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 **Office of**

 **SELECTMEN**

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***BOARD OF SELECTMEN***

***SPECIAL JOINT MEETING OF THE BOARDS OF SELECTMEN***

***OF REHOBOTH AND DIGHTON***

***WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2019***

***MEETING MINUTES***

***GLADYS L. HURRELL REHOBOTH SENIOR CENTER***

**Present:** Rehoboth Selectman Frederick “Skip” Vadnais; Selectman Gerry Schwall, Selectman Dave Perry, Selectman James Muri, and Dighton Selectman Kenneth Pacheco and Selectwomen Nancy Goulart

**Absent:** Rehoboth Selectmen Michael Costello and Dighton Selectman Brett Zografos

***Meeting was broadcast live both in Rehoboth and Dighton, and can be viewed on demand on the Rehoboth TV website. Additionally, a copy of which will provided to the Dighton public access channel for them to do with what they wish.***

**Call to Order at 4:30 p.m.:** The Board and the public participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

1. **Consent Agenda**

**NEW BUSINESS**:

**Action Item #1: Discussion with Dighton Board of Selectmen RE: Appointment of Moderator for November 2nd District-Wide ‘Tent’ Meeting**

G. Schwall explained the sole purpose of today’s meeting is to select a moderator for the Two Town Meeting on Saturday November 2nd ,2019 at 1:00 PM. Dighton’s moderator has declined, as did Rehoboth’s moderator. An experienced moderator from Seekonk, has stepped forward. He is a high school teacher as well, so he understands the schools and he knows how to run a meeting.

Peter Hoogerzeil was present.

**Discussion:**

N. Goulart asked him to tell the Boards a little about himself.

Mr. Hoogerzeil communicated that he has lived in Seekonk most of his life. He currently teaches U. S. History, Government and Current Events at Seekonk High School, as he has for the past 13 years. Previously, he worked in business and sales as well as on campaigns. He was appointed moderator 4 years ago to replace the current moderator who was elected to the Board of Selectmen. He will be seeking re-election again in April. He is familiar with both towns. He was approached and would be glad to moderate the meeting. He lives in Seekonk with his wife and twin boys who are in second grade at Martin School in Seekonk.

S. Vadnais expressed that he is familiar with Mr. Hoogerzeil’s work from the newspaper, and is confident that he can run a meeting as he is familiar with the parliamentary process.

Mr. Hoogerzeil wants to confirm the rules of the meeting, integrating the bylaws of each Town, regarding town meeting rules (Robert’s Rules and Cushing’s Rules).

G. Schwall – We have contacted our Town Counsel, as I suggest you to do to yours, so that the moderator has access to both, should a procedural question arise.

N. Goulart -Our Town Moderator is an attorney, William McKeon. He would be my choice as counsel.

P. Hoogerzeil -If there is deliberation with Town Counsel, I do it out in the open.

D. Perry is concerned with communication between the rooms if everyone does not fit in the tent, and that everyone is represented.

G. Schwall voiced concerns over the School Committee’s lack of logistical control, and lack of communication.

Mallory Aronstein, Dighton’s Town Administrator, was present and discussed how it has been done in other towns. Assistant Moderators (chosen by Moderator) run questions from other rooms back to the moderator.

S. Vadnais -There needs to be a way to make sure each individual in the meeting has a right to be there.

P. Hoogerzeil – I have 3 concerns as Moderator. Traditionally there is a Warrant. Town Clerk announces that there is a quorum present and hands the meeting over to moderator. So, I need to know, what is the controlling document?

G. Schwall- The regulations from DESE are very vague: a notice to the Town Clerk, a posting in 2 additional places in the Town, and a notice in a newspaper. As far as opening the meeting, not Town Clerk, but you will have a recording secretary from the school district, who I believe will be Celeste Sullivan, as required by DESE.

N. Goulart commented on how Dighton start their Town Meeting and suggested the moderator contact the Secretary of State with any questions regarding the procedure of this meeting.

S. Vadnais motion to nominate Peter Hoogerzeil as our Moderator. Second by N. Goulart. Unanimous vote of the majority of the combined Boards of Selectmen.

J. Muri voiced concern about disenfranchising voters who are not able to get there in time due to the school department closing parking lots, and busing people in. N. Goulart charged M. Aaronstien to contact the Chief regarding this. S. Vadnais has concerns regarding handicap access. Whole front of school should be for public safety and handicap access.

Discussion ensued regarding closing the parking lots, traffic flow, one-way traffic, and other logistics to deal with.

P. Hoogerzeil stated he would not convene the meeting until he is confident that all voters have been able to be checked in.

G. Schwall – Adding to traffic concerns, SATs are also scheduled for that day, 8:00 AM -12:00 PM. Voter check in begins at 11:30AM. Very poor planning by School Committee.

S. Vadnais suggests writing a letter to School Districts indicating that we’ve made a selection of a moderator and what our demands are going to be.

P. Hoogerzeil stated voters need to be properly checked in and identified, voters need to be accommodated to be able to access the meeting. If the facilities are not set up for them to be able to access the meeting, you shouldn’t call the meeting. Under Massachusetts State Law, you need to be able to accommodate everyone who wishes to participate in the meeting. I need to be able to communicate with Police and Fire in regards to capacity limits not being exceeded. Everything needs to be lawful and all voters need to be able to access the meeting.

S. Vadnais motion that we, the joint Boards, designate our two chairmen, in coordination with the Moderator Peter Hoogerzeil, to do what is necessary to ensure that our concerns about accessibility, accountability, and public safety, etc. are met. Second by N. Goulart. Unanimous vote.

J. Muri- has heard a rumor that it is the intention of school committee to limit who the speakers are by issuing some sort of badges indicating that they were speakers, ahead of time, and that nobody else would be allowed to speak.

P. Hoogerzeil – I would not allow that. Both Towns are under open town meeting.

G. Schwall asked who would draft the letter, as time is of the essence. It was decided that M. Aronstein will draft the letter to share with both Chairs and Moderator to opine.

P. Hoogerzeil inquired about counter/runners/tellers.

G. Schwall -DESE does not allow voice votes, so must be an actual hand count.

N. Goulart inquired if it could be a paper ballot?

G. Schwall- There is one question regarding the overall budget, nothing to do with assessment or appropriation. But there could be motions to raise or lower budget.

J. Muri -We have close to 10,000 registered voters in Rehoboth and 5,500 voters in Dighton, so we could have over 15,000 people show up to this meeting.

N. Goulart inquired what the figure is that we are voting on.

G. Schwall read the posting, “To see if the Towns of Dighton and Rehoboth will vote pursuant to Mass General Law…to raise and appropriate or transfer from their available funds their apportioned share of the sum of $29,904,571.00 for the operation and capital and other costs in expense of the Dighton Rehoboth Regional School District of fiscal year 2020. Said apportionments to be determined in the statutory method.” You vote on a budget number. You have to post the total budget, regardless of where the money is coming from. I don’t think we have a meeting. I will have to get this to Town Counsel.

S. Vadnais- They will have to repost.

George Solas, Winterberry Lane, Rehoboth, spoke regarding total numbers of people expected exceeding expectations.

Michael Deignan, 5 Slater Street, Rehoboth, addressed moderator regarding concerns about the busing from several miles away, as a parent of a newborn who might need to have immediate access to his vehicle should an emergency arise.

Town Moderator, P. Hoogerzeil, stated that the safety of the public getting to and from the meeting would not be under his purview but that of the Police and Fire Chiefs.

D. Perry restated the fact that we are voicing these concerns regarding rumors, because there has been no formal acknowledgment of how these issues will be addressed. We have issues with public safety and infringements on the democratic process.

K. Pacheco -It’s our understanding that Dr. Azar has not closed the parking lot.

G. Schwall will consult Town Counsel. DESE is clear that you are approving a “budget”. If this number is not correct amount, then this is not a correct posting.

N. Goulart has concerns regarding total budget and incorrect number, which could only be accepted, defeated or lowered, never increased.

P. Hoogerzeil- It needs to be the gross operating budget that you would be voting on. Chapter 70 aid is never guaranteed, so you have to vote on gross.

The combined Boards gave their final thoughts and P. Hoogerzeil restated that the meeting needs to have legal standing.

G. Schwall thanked P. Hoogerzeil on behalf of both Boards for taking on this difficult role as moderator.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Selectmen N. Goulart made a motion to adjourn the Regular Session Meeting at 5:29PM., Second by Selectmen J. Muri. Perry – aye; Muri – aye, and Schwall – aye, Vadnais – aye, Goulart – aye; Pacheco - aye.

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Frederick E. Vadnais, Jr., Chairman

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James Muri, Vice Chairman

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David A. Perry, Jr., Clerk

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Gerald V. Schwall, Member

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_absent\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Michael Costello, Member

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Respectfully Submitted,

Cindy McDonough

Assistant to the Town Administrator **Approved 12/7/2020**