



TOWN OF STOUGHTON

The official seal of the Town of Stoughton was adopted in 1892. It was designed by Edwin Arthur Jones. The seal features shield which symbolizes the important facts in the history of Dorchester at the time it included what is now Stoughton. The building in the left foreground represents the first church of Dorchester, the society of which was organized in England in March 1630 and arrived here in June of the same year. The building in the rear of the church calls to mind the first free school, established in 1639. The building in the background, on the Neponset River, represents the first Grist Mill, built in 1633 by Captain Israel Stoughton, the father of William Stoughton, for whom the town was named.

The smaller shield on the left overlapping the Dorchester shield, calls to mind the fact that the portion of Dorchester set apart for the town received its name from Lt. Governor William Stoughton. This is indicated by the presence on the shield of the Stoughton arms.

The harp which rests above the shield, represents, after the manner of heraldry, that in addition to sharing with Dorchester the distinction of possessing the first mill, church and free school, we also claim in our own special right the origin of the first musical society in the country.

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STOUGHTON HISTORY

The Birthplace of American Liberty

August 16, 1774	At the dooty Tavern in Old Stoughton was held the first formal meeting or "County Congress" where delegates reduced to writing the principles of American Independence.
September 6, 1774	The second or adjourned meeting of the county Congress held at Dedham to "complete the business."
September 9, 1774	The third meeting held at the Vose Tavern in Milton where the Suffolk Resolves were unanimously adopted. The resolves were said to "contain a complete declaration of War against Great Britain."
September 17, 1774	In Philadelphia the first Continental Congress, inspired by the Suffolk Resolves, passed the Declaration of Rights.
May 20, 1775	The famous Mecklenburg Declaration was prepared in the Carolinas.
May 22, 1776	At a meeting of the Stoughton townspeople, resolutions were enthusiastically passed which declared to the same sentiments expressed six weeks later in the Declaration of Independence. So it is seen that the

	residents of Stoughton were in the forefront of the separation movement.
July 4, 1776	The Declaration of Independence.

Thus, in Old Stoughton was held the first formal meeting of those who were determined to make America “the land of the free.” The action of this first county congress and its influence upon subsequent events gives to Old Stoughton the honor of being the definite Birthplace of American Liberty.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Incorporated	1627
Square Miles	16.3
2012 Population	25051
2012 Voters	17239
2012 Tax Rate	residential \$14.50/per thousand Commercial \$25.24/per thousand

Copies of Birth Death or Marriage Certificates

You may write or come into the Town Clerk’s Office for a birth, death or marriage certificate. There is a \$10 fee for each certified copy. You may be asked to produce identification such as a Drivers License or Passport. When you requesting in writing please tell us the name of the person(s) and date of event. Include your check payable to the Town of Stoughton and a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Dog Licensing

\$10 for every altered male or spayed female dog.
\$15 for every unaltered male or unspayed female dog.

Dogs licenses expire each year on December 31

Should any owner or keeper of a dog failure to license that dog, on or before May 1, that owner or keeper shall pay a late fee of \$25, said fee to be in addition to the license fee for all dogs licensed on or after May 1 of any year, excepting a dog brought into the Town as provided in MGL c. 140, § 138, this late fee shall be applicable from the 61st day after arrival of such dog; and in addition, should any owner or keeper of a dog fail to comply with the provisions of this article or any order of the Dog Officer issued pursuant to this article, that owner or keeper shall be punished by a fine not to exceed \$25 for each offense.

Dogs not licensed by June 1st will have to pay a \$25 FINE for VIOLATING STATUTE in addition to late fees and licensing fee.

Chamber of Commerce

P.O. Box 41
Stoughton, MA 02072
781-297-7450
chamber@stoughtonma.com
www.Stoughton-ma.gov

Registry of Deeds

The Register of Deeds keeps copies of deeds, mortgages, plans and other papers relating to the title of any property located within the county.

The Registry of Deeds for Stoughton is Norfolk County – located in Dedham – 781-461-6123.

District Court

Stoughton District Court
 1288 Central Street
 Stoughton, MA 02072
 781-344-2132

In this court both criminal and civil cases are heard by a judge without jury. Appeals in criminal cases may be taken to juries of six. All misdemeanors may be tried in the District Court and felonies are also tried there, provided the sentence does not exceed five years. The District Court hears civil suits, cases of nonsupport, eviction, illegitimacy, neglect, small claims and remand sessions. Routine traffic and parking violations are usually handled without a hearing.

Probate Court

Probate and Family Court
 Norfolk Division
 35 Shawmut Road
 Canton, MA 02021
 781-830-1200

Newspapers

The community’s local news is reported by two daily newspapers: The Patriot Ledger and The Enterprise and two weeklies: The Stoughton Chronicle and The Stoughton Journal. The Boston Globe and The Boston Herald are delivered daily and Sundays.

Transportation

Stoughton has excellent bus and commuter rail service. The Brockton Area Transportation Authority (BAT) operates busses from Brockton to Stoughton via Stoughton Center Cobb’s Corner local hospitals and returning to Brockton. The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA). Commuter trains provide the Town with rapid transportation to and from Boston. The train depot is located in the center of Town.

Services

Electricity	National Grid
Gas	KeySpan and Columbia Gas of Mass
Water and Sewer	Stoughton Department of Public Works...781-341-1300 X379
Cable Television	Comcast & Verizon

Working Papers

Working papers for residents of Stoughton can be obtained at the Superintendent’s Office.

If a student attends private school, working papers can be obtained at the same location.

LOCAL CENSUS

Uses of Local Census:

Information collected for municipal purposes

- School Needs – student population – estimating number of teachers required
- Growth and planning needs
- Resident Identification for police and fire - Street List (51 MGL §6)
- Collection of dog information
- Proof of Residency
- Veteran Information

Information for the Jury Commissioners - Jury List (234 MGL §4)

Determining inactive voter status for purge required by the National Voter Registration Act

VOTING AND ELECTIONS

Where to Vote:

PRECINCT 1 JOSEPH R. DAWE, JR. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, 131 Pine Street

PRECINCT 2 E.A. JONES EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER (formerly Jones Elementary School, 137 Walnut Street

PRECINCT 3 SOUTH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, 171 Ash Street

PRECINCT 4 JOSEPH H. GIBBONS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, 235 Morton Street

PRECINCT 5 JOSEPH H. GIBBONS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, 235 Morton Street

PRECINCT 6 HELEN H. HANSEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, 1800 Central Street

PRECINCT 7 WEST ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, 1322 Central Street

PRECINCT 8 ROBERT G. O'DONNELL MIDDLE SCHOOL, 211 Cushing Street

Voter Registration

The Town Clerk maintains the voters roll for Stoughton. The list is continually updated, adding names of persons newly registered and removing names of persons who have moved within Stoughton, moved out of Stoughton, or who have died.

What are the qualifications to be a registered voter?

A U.S. citizen, and
A resident of Massachusetts, and
18 years old on or before the next election

How may I register to Vote?

Voter registration in Stoughton has never been easier than it is today. You may visit the Town Clerk's Office at Town Hall and complete a voter registration form in person. You may also register to vote when renewing your drivers license. Mail-in forms also may be obtained by calling the State Elections Division at (800) 462-VOTE.

Upon signing the registration form, you must attest, under the pains and penalties of perjury, that you are legally eligible to register and that the information you provide is accurate and truthful. The penalty for fraudulent registration is a fine of ten thousand dollars or imprisonment for up to five years, or both.

When you register, you may choose to become a member of a political party, select a designation for a political organization which has not achieved party status in the state or choose to become an "unenrolled" voter (commonly referred to as "independent"). Remember that if you register in a party in a primary election you may only receive a ballot for that party. Unenrolled voters may request any ballot in a primary election.

You will remain on the list of voters as long as you vote regularly and complete and return the annual local census. If you move to another city or town, you must re-register to vote in your new community.

Registration Deadlines

Voter registration deadlines are established by state statute and are adhered to strictly. You may register to vote up to twenty days before any election.

Election Timetable

Town	Annual Election	27 days before Annual Town Meeting
	Town Meeting	1 st Monday in May
State Primary	Every 2 years (even numbered)	7 th Tuesday prior to State Election
State Election	Every 2 years	1 st Tuesday after 1 st Monday in November
National Primary	Every 4 years	1 st Tuesday in March
National Election	Every 4 years	1 st Tuesday after 1 st Monday in November

Electoral Districts

GOVERNOR & LT. GOVERNOR

Governor Deval L. Patrick
Lieutenant Governor Tim Murray
 State House Room 280
 Boston, MA 02133
 (617) 725-4005
 FAX (617) 727-9725

Party Affiliation – Democrat

STATE:

NORFOLK, BRISTOL AND PLYMOUTH DISTRICTS

Senator Brian Joyce
 State House Room 109D
 Boston, MA 02133
 (617) 722-1643
Brian.A.Joyce@state.ma.us

Party Affiliation – Democrat

SIXTH NORFOLK DISTRICT

Precincts 1, 5, 7, and 8

Representative William C. Galvin
 State House Room 448
 Boston, MA 02133
 (617) 722-2582
Rep.WilliamGalvin@hou.state.ma.us

Party Affiliation – Democrat

EIGHTH NORFOLK DISTRICT

Precincts 2, 3, 4 and 6

Representative Louis J. Kafka
 State House Room 185
 Boston, MA 02133

(617) 722-2960
 FAX (617) 722-2713
Rep.LouisKafka@hou.state.ma.us

Party Affiliation - Democrat

FEDERAL:

NINTH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Congressman Stephen F. Lynch
 2348 Rayburn HOB
 Washington, DC 20510

(202) 225-8273

155 West Elm Street
 Brockton, MA 02301
 (617) 428-2000

Party Affiliation – Democrat

U.S. SENATORS

Scott Brown
 317 Russell Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510
 (202) 224-4543

Party Affiliation - Republican

Senator John M. Kerry
 218 Russell Senate Office Bldg.
 Washington, DC 20510
 (202) 224-2742

One Bowdoin Square 10th Floor
 Boston, MA 02114
 (617) 565-8519

Party Affiliation - Democrat

Absentee, Physically Disabled and Specially Qualified Voting

Absentee Ballots

Voters who are unable to vote on Election Day because of physical disability, religious beliefs or travel may vote by absentee ballot. State law limits the availability of absentee ballots to the three listed circumstances only. Absentee ballots are not available for mere inconvenience, or because of ordinary commuting-related difficulties. If you will be absent from Stoughton for an extended period of time, you may submit a single application for all elections occurring within the calendar year the application is accepted.

Applications for absentee ballots may be obtained from the Town Clerk. Applications may be submitted in person or by mail (with original signatures). The voter, or a family member (residing in the same household) on the voter's behalf, may submit an application. All applications must be signed under the pains and penalties of perjury by the voter, or a family member, before a ballot will be made available, attesting that:

“Under the penalties of perjury, I swear (or affirm) that I am eligible to vote in Massachusetts at the address below, that I

will request a ballot only from the city or town below, that I cannot vote in person at the polls on election day because of absence from the city or town, physical disability, or religious belief, and that the information below is true. I have carefully read the instructions on the back of (or with) the ballot, have marked the ballot while alone or with assisting person (if required), and have sealed it in the envelope.”

Applications for absentee ballots must be received by the Town Clerk before 12 noon the day before an election. (A voter who is admitted to a health care facility after noon of the fifth day before an election may apply for a ballot up until the close of the polls and may request to have the ballot delivered.)

Absentee ballots generally are available three weeks before an election. You may vote over the counter when absentee ballots are in and you will be away on election day.

In a primary election, a voter who is registered “unenrolled” must specify the ballot of the party of choice on the application.

Return of Absentee Ballots

Absentee ballots must be received before the polls close to be counted. However, absentee ballots, completed outside the U.S., for the state general election will be counted if received by 5:00 p.m. on the tenth day following the election. This exception does not apply to Stoughton Town elections or state primaries.

Do not place Absentee Ballots in the free Town Hall mailbox – Absentee Ballots must be either returned in person or placed in the U.S. Mail.

Permanently Physically Disabled Voters

A voter who is permanently disabled need not submit a request for an absentee ballot every election. If such a voter submits a written statement from a registered physician indicating that he is disabled permanently, the Town Clerk will mail to the registered voter an application for an absentee ballot twenty-eight days before an election or each calendar year. The application will be as complete as the Town Clerk can make it, and the voter in most cases need only sign the application and return it. Upon the Town Clerk’s receipt of the signed application, the voter will be sent an absentee ballot for those elections.

If the voter submits an application for an absentee ballot in person, he/she may obtain the ballot (call first to see if it is available) and vote “over-the-counter.” If the ballot is not available, it will be sent to the voter when available. When the application is submitted in person by a family member, the ballot may only be sent by mail to the voter. Ballots may not be “hand carried” out of the Town Clerk’s office. Ballots may be returned by mail or in person by the voter or family member. All ballot envelopes must be signed by the voter or, if the voter is unable to sign, by an assisting person.

Specially Qualified Voters

In addition to registered voters, certain “specially qualified voters” may vote by absentee ballot. A “specially qualified voter” is a person who is a Massachusetts citizen, living outside of the United States, who is at least eighteen years old and whose last residence in the United States was Massachusetts. You also may be a “specially qualified voter” if you are otherwise eligible to be a registered voter and your present domicile (a place where you live and plan to remain) is Massachusetts and you are: out of town because you are in the active service of the armed forces or merchant marine of the United States, or a spouse or dependent of such person; or absent from the Commonwealth.

How do I run for an elected office?

Any registered voter of Stoughton may be a candidate for town elective office. The prospective candidate must:

Obtain Nomination papers. Nomination papers for Moderator, Board of Selectmen, Board of Assessors, Board of Library Trustees, Municipal Light Board and School Committee are available at the Town Clerk’s Office. Nomination papers are available in the Town Clerk’s Office in December.

Candidate for elected offices must obtain 120 certified signatures (registered voters) to qualify for placement on the Local Election ballot. Nomination papers need to be returned to the Town Clerk’s Office approximately 7 weeks before the election.

Campaign and Political Finance

Nomination and Petition Papers

The first step to running for office or placing a question on the ballot is to gather the required number of signatures of registered voters on

petition papers. The number of signatures depends on the office or the type of question.

Candidates or question proponents must gather the required number of signatures on the petition papers. Once the signatures are gathered, the petition papers are submitted to the Town Clerk for certification. The Town Clerk will certify the signature of any registered Stoughton voter. (If the paper is for the nomination of a candidate for a party primary, the signatures of voters enrolled in another political party or political designation will not be counted.) If the required number of signatures is certified, the candidate or question will appear on the ballot.

Campaign and Political Finance Filings

State law requires an accounting of all money received or spent in the course of a political campaign.

Financial disclosure statements of candidate and ballot question committees must be filed with the Town Clerk's Office and maintained for public inspection.

The financial disclosure statements must be on forms prescribed by the Town Clerk and include the name of the candidate or ballot question committee; the address of the committee; the committee's chairman and treasurer; an accounting of all contributions received; and a listing of all individuals who contributed over a prescribed amount. The statements also must include an accounting of all campaign expenditures.

Forms, guides, and the law can be found on the Office of Campaign and Political Finance website at: www.state.ma.us/ocpf

The statements, which are filed periodically throughout the year, are reviewed and audited by the Town Clerk. The filing deadlines for Town candidates or questions are:

The eighth day before a Town or general election, or special election

The thirtieth day following a general election

The end of the year – January 20th report, with an accounting of all required information through December 31st of the preceding year

Activities at Polling Places

State law prohibits the display of political paraphernalia within 150 feet of the entrance to the polling location. Signs, stickers and even lapel buttons are not permitted within this restricted zone. Within 150 feet of a polling place, no person shall solicit votes for or against, or otherwise promote or oppose, any person or political party or position on a ballot question, to be voted at the ongoing election.

TOWN MEETING

“All powers of the Town shall be vested in the Representative Town Meeting...The Representative Town Meeting shall provide for the exercise of the powers of the Town and for the performance of all duties and obligations imposed upon the Town.” (Section C7-8 Stoughton Charter)

Two town meetings are required by the Charter. The first business of the annual town meeting is the local election held 27 days before the Annual Town Meeting. At this election the voters elect the Moderator, members of the Board of Selectmen, School Committee, and Town Meeting Representatives.

The Annual Town Meeting shall be held on the first Monday in May. The Board of Selectmen shall insert articles into the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting which bear signatures of 10 or more registered voters of the Town. The Annual Town Meeting warrant shall close to petitioned and budget articles on December 31 of the year previous to the Annual Town Meeting. The warrant shall remain open to the Board of Selectmen until the first Tuesday in February.

A Special Town Meeting needs 100 for inclusion in a warrant opened at the discretion of the Board of Selectmen.

There are approximately 6-8 nightly Town Meeting sessions each year.

How do I become a Town Meeting member and what is involved?

You must be a registered voter

You are required to take out nomination papers and get 15 certified signatures of voters in your precinct to be placed on the Local Election ballot in the Spring. Nomination papers are available at the Town Clerk's Office in December. Nomination papers must be returned to the Town Clerk's Office approximately 7 weeks before the election.

As a Town Meeting member you are expected to read the warrant prior to Town Meeting to inform you of the items that will be discussed during the meeting.

THE CITIZEN AND GOVERNMENT

OPEN MEETING LAW

The best way to understand town government is to observe it in action. All public boards, commissions and committees are required to conduct their business in meetings, which are open to the public. Under the open meeting law, notices stating the time, date and location of meetings must be posted on the bulletin board in the town hall at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting. The public may attend, listen and even tape record the meetings but may not speak without permission of the presiding officer. Closed meetings, or executive sessions, may be held only when the following are involved: reputation, character, physical condition or mental health of the individual; discipline, dismissal or complaints about an individual; strategy for collective bargaining negotiations or litigation; deployment of security personnel and devices; allegations about criminal conduct; negotiations about purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property; compliance with general or special laws or federal aid requirements. The public may have access to the minutes of open meetings and of executive sessions when the reasons for the closed executive session no longer pertain.

If a citizen wishes to discuss a matter with a town board, he/she may contact that board by letter or phone requesting time on the agenda of the board's next meeting.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Public hearings give the citizen an opportunity to register approval or disapproval of proposed actions by town boards. These may be required by law, such as hearings by the School Committee concerning the budget or hearings by the Planning Board concerning zoning changes, or they may be optional hearings whereby a board is seeking public input on a particular policy or action. In either case, every citizen who wishes to speak is given an opportunity to be heard.