



Town Administrator's Transcript & Newsletter

Michael Mullen, Jr.

Dighton Town Administrator

July 2021

Hello Dighton Residents,

My name is Mike Mullen, Jr., and it is an honor and privilege to be serving the Town of Dighton as your new Town Administrator. The last four months have been full of activity as we've been working to continue progress in a number of areas. I'm thrilled to write today to introduce myself and outline the Town's latest efforts on your behalf!

Though I've made it a top priority to get out and about since being appointed by the Board of Selectmen in late January and starting in my role in early March, I want to begin by telling you a bit about myself and my professional background.

First, and most importantly, I am the lucky husband to my beautiful wife, Jenna, and a proud Dad to our two four-year old twins, Patrick and Clara. I was born, raised and still live in Rockland, a community that instilled in me at an early age the value of being community-oriented and civically engaged. I served for six years as a member of the Rockland School Committee and, until this spring, for five years as a member of the Rockland Board of Selectmen. Becoming community invested and involved is essential to fully understanding and successfully supporting community goals, initiatives, and traditions. I've already made these efforts a guiding priority of my work here in Dighton as well. Earlier this month, for example, I finally learned how to correctly pronounce *chourico* (sheer-reese)!

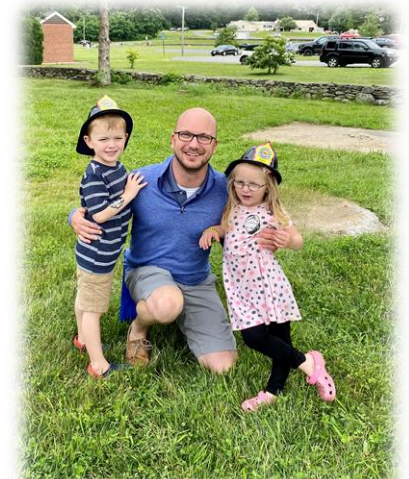
Professionally, I have been proud to grow my career in public service and municipal management since graduating from Bridgewater State College with a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science and, in 2012, with a Master's in Public Administration Degree from Suffolk University. I began my career at the State House in Boston as an aide, then chief of staff, to a former state representative from Brockton. I then went on to serve as legislative director to my local senator before going to work as Chief of Staff to former Brockton Mayor Linda Balzotti. Prior to coming to Dighton, I served as Assistant County Director and County Director for the Norfolk County's government in Dedham where I was responsible for developing and managing the County's \$31 million operating budget.

In my spare time, I love spending time with my family, working in my yard, and living my best life impersonating Bandit, the dad from the kid's television show Bluey!

Again, I can't tell you how honored and humbled I am to be serving as your Town Administrator. I truly appreciate the warm Dighton welcome I'm continuing to receive from so many town residents, department heads and employees. I also look forward to earning your trust as we continue working to move Dighton forward. Make sure to keep reading for recent news and updates. Please always feel free contact me at Town Hall or by email at mmullen@dighton-ma.gov should any need arise.

See you around Town,

Mike Mullen, Jr.



Patrick and Clara sporting their Dighton Junior Firefighter helmets at the 1st Annual Firecracker Festival

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Annual Town Meeting Recap

A 31-article Annual Town Meeting Warrant, which included the town's \$23.2 million operating budget for Fiscal Year 2022, was the talk of the Town and the Dighton-Rehoboth Regional High School Auditorium on Monday June 7, 2021 as town officials and residents came together for Dighton's Annual Town Meeting.

This year's Annual Town Meeting Warrant prioritized the Town's commitment to responsible fiscal planning, targeted capital investments, and continuing the credibility the town has built in funding core town services vital to all Dighton residents.

Notable items on the Warrant approved by Town Meeting included support for school funding, appropriations to reestablish the lieutenant position at the Dighton Police Department to reflect current-day needs; ongoing investments in a town-wide online permitting service; investments in the parks and recreation department; funding for a new, leased fire engine, a police vehicle and highway/roadway equipment; in addition to our latest in a series of solar Payment in Lieu of Tax (PILOT) agreements.

Thank you, Ed Swartz

Speaking of Town Meeting, those in attendance at the conclusion of the meeting heard former Finance Committee Chairman Ed Swartz deliver some bittersweet news: that after 20 years serving Dighton as our Finance Committee Chairman, Mr. Swartz would be stepping down at the end of June.



From right clockwise: Ed Swartz being recognized by Board of Selectmen members Brett Zografos, Kenneth Pacheco and Leonard Hull on June 23rd

During their June 23rd meeting, the Board of Selectmen honored Mr. Swartz with a [Proclamation and Certificate of Recognition](#) for his tireless efforts on behalf of Dighton. Ed was honored for his collaborative, credible leadership and fiscal discipline he brought to the Finance Committee. He was recognized for the Town's strengthened position, the creation of our Capital Stabilization Account; the funding of many capital improvements, including a new headquarters for the Dighton Police Department and modular classrooms at the Dighton Elementary School, and his work advocating for the professionalization of Dighton's town government.

While I've only been in Dighton a few months, it is abundantly clear that Ed Swartz has been an instrumental member of Dighton's town government throughout his years of service. On behalf of our entire community, I would like to extend our

sincere gratitude to Ed for all that he has done for Dighton. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Update on Dighton Elementary and Middle School Traffic Drop-Off and Engineering Redesign Scheduled for Wednesday, August 11th Board of Selectmen Meeting

Thanks to the leadership of Building Commissioner Jim Aguiar, Highway Superintendent Tom Ferry, school officials, and Zenith Consulting, engineering and design efforts have continued a redesigned driveway and traffic pattern for Dighton Elementary and Middle Schools since being approved at November's Special Town Meeting. The group plans to provide an update to the Board of Selectmen and town residents at the Board's regular meeting on Wednesday, August 11th. All are welcome to attend as we work to continue moving the project forward.

Dighton Awarded \$118,838 State Safe Streets and Paths Accessibility Grant—check out [Taunton Gazette coverage here!](#)

The saying goes that the third time is the charm. In Dighton's case, late last month, the saying became reality as we learned the Town had been awarded nearly \$119,000 in state grant funding as a result of our latest grant application effort. The grant will fund ADA-compliant curb ramps and curb cuts, accessible sidewalks for wheelchairs and clearly delineated crosswalks for pedestrian use throughout town as part of a Safe Streets and Paths project.



The grant will go a long way in helping to remove accessibility barriers in all corners of Dighton. Selectmen Brett Zografos, Highway Superintendent Tom Ferry and ADA Coordinator Jonathan Gale were instrumental in making this grant a reality, as were MassDOT, Rep. Haddad and Sen. Pacheco. This grant funding will also allow town funding approved last month's Annual Town Meeting for this purpose to be reappropriated to help meet other community needs.

Addressing accessibility barriers throughout the Dighton community is an ongoing priority for the Board of Selectmen, the Dighton Commission on Disability and Dighton Highway Department. Together with residents, we have been working to



The intersection of Main and Elm Street is one of many areas receiving upgrades from Shared Streets grant funding

identify streets, sidewalks and intersections in Dighton with accessibility barriers in an effort to better enable all residents safe access to Dighton's many public resources.

Infrastructure improvements made possible by the grant funding will include two ADA-compliant curb ramps and cuts to be installed at the following locations: Main Street and Elm Street, Warner Boulevard and Spring Street, School Street and Lincoln Avenue, Lincoln Avenue by Johnny's Market, Summer Street and Spring Street, sidewalk across Bow Street, and Spring Street and Winter Street.

Crosswalks and two ADA-compliant curb ramps will also be installed at Center Street near the Berkley-Dighton Bridge next to the Bristol County Agricultural High School, Main Street near the Dighton Public Library (395 Main St.), Lincoln Avenue at the Lincoln Village Senior Housing (300 Lincoln Ave.), and at the intersection between Lincoln Avenue and Spring Street.

Dighton Resident Janelle Vining Hired as New Town Accountant

Congratulations to Dighton resident Janelle Vining who has been appointed to serve as Dighton's new Town Accountant effective August 2, 2021. Ms. Vining is replacing former Town Accountant Chris Laviolette who recently became Finance Director for the Town of Raynham.

Ms. Vining, who is a certified Public Accountant (CPA) will serve as an integral part of the financial team responsible for monitoring, directing and auditing the town's financial and accounting system, including maintaining the fiscal records and systems of the town. She will also serve as a member of the town's newly re-established Capital Outlay Committee.

She comes to Town Hall with more than a decade of accounting experience as an Audit Manager at Farmer & First CPA's. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting from Roger Williams University and a master's degree in Business Administration from the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth.

We're excited to have Janelle bring her leadership and love for the Dighton community to Town Hall as a leading member of our finance team. Her appointment comes at an exciting and important time for Dighton as we work to strengthen our fiscal planning, forecasting, and capital planning.

Grants At-a-Glance

DIGHTON PLACES EMPHASIS ON FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING

During their July 14, 2021 meeting, the Board of Selectmen, citing transitions in Dighton's financial team and the town's short- and long-term financial and capital planning priorities, asked the state Division of Local Services to partner with the Town on a Financial Management Review. The Review, once officially considered and approved is anticipated to begin in mid-October and is expected to be completed by the end of February 2022.

TOWN OFFICIALS SUBMIT APPLICATION FOR INAUGURAL STATE ONE-STOP FOR GROWTH GRANT OPPORTUNITY

The Town in early June submitted a state grant application that proposes to undertake a zoning assessment of both the Route 138 and Route 44 corridors. The Route 138 assessment would build off of last year's Woodard & Curran Sewer Expansion Study, while the Route 44 assessment would be aimed at resolving a number of conflicts on parcels with split zoning.

If awarded, the Town plans to bring together a variety of residents and stakeholders to move the initiative forward.

The Town's application received support from Rep. Haddad, Sen. Pacheco, and the Taunton Area Chamber of Commerce.



Members of the Board of Selectmen, former Selectman Nancy Goulart and town employees enjoying 'Christmas in July'

Thank you, Dighton Town Employees: Board of Selectmen, Town Administrator Host 'Christmas in July' Breakfast to Show Gratitude and Appreciation

While the only frost in the air might have been around the air conditioning condenser at Old Town Hall, Christmas will be celebrated twice this year with the first celebration having taken place in Dighton on Thursday, July 15th with members of the Board of Selectmen, former Selectman Nancy Goulart, and me treating town employees to an Alice's breakfast and malassadas.

Given the challenges of the last year, it was great to take a moment to thank our dedicated employees for all they do for our community. I look forward to celebrating more occasions with town employees and residents and the months and years to come!

Dighton Portal Additional News and Updates

[Dighton and Berkley Firefighters Go Head-to-Head In Charity Softball Game](#)

[Dighton Public Library Shares Upcoming Summer Programming Opportunities](#)

[Dighton Fire Department Shares Safety Tips During Hurricane Preparedness Week](#)