



A Message from your Town Administrator

January 2020

Coming Soon: Electric Vehicle Charging Stations!

The Town is moving forward with installing two electric vehicle charging stations at the Municipal Campus. One will be in the rear of Town Hall; the other will be at Old Town Hall. The funds of these were originally provided through the Green Communities designation the Town received in late 2018. However, National Grid provided rebates in an amount exceeding the cost and this frees up some funding for other green energy changes that the Town is discussing.

Happy New Year! As we start a new decade, we continue with practices from last year, including a line-by-line budget review, performance evaluations for department heads and voting preparations. In meetings with the Board of Selectmen, you'll see these discussions taking place. Packets are posted online so you can view the materials we are looking at as well and follow all the numbers we are throwing around in our discussion. Additionally, the Annual Town Election is in April, but work for that begins now. Nomination papers are due on February 20 for a variety of positions, many of which the incumbent is not seeking reelection. This includes Moderator, Assessor, Sewer Commissioner, and others. Consider volunteering for public service today!

We also welcomed a new addition to our staff this month. Jonathan Gray was appointed as the new Office Manager to the Zoning Board of Appeals and he has hit the ground running as he has started in the thick of multiple public hearings for the proposed Strawberry Fields development. The Town has also said a sad goodbye to long-time employee Dennis Hazel who has resigned after 13 tremendous years in Dighton. Thank you for your service to our community, Dennis! Congratulations on the next step of your career.

The Town was awarded \$277,442 from MassDOT to revamp two intersections and install bicycle signage town-wide.

TOWN UPDATES

Last month, I listed the year's grants that we were awarded. At the time, we were still waiting to hear back on our Complete Streets award. I'm pleased to announce that we were granted \$277,442.00 from MassDOT to revamp two intersections and install bicycle signage town-wide, all projects which were selected from the Town's Prioritization Plan. The intersections to be redone are Center Street at Somerset Avenue and Pearl Street. Work for this will begin this spring.

The Board of Selectmen reviewed the preliminary plans relative to redesigning the driveway and traffic flow for Dighton Elementary and Middle Schools. Taking into account comments from parents, school administration, and Town officials, the Board authorized the Town to continue through the permitting process with Conservation. The plan calls for a secondary egress on the property and one-way traffic flows to make for a safer and less congested drop off system for both schools. We will continue to provide updates as this project continues. It will be developed in conjunction with the Complete Streets work taking place this spring.

In coordination with the Board's overarching goal of achieving ADA Compliance town-wide, the Selectmen established a 5-member ADA Commission at their meeting on January 8. Residents with disabilities, hidden or otherwise, and residents with family members with disabilities are encouraged to submit letters of interest to

serve on this important committee. The Town anticipates awarding the contract for the Self Evaluation and Transition Plan in mid February which will provide a punch-list of sorts to eliminate barriers. Commissioners will keep tabs on that project, but will more importantly serve as a resource to any residents who may face accessibility barriers in their dealings with the Town.

The Police Station guardrails were finally completely installed after having digging issues in the front area, which left half of the job completed for most of the month. On January 30, the work was completed and we have ensured safety for a previously exposed part of the building. The vulnerability came to light when a driver nearly crashed into the building. Thank you to Mr. Denis Maguy, Chairman of the Police Station Building Committee, for his assistance in this project.

Strategic Planning for the library is underway! I was graciously asked to join the Board of Trustees, Library Director Jocelyn Tavares, Selectman Ken Pacheco, and Youth Services Librarian Lori Van Hook and other interested residents to serve on the Strategic Planning Committee. This group will work with professional strategic planners to discuss library programs and services, expanding them in a modern age, and achieving the goals of our library. It is important to note that the building itself is *not* the focus of this strategic planning work at this time.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Budget preparations for the Fiscal Year 2021 are underway! Department Heads and Committees have submitted their budget requests. I am looking forward to working alongside the Selectmen and the Finance Committee to provide a budget for Town Meeting in June. At the end of this newsletter is a Fiscal Milestones calendar developed by Mr. Jeff Carvalho, which provides a schedule of how we arrive to the final budget we present at Town Meeting, and how we utilize the authorizations granted at that meeting for both operating and capital expenses to set the tax rate each November. Thank you, Jeff, for putting this together.

The Town Clerk has been busy organizing Early Voting in advance of the March 3 Presidential Primary, which will take place February 24 through February 27 at Town Hall, specifically the Lower Level Meeting Room. Take advantage of shorter lines!

Also in February, I'll be gearing up with Veterans' Agent Donald Hirschy to finalize plans on our Medal of Honor ceremony featuring Mr. Frederick C. Anderson, a Civil War hero issued the Medal of Honor. His family has generously donated the Medal of Honor to the Town of Dighton. The event will be on April 26. Save the Date! We hope to see you there!

We received a draft study concerning expanding sewer services. In the next month, I'll be hearing from the Sewer Commissioners regarding their thoughts on the data provided, the expansion options, and their thoughts on moving forward.

COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town's Public Listening Session for the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan. This will take place on February 12 at 7:00 p.m. at the start of the Selectmen's Meeting. Review the plan here: https://dighton-ma.gov/news_detail_T6_R236.php Interested parties are invited to be present and be heard.

The Parks and Recreation Commission is gearing up for their Annual Easter Egg Hunt in April and is seeking volunteers to help stuff eggs and set up the day of the event. Contact the Commission today to join in on the fun.

IMPORTANT DATES

February 8 – Animal Shelter opening

February 12, 19, 26 – Selectmen's Meetings

February 17 – President's Day, Town Offices closed.

February 15 – Dighton Food Bank distribution, Lower Level of Town Hall

PrimeTime is seeking clients. If you or someone you know would benefit from meeting new friends, trying new experiences, and staying active, call Sheila at 508-669-6272.

Do you have Dighton news to share? Tell us about it! Visit <https://dightonportal.com/submit-a-story/> to provide details on our story!

THE BIG CHEESE



January's Big Cheese award was given to Ms. Rosalind Grassie, Office Manager to the Board of Health. Ms. Grassie is a jack of all trades and routinely steps up to offer assistance regardless of how busy she may be under her duties with the Board of Health. In December, we had a resignation of the ZBA Office Manager. Ms. Grassie stepped in to assist the ZBA in continuing duties while we searched for a replacement, as they have significant ongoing work with the proposed Strawberry Fields development. Then given literally five minutes notice, Ms. Grassie happily stepped in to assist in interviewing candidates. Ms. Grassie's cheerful attitude and unwavering willingness to do all she can do to help, regardless of the demands placed on her time, earned her the Trophy this month. Thank you, Ros!

Town Of Dighton Fiscal Milestones

Updated: 13 December 2019

<p>July Happy New Year!</p>
<p>August</p>
<p>September</p>
<p>October - Fall Special Town Meeting (historically latter part of the month on a Monday) - Dighton Community Preservation Committee (CPC) meets to begin review of Community Preservation Act (CPA) proposals</p>
<p>November - Set next Calendar Year (CY) tax rate based upon budget voted on at the previous Annual Town Meeting (ATM) and any changes made at the Fall Special Town Meeting - Dighton Community Preservation Committee (CPC) meets to finalize review of Community Preservation Act (CPA) proposals for submission to ATM warrant</p>
<p>December - Mid: Budget requests sent out by Town Administrator - 31st: Annual reports Due</p>
<p>January - 31st: Budgets due to Town Administrator and Town Accountant (Committee budgets should be VOTED ON prior to submission)</p>
<p>February - Board of Selectmen (BoS) reviews and votes on each budget submission</p>
<p>March - BoS reviews and votes on each budget submission</p>
<p>April - BoS reviews and votes on each budget submission - Finance Committee (FinCom) meets and puts together budget that will be voted on at the ATM - BoS and FinCom meet to go over Warrant Articles for ATM</p>
<p>May - BoS and FinCom meet to go over Warrant Articles for ATM</p>
<p>June - First Monday in June: ATM, new budget is voted on - Schedule from Town Accountant regarding encumbrances, last day to pay bills, etc, is released.</p>