



A Message from your Town Administrator

April 2020

Reverse 911 - Coming Soon!

After considerable research by Dispatcher Theresa Costa and the Board of Health office staff, the Emergency Preparedness Committee has approved the purchase of Code Red, a reverse 911 system that allows residents to receive updates in the form of their choosing (phone, cell phone, text, email) will soon be operational in the Town of Dighton. This system will be used to notify residents of emergencies and general information, and it can also send alerts based upon geography as well. Stay tuned for instructions on how to sign up.

PANDEMIC REOPENING TASK FORCE

The Emergency Preparedness Committee also established a subcommittee to focus efforts on reopening municipal operations, prioritizing safety for staff and residents alike. We are eager to reopen our doors to you!

We truly picked up some momentum in April, adapting to our new virtual world of governing. The Town has demonstrated its agility as we have worked to convert our so-called ancient processes to merge with the digital world. The Board of Selectmen, thanks to Executive Assistant Karin Brady and the Cable TV Committee, was able to hold a live meeting on Zoom. Thus began the first of many Zoom meetings for us! Finance Committee meetings are underway, and are recorded for public viewing on YouTube and Channel 9. ZBA Office Manager Jonathan Gray, Planning Board Office Manager Kerrie Easterday, and I met this month to prepare for holding a public hearing utilizing virtual means and we think we have a plan that will allow us to hear residents' concerns and maintain an organized meeting.

Selectman Brett Zografos has also utilized Zoom to stream live on Facebook during the pandemic in which he serves as host to special guests and answers residents' questions live. It's a great feature to connect with your local leaders in a time when social distancing forces us apart. Selectman Zografos has held three of these Q&A sessions, one of which I was fortunate to be a guest as was my 3-year-old son, Kevin. He wants to make sure everyone is eating their vegetables! These sessions are held about every other Wednesday on Facebook.

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It goes without saying my deep appreciation for all of the Town's employees, especially those deemed essential, that have truly not missed a beat in providing local services and keeping our operations moving. They have adapted quickly to remote working, using new software, and trying different – and highly creative - ways to accomplish their tasks. Great work to all!

TOWN UPDATES

At the beginning of the month, the Board of Selectmen officially declared the Town of Dighton as a Medal of Honor community. Unfortunately, we had to cancel the ceremony scheduled for this month to officially receive the Medal in its due pomp and circumstance in honor of Frederick Clark

Anderson. Special thanks to Michael Berube of the Highway Department and Building Commissioner Jim Aguiar for their work in transforming the display case that will eventually house the medal, the proclamation passed on April 8, 2020, and some other items relative to this occasion. We are looking forward to holding this ceremony when it is safe to do so.

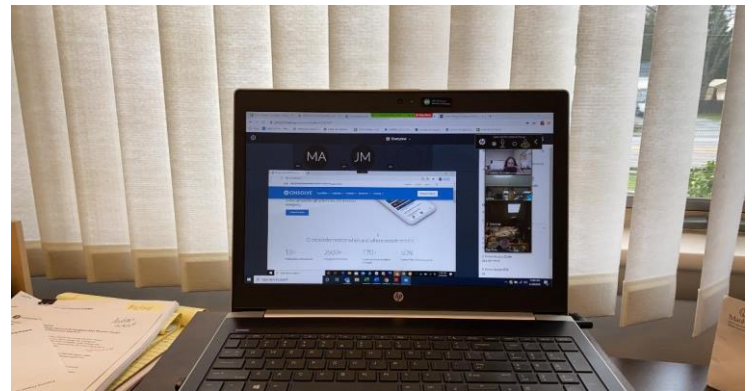
Workers, though you aren't seeing them, are still hard at work. Some work from the office while most are remotely taking care of business. The town's network and software upgrades were truly instrumental in our ability to maintain this level of output and for it to absorb the demand that has been placed on it.

Financial Happenings

We are still plugging away on our FY21 budget. The Selectmen finalized votes on budgets and salary requests. Finance Committee is meeting now and through the first week of May to compile their recommendations in preparation for the Annual Town Meeting, scheduled for June 15, 2020. The Town's cash flow remains okay – we are continuously monitoring it. We have extended the due date for property tax bills to June 1, 2020 and we have waived penalties and interest on payments made on or before June 29, 2020.

I continually check in with local Town Administrators and Managers, via conference calls each Monday as we contemplate the latest updates from the state. I also participate in weekly state-wide conference calls held by the MMA where Lt. Governor Karyn Polito and DOR Senior Deputy Commissioner Sean Cronin. During these we are able to ask questions and hear the latest news from the Governor's Office. Thus, we are able to remain informed about the fluid situation that is Covid 19.

Updates for our response and new developments concerning the Coronavirus and this vastly changing landscape are available on our town websites: Dighton-ma.gov and dightonportal.com. The John Guilfoil Public Relations team continues to issue notices for us, which are posted at Dightonportal.com. We have also updated our website to include various notices from local departments and day-by-day updates to our response efforts. Included in these notices is a story about mail in voting procedures should you be unable to visit the polls for voting in our Town Election because of Covid 19. The process is very easy: If you are a registered voter in the Town of Dighton, complete a 2020 municipal election early ballot application (available on our website, or through the Secretary of State's office), fax or mail it to the Town Clerk or drop it in the lock box at the bottom of the ramp at Town Hall. An absentee ballot will then be mailed to you. Absentee ballots must be received no later than June 6, 2020.



Creative workplace strategies: a Zoom meeting with screen share on Go To Meeting.

IMPORTANT DATES

May 6 – Strawberry Fields virtual Public Hearing

May 13, 27 – Scheduled Selectmen Meetings

June 6 – Annual Town Election

June 15 - Annual Town Meeting

June 27 – Rabies Vaccination Day 2 – 3 p.m.

Local Services

Regrettably, we have to continue to suspend our services at the Council on Aging and Prime Time. The Board of Selectmen recently made the difficult decision to lay off the part time employees of Prime Time. Full time employees are still reaching out to participants and working to combat the negative effects of isolation. Full time employees are also working to finalize building projects for the PrimeTime facility.

Select Library services are being carried out digitally. Library workers have been hard at work taking trainings, digitizing e-card abilities, and providing digital content. Library Director Jocelyn Tavares and

Ms. Phyllis Haskell, who manages IT for the library, have been working with SAILS network folks on a variety of measures to implement once the library is open for business again. This includes methods on quarantining shared materials.

The Board of Selectmen also voted that the Dighton-Rehoboth Regional School District's school nursing staff serve as temporary Public Health agents. This is so they can assist our Town Nurse in community tracing efforts. We thank the School Department for their collaborative efforts.

Our outdoor spaces remain open to the public, but with social distancing measures in place! Trails are beautiful and spending time outside seems to be just what the doctor ordered these days. Now that the nice weather is upon us, we expect to see more of you walking the track behind Town Hall. And our Dighton Trails Committee has been showcasing various trails on their Facebook page as well. Check out this graphic to ensure your doing your best to stop the spread of Covid 19.



MONOPOLY TRIVIA

I know I'm definitely in the minority for my love of Monopoly, but as I grew up this was staple in my family and amongst friends. We had marathon monopoly games where breaks were a necessity. At each break we would count our money and swear that we would know if anyone stole our money. My brother (four years older than me) was always making these intricate deals and after a while you knew that whatever deal he was proposing was certainly only benefiting himself. You can probably guess that he often won. Since most of us are at home these days with some free time on our hands, I thought I'd share some trivia about Monopoly, if you venture to play a round or two.



The most landed on squares in Monopoly are New York Avenue, Illinois Avenue, B&O Railroad, and Reading Railroad. Prioritize your purchases!



The least common space you'll land on is Mediterranean Avenue. That being said, I always buy this and Baltic Avenue. It only takes \$500 for hotels on both properties and you make almost the full amount with one person landing on it. Just some practiced advice...



Parker Brothers initially rejected Charles Darrow's Monopoly, citing the game's length as one of its "fundamental errors".



There are 16 chance cards. Ten of them will move a player to a different space. Of the 16 community chest cards, ten will provide a player money.



The Go to Jail officer's name is Officer Edward Malloy.

THE BIG CHEESE



We haven't held a Department Head meeting since our essential staffing plan went into effect. But that doesn't mean we can't honor some of our employees! I'd like to name a few that have risen above the many challenges presented by Covid 19 and went above and beyond to deliver services. Don Hirschy, our Veterans Agent, has truly exemplified going beyond the call of duty. At the start of this pandemic, he sent 80 handwritten notes to our veterans and included a Hannaford's gift card. Then he delivered coffee to our vets and participated in Gilette Stadium's Veterans food drive. He has continued to call our local veterans to check in on how they are coping with our new way of living and suspending services. We salute you, Mr. Hirschy, for embodying humanity during a crisis and still delivering top notch services.

I'd also like to recognize Treasurer and Collector Mary Hathaway who has been working very hard to keep up with payrolls, bills, tax collections, revenues and turn ins, and serving as a one-woman show for about three weeks in her office. We thank you, Mary, for your continued dedication and hard work.

The Board of Health, I think it goes without saying, has significantly contributed to the Town, monitoring state and federal updates, organizing community tracing personnel, managing state grant funds relative to Covid-19, providing guidance to Town departments relative to Covid 19, all while still maintaining so-called normal Board of Health duties.



Meet Bentley!

Bentley is our newest resident at the Animal Shelter. He is currently recovering from a neuter surgery and is up for adoption! He would do best in an older home with no kids, where he could have lots of quiet time and cuddles. For more information about Bentley or getting involved with the Animal Shelter in general, please contact Animal Control Officer Stacy Ferry at 774-218-5340.