



Town Administrator's Transcript & Newsletter

Michael Mullen, Jr.

Dighton Town Administrator

November / December 2021



Hello, Dighton!

The holiday season, the end of the year, and a beginning of another, always provides us with an opportunity to pause and reflect on the successes and challenges of the last 12 months.

There is no question about the challenges we continue to face. 2021 was another tough year for many of us in so many ways, but we keep coming together as a community to confront and address issues head-on. As we move forward into 2022, we do so poised to build on the accomplishments that Dighton continued to make this year.

Dighton entered 2021 facing transitions in a number of areas, including the Town Administrator, Town Clerk and Assistant Town Accountant positions. Later in the year, we also saw changes in the positions of Town Accountant and Town Assessor. During these transitions, town officials, employees and volunteers stepped up to make sure our town government continued its forward progress—and we extend to them our heartfelt appreciation.

Since then, we have kept working to strengthen our fiscal practices. Our new Financial Team meets regularly to assess revenue and expense trends, review timelines, and plan future forecasting efforts. Our Capital Outlay Committee, officially re-established in late spring, continues working to create the town's first-ever 5-year Capital Plan. Together with the Board of Selectmen, we are also working with the state Department of Revenue (DOR) and Division of Local Services (DLS) to complete a Financial Management Review of the town's fiscal practices that evaluates current financial practices and makes recommendations for future efforts in line with municipal finance best practices.

We have also continued our focus on—and success in—leading various grant funding initiatives to advance and achieve community goals. Dighton has continued making investments, most recently with new Town Hall lighting, through **Green Communities Grant** funding. In July we secured a **\$118,838 MassDOT Shared Streets Grant** that funded ADA-compliant curb ramps and curb cuts, accessible sidewalks and clearly delineated crosswalks for pedestrian use throughout town. The Police Department has been leading efforts to pursue **traffic enforcement** and **body camera grants**. Last month Dighton was awarded a **\$25,000 state grant** that will be matched with additional funding from SRPEDD to create a **town-wide Economic Development Plan**. We have been awarded a **\$16,869 state IT grant** to upgrade our network infrastructure, and earlier this month learned that we have been awarded a **\$151,000 state Municipal Americans with Disability Grant** to fund various accessibility improvements in town.

As always, please keep reading for recent news, information and updates. It remains an honor to serve as your Town Administrator. Please always feel free to contact me should any need arise.

Happy New Year!

Mike Mullen, Jr.

Dighton COVID-19 Updates

Like many communities, Dighton is experiencing a significant surge in residents who are testing positive for COVID-19. Town officials continue to place a priority on Dighton's COVID-19 response, including contact tracing for residents and local families.

Residents supported increased funding for Contact Tracing at November's Special Town Meeting, and the Board of Selectmen last week approved an additional \$5,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to hire a temporary Contact Tracer to help meet our needs. Earlier this month, Dighton joined with a number of local communities to apply for a regional Public Health Excellence grant through the state which we hope will provide longer-term sustainability in continuing these efforts.

Information on Updated Contact Tracing Protocols

As outlined in the accompanying infographic, state contact protocols were updated by the Department of Public Health in early December. **Local contact tracing efforts are now prioritizing contacts with only those who test positive for COVID-19.**

Individuals who test positive are asked to **notify their own close contacts**. A close contact is anyone who an individual has been within 6 feet of for a combined total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period in the 48 hours before an individual's symptoms began.

Any resident with questions about contact tracing and/or updated state and federal guidelines should feel free to reach out to the Board of Health Office at (774) 872-0943.


Baker-Polito Administration Announces Opening of Taunton COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic at 2005 Bay Street

Opening January 6th, the Taunton COVID-19 vaccine and booster clinic will have the capacity to administer 400 doses daily. Appointments are available now by visiting vaxfinder.mass.gov. Language translation services will be available on site. Administering primary series for individuals 5+, as well as boosters. Brewster Ambulance will serve as the provider.

From Mass DPH: [What to do if you have COVID-19 or have been exposed to COVID-19](#)

Isolation and quarantine are important steps to help stop the spread of COVID-19. Make sure to read updated guidance from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, which can be found [here](#).

Up-to-date COVID-19 News, Information and Updates from the Town of Dighton can be accessed from the top of the Town of Dighton homepage at www.dighton-ma.gov.



IMPORTANT UPDATES ON COVID-19 CONTACT TRACING

Join Us to Help Stop the Spread

- Dighton continuing Contact Tracing efforts; Board of Selectmen approved funding last week to assist efforts
- State Contact Tracing protocols updated by the Department of Public Health
- Local efforts prioritize **contacts with only those who test positive for COVID-19**
- Individuals who test positive should **notify their own close contacts***

If you develop COVID-19 symptoms, even if mild, contact your health care provider and arrange a test at nearest testing site. Isolate if positive and inform close contacts*

***For COVID-19, a close contact is anyone who you were within 6 feet for* a combined total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period**

Dighton Hosts Congressman Auchincloss, Rep. Haddad and Sen. Pacheco to Discuss Economic Development and Infrastructure

In mid-November, the Board of Selectmen and town officials hosted Congressman Jake Auchincloss, Rep. Pat Haddad and Sen. Marc Pacheco to discuss infrastructure, public safety and economic development funding as we visited the Spring Street Mill, Dighton Fire Station #1 and Alice's Last Stop on County Street. The meeting came as federal and state officials continue to prioritize infrastructure and economic development funding for local communities.

A full recap of the visit can be accessed [here](#).



More than \$46,000 in State Grants to Fund Economic Development Planning, IT Upgrades, and Recycling Efforts

In early December, we were proud to announce that the Town of Dighton was awarded three state grants totaling about \$46,800 by the Baker-Polito Administration, including a \$25,000 Community Compact Cabinet (CCC) Best Practices Program grant, a \$16,869 Community Compact Information Technology grant and a \$4,800 Sustainable Materials Recovery Program grant.

With these grants, the Town of Dighton will be able to plan forward its economic development goals, invest in our IT network infrastructure and continue our commitment to advancing sustainable waste practices.

Highway Department Wraps-Up Shared Streets Grant Projects



Closing out the end of the year means closing out our \$118,838 MassDOT Shared Streets & Spaces grant that funded ADA-compliant curb ramps and curb cuts, accessible sidewalks for wheelchairs and clearly delineated crosswalks for pedestrian use throughout town. A big thanks to Highway Superintendent Tom Ferry, our Highway Department staff, and LAL Construction for bringing this project to completion during the last few weeks!

The grant funding awarded to the town for economic development planning coincides with the recent re-establishment of Dighton's Development and Industrial Commission. The Commission plans to lead the advancement of the town's Economic Development Plan through an ongoing partnership with the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD). SRPEDD's District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) program will also provide matching funding that will enable Dighton to complete a full Economic Development Plan.

Be sure to [click here](#) for more information about the grants.

Dighton Awarded \$151,250 Municipal Americans with Disability Act Grant to Fund Town-wide Accessibility Improvements

This month town officials also learned that our \$151,250 Municipal Americans with Disability Act grant application was approved by the Massachusetts Office on Disability to fund various accessibility improvements in the town.

Projects to be funded the grant include the construction of a new accessible Town Hall walkway, park accessibility improvements, and accessibility upgrades to the town website.

This grant is a direct result of a team effort between Selectman Brett Zografos, ADA Coordinator Jonathan Gale, Parks and Recreation Commission Chairman Kevin Smith, Jr., Building Commissioner Jim Aguiar and Highway Superintendent Tom Ferry to make these initiatives possible. [Click here for a full overview of the grant projects to be completed.](#)

Town of Dighton Shares Information About Bristol-Plymouth Regional Technical School's Proposed \$305 million School Building Project

The Bristol-Plymouth Regional Technical School Committee has called a Special Election for Saturday, March 5, 2022 at the Dighton Elementary School for consideration of B-P's proposed school building project. The Special Election will take place between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.

The Town of Dighton is committed to sharing as much information about the project ahead of the special election. For more information about the Special Election, please [click here](#).

Dighton Lights On Returns!



My daughter, Clara, and I had a great time joining the Board of Selectmen, Sen. Pacheco, Town Clerk Mark Pacheco and his daughter, Margo, and Sue Medeiros to sing Christmas Carols at last month's 'Lights On'

**THANK YOU TO THE DIGHTON HOLIDAY COMMITTEE FOR A
WONDERFUL EVENT!**

In Case You Missed Them: Some 2021 Year-in-Review Dighton Portal News Highlights

[Town of Dighton Gifted Medal of Honor from Family of Civil War Soldier](#)

[Town of Dighton Awarded \\$12,500 by Massachusetts Historical Commission](#)

[Town of Dighton Announces Appointment of New Town Accountant Janelle Vining](#)

[Shawn Cronin Appointed as Dighton Police Department's First Lieutenant in 20 Years](#)

www.dightonportal.com

Happy New Year, Dighton!

