



Town of Dighton

Proposed Acquisition of 207 Main Street for Dighton Public Library

Outline of Need

- Original Dighton Public Library, located on Dighton's Main Street was a Carnegie library built in 1910 with 3,000 square feet of operational space.
- Current space limitations, building safety, lack of adequate egress and handicapped accessibility issues have forced the closure of the original Main Street location.
- Town has temporarily relocated library operations to Dighton's Town Hall Campus, with its General Collection housed in a 12' x 60' modular trailer unit and its Youth Services Department located in the lower level of Town Hall.
- Temporary space has continued to significantly impede town library operations. It has separated staff and caused a major disruption for library patrons, especially patrons with children. Temporary library services include very little technological programming, thereby preventing Dighton's ability to offer modern day library services to its residents.
- Dighton remains on Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) project funding waiting list. The town's current application, which proposes to construct an \$8 million addition to the Main Street Library building, has failed to meet local needs.
- Town officials anticipate that a new MBLC application proposal would cost in excess of \$8 million
- The need for a new home for the Dighton Public Library comes at a time when the town is grappling with a host of longstanding capital needs, the need for a future debt exclusion vote on Dighton's \$22.6 million share of the Bristol Plymouth Regional Technical High School building project, and operational budgetary needs.

Solution

- Town officials have identified an opportunity to acquire a suitable, unique and historic property in town, located at 207 Main Street, utilizing its local share of ARPA funding to acquire the property. This proposes a cost-effective solution to addressing the library needs, all while minimizing the impact on the local tax rate.
- The acquisition of a historic community property also makes future improvements eligible to be funded through Dighton's Community Preservation funds, also limiting the pressures on Dighton's operational and capital budgetary needs.
- Initial costs, including acquisition and building improvements, are expected to cost approximately \$2 million. The costs won't impact the town's tax rate. They would be significantly less than the previously proposed \$8 million addition; and they would allow the town to preserve a valuable, historic property located in close proximity to the Wild & Scenic Taunton River.