



**HAND  
BOOK  
TOWN  
OF  
REHOBOTH**

Information for New Residents  
Prepared by the Office of  
The Rehoboth Town Clerk

July 2008

## **PRESENT DAY REHOBOTH**

Located in Southeastern Massachusetts in Bristol County, Rehoboth is bordered by Seekonk on the west, Attleboro and Norton on the north, Taunton and Dighton on the east, and Swansea on the southeast and south. It is about nine miles from Taunton, 13 miles from Fall River, 10 miles from Providence, Rhode Island, 46 miles from Boston and 186 miles from New York City. The Town contains 47.25 square miles of land and has over 200 miles of road. The annual town census conducted as of January 1, 2008 showed 11,910 residents living in Rehoboth.

The topography of Rehoboth and contiguous communities, like the entire seaboard lowland of which they are part, is characterized by low elevations and smooth contours. Almost all of the area is less than 200 feet above mean sea level. The general direction of the slope is from north to south, from high points in Attleboro to sea level at Narragansett Bay. The entire area is interlaced with swamps, and there are extensive tidal marshes in Swansea and southern Rehoboth.

There are several churches within the town including the Rehoboth Congregational, North Rehoboth United Methodist, Hornbine Baptist, Rehoboth Baptist, Community Covenant and Christian Life Fellowship. Although there are no Catholic churches in Rehoboth, several are located within easy reach in Seekonk, Taunton, Attleboro, Dighton and Swansea.

Rehoboth is a member of the Dighton-Rehoboth Regional School District, grades K-12. The Town has one public elementary school presently in use in Rehoboth - Palmer River Elementary School (grades K through 4), one middle school - Dorothy L. Beckwith School (grades 5 through 8) and the high school students attend the Dighton-Rehoboth Regional High School just over the town line in Dighton.

Recreational facilities for Rehoboth include tennis courts at the Regional High School off New St., the Shad Factory Conservation Area on Reed St., the Miller Bird Sanctuary on Lake and Winter Streets, the Fox Farm Conservation Area on River St., softball fields at the Martin St. complex, a soccer complex at the corner of Tremont St. and Fairview Avenue and a multi-recreational area being completed on Peck Street, adjacent to the Town Hall.

There are several private riding stables in the town and the Pawtucket Boys Club operates Camp Ramsbottom on Route 44, which is open to local youngsters. A privately run summer recreation program is offered to town youngsters for four weeks in the summer.

The Rehoboth Junior Baseball, Rehoboth Junior Football and Rehoboth Soccer associations provide programs for local boys and girls.

Among the historical sites in Rehoboth are Anawan Rock where Chief Anawan was captured in 1676, the restored Hornbine School -- a one-room schoolhouse open to the public by appointment through the Hornbine School Association -- the Carpenter Museum which displays many Rehoboth artifacts and many historic cemeteries, each numbered by the Annawan Historical Society.

Golf courses located in the town are Crestwood Country Club (private), Wheeler St.; Hidden Hollow Country Club, Pierce Lane; Hillside Country Club, Hillside Ave.; Middlebrook Country Club, Pleasant St.; Pine Valley Country Club, Providence St.; Rehoboth Country Club, Perryville Rd.; and Sun Valley Country Club, Summer St.

Among the many organizations in town are the American Legion, Anawan Grange, Annawan Historical Society, Holy Ghost Brotherhood, Rehoboth Men's Club, Rehoboth Garden Club, Antiquarian Society, Rehoboth Lions Club, Rehoboth Anawan Lions Club, Masonic Lodge, Eastern Star, Men's Golf League, Women's Society of Christian Service, Wealtha Kent Bliss Women's Fellowship, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H Clubs, Senior Citizens Club, Friends of the Elderly, Friends of the Blanding Library, Women's Activity Club and several gun clubs.

Public and private clambakes are held at Francis Farm, County St.

### PUBLIC SERVICE

Ambulance Committee, Inc. The Ambulance Committee is a group of citizens who are responsible for maintaining the ambulance and providing training required by State law to insure that all ambulance attendants are certified Emergency Medical Technicians. The town owns two ambulances certified by the state which are housed at the Public Safety Building on Anawan Street. The ambulances are financed through third party payments and by donations from those serviced by the ambulance.

Rescue Squad - Rehoboth also has a rescue vehicle manned by the Rescue Squad, an arm of Rehoboth's Emergency Management Agency. Members of the Rescue Squad are trained to provide emergency services.

Community Counseling of Bristol County - A non-profit mental health care facility located at 366 Winthrop Street, it was formed to meet the community's need for professional counseling. A staff of mental health professionals is available for counseling in many different areas.

Visiting Nurses - Rehoboth subscribes to the services of the Visiting Nurse Association of Southeastern Massachusetts, Inc., located at 14 Church Green, Taunton.

Blanding Public Library - The Blanding Public Library, located in Goff Memorial Hall on Bay State Rd., is operated under the direction of the Antiquarian Society. It is open Monday through Thursday 11:30 AM to 8 PM, and Friday and Saturday from 10 AM to 4 PM.

There is a children's room located in the basement of the Goff Memorial Hall which is open the same hours as the main library. Programs are regularly scheduled for enrichment of both children and adults.

There is also an excellent genealogy room on the second floor of the library called the Trim Genealogy room.

In addition to the books, magazines, newspapers, records and audio cassettes available at the library, other services are available through the Eastern Massachusetts Library which loans materials to Blanding Library.

Cable TV – ComCast has the cable television license in the town of Rehoboth. Cable is now available to residents of Rehoboth with Channel 9 being the municipal access channel.

Taunton-Rehoboth Welfare Service Office - Welfare service for Rehoboth residents can be obtained through the Massachusetts Dept. of Welfare, 21 Spring St., Taunton.

Registry of Motor Vehicles - The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles maintains offices at the following locations:

1 Washington St., Taunton  
555 Kelley Boulevard, No. Attleboro  
230 Plymouth Ave., Fall River  
490 Forest Ave., Brockton  
950 Kings Highway, New Bedford

Inspection stickers must be obtained within seven days of putting your vehicle on the road in Massachusetts and must be renewed annually at an official inspection station.

Social Security Office - There is a Social Security Office located in Attleboro at 247 Maple St.

Transportation and Highways - Although Rehoboth does not have rail facilities, bus service is available to Providence, Rhode Island, where connections can be made for all parts of the United States. Buses are available in Taunton for both Boston and Providence.

Rail service to Boston and Providence is available from Attleboro and South Attleboro.

Public roads and highways are in good condition meeting the requirements of modern transportation. Principal highways in Rehoboth are Route 44, running east to west between Taunton and Seekonk; and Route 118, running north and south between Attleboro and Swansea.

Air Travel - Airports are located in Rhode Island at Green Airport in Warwick and in Boston at Logan International Airport. Bus transportation to Logan is available from Pawtucket and Providence, RI and from Foxboro, MA.

Utilities - Electric service to the town is supplied by National Grid.

Telephone service is provided by Verizon. The town is served by several telephone exchanges depending on the area of town in which you live.

Piped gas is available on a few streets, but bottled gas is easily obtainable. Water is obtained from private wells and springs, as Rehoboth does not have a public water supply.

## **TOWN GOVERNMENT**

Relationship to State - Town government in Rehoboth operates under state laws, sections of state law accepted by Town Meetings, Town by-laws and rules and regulations legally adopted by various town boards, committees and commissions.

The rights and responsibilities of all towns and town officers are defined in the General Laws of the Commonwealth. The law requires that all towns provide essential functions for their citizens. These include preservation of peace, protection of persons and property, education of children, assessment and collection of taxes, maintenance of roads and health administration. The town may and does provide other services voted at Town Meeting.

Town Meeting - Rehoboth is governed by an Open Town Meeting, the traditional form of local government in New England. The Annual Town Meeting is held on the second Monday in April; the election of officers on the first Monday in April. All town elections are actually the first action of "town meetings" stemming from the fact that in early years Town Meeting was an all day meeting with the election of officers as the first order of business. Special Town Meetings may be held at the call of the Selectmen or by petition of 200 registered voters.

All town meetings are called by a warrant, issued by the Selectmen, which gives the time and place of the meeting and lists, in the form of articles, all the business to be acted upon. All regular appropriations for the operation of the town are included in a budget article and articles for additional appropriations are submitted in individual articles. Town officers and boards submit articles for both special appropriations and requests for other actions such as by-law changes. Voters are also allowed to petition for submission of articles on a town meeting warrant but they must present their petitions signed by 10 registered voters for an annual town meeting article and 100 registered voters for an article on a special town meeting warrant.

At least seven days before the date of an annual town meeting and fourteen days before a special town meeting, the warrant must be posted by a Constable in the office of the Town Clerk and in at least three other public places in each of the three precincts of the town. It has become traditional to mail copies of warrants for town meetings to boxholders in the town to insure that all residents are informed on the offices to be filled and the articles to be voted on at annual town elections and town meetings. A town by-law requires that warrants for special town meetings containing articles which would result in expenditures in excess of \$25,000 or more must be mailed to boxholders.

In Massachusetts any town having a valuation of over one million dollars must have a Finance or Advisory Committee. Under the provisions of the by-laws of the town of Rehoboth they consider all articles in the warrant and make their recommendations before each town meeting. The town need not adhere to the recommendations of the Finance Committee.

Town Meeting Procedure - Town Meeting is called to order by the Town Moderator and the return of a constable stating that the warrant has been properly posted is read by the Town Clerk. A quorum for an Annual Town Meeting is ninety registered voters and for a Special Town Meeting a quorum of sixty voters is required. The Town Clerk keeps the official minutes of all town meetings including recording the votes.

The conduct of all town meetings is determined by state law, local by-laws, past practice and also a handbook on parliamentary procedure entitled Town Meeting Time (2nd edition) by Johnson, Trustman and Wadsworth.

No person whose name is not on the official list of registered voters may be admitted to any town meeting except by written request of a majority of the Selectmen to the Moderator, or by the Moderator. All such persons must be called to the voters' attention. Voting at a Town Meeting may be by voice, hand count or by ballot. Voters wishing to speak must stand and be recognized by the Moderator. A voter will not be allowed to speak on the same subject a second time until all others who wish to speak have been heard, except at the Moderator's discretion.

A motion to reconsider any article must be made before the final adjournment of the meeting at which the vote was taken, but such motion to reconsider cannot be made at an adjourned meeting unless the mover has given notice of this intention either at the session of the meeting at which the vote was passed or by written notice to the Town Clerk within 48 hours after the meeting is recessed. There can be no reconsideration of a vote once reconsidered.

## TOWN ADMINISTRATION

### GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Moderator - The Moderator is elected annually for a one year term. He presides at all Town Meetings, except the election portion, and makes appointments to committees as authorized by Town Meeting.

Board of Selectmen - The Board of Selectmen consists of three members, one elected each year for a three year term. They are the executive officers of the town and have responsibility for the general direction and management of property and affairs of the town in all matters not otherwise designated.

The Selectmen provide the warrant for both annual and special town meetings, impose and enforce a set of rules and regulations for the government of the Police Department and the guidance of its members, approve all bills and payrolls before payment is made by the Town Treasurer, appoint certain officers and committees as defined in the town by-laws, lay out streets for acceptance by town meeting, and act as the licensing authority of the town, granting licenses and fixing fees as the law provides.

Board of Health - There are five members appointed to staggered three year terms. They are responsible for formulating and enforcing regulations affecting our environment and actions affecting our health. Among their duties is the control of the spread of infectious diseases dangerous to the public health. They have power to isolate and quarantine sick and infected persons. They must report immediately to the state Department of Public Health and also report all deaths from such diseases.

The Board of Health also makes reasonable health regulations on the following:

1. Communicable disease control
2. Milk production and distribution
3. Regulation of persons and premises for sale, dispensing or distribution of foodstuffs
4. Eating and drinking establishments
5. Standards of fitness for human habitation
6. Nuisance
7. Septic systems
8. Keeping of livestock

The Board of health employs a full time Health Agent who conducts inspections and carries out other duties at the direction of the Board of Health.



Town Administrator – A Town Administrator to the Board of Selectmen is appointed annually by the Selectmen for a term of one year. The duties are to carry out and implement the policies and directives of the Board. This person is responsible for insuring that the Selectmen are kept informed regarding financial, administrative and other matters through oral and written reports. This person also maintains full familiarity with the responsibilities and activities of all town departments, boards and commissions; prepares and submits specific recommendations for administrative action and procedures; and provides administrative direction to various appointed department heads and supervises clerical staff employed by the Board of Selectmen. The Town Administrator is also in control of maintenance and repair of town owned buildings and equipment, except schools. This person also serves as budget analyst.

Town Clerk - The Town Clerk is elected for a three year term and must be bonded. She serves as the Chief Elections Officer conducting both local and state elections. She certifies the results of all elections and actions taken by Town Meeting. She certifies the appropriations at town meetings, which are used by the Board of Assessors to set the annual tax rate.

She is also the official record keeper for the town and keeps the official minutes of Town Meetings and elections and posts meetings of all town boards.

The Town Clerk shall keep a file of all Town Reports, reports submitted by all committees chosen by the Town, all original warrants and all original documents or copies thereof relating to the affairs of the Town, which come into her custody. She also indexes all such reports and all the records of the Town in her custody in a manner convenient for reference and examination.

All records of births of children born in Massachusetts to Rehoboth residents and records of deaths in Massachusetts of Rehoboth residents are filed with the Town Clerk. She takes intentions of marriages and issues marriage licenses to any couple planning to be married in Massachusetts, records the marriage when the license is returned from the marriage officiant and also serves as a Justice of the Peace. Certified copies of these vital records and genealogical records are issued by the Town Clerk upon request. Corrections and delayed returns of all vital records are also filed with the Town Clerk.

The Town Clerk certifies all town records filed with her and certifies pole locations after approval by the Board of Selectmen. The Town Clerk witnesses the Selectmen's approval of borrowing by the Town Treasurer.

The Town Clerk records all security transactions as required by law, licenses granted by her office or by other town officials, maintains a register of certificates of practice granted by state authority, has custody of all instruments conveying an interest in real estate to the town, maintains copies of all plans and layouts for streets and of all certificates of takings by eminent domain, maintains a road book, posts notice of all meetings, administers oaths of office to all town officers, receives all plans under the

Subdivision Control Law for the Planning Board, receives and processes and/or files applications and decisions of the Zoning Board of Appeals, provides the jury list to the State Jury Commission, issues dog licenses, business certificates and raffle permits.

The Town Clerk serves as a member of, and is Clerk to, the Board of Registrars overseeing voter registration sessions and directing their work in conducting the annual listing of town residents and the school census. The Town Clerk's Office and the Office of the Board of Registrars is located at the Town Office Building.

Board of Assessors - The Board of Assessors is comprised of three members, one elected annually for a three year term. They assess real estate and personal property as of January 1st of each year, deliver the tax list and warrant to the Collector of Taxes for collection, and keep records of all abatements and exemptions of taxes and the names of the persons taxed.

Motor vehicle excise taxes, as set by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, are received, corrected by the Assessors, and committed to the Collector of Taxes for collection. The office of the Assessors is located at the Town Office Building.

Collector of Taxes - The Collector of Taxes is elected for a three year term and must be bonded. She bills and collects all tax accounts due the town including real and personal property and excise taxes. The responsibilities are governed by the General Laws of the Commonwealth, Chapter 59 and 60. The Collector's office is located in the Town Office Building.

Treasurer - The Treasurer is elected for a three year term, is bonded, and has custody of all funds belonging to the town, except funds for which other provisions are made by law or by-law.

The Treasurer negotiates all borrowing of money, invests surplus funds and forecloses Tax Titles. Other duties include responsibility for all payroll information and paying all bills of the town subject to a warrant prepared by the Town Accountant and approved by a majority of the Board of Selectmen. The office is located in the Town Office Building.

Town Accountant - The Town Accountant is appointed by the Board of Selectmen for a three year term. Duties include examining all bills and payrolls submitted for payment and, if found correct, listing them on a warrant for approval by the Selectmen, maintaining records showing the amount of each appropriation and expenditures charged against each, and maintaining records showing the amount received from each source of revenue.

The Town Accountant also certifies all contracts as to the availability of funds and has custody of all contracts of the town. The Town Accountant examines the books and accounts of all its officers and committees entrusted with the receipt, custody or expenditure of money. The Town Accountant compiles financial reports required for State and Federal grants. The Town Accountant's office is located in the Town Office Building.

Finance Committee - The Finance Committee consists of seven members, serving staggered three year terms, appointed by the Board of Selectmen. Their most important function is the preparation of the annual town budget. They also consider all articles to be inserted in warrants for annual and special town meetings, hold public hearings when considered advisable, make recommendations on all articles and approve all transfers of funds from the Reserve Account.

Town Counsel - Town Counsel, who must be a competent lawyer and member of the Massachusetts bar, is appointed annually by the Board of Selectmen. Town Counsel's responsibilities include advising Selectmen and other town officials on all legal matters. Town officers and boards may seek the advice of Town Counsel with the permission of the Board of Selectmen.

## **PUBLIC SAFETY**

Police Department - The Chief of Police and police officers are appointed by the Board of Selectmen.

The number of full time and part-time officers appointed each year depends on the needs of the department as determined by the Police Chief and the Board of Selectmen. The general duties of the Police Department are protection of persons and property; and more specifically traffic control, inspection of vacant properties, 24 hour patrols, testifying in court and investigation of accidents, crimes and complaints. The Department is housed in the Public Safety Building on Anawan Street.

Fire Department - The Chief of the Fire Department is a full time position, is salaried and is appointed by the Selectmen. His is a permanent appointment under Chapter 48 of the General Laws meaning that he can only be removed for just cause after a hearing.

All other Fire Department members are called "call" firefighters. They are paid on an hourly basis for the time they actually work. The Fire Chief organizes the three fire companies in Rehoboth with such membership as may be approved by the Board of Selectmen. He also has the authority to appoint a captain and other officers for each fire company.

There are presently three fire stations in the town. Station #1 is located at the Public Safety Building on Anawan St.; Station #2 is located on Tremont St. in the north section of the town; and Station #3 is located in the south section of the town on Pleasant St. The Fire Chief also serves as Forest Fire Warden.

Superintendent of Streets - The Superintendent of Streets is appointed yearly by the Board of Selectmen. He works under their direction in heading up the Highway Department and is responsible for the construction and maintenance of all town roads and bridges and for snow removal and sanding. He is also responsible for obtaining, placement and maintenance of guard rails, fences and street signs on public ways.

Emergency Management Agency - Formerly called Civil Defense, members are appointed annually by the Board of Selectmen. The objective of the group is the implementation of a national and state program and local preparedness to meet local emergencies and disasters.

### **OTHER TOWN SERVICES**

Animal Control Officer - This position combines the former positions of Dog Officer and Animal Inspector and is appointed annually by the Board of Selectmen. This person has the responsibility for picking up and confining stray dogs, and attending to all complaints or other matters pertaining to animals in the town.

The ACO maintains the town's animal shelter located behind the Town Office and takes necessary measures to insure that all dogs are licensed and all livestock inspected as required by state law.

Conservation Commission - The Conservation Commission is charged with the preservation of areas for conservation purposes. This commission consists of seven members, each appointed for a three year term. Their primary purpose is the encouragement of conservation and they have the right to acquire properties for conservation purposes. They are also responsible for the enforcement of the Wetlands Protection Act, G.L. Chapter 131, Section 40 and 310 CMR 10:00..

This law requires that no person shall remove, fill, dredge or alter any bank, beach, dune, flat, marsh, meadow or swamp bordering on the ocean or on any existing creek, river, stream, pond or lake or any land under said waters or any land subject to tidal action, coastal storm flowage or flooding without written notice to the Conservation Commission of the intention to so remove, fill, dredge or alter, including such plans as may be necessary to describe the proposed activity and its effect on the environment.

The Commission also maintains and develops various conservation areas in town: the Shad Factory located on Water Street, the Miller Bird Sanctuary off Lake Street, and Fox Farm at River and Broad Streets.

Council on Aging - The Council on Aging is an appointed board with offices located at the Hurrell Senior Center, 55 Bay State Road. Service hours are Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 4 PM. The building also houses the Rehoboth Senior Citizens Club, Friends of Rehoboth's Elderly, Inc. and serves as the temporary office for the Rehoboth Housing Authority.

The purpose of the Council on Aging is to act on behalf of residents 59 plus years of age. In addition to their advocacy role the COA is a major provider of social services.

Services offered include information and referral, outreach, friendly visits, meals on wheels, social and recreational programs, filling out forms of all types, home care referrals, financial support through state and federal programs, health, podiatry and flue clinics. Title III Meal Site, and a host of additional support and advocacy programs.

A full listing of services and programs can be obtained by calling the COA office at 252-3372.

Dog Licensing - All dogs kept in the town of Rehoboth who are six months of age or over must be licensed annually. Licenses are obtained from the Town Clerk's office and are due and payable on April 1st of each year. Proof of a current rabies inoculation is required at the time of licensing. Also, if the dog is neutered or spayed, such proof is required the first time the animal is licensed.

Historical Commission - The Historical Commission consists of seven members, each appointed for a term of three years. Their main purpose is to preserve the historical heritage of Rehoboth. Over the years they have collected many items of historical interest and compiled several historical pamphlets.

In 1976 as part of the Bicentennial celebration, the commission sponsored an archaeological dig at the site of the Palmer River Meeting House on Lake St. Many artifacts were recovered from the dig and are now on display at the Carpenter Museum.

Their most recent project is the publishing of a "Guide to Historic Sites in Rehoboth, Mass." -- a booklet featuring pictures and descriptions of twenty three historic sites in the town.

Housing Authority - In 1983 the town voted to establish a Housing Authority under the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 121B, section 2. There are five members each of who serve for a five year term. Four members are elected at town elections in each of four years and the fifth is appointed by the Governor of the Commonwealth.

They meet regularly and continue efforts to obtain land and funding for elderly housing in Rehoboth.

Inspectors: Building and Electrical Wiring - These inspectors are appointed annually by the Selectmen. The Inspector of Buildings is the principal enforcing agent of the State Building Code and Zoning By-laws of the town. The Inspector of Electrical Wiring administers the State Electrical Code.

Inspectors: Plumbing and Gas - The Building Inspector appoints the Plumbing Inspector and the Gas Inspector. In Rehoboth these inspectors work on a part-time basis and can be contacted through the Town Office.

Park Commission - Five Park Commission members are elected, one each for staggered five year terms. The Commission works closely with all other town boards and committees with regard to long range development plans for Rehoboth's natural resources.

One continuing project is identifying and definitely locating all town owned and quasi-public lands for the purpose of determining the best future land uses for the benefit of Rehoboth's residents.

Planning Board - The Board consists of seven members who are elected for terms of five years each. Chapter 41 of the Massachusetts General Laws establishes the Planning Board as the local agency with primary responsibility for dealing with inter-relationships of resources, facilities, activities and people over space and time. Activities with regard to the Planning Board include information gathering, data analysis, and establishment of planning goals and objectives and the preparation of plans and implementation methods. Policies of the Board are the most explicitly reflected with regard to the community master plan, the administration of the Sub-Division Control Law and the evaluation of proposed zoning regulations.

State law provides that the Planning Board shall make a master or study plan of the town. This plan is to include data on such items as population, land use, economic base, community facilities, economic development and zoning regulations. The Board may hire outside consultants to aid in accomplishing these tasks.

The purpose of the sub-division control law is to protect general safety, convenience and welfare of residents by regulating the design and construction of ways and insuring proper sanitary conditions and sub-divisions. Due regard must be given to the provision of adequate access, lessening of congestion, reducing danger to life and limb, securing safety from fire, flood and other emergencies, compliance with zoning regulations and the coordinating of ways in a sub-division with each other and with other public ways.

A sub-division is a division of a tract of land into two or more lots, the frontage of which is not on a public way or a way in an approved sub-division or a way in existence when the sub-division control law became effective in the town having, in the opinion of the Planning Board, sufficient width, suitable grades and adequate construction to provide

for the needs of vehicular traffic in relation to the proposed use of the land abutting thereon or served thereby. Copies of the Sub-Division Control Law are available for sale at the Town Clerk's office.

State law also requires that the Planning Board hold public hearings with regard to proposed adoption and/or amendment of zoning by-laws and report with recommendations to the town meeting.

No public way in town shall be laid out, altered, relocated or discontinued unless it has first been referred to the Planning Board and the board has reported thereon. No plan of any land may be recorded in the Registry of Deeds without first bearing the endorsement of the Board as to whether or not the plan shows a sub-division. The Planning Board does not have the authority to alter the existing zoning requirements in regard to frontage and areas as it relates to any lot or in any other manner.

The Rehoboth Planning Board employs a Town Planner who reviews existing Planning Board Rules and Regulations, zoning by-laws and the Sub-Division Control Law and drafts proposed amendments to these. The Planner also reviews all plans submitted to the Planning Board and makes recommendations on each.

Schools and School Committees - The town of Rehoboth is a member of the Dighton Rehoboth Regional School District, which includes grades kindergarten through grade twelve. Rehoboth has five elected members of the Regional District School Committee with two elected in each of two years, and one elected the third year, each serving a three year term. To meet the requirements of proportional representation respective to the population of the two member towns, each elected member from Rehoboth has one vote for a total of five (5) votes while each of the five Dighton members has eight tenths (.8) votes for a total of four (4) votes.

The committee is responsible for curriculum, staff, policy and maintenance of school buildings.

The office of the Superintendent of Schools is located at the Dighton-Rehoboth Regional High School off New Street.

Transfer Station - Located at the intersection of Plain St. (Route 118) and Martin St., the transfer station is open to residents of the town on Tuesday 4 PM to 7 PM and on Saturday from 8 AM to 3 PM.

Residents must purchase stickers to be placed on their vehicles and tickets must be purchased for the deposit of rubbish. Recycling bins are available at the Transfer Station for glass, metal, plastic and cardboard. There is no charge for depositing in the recycling bins.

Rehoboth has no public rubbish and garbage collection. Homeowners may contract with private companies for collection.

Tree Warden - The Tree Warden is elected for a three year term and has authority for planting, trimming or removal of any public shade trees and shrubs within the limits of the streets and highways, except those along state highways and those in public parts or other places under the jurisdiction of other public officials. He cooperates with other town departments in preparing his annual program.

In Rehoboth, the Tree Warden also serves as Moth Superintendent and works under the rules and regulations of the Pesticide Board in the Department of Public Health. He is concerned with the control of insects which destroy shade trees and also the removal of diseased trees within 500 feet of public land.

Veterans' Services - A Veterans' Service Officer, Veterans' Grave Officer and Director of Veterans' Services is appointed yearly by the Board of Selectmen (position is usually held by one person but could be held by separate individuals). The primary function of these positions is to assist veterans and their dependents in obtaining Massachusetts veteran benefits, V.A. veterans benefits and to secure other human services as needed.

The office of Veterans' Services is a cooperative effort between the state of Massachusetts and local governments. It guarantees that the veteran who served this country when called will have his life needs met.

The office of the Veterans' Services is located in the Town Office Building and is open to the public Monday through Friday from 9 AM to 12 noon,

Water District - In April of 1995 the town voted to petition the General Court of the Commonwealth to establish a Water District for the town of Rehoboth. The petition was approved and the Rehoboth Water District was established by Chapter 152 of the Acts of 1995.

The Water Commission consists of five Water Commissioners who are elected for a term of three years each.

Zoning Board of Appeals - Chapter 40A of the Massachusetts General Laws is known as the Zoning Enabling Act. It spells out the duties, powers and functions of the Board of Appeals under the zoning ordinance of the town. It is mandatory that every zoning ordinance or by-law provide for a Board of Appeals. The Rehoboth Board of Appeals consists of five members and three associate members all of whom are appointed by the Board of Selectmen. Regular members are appointed for five year terms and associate members are appointed on an annual basis.



The powers of the Board of Appeals are listed under Section 15 of Chapter 40A and include the following:

1. To hear and decide on appeals taken by any person aggrieved by his inability to obtain a permit from any town official or any officer or board of the town.
2. To hear and decide on applications for special permits for exceptions. An exception is a stated use permitted by the zoning by-laws, but contingent upon approval of the Board of Appeals and upon such conditions as may be stated by the by-laws.
3. The granting of variances from the terms of the zoning by-law is the most complex of ZBA functions. A variance is permission to violate the by-laws to a degree and must be with respect to a particular parcel of land or to an existing building thereon. There must be conditions especially affecting such parcel or building, but not affecting generally the zoning district in which it is located. Specific information regarding variances may be obtained by contacting the ZBA.

Rules and regulations adopted by the Board of Appeals are on file with the Town Clerk. No board member may represent any party of interest in any matter pending before it. Decisions on appeals must be made within twenty days of the filing of the appeal with the Town Clerk's Office.

Other Town Boards and Inspectors -

Communications Committee	Measurer of Wood & Lumber
Industrial Commission (Inactive)	Fence Viewer
Sealer of Weights and Measures	Field Driver
Public Weigher	Recreation Committee (Inactive)
Stormwater Implementation Committee	Agricultural Commission

For additional information regarding these and other town officials, please refer to the town by-laws and the annual town report.

**COUNTY GOVERNMENT**

Bristol County - There are many historic sites, recreational facilities and spectator sporting events offered in Bristol County. In New Bedford one can relive the early nautical days when whaling was the prime occupation. The famed World War II Battleship U.S.S. Massachusetts is berthed in Fall River and welcomes visitors aboard. Professional football and dog racing provide entertainment for the sports enthusiast and the Great Woods Performing Arts Center in Mansfield offers concerts to satisfy every taste. For outdoor recreation there is salt and fresh water fishing, boating and golf.

County Commissioners - Bristol County elects three County Commissioners for four year terms. They have no general legislative authority. They have limited quasi-judicial duties -- that is they hear appeals and disputes and make decisions. Generally their activities are administrative. They are principally occupied with maintenance and operation of county buildings, correctional institutions and other properties. The major exceptions are that the jails are under sheriffs in all counties in Massachusetts.

Judicial - Taunton is the County seat of Bristol County. Located in Taunton are Probate Court, District Court and Superior Court. Associated with the courts are two recording officers: the Clerk of Courts, and the Register of Probate. Both of these officers are elected for six-year terms. The Clerk of Courts serves also as Clerk of the County Commissioners.

Likewise associated with the courts are the jails and correctional institutions. These are under the supervision of the sheriff who is elected for a six-year term. The jails are places of temporary detention before and during trial. The correctional institutions are places to which persons are committed to serve their sentences after being found guilty, and are located in various cities and towns in Massachusetts.

Offices located in Taunton are County Commissioners, Probation Officer, Sheriff, District Attorney, County Treasurer and a Law Library.

Jurors - Formerly under the jurisdiction of the county, Rehoboth is now part of the Massachusetts Jury Commission's "One Trial Jury System" whereby every citizen 18 years of age or older who can speak and understand the English language and who is physically fit must serve. (Citizens 70 years of age or older may choose not to serve.)

Jurors are selected at random from census lists supplied by the Town Clerk to the Office of the Jury Commissioner. Each juror, when summoned, is entitled to one postponement of up to one year from the date summoned. The postponement allows a "juror" to choose a more convenient date to serve. Each juror may request a transfer of courthouse location if the juror encounters a transportation hardship.

Jury duty is limited to one trial, which could last from one day to one month. Ninety five percent of all jury trials are completed in less than three days.

A juror who is regularly employed is entitled to normal wages paid by the employer for the first three days of jury service. On the fourth day, and each day thereafter, each juror will receive \$50.00 per day from the Commonwealth.

Registry of Deeds - In Massachusetts deeds to real estate are filed with the Registry of Deeds. For Bristol County this office is entitled Bristol County Registry of Deeds, Northern District and is located at 11 Court St., Taunton.

Bristol County Mosquito Control Project - This is a county-wide program financed by the cities and towns benefited. The Bristol County Mosquito Project is located in Taunton. Local residents may call to have their property sprayed. The purpose of the program is to control the spread of mosquitoes and greenhead flies.

### REGIONAL SERVICES

Southeastern Regional Planning & Economic Development District (SRPEDD) -

The role of SRPEDD, one of the twelve regional planning agencies covering all of Massachusetts, is as follows:

1. To develop regional plans, particularly for issues of more than local concern (such as transportation) thereby making member municipalities eligible for certain types of federal financial assistance;
2. To provide assistance to member communities in the areas of zoning, development planning, environmental protection, governmental structure and services;
3. To review local plans and proposals for compatibility with regional plans and to ensure that a municipality does not create problems for its neighbors;
4. To serve as a forum for the discussion of issues touching more than one municipality and as a liaison with some state and federal offices.

### VOTER INFORMATION

Registrars of Voters - This is a four member board consisting of the Town Clerk and three other persons appointed by the Board of Selectmen, one each year for a term of three years.

Members must represent the two leading political parties and no appointment shall be made to cause the Board to have more than two members of the same political party. The Registrars are responsible for the registration of voters in the office on dates specified by state law for special voter registration sessions. They are also responsible for certifying signatures on petitions and nomination papers and conduct an annual listing of residents as of January first of each year.

Voter Registration - You may register to vote if:

1. You are a citizen of the United States;
2. You are 18 years of age or more by the day of the election or primary;
3. You are a resident of Rehoboth.

You should register to vote if:

1. You are a citizen who has not registered before;
2. You have moved to a new city or town;
3. Your name has been changed through court action or marriage;
4. Your name was omitted from the annual listing of residents on January first prior to the election;

OTHERWISE, voters need register only once in Massachusetts.

How to Register - Election laws in Massachusetts have changed within the past few years. In addition to being able to register to vote at the local office of the Registrars of Voters (in the Town Clerk's office) registration can now take place at the state's Registry of Motor Vehicle offices when residents register their vehicles or renew their driving licenses. Residents may also register to vote by mailing the proper form to the Registrars in the Office of the Town Clerk. Registration may also take place by appearing in any Registrars office throughout the Commonwealth. That office will forward the voter registration form to the proper city or town.

Legal residents of the town on active duty with the armed forces of the United States, their spouses and dependents, persons in the Merchant Marines of the United States, their spouses and dependents, and citizens of the United States temporarily residing outside the territorial limits of the United States may obtain absent voting ballots even though they have not registered to vote in Rehoboth.

Where to Register: At the office of the Town Clerk, Town Office Building, 148r Peck St., or at the office of any Town Clerk or Election Commissioner in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, or when registering a vehicle or renewing a driving license with the Registry of Motor Vehicles.

When to Register: On any business day of the year except on the 20 days before elections or primaries.

Any serviceman or other federal employee, spouse, parent or child of a federal employee on foreign service, or a United States citizen temporarily residing outside the territorial limits of the United States and his or her spouse or dependent may register late by appearing in person before his local Registrar of Voters any day following the final registration period before a primary or election provided he does so prior to 4:00 PM on the day before a primary or election.

Voting - Polls are open for local elections at times designated by individual cities and towns. In Rehoboth the polling hours for local elections are usually set to begin at 10 AM and close at 8 PM. State law requires that the polling hours for all state primaries and elections be 7:00 AM to 8 PM.

To Cast Your Ballot - Rehoboth has been divided into three voting precincts. Your voting precinct is assigned at the time you register to vote. If you are unclear as to your precinct you may call the Town Clerk's Office and obtain that information.

Precinct I votes at the Town Office Building at 148 Peck St.; Precinct II votes at the Rehoboth Senior Center at 55 Bay State Road and Precinct III votes at the South Rehoboth Fire Station at 102 Pleasant St. For primaries (both state and presidential) Selectmen usually vote to combine the three precincts with everyone voting at one polling place on that day -- usually the Rehoboth Senior Center at 55 Bay State Road. This is done because of the traditionally low voter turnout for primaries.

To Vote - Go to your polling place (Precinct), give your street, house number and name to the election workers.

Take the ballot (a security sleeve is available at your request) you are given and proceed to one of the voting booths. Directions for marking the ballot will be posted in each voting booth. Mark the ballot with the special marking pen provided, insert the ballot into the security sleeve (if you have requested one) and proceed to the checkout area. You will again be asked for your name and address and you may then proceed to the ballot box and deposit your voted ballot.

At the Polling Place You May Expect -

Sample ballots and voting lists posted;

Protection from candidates, their workers and political advertising within 150 feet of the entrance to the polling place;

To receive up to three ballots, one at a time, if you make an error;

A maximum of five minutes to mark your ballot if others are waiting in line to vote. (Otherwise the time limit is 10 minutes).

Absentee Voting - You may apply for an absentee ballot if:

You will be absent from the town during the hours the polls are open;

You are physically disabled to get to the polls;

You are eligible for an absentee ballot if:

You are a registered voter;

You are a U.S. citizen in the active service of the armed forces or merchant marine or are a member of the immediate family of such a person;

A Massachusetts citizen absent from state;

To obtain an absentee ballot you must:

Submit a written request (signed by the voter) to the Town Clerk's office no later than noon of the day before the election.

In some cases a close relative (who is a registered voter) may apply. Ask the Town Clerk's office for more information.

To Vote an Absentee Ballot:

If you will be absent from the town on election day you may vote your ballot in the Town Clerk's Office before you leave (if the ballots are available).

If you are voting absentee by mail, follow the directions received with your absentee ballot.

The only time an absentee ballot can be delivered by hand to a voter is when the voter states (under penalties of perjury) in an application that he/she has been admitted to a health care facility after noon on the fifth day before an election.

### **POLITICAL PROCEDURES**

General Nominations - If you are planning to seek elective office, consult the Town Clerk for the proper nomination procedure. Election by write-in is permitted if proper legal procedures are followed.

Caucus - Political caucuses are held in Rehoboth before town elections to select one candidate for each office to be filled at the Annual Town Election. The Caucus is called by the Town Committee of the political party, elects its own chairman and clerk and is open to all designated voters of that party and non-designated voters. The list of nominated candidates is submitted to the Town Clerk within 72 hours of the adjournment of the caucus by the Town Committee.

Primary Elections - The purpose of a primary is to nominate party candidates who will run in the general election. To vote in the primary you must state your party preference or be registered in that political party. You will be given only the primary ballot of that party. Your statement of party preference in the primary is in no way binding upon you as a voter in the general election.

Presidential Primaries - Are held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in March in presidential election years. Presidential Primaries:

Allow voters to indicate presidential preference to which delegates are bound for the first ballot unless released by the candidate;

Elect members of state and town committees.

State Primaries - Are held on the seventh Tuesday prior to the state election in even numbered years and nominate party candidates for the offices listed below which are to filled that year:

U. S. Senator & Congressman	Governor	Lt. Governor
Secretary of State	Attorney General	Treasurer
Members of Governor's Council	Auditor	County Sheriff
State Senators and Representatives	County Treasurer	County D.A.
County Register of Deeds	County Clerk of Courts	
County Commissioners	County Reg. of Probate & Insolvency	

Election Days and Terms of Office - Election days for county, state and national offices always fall on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November. Local election days vary in different cities and towns. In Rehoboth, by by-law, the local elections are held on the first Monday in April.

The President and Vice President are chosen every four years, in years divisible by four, by the College of Electors. The number of electoral delegates is equal in each state to the total of its senators and representatives.

U.S. Senators are elected in even years for terms of six years. U. S. Representatives re elected in even years for terms of two years.

Governor, Lt. Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, Treasurer and Auditor are elected in even years that are not presidential election years for terms of four years.

State Senator, State Representative and Governor's Councilors are elected in even years for terms of two years.

County officers are elected in even years. County commissioners and District Attorneys have four year terms while other county officers have six year terms.

Ballot Questions - State and local referenda and ballot questions may be on the ballot in any year for local elections and in even years for state and national elections. State constitutional amendments appear only on the state ballot.

Political Parties - There are two recognized major political parties in Massachusetts at this time -- Democrat and Republican. There is also two other recognized political parties -- Working Families and Green-Rainbow -- at this time (200). In order to be recognized as a political party the party must have polled at least three percent of the entire vote cast in the commonwealth in the last biennial election.

What Parties Do:

Provide organized channels through which citizens may take an active part in government;

Put important issues into definite form by writing them into platforms;

Nominate and attempt to elect candidates for state, county and town offices;

Raise money and run campaigns.

Party Organization - National and state committees consist of enrolled party members who participate in conventions, raise and distribute campaign funds and maintain party organization.

Town Committees are composed of not less than three nor more than 35 enrolled voters of the party who are residents of the town. Candidates are usually presented to the voters by the local political party as a "slate". An individual party member wishing to run for Town Committee may have his name appear on the ballot by taking out nomination papers and obtaining the signatures of five party members of his town. Town Committees are elected at the Presidential Primary for a four year term.