



A Message from your Town Administrator

October 2020

EVIP Grant received

The Town received a \$5,000 EVIP grant to be used toward a 2020 plug in hybrid Ford Escape for the inspectional services group (Building Inspector, Health Agent, Conservation Agent). The Town will vote on a warrant article to purchase this vehicle. If that vote is favorable, we will go forward with the purchase and apply this grant toward it. Town Meeting is scheduled for November 16, 2020.

OTHER GRANTS

Before my goodbye, I did have the opportunity to apply for two additional grants. We applied for over \$118,000 from the Mass. Office of Disability to install curb ramps at all crosswalks in order to continue removing accessibility barriers. I also worked with Dighton-Rehoboth officials to apply for a Community Compact IT grant. They hope to use the funds, if awarded, to upgrade the phone and network systems at the Dighton Middle School.

This edition of my newsletter will be my last issue. I have tendered my resignation from my post as the Town of Dighton's Town Administrator. It has been a distinct privilege and honor to serve you in this capacity. Dighton is truly a gem both in its beautiful natural resources as well as the deep sense of perseverance and dedication. During my time in Dighton, I have had very unique opportunities to grow as a leader with horrible tragedy, a global health crisis, and being at the helm when your form of government was transformed. These experiences have molded me into a well-rounded leader and stronger professional. I thank the Town for these experiences and for affording me these opportunities. Thank you to the residents especially. It has been an honor to get to know you and be part of your community.

Before my official goodbye to you, I must share our latest successes— I do like to end on a positive note!

Community Happenings

A major accomplishment occurred this month, but it wouldn't have been exciting enough to make local papers. I partnered with Attorney William

Solomon and the Dighton Cable Commission early on in my career here. We worked together to revise the Cable License Agreement. This is negotiated with Comcast, LLC., that provides funding for our cable access programming. After two years of negotiation, the Town finalized a great deal for itself! The Town receives funds based upon Comcast subscribers and uses these funds to provide local government and education programming to the Town. The Town will now receive 5% of subscriber revenues per year and \$10,000 per year in capital expenditures. This is a significant improvement based on the previous contract which only afforded the town to 1% of subscriber revenues per year. There is a very low senior discount of \$2.00 a month. While this is not the successful discount we were hoping for, it is better than nothing. We are hopeful we can work towards increasing that amount in the future. A heartfelt thanks goes out to the Cable Committee for their assistance and cooperation in finalizing this agreement. Special thanks also go to these folks regarding their integral work during the Covid19 pandemic in assisting us to still get word out to the public of local business, town votes, public hearings and meetings. Dave, Laura and Andrew, you are vital to us informing the public!

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IMPORTANT DATES

November 3 – Election Day!

November 4, 18 – Selectmen's Meetings

November 11 – Veteran's Day, Town Offices closed

November 16 – Special Town Meeting

*November 25, 26, 27 – Thanksgiving Break,
Town Hall Closed*

The Conservation Agent will remain just a Conservation Agent! The stormwater duties have been pulled from the job description after some discussion about regionalizing and merging the position. The Selectmen opted not to regionalize with the Town of Berkley on the Conservation Agent duties as there is a significant amount of work for Dighton alone. The Board also voted to keep stormwater duties with the Health Agent, who has some stormwater duties under his purview. The Town is now accepting applications for this position. Visit our website at https://dighton-ma.gov/government/job_vacancies.php for more information or contact the Board of Selectmen's office.

Obviously, the Town is also seeking applications for Town Administrator. The Board recently hired Bernie Lynch of Community Paradigm Associates to begin a recruitment process for the role. More information will be forthcoming at upcoming Board of Selectmen's meetings.

The Town has recently called upon our State Delegation to assist in a pedestrian push-button at the lights at Route 138 and Center Street. With the new sidewalks installed and school starting, pedestrians reported that they had a lot of difficulty crossing without appropriate pedestrian access technology installed at the light. The Board of Selectmen voted to send a letter to MassDOT and requested the assistance of our State Delegation to also support the request. Representative Haddad and Senator Pacheco co-authored a letter of support for this initiative. I'd like to thank resident Kerrie Azevedo for calling our attention to this oversight. We are very receptive to resident inquiries, concerns, and suggestions and oftentimes rely on residents to give us "the real deal" about issues they face. Many things go unnoticed – residents are our eyes and ears.

Speed Zoning Public Hearing

A prime example of resident complaints spurring action is in regards to the speeding that is plaguing our town. Residents on Forest Street commented on the excessive speeds on their street. We have increased enforcement and use of the speed radar throughout town as a result of these comments. Additionally, the Town purchased a second radar trailer and it is installed on streets around town. Patrolman are also dispatched to various areas and monitoring speeds as well. After a speed study conducted in November 2019 highlighted various streets with continual excessive speeds, the Town researched speed zoning as a potential solution. In June 2020, at our Annual Town Meeting, the Town adopted the state provision allowing the Board of Selectmen to establish speed zones. Police Chief MacDonald, Fire Chief Maguy, Highway Superintendent Tom Ferry, Selectman Zografos and myself met to review our speed study and see if any roadways fit the minimum criteria for speed zoning. Because speed zoning mandates a 20-mph limit, we wanted to be quite selective in implementing this. Pleasant Street was a highly traveled street with an observed speed average of 48 mph. Due to the dense population, the local park, lack of pedestrian protection via sidewalks, the narrow roadway, and the boat yard attracting various, large scale vehicles, Pleasant Street rose to the top as a good candidate for speed zoning. I gave a presentation about this process and the Board ultimately adopted a 20-mph speed limit for Pleasant Street and all streets east of Route 138 between Water Street and the Somerset line. Further study will take place on other roadways that face excessive speeding. Enforcement by the Dighton Police Department will continue. Visit https://dighton-ma.gov/government/plans_and_projects.php for the presentation.

Announcements

The Veteran's Day Ceremony will be held at the Veteran's Park, adjacent to Town Hall on Wednesday, November 11, 2020, at 10:00 a.m. All are welcome to attend. In case of inclement weather, the ceremony will be held in the Dighton Lions Pavilion, 1111 Somerset Avenue.

The Dighton Cultural Council has set Monday, November 16, 2020, as a deadline for organizations, schools and individuals to apply for grants that support cultural activities in the community. Last year, the Dighton Cultural Council distributed about \$5800 in grants. These grants support a variety of artistic projects and activities in

Dighton – including exhibits, festivals, field trips, short-term artist residencies or performances in schools, workshops and lectures.

A Special Town Meeting has been scheduled for Monday, November 16, 2020. This meeting will discuss spending articles, by-laws, and other items to come before the Town, including a potential PILOT Agreement. We are hopeful to have this meeting in person as we held the Annual Town Meeting. However, we remain vigilant and cautious about Covid 19 changes and regulations, recognizing the highly fluid nature of governing during this pandemic.

There are various vacancies on town boards and committees, including some newly created committees and the Finance Committee. Volunteers are a vital part of our community and do so much to keep the Town moving forward. 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



He was the first to hold the Big Cheese title and he'll be the last as well. Tom Ferry is this month's recipient in recognition of the drop-everything-and-get-it-done attitude he and his entire department took to complete the Shared Streets and Spaces grant project on the Pleasant Street and Somerset Avenue intersection. We received the award at the beginning of September and had to complete all of the work by October 15. At this same time, Tom worked to get an estimate for redoing curbramps townwide, installed bike signage and completed two other intersection improvement projects with Complete Streets funding, and kept up with regular business, including safety zone thoughts and ideas and assisting in coordinating an Eagle Scout project. He certainly coordinates a lot and does it with a (usually) pleasant attitude. Just kidding – Tom is literally always smiling. He is also always working to complete long-needed projects for the Town. When he finishes one project, it is on the next. (The next item in this case happens to be Main Street engineering for the inquiring minds.) Thank you for all you do, Tom. The Big Cheese is well deserved for you and your department.

Thank you for all

the support!

- Mallory