



Town of Dighton

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May 18, 2022

Dear Residents of Dighton:

Together with the Board of Selectmen, we are pleased to submit the accompanying Town of Dighton Annual Town Meeting Warrant. This year's Annual Town Meeting is scheduled for Monday, June 6, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. in the Dighton Rehoboth Regional High School Auditorium, located at 2700 Regional Road, North Dighton, MA 02764.

First and foremost, the accompanying Annual Town Meeting Warrant includes the Town's proposed Fiscal Year 2023 Operating Budget. The Town's operating budget development process is carefully-constructed and shaped by meetings between the Board of Selectmen, the Finance Committee, the Town's financial team, and developed in partnership with department heads, boards and committees, and input from town residents.

Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Overview

Efforts to plan for the next fiscal year have centered upon conservative, needs-based budgeting as we continue to confront and adapt to various fiscal challenges shaped by outside economic factors. The Town of Dighton Fiscal Year 2023 Operating Budget will be a recalibrated, core-services centered budget that continues our commitment to responsibly meet the needs of town residents.

A major focus of this year's budget proposal involves adapting to much more modest local receipt revenues as compared to what we have realized in previous years. The efforts we propose taking to recalibrate, stabilize and adapt to current budgetary trends are part of a multi-year plan to prioritize sustainable, financially-sound and forecast-driven budget planning to drive our efforts forward.

Proposed Capital Articles

As you review the proposed Warrant, you will note that there are a number of capital needs priorities that are reflected in the Warrant but are not being recommended to fund at this time. The Town, through its re-established Capital Outlay Committee, this year began developing a multi-year capital plan to rank, plan and prioritize the Town's capital needs. The proposed capital-related Warrant Articles reflect the needs as prioritized by the Capital Outlay Committee for the next fiscal year. However, the Town does not currently have the ability to responsibly fund all the priorities as outlined in the Warrant at this time. To that end, you will note the respective funding recommendations from the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee.

Proposed Acquisition of 207 Main Street

In Article 30, you will also note a proposed Warrant Article seeking approval for the Town to acquire the building and property located at 207 Main Street, Dighton for the purposes of operating the Dighton Public Library at this location. This Article seeks approval only for the acquisition of the property. Funding for the

acquisition is able to be separately approved through the Town's American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) grant allocation.

Late last year, the Board of Selectmen and other town officials identified an opportunity to acquire the suitable, unique and historic property located at 207 Main Street, utilizing the Town's local share of ARPA funding to acquire the property. After conducting due diligence, including having the property independently appraised, the Board of Selectmen has entered into a Purchase and Sale Agreement with the property owner in hopes of achieving a cost-effective solution to addressing our library needs.

Initial costs, incorporating acquisition and building improvements (and including the \$150,000 proposed in Article 31), are estimated to cost approximately \$2 million. These costs would be significantly less than the previously proposed \$8 million addition and would allow the town to preserve a valuable, historic property located in close proximity to the Wild & Scenic Taunton River.

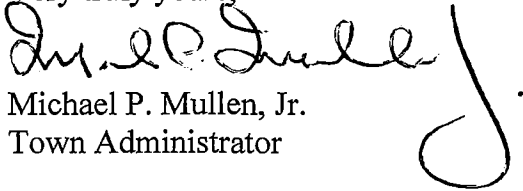
The acquisition of this historic community property makes future improvements eligible to be funded through Dighton's Community Preservation funds, thereby limiting the pressures on Dighton's operational and capital budgetary needs.

The remaining proposed Annual Town Meeting Warrant Articles include funding a Dighton Elementary and Middle School Campus feasibility study, various zoning-related articles, a Pleasant Street roadway acceptance article, a proposed article to increase the Senior Tax Exemption to \$1,000, and a Citizen Petition article for review and consideration.

A Town Meeting Information Session has been scheduled by the Board of Selectmen for 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 31, 2022 at Old Town Hall, located at 1111 Somerset Avenue, to provide an overview and answer any questions on the proposed Warrant Articles.

We look forward to seeing you at Dighton's June 6, 2022 Annual Town Meeting. Please feel free to reach out to the Board of Selectmen/Town Administrator's Office at (508) 669-6431 if you have any questions.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael P. Mullen, Jr.", with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end of the signature.

Michael P. Mullen, Jr.
Town Administrator