



**STATEMENT FROM THE ANDOVER SELECT BOARD, TOWN MANAGER,
CHIEF OF POLICE and FIRE CHIEF**

The Andover Select Board, Town Manager Andrew P. Flanagan, Police Chief Patrick Keefe, and Fire Chief Michael Mansfield condemn the actions of the Minneapolis Police officers which resulted in the death of George Floyd and wish to provide the community with a first step for beginning the process of moving forward.

We were deeply troubled at witnessing the atrocious acts of those officers involved in George Floyd's death. We continue to work hard to make Andover a welcoming place of inclusion and safety, and this work remains the highest priority and should reflect who we are as a community. The actions of the police officers involved in the death of George Floyd in no way reflect the value we place on human life in the Town of Andover.

In 2017, the Andover Select Board adopted a statement against hatred that embodied the values of our community – that as one community, we stand together, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, or orientation. And, as one community, we do not tolerate hate or violence.

As public servants, it is our responsibility to continue to speak out against discrimination, racism, xenophobia, and hatred. It is our responsibility to foster a community that is anti-racist, where all voices are heard and respected. Together, we will turn the page to a new chapter in Andover's history. A chapter in which inclusion, acceptance, and equitable treatment of all is prioritized and integrated into the fabric of all that we do as a community.

The methods used by police in Minneapolis that killed George Floyd are not part of any police training program in Massachusetts, including those used by members of the Andover Police Department. Specifically, police are never trained to place a prone suspect on their face or to put pressure on the neck or throat of a person being detained.

The Andover Police Department believes in treating all, including those accused of committing a crime, fairly and with dignity. Officers are trained only to use the amount of force necessary to ensure safety for the suspect, the officers, and the civilians in the area.

Additionally, the Andover Police Department has long been at the forefront of progressively training its officers. This includes extensive training in crisis intervention management, mental health awareness, de-escalation procedures, and professional standards. The Department is committed to continuing to train in these areas. The Department's policies and training protocols

are consistently reviewed internally and are evaluated by an independent police accreditation board.

The values statement of the Andover Police Department clearly states that our officers will provide the highest level of public safety and professional service to all who live, work, and visit our town. The Police Department continuously evaluates the standards to which they hold themselves accountable and are deeply committed to achieving excellence in all aspects of community policing. Andover Police remains committed to upholding the values of the department and continuing to treat individuals that interact with the department with the decency, fairness, and respect that they deserve.

The Fire Rescue Department shares the values of Andover Police and together are representative of a collective effort to provide all public safety services in a fair and equitable manner. Andover Fire Rescue personnel have also had extensive sensitivity training around diversity and inclusion. Further, Andover Fire Rescue continues to review its training and culture regarding diversity and inclusion, as well as the effectiveness of that training.

What happened in Minnesota, and recent incidents here in Andover, does not embody the values of our community, yet we know that implicit bias is imbedded in our culture. We are now beginning a process that invites change and encourages civil discourse so that we may work together towards equal treatment and acceptance of all.

As we begin the process of addressing these issues in our community, the Select Board and Town Manager invite you to participate in a community conversation as part of a Town Hall forum. We want to gather your thoughts, opinions, and input on how we move forward together and ask you to share your experiences in an effort to create awareness here in Andover. Details about the Town Hall will be forthcoming and the Board invites you to send your thoughts to InclusiveAndover@andoverma.us.

We will always condemn the words and actions that drive us apart as a community. We look forward to beginning the work that continues to build public trust and draws us closer as a community, emphasizing and prioritizing acceptance and equitable treatment for all.