



A Message from your Town Administrator

July 2020

New Pilot Program for Seniors

The Town is trying out a new program for seniors! Those aged 60 and over who are seeking to purchase a single trash bag rather than a whole roll can do so. Purchases may be made at the Council on Aging. Small bags are \$1.00 each; Large bags are \$2.00.

Bags can be purchased between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Please wear a mask for the safety of the public and our employees. Contact the Council on Aging for more information at 508-823-0095.

TOWN HALL SERVICES

We are OPEN for business at Town Hall. We continue to promote our services online and through remote means. However, if you need to visit town offices, you are welcome to. Please wear a mask and use some sanitizer on your way in and out.

July continued our relative normalcy! We began making purchases for the authorized items at Town Meeting, like a new ladder truck for the Fire Department, roadway sweeper for the Highway Department and two cruisers for the Police Department. We have declared surplus the old vehicles and are planning for an auction to include those vehicles, some other supplies, and the building at 949 Somerset Avenue. This auction will take place in September.

We continued the spending freeze that was first enacted in March and now all requests for discretionary spending go through the Board of Selectmen at a meeting. We are remaining highly vigilant about expenses, regardless of how small the expense. We have received word from the state that they are likely going to provide level funded figures in unrestricted local aid, which is good news for us. If this pans out, we will continue to have a balanced budget throughout FY21.

Town Hall Changes

At the beginning of the month, we were closed to the public. As the Commonwealth moved forward in the Governor's Phased Reopening Plan, we slowly resumed regular services at Town Hall. We began by appointment only services, including for the Veteran's Agent, Council on Aging, and Library curb

side pick-up. We then opened our municipal buildings to the public on July 13. We still have appointment only requirements for COA, Library pick up, and the Veterans Agent. As the Governor's Phased Plan

continues, so will our own local reopening plans. The Building Commissioner and members of the Highway Department have worked diligently to set up computer services for the library at the Old Town Hall. If you are in need of computer services, please contact the library to schedule an appointment.

***As of July 13, we
are open to the
public once again.***

We appreciate your patience and understanding as we adapt to this new world. We have installed a second drop box at 1111 Somerset Avenue specifically for the Board of Health, Building, and Veterans departments. Online permit applications continue to go well through the Building Department. Meetings of various boards are continuing in-person. However, due to reduced occupancy levels, many boards choose to also provide Zoom meeting information for public participation efforts. I sincerely thank the Cable Committee for their hard work and diligence in continuing to get our messages and work out to the residents and businesses that call Dighton home!

In an effort to provide more office space, the Board of Selectmen's Meeting Room in Town Hall will be converted to new offices and a small conference room. Selectmen's Meetings will now take place at the Old Town Hall Meeting Room regularly. The Cable Commission is working on how to bring capabilities to broadcast live from that building. A special warrant article will be necessary to allow us to make that a reality. In the meantime, residents can watch meetings via our Zoom link, we will have recordings available on YouTube and we will continue to broadcast the meetings on Channel 9.

The Town also submitted its first round of CARES Act funding to reimburse us for the many purchases we made to make a safe workplace and building for the public to enter. These purchases included server connections for telecommuting capabilities, sanitizer, masks, plastic partitions, and moving services in some cases. Other allowable costs include overtime for Board of Health staff, town nurse staff, and emergency services as they relate to Covid 19, as well as modifying services to encourage social distancing. Our first round of estimated costs amounted to just under \$20,000. We received a little more than \$7,000 back. The remaining balance is expected to be covered through FEMA funding, available in September or October of this year. Our next round of funding will be for FY21 and will include some of the school district's purchases.

In non-Covid related news, we had to replace two of the HVAC units in Town Hall. They broke in June, leaving half of the building without climate control. We installed small AC units in each of those offices while we procured services for replacement. After a competitive bid process, we installed two new, highly efficient HVAC units for just under \$25,000. This was happy news since we anticipated this amount for just one unit. We are now evaluating the other two units to determine if we should preemptively replace them.

Grant Projects Status Update

The Town successfully completed the MVP, HMP and ADA planning grants. These will be our building blocks for future grants and we have already used the MVP to apply for an Action Grant. The Complete Streets intersection projects are underway in North Dighton as are the Green Communities projects, which are currently waiting rebate information. We have also taken advantage of a new program from MassDOT called Shared Streets and Spaces. We've submitted two projects for funding. The first is to redo the entryway sidewalk at the Dighton Middle School. The second is to install sidewalks along Main Street, Pleasant Street and Somerset Avenue. These sidewalks will connect the nearby residents to commercial centers, playgrounds, and parks, and they were a listed intersection improvement project on our Prioritization Plan. We are hopeful for funding for these worthy endeavors. I will report back our results! Detailed information on the various grants awarded to the Town and their development and end results can be found on our [website](#).

Community Announcements

Our sibling entity, the Dighton Water District, announced a townwide water ban and a moratorium on new construction. Current house lots can have homes built on them. But any subdivisions that are not already approved will not be able to continue until such time as there is more water available for the District. They are also working hard on replacing the infrastructure along Main Street. It is from the 1950s and in need of replacing but it is an expensive endeavor. Once that is replaced, the Town expects to repave Main Street.

The Town of Dighton's Business Guide is available for review. You can access it on our website [here](#). If you have any suggestions, edits, or questions, please feel free to email them to me at maronstein@dighton-ma.gov. The idea behind this guide is to provide a roadmap to permitting throughout our community. There are many different boards, all with their own respective purviews for siting a new or expanding business. The guide is meant to break down these processes into a simple step-by-step process to assist new or prospective businesses from locating in our Town. I hope you find it useful! We are still amassing some edits and it will be revised upon receipt of those.

IMPORTANT DATES

August 12, 26 – Scheduled Selectmen Meetings

August 15 – Dighton Food Bank Distribution, Town Hall

September 7 – Labor Day, Town Hall Closed

There are various vacancies on town boards and committees. If you are interested in serving the Town in a particular capacity, please fill out a volunteer information form and submit it to boardofselectmen@dighton-ma.gov. Find a list of vacancies on our [website](#).

THE BIG CHEESE



My monthly award is going to Ms. Lori Van Hook, Youth Librarian Services. Talk about making lemonade out of lemons! Ms. Van Hook has created new outdoor programming for kids and adults (because it was very fun for me too!) to enjoy in the midst of the pandemic. Behind the Community Playground is an Enchanted Literary Forest. I took my son Kevin, 4, to it

as we enjoyed a nice day together at the playground and we had so much fun jumping from post to post. Lori also provided library visitors a fun activity: Adopt a Monster! As we checked out some books for my older son Cole, 7, (*Ballpark Mysteries* by David A.



Kelly, if you have any young baseball fans) we were given an Adopt a Monster kit. It was a super cute activity. Kevin had fun creating "Run Fast Guy" and

creating a book for him to read. I'm recognizing Lori for thinking outside the box, finding a way to continue services that are new, creative, and bring even the simplest joy in a time of total chaos and complication. Great job, Lori!

