

11/1/21 Special Town Meeting Board of Selectmen Informational Meeting

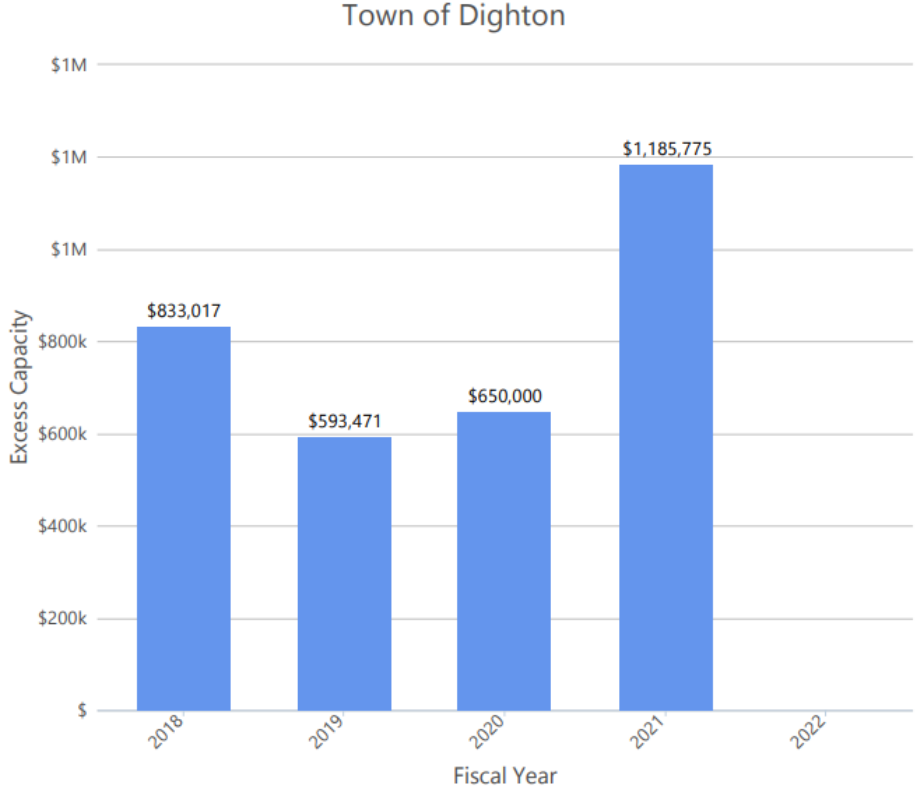
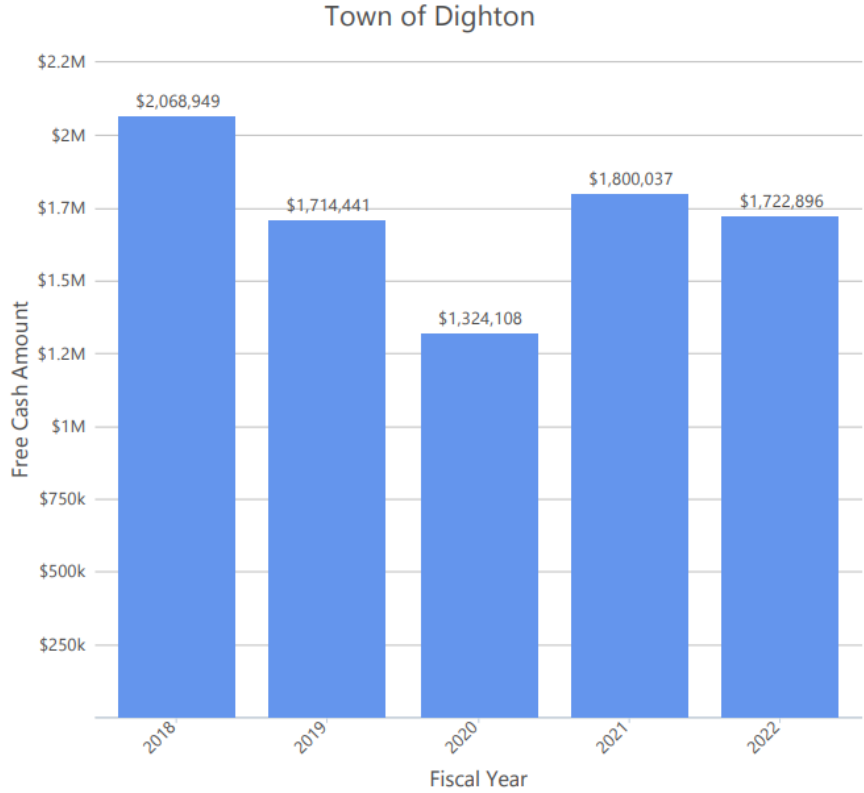
OCTOBER 21, 2021, OLD TOWN HALL



Funding Articles - Financial Overview

- ✓ Strong priority on maintaining fiscal discipline and operational sustainability to limit taxpayer burden
- ✓ Excess tax capacity for Fiscal Year 2022 estimated at approximately \$800,000, continuing prior fiscal year trends
- ✓ Proposed uses of free cash to pay new Police Station debt service to reduce the tax rate, increase Stabilization and Capital Stabilization account balances, and fund a number of capital investments
- ✓ Plans to strengthen fiscal position and practices with Division of Local Services (DLS) Financial Management Review to prioritize financial forecasting, other best practices

Financial Overview



Article 1

To hear reports from Town officials



Article 2

Payment of Fiscal Year 2021 ACO Unpaid Bill

- Funds payment of \$80.83 bill to Mass-RI Veterinary ER for services rendered on March 9, 2021

Finance Committee Recommends to Raise and Appropriate

Board of Selectmen Recommends to Raise and Appropriate

Article 3

Payment of Police Station Debt Service using Free Cash

- Proposes to fund \$379,675.00 using part of Town's \$1.722 million in certified free cash to pay new Police Station debt service to reduce the Fiscal Year 2022 tax rate

*Finance Committee Recommends Transfer
from Free Cash*

*Board of Selectmen Recommends Transfer
from Free Cash*



Article 4

Funding of Fiscal Year 2022 Police Department Personnel Expenses

- Funds recently settled Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Town of Dighton and Dighton Police Officers Local 306, Massachusetts Coalition of Police (Local 306)
- Agreement calls for base wage increases of 2%, 2% and 2.5% over three fiscal years; restructuring of Court Officer position into Community Outreach Officer position which includes focus on town traffic needs; and utilization of assessment centers as a best practice for promotions

Finance Committee Recommends to Raise and Appropriate

Board of Selectmen Recommends to Raise and Appropriate

Article 5

Resident Petition – Proposed Flag Bylaw

Article 6

Proposed Health Agent increase in hours and wages

- Proposes increase in Health Agent hours from 28 to 35 hours per week and increase in hourly rate from \$37.04/hour to \$38.86/hour
- Follows-up to agreement by Board of Selectmen, Board of Health and Finance Committee Chairman & Town Administrator to defer from Annual Town Meeting to Special Town Meeting
- Current proposal reflects agreement between Board of Selectmen, Board of Health & Town Administrator
- Dighton's Health Agent is the only Health Agent working less than 35 hours when compared to 7 surrounding communities; also lowest paid Health Agent

Finance Committee to Discuss Further

Board of Selectmen Recommends to Raise and Appropriate

Article 6

Proposed Health Agent increase in hours and wages

Study Edited for Bristol County Towns -Population under 20,000

Town	Population	County	Multi Fam	Elected	Salary FY22	Hours	Hourly Rate	
Dighton	8,171	Bristol	24	appointed	\$ 53,930.00	28	\$ 37.04	
Freetown* -Job Posted	9,206	Bristol			\$ 74,000.00	36	\$ 39.53	
Acushnet	10,559	Bristol			\$ 71,200.00	35	\$ 39.12	
Rehoboth	12,502	Bristol			\$ 70,219.00	36	\$ 37.51	
Raynham	13,383	Bristol	53-2 7-3	Contractual	\$ 81,600.00	35	\$ 44.84	
Seekonk	15,531	Bristol			\$ 82,452.00	35	\$ 45.30	
Swansea	17,144	Bristol			\$ 75,700.00	35	\$ 41.59	
Somerset	18,181	Bristol	315	Employee at will	\$ 78,552.24	35	\$ 43.16	
					Average=	\$ 73,456.66	34.38	\$ 41.01

Article 7

Proposed Reimbursement to the Sewer Enterprise Fund

- Fiscal Year 2021 Town-approved operating budget included \$20,115 payment for 12 months of employee health insurance from Sewer Enterprise Fund
- Sewer employee stopped receiving health insurance benefits through Town in December 2020, but charged by Town for whole amount, per former Town Accountant
- Proposed article would provide reimbursement by Town to Sewer Enterprise Fund for unused balance of health insurance costs

Finance Committee Recommends No Action – Further Review Needed

Board of Selectmen Recommends No Action – Further Review Needed

Article 8

Reappropriation of Funds for Purchase of Town Inspectional Vehicle

- Fall 2020 Special Town Meeting approved \$30,000 for the purchase of a 2020 Ford Escape Hybrid Vehicle as a Town Inspectional Vehicle
- Inventory and chip issues have created an impossible challenge for the Town to procure said vehicle, but original article limits Town purchase of vehicle specifically to a 2020 Ford Escape Hybrid Vehicle
- Current article seeks approval of \$40,000 in funding for the purchase of a “hybrid vehicle”, \$30,000 of which will be reappropriated from original article

Finance Committee to Discuss Further

Board of Selectmen Recommends a \$10,000 Transfer from Free Cash and to reappropriate \$30,000 from Article 11 of the Special Town Meeting of November 16, 2020

Article 9

Purchase and Installation of Town Hall HVAC Unit

- Article proposes that \$13,000 be expended for the purchase and installation of a high efficiency HVAC unit at Town Hall
- Town replaced two original 5-ton units last summer; cooling system in 3-ton unit serving the front offices of Town Hall's main level failed in mid-summer
- With funding for and replacement of 3-ton unit, all Town Hall HVAC systems will now be new and highly-efficient

Finance Committee Recommends Transfer from Free Cash

Board of Selectmen Recommends Transfer from Free Cash

Article 10

Enhanced Town Cybersecurity Insurance Policy

- Builds on Town's efforts to strengthen and maintain IT, network and security efforts.
- Funding would implement multi-factor authentication for employee access into Town network
- Ensures adequate insurance coverage for any breach, federal/state reporting requirements

Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen Recommend to Raise and Appropriate \$10,000 and Transfer \$5,000 from Free Cash



Article 11

Dighton Trails Feasibility Study

- Trails Committee seeking up to \$40,000 in funding for a feasibility study to define concepts and designs for on road and off-road trail options to tie in the future 2 mile DCR Sweet's Knoll rail trail into the fabric of Dighton and surrounding communities
- DCR Sweet's Knoll rail trail being constructed in the heart of Dighton spanning roughly 1 mile north and south of the existing DCR Sweet's Knoll State Park located on Route 138



Article 11

Dighton Trails Feasibility Study

- DCR actively starting on design phase of this project with a site visit and meeting with Trails committee members and town officials on Thursday Oct 21st
- Scope of feasibility study is to focus on north and south terminations of the DCR Sweet's Knoll Rail Trail to tie into Taunton and Somerset, connecting Dighton to surrounding communities and the Taunton River Trails network regional vision for a 22+ mile multi-modal recreational trail (a vision decades in the making)
- If funding is secured, study will produce concepts and rough designs that can be used to pursue grants to turn these designs into reality in the coming years



Article 12

Police and Fire Department Repeater and Radio Upgrades/Build-Out

- Current public safety radio system is not a public safety-rated system
- Survey revealed bad grounding and moderate signal loss in the current radio network
- Communication is getting worse over time as the 18-year system continues to age
- There are a number of areas in town where Police and Fire cannot communicate with the dispatcher or between each other
- Many of the current portable radios have been phased out by the manufacturer making it more difficult to secure parts
- New system will prepare DFD/DPD/Dispatch to move to digital technology in the future when/if needed; completely P25-capable
- Upgraded system will need no interjection in certain areas of Town to get appropriate communication coverage

Finance Committee Has No Recommendation

Town Administrator Recommends take no action at Special Town Meeting, but to immediately fund with APRA Funding

Article 13

\$150,000 for Pleasant Street Bridge at Muddy Cove Engineering

- The 107-year old Pleasant Street Bridge at Muddy Cove is listed as a vulnerable area/area of concern in terms of coastal flooding in the town's combined Municipal Vulnerability Plan and Hazard Mitigation Plan, as well as the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plan Regional Addendum for Somerset-Dighton-Swansea
- Bridge has a weight posting for less than half the legal statutory vehicle load, which presents a hurdle in public safety access across Pleasant Street
- Average traffic volume along Pleasant Street recorded at 1,345 vehicles/day
- Town has been seeking state assistance to fund Pleasant Street Bridge reconstruction costs; engineering is needed to make project truly 'shovel-ready'
- Engineering includes topographic and existing conditions survey, hydraulic evaluation, geotechnical analysis, design, construction plans and details, and state Chapter 85 review, among other tasks

Finance Committee Recommends Transfer from Free Cash

Board of Selectmen Recommends Transfer from Free Cash

Article 14

DES/DMS Driveway Redesign & Maintenance Facility: Additional \$30K for Design, Permitting and Engineering

- Last November's Special Town Meeting approved \$85,000 to fund the redesign and engineering of an improved DES/DMS roadway redesign with public safety access
- December 4, 2020 Site Visit scheduled with Town and D-R officials, school community stakeholders; School Department feedback prioritized the preservation of green space, construction of a school maintenance facility in project
- August 11, 2021 update to Board of Selectmen—school district and committee members invited
 - Proposed design was presented with a number of wetland and vernal pool permitting issues discussed
 - Prompted the need for an additional \$30,000 to complete engineering, permitting and design process
 - Wetland and vernal pool issues necessitate local, state (MEPA and environmental important reports), and federal (Army Corps of Engineers) permitting processes

Article 14

DES/DMS Driveway Redesign & Maintenance Facility: Additional \$30K for Design, Permitting and Engineering

- Town plans to pursue grant funding for the project to help offset construction costs, but we need engineering and permitting to be completed and be 'shovel-ready' in order to apply

Finance Committee Recommends Transfer from Free Cash

Board of Selectmen Recommends Transfer from Free Cash



Article 15

Fiscal Year 2022 Budgetary Transfers/Supplemental Appropriations

- Board of Health
Additional Per Diem Public Health Nurse Hours **\$5,000**
- Accounting - Personnel to Expense Budget
Interim Consultant for Department Transition **\$5,000**
- Budget Reconciliation – Trails Budget
Reconciles Spreadsheet Cell Error **\$1,000**
- Reserve Fund Reimbursement **\$10,000**
Reimburses Reserve Fund for Accounting Department Consulting

Article 15

Fiscal Year 2022 Budgetary Transfers/Supplemental Appropriations

- Public Buildings **\$15,000**
Reimburses Public Buildings Expense Account for Higher Than Expected Expenses (i.e. Library move to modular building; Shed Materials for Briggs Garden)
- Fire Department – Ambulance **\$7,000**
Ambulance Billing Software Inadvertently Not Funded in FY22
- Insurance – Additional Insurance Costs **\$7,000**
FY22 Actual Premiums Higher than Initially Budgeted

Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen Recommend to Raise and Appropriate and/or Transfer from Available Funds the amount of \$50,000

Article 16

\$12,000 in Proposed Funding to Hold a Hazardous Waste Day

- Funding in the Board of Health Budget was cut during the Fiscal Year 2022 Budget process with an understanding that the funding be proposed at Fall Special Town Meeting
- The last (HHW) Household Hazardous Waste Day in Dighton was held more than one year ago at a cost of \$10,400.00.

Finance Committee to Discuss Further

Board of Selectmen Recommends to Raise and Appropriate

Article 17

\$200,000 Deposit to Capital Stabilization Account

- Fund Balance currently stands at \$738,018.53 after \$100,000 withdrawal at Annual Town Meeting
- Balance would increase to \$938,018.53
- Capital Stabilization Account is an important funding source as Capital Outlay Committee begins to compile a long-term town-wide Capital Plan

Finance Committee Recommends Transfer from Free Cash

Board of Selectmen Recommends Transfer from Free Cash



Article 18

\$200,000 Deposit to Stabilization Account

- Fund Balance currently stands at \$1.45 million
- Balance would increase to \$1.65 million
- Recommended best practice is to build Stabilization Account balance to 10% of operating budget

Finance Committee Recommends \$150,000 Transfer from Free Cash

Board of Selectmen Recommends \$200,000 Transfer from Free Cash



Article 19

Purchase and Installation of Two Mini-Split Systems in Cable Office

- Article proposes that \$14,000 be expended for the purchase and installation of two mini-split HVAC heat pump systems in the Cable Office at Town Hall
- Would be funded with PEG Access Fund revenues, having no tax impact or impact on Free Cash
- Part of building upgrade project to modernize the Cable Office in a temperature-controlled setting for equipment

Finance Committee Recommends Transfer from PEG Access Fund

Board of Selectmen Recommends Transfer from PEG Access Fund

Article 20

Proposed Purchase of a \$64,500 mid-mounted Boom Mower for Highway Department

- Residents at this year's Annual Town Meeting approved \$64,000 for a new Highway Department Utility Tractor
- Finance Committee & BOS recommended deferring purchase of Boom Mower to Special Town Meeting
- Purchase would equip new Utility Tractor with a new Boom Mower

Finance Committee Recommends Transfer from Free Cash

Board of Selectmen Recommends Transfer from Free Cash



Article 21

Other Post-Employment Benefit (OPEB) Trust Fund

- The Town's Independent Auditors, Roselli, Clark & Associates, recommend that the Town of Dighton fund its OPEB Trust at an amount of at least \$125,000 each year to fund our unfunded liability for retiree health care and life insurance benefits
- The proposed funding in Article 21 seeks to continue the Town's commitment of fulfilling this obligation, which continues to strengthen the Town's financial position
- Of the **\$125,000 in recommended funding by the Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen**, \$90,000 would be funded with a transfer from Free Cash; with the remaining \$35,0000 through Raise and Appropriate in the Town's operational budget

Article 22

\$6,000 for Public Utilities Appraisals

- Funding for this Article continues to fulfill a Department of Revenue (DOR) requirement that public utilities (Eversource Gas Co., Massachusetts Electric Company and New England Power) be appraised every year by the Town

Finance Committee Recommends Transfer from Free Cash

Board of Selectmen Recommends Transfer from Free Cash

Article 23

\$8,000 for Certification Assistance for the FY23 Revaluation for Real Estate and Commercial Property

- This article funds annual outside consulting services to assist in the revaluation for Dighton real estate and commercial property in Fiscal Year 2023

Finance Committee Recommends Transfer from Free Cash

Board of Selectmen Recommends Transfer from Free Cash

Article 24

\$64,000 for a Fully-Equipped Police Vehicle

- Funding proposed in Article 24 continues the Town's longstanding practice of appropriating funds for the purchase of a new fully-equipped police vehicle each year
- A fully-equipped police vehicle includes computer, firearm (Patrol Rifle), radio, antenna, and related accessories

Finance Committee Recommends Transfer from Free Cash

Board of Selectmen Recommends Transfer from Free Cash



Article 25

Purchase of Dog Licensing Software for Town Clerk's Office

- The \$3,000 in proposed software will streamline operations in the Town Clerks office relating to Dog Licensing
- It will make the licensing process faster and more efficient for residents at the counter
- Software corresponds with UniBank, allowing the Clerk's office to take online payments

Finance Committee Recommends Transfer from Free Cash

Board of Selectmen Recommends Transfer from Free Cash

Article 26

Proposed Funding to Purchase Body-Worn Cameras For Police Department

- Body-worn cameras anticipated to be an implementation requirement of new police reform law; also seek to provide greater security for our police personnel and to provide overall transparency for the review of practices and training
- Commonwealth of MA making significant grant funding available for body-worn cameras; Dighton applied for funding in late-August. Awaiting grant decision

Finance Committee Currently Has No Recommendation

Article 27

Purchase of 4 New Ballot Scanners by Town Clerk - \$26,000

- Increases in Dighton's population means increase from 2 to 3 precincts
- Requires upgrade of ballot scanners to accommodate added precincts and an update to now 20-year old equipment

Finance Committee Recommends Transfer from Free Cash

Board of Selectmen Recommends Transfer from Free Cash



Article 28

Purchase of Town Treasurer/Clerk Laptop Docking Stations & Printer

- Renovated, modernized Town Treasurer/Clerk Counter now open and operational
- Offices proposing purchase of laptops, docking stations and printer for Counter to make service more efficient and provide residents with quicker service
- With proposed technology, will be able to conduct all business, log information, and print out receipts/documentation right at new Counter, providing better service to Dighton residents

Finance Committee Recommends Transfer from Free Cash

Board of Selectmen Recommends Transfer from Free Cash

Article 29

Dighton-Rehoboth Regional School Committee Proposed Capital Stabilization Fund

- WHAT IS IT?

CAPITAL – THINK “BUILDINGS AND EQUIPMENT” STABILIZATION – THINK “SET ASIDE” OR “RAINY DAY”

FUND – THINK “SAVINGS”

Therefore, a Capital Stabilization Fund is analogous to a savings account where funds are set aside for specific projects to insulate the member towns and the district from large, irregular expenses for buildings and equipment.

- BENEFIT

Capital expenditures are irregular and can be significant in amount. Consequently, assessments for them are irregular and planning is difficult.

In order to facilitate planning and avoid periodic, large, irregular outflows of funds, municipalities and school districts can set aside funds for large future projects or unanticipated capital repairs. Setting aside funds over time allows the community to have them available in the future when emergency repairs or a large project is required, without having an unexpected, large requirement for funds.

Article 29

Dighton-Rehoboth Regional School Committee Proposed Capital Stabilization Fund

- FUNDING SOURCE

The proposed Capital Stabilization Fund would be funded via school district E&D funds resulting from the District's operating budget. Consequently, implementation of a Capital Stabilization Fund:

1. Would further encourage the identification of operational efficiencies by the district
2. Would not result in an increased assessment to the member towns

- CONTROLS

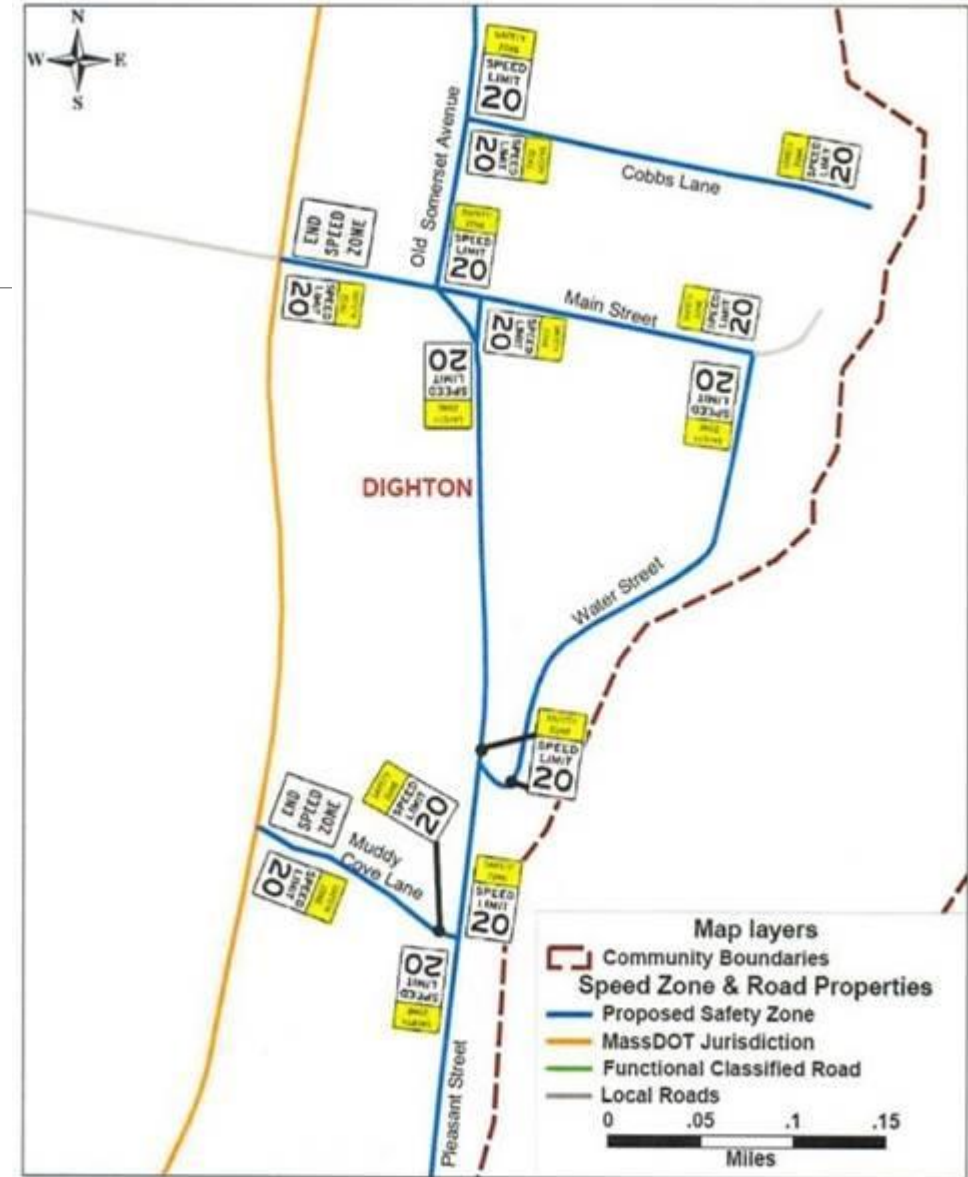
In addition to School Committee oversight which would govern the specific projects funded by the Capital Stabilization Fund, there are legislative restrictions governing the use of Capital Stabilization Funds in Massachusetts

Article 30

Proposed Establishment of Safety Zone Bylaw

- Safety Zone Bylaw proposal builds on multitude of Town efforts to recently address speed issues in Pleasant Street area:
 - Town residents approved opting-into law allowing for establishment of Safety Zones (MGL Ch. 90, Sec. 18B) at June 2020 Annual Town Meeting
 - BOS Held Public Hearing on Pleasant Street Safety Zone on 10/7/20
 - SRPEDD analysis delivered to Town in 2/21; recommended establishment of Town General Bylaw for enforcement

Board of Selectmen Does Not Recommend



Article 31

Amend Town of Dighton Dog License Fees

- According to MGL Ch 140 Section 139, the cost for an intact dog must cost more than spayed and neutered dogs.
- The proposed change in the bylaw reflects the state statute while getting rid of steep increases in the dog late fees.

Board of Selectmen Recommends

To see if the Town will vote in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws Section 139, Chapter 140 to amend the Town of Dighton Dog License Fees as follows:

Female \$15.00
Spayed Female \$5.00

Fees:
Male \$15.00
Neutered Male \$5.00

Licenses Issued after April 1st

Late Fee:
Add \$10.00 (FOR EACH DOG)

or take any other action relative thereto.

Article 32

Clarifying 'Residential Kennel' Definition in Zoning Bylaws

- The proposed Zoning Bylaw removes the requirement for a Special Permit to be issued by the Zoning Board of Appeals for a 'Residential Kennel' (for a pack or collection of 4 or more dogs for *personal use*)
- This would eliminate a \$750 Special Permit filing fee, a notice advertising requirement, and a consultant fee for residents seeking to obtain a Residential Kennel Special Permit
- Under the proposed updated Bylaw, the Board of Health would be charged with approving and inspecting a Residential Kennel in accordance with regulations promulgated by the Board of Health, with regulations to include a Public Hearing and Abutter Notification Processes.
- Updated Bylaw seeks to streamline process for residents, eliminate burdensome costs, encourage compliance with local regulations

Board of Selectmen Recommends

Board of Health Recommends

Planning Board Recommends

Article 33

Establishing Commission on Disability (COD) in the General Bylaws

- Dighton Commission on Disability is proposed to be established in the General Bylaws similar to the Community Preservation Committee
- New COD Bylaw reflects the composition and existing COD practices
- Considered to be a best-practice with the Massachusetts Office on Disability, making the Town of Dighton eligible for additional grant funding

Board of Selectmen Recommends

Commission on Disability Recommends

Article 34

PILOT Agreement Authorization for Brook Street Solar

- Recommended to Table

Article 35

PILOT Agreement Authorization with ISM Solar (Elm Street, Phase 2)

- Existing PILOT Agreement in place for Elm Street, Phase 1
- Proposed PILOT Agreement includes specific information relating to Map and Lot and on-site equipment
- Follows existing Town Boilerplate Agreement stipulating universal terms for all Dighton PILOT Agreements

Articles 36, 37, 38, 39

Proposed Acceptance of Certain Roadways as Town Roadways

- Billy's Lane and Tommy's Way
- Sonny's Way
- Dighton Woods Road
- Dighton Woods Circle

Planning Board Recommends Articles 36, 37, 38, 39

Article 40

Any other business?

THANK YOU!

Michael Mullen, Jr.

Town Administrator

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