboth will run their public access telephone television channels in the future. He said that it would be good to share costs because of the expense to replace Rehoboth broadcasting equipment at Dighton-Rehoboth Regional High School. He said, "Bring dialogue to the table and then discuss it... ."

Mr. Reid affirmed that public/televised revisionary committee meetings would be a good way to keep people informed of what's going on.

Glen Jefferson said, "Not just the twelve of us on the committee -- we have to bring the community along."

Selectman Pires brooked the question of public input. He said, "We don't want a circus at every meeting, as the meetings are going on, but will there be a public forum? at least every six (6) months? The Rehoboth selectmen responded, "That's a great idea." Mac Reid said that he favored having them more often. Selectman Pires asked, "Every two months?" (Inconclusive.).

Mr. Jefferson suggested an anonymous on-line survey for people who do not want to come out publicly at meetings with their input. He suggested the cyber "survey monkey" for this purpose. Selectman Costello commented that Rehoboth used to have 'phone banks where people could call in, and suggested that a phone bank approach might be useful to get info for regional agreement revisions as it once had been for obtaining information for by-law revisions.

Selectman Cronin said that he liked the idea of "survey monkey" -- "people are leary of coming to meetings," &c.; and at a forum, we can take ideas, but some people don't want to come out, which is silly."

The Rehoboth selectmen invited the selectmen of Dighton to their meeting with Mac Reid scheduled for Monday, 29 September, at the Rehoboth Senior Center. This agenda item was concluded with amicable dissolution and departure of Rehoboth guests.

On motions of Selectman Pires, each seconded by Selectman Menges, the board unanimously voice voted to approve the minutes of its meetings of

September 8, 2014, 6:00 P.M.
 September 10, 2014, 7:30 P.M.
 September 15, 2014, 3:00 P.M.
 September 17, 2014, 7:30 P.M.

(Selectman Menges stated during discussion of the motion to approve the minutes of September 15, 2014, 3:00 P.M., that the minutes were written but still rough in form and would be improved before being filed with the Town Clerk.) as prepared for its approval by the clerk of the board.

On a motion of Selectman Menges, seconded by Selectman Pires, the board unanimously voice voted to approve the 24 September 2014 spending warrants, 13A-15, \$67,337.56; 13B-15, \$16,814.84; 13C-15, \$236,155.52; and 13B-15, \$1,-854.16, as prepared for its approval by the Town Accountant.

The board received correspondence from the Taunton Area Vietnam Veterans' Association offering assistance in obtaining a POW/MIA memorial vacant chair for the lobby of Town Hall. On a motion of Selectman Pires, seconded by Selectman Menges, the board unanimously voted to express interest in this offer and to thank the Taunton Area Vietnam Veterans' Association for this offer. A meeting will be scheduled soon with a representative of the TAVVA and Dighton Veterans' Agent Donald Hirschey.

The board also received correspondence from the Rehoboth Board of Selectmen inviting Dighton Selectmen to a meeting of the Dighton-Rehoboth Regional Agreement Revisionary Consultant Mac Reid with Rehoboth's Selectmen and Finance Committee at the Rehoboth Senior Center on Monday, 29 September 2014, at 7:45 P.M. On a motion of Selectman Menges seconded by Selectman Pires the board unanimously voted to direct the clerk of the board to post this meeting for the Dighton Selectmen.

A letter from the Dighton Historical Commission was read by the chairman, announcing and confirming the Historical Commission's designation of member Richard Gunther as its delegate to the Community Preservation Committee.

Bristol County Agricultural High School Superintendent Stephen Dempsey had sent a letter inviting the selectmen to a light lunch featuring guest Congressman Kennedy on 10 October 2014 at 11:30 A.M. Clerk of the Selectmen Patrick W. Menges stated that the board has already "RSVP'd".

From the Rehoboth Board of Selectmen came a letter appointing "Skip" Vadnsis as the Rehoboth Selectmen's member of the Dighton-Rehoboth Regional School District Agreement revisionary board.

Dighton Cultural Council is accepting project funding applications thru October 15th, 2014, and needs three more members, two pieces of correspondence from the Council announced.

A letter from Veterans' Agent Donald Hirschey reported that he is happily serving as temporary Veterans' Agent in Rehoboth.

Selectman Pires read

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The Dighton Public Library has scheduled events for the Town's young people. Contact the Library at (508) 669-6421 for details :
 - 27 September: "The Bridgewater Triangle" Co-Directors here to answer any questions.
 - 2 October: Si-Fi Ghost Hunter Audiovisual Presentation by Dustin Perry
 - 18 October, 1:00PM: Composer Shauna Winston, Ragtime Concert
 - 27 October: Dighton Cultural Council presents, "The Trial of Lizzie Borden". Audience decides, Guilty or Innocent?
- Please be advised that there will be a Special Town Meeting Thursday, October 28, 2014 at 7:00 P.M. at the Dighton Middle School.
- The next Meeting of the Dighton Board of Selectmen on Wednesday Night, October 1, 2014 will be at Town Hall.
- Bulky Item Pickup will be taking place October 21, 2014. Have Items out at curbside by 7:00AM.
- There will be a Public Forum on the Master Plan at Town Hall, Lower Level, Tuesday October 7, 2014 at 7:00PM. Consult the Town of Dighton Web Site for a draft or view hard copy at the Town Hall.
- On Veterans' Day, 11 November 2014, Boy Scouts of America Troop 45 will perform the Flag Raising on Veterans' Memorial Common. There will be a collation in the Town Hall, Main Floor Hearings Room, after the Ceremony.
- The Board of Health has sharps disposal containers for sale for Dighton residents only at the office (\$3.00qt/\$6.00gal). Once full, they can be brought back to the Board of Health for proper disposal at no additional cost.

as they appeared in the published agenda.

Under Old Business, Selectman Menges stated that the warrant for the upcoming October 28, 2014 Special Town Meeting is still being finalized for the board's signature.

NEW BUSINESS

On a motion of Selectman Pires, seconded by Selectman Menges, the board unanimously voted to designate the Board of Selectmen/Health to undergo the annual audit of a selected town government department this year.

On a motion of Selectman Pires which Chairman Cronin stepped down and seconded, upon the written recommendations of the Historical Commission and the Dighton Historical Society, the board appointed as Town Historian to succeed the late Mrs. Elaine B. Varley, Mrs. Myrna D. Santos of 455 Center Street. Selectman Menges announced that he would not participate in the vote upon this matter or sign the appointment because Mrs. Santos is his sister.

The board voted to table a presentation by Phil LaBrash of FIT POWER, Mr. LaBrash being absent, on a motion of Selectman Pires, seconded by Selectman Menges.

Following recommendations of the Historical Commission and the Dighton Historical Society, the board, on a motion of Selectman Menges, seconded by Selectman Pires, appointed Ruth E. Horton of 254 Fourth Street, Providence, Rhode Island, 02906, to the Historical Commission.

On a motion of Selectman Pires, seconded by Selectman Menges, the board unanimously voted upon a voice vote, to accept a bid for magnesium chloride for ice control for the highway department in the amount of \$11,513.75 submitted by Mazzone Lumber Company of Taunton, Mass., as recommended by Highway Superintendent Thomas Ferry.

The board agreed by consensus to have the text of the Dighton-Rehoboth Regional School District 1987 Agreement scanned for public viewing, to the Town's website.

The board acknowledged and on a motion of Selectman Pires seconded by Selectman Menges accepted with gratitude a \$30.00 donation to "Prime Time", the Council on Aging's adult elderly day care facility. The board also acknowledged Dighton Police Department Sergeant Edward Dutra's completion in Fitchburg of training for public schools disaster response, and Glen Jefferson's acceptance of a seat on the Dighton-Rehoboth Regional School District Agreement Revisionary Board, and videographer for the evening John Meagher.

On a motion of Selectman Pires, seconded by Selectman Menges, the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



PATRICK W. MENGES

Selectman

Clerk of the Board of Selectmen