



Shutesbury Select Board
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June 10, 2020

Dear Shutesbury Friends and Neighbors,

Our country is in the throes of two pandemics, one from a virus and one from hate, racism, injustice, illuminated by the tragic event of George Floyd's death at the hands of a police officer sworn to protect citizens, and the subsequent violence that has followed. Social isolation and masks help us navigate the first pandemic; the opposite is true for the latter pandemic, where unmasking sources of hate, sharing outrage, and education work to expose this pandemic. Time shows us that no community is immune to either. It is through open communication and education we can deal with both.

This tragic event has been met with much outcry and has been the catalyst for change across the country. The impact of this tragedy is felt widely, even in Shutesbury, our small town, so far away. The Select Board and our Police Department have been grappling with questions like "What can we do?", "How can we work to prevent acts of violence here?" and "How do we communicate to Shutesbury residents the steps we are taking?".

This is not a new discussion for the Select Board. Over many years, we have made conscious efforts to fight against discrimination here in Shutesbury. We've been very thoughtful in our hiring practices to create a police department that values diversity. In a broader effort to include training to all our town employees and volunteers, we engaged Deborah I. Ecker, Esq. from KP Law, who is Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD) certified to provide sensitivity and implicit bias training. We can happily report that these training sessions were well attended by many. We will continue to have our police officers and other town officials participate in similar training on a continual basis.

Police Chief Fernandes brings to Shutesbury a strong commitment to community policing and we on the Select Board, support him in that commitment. Chief Fernandes has made community policing a priority in his hiring and training practices, and the Select Board encourages, supports, and applauds him in these efforts. One of Chief Fernandes's first steps was to purchase body cameras for his entire department and require them to be worn at all times while officers are on duty. These cameras are activated the moment an officer leaves the vehicle. Camera footage is downloaded and reviewed by the chief on a weekly basis. The benefit of these cameras is they

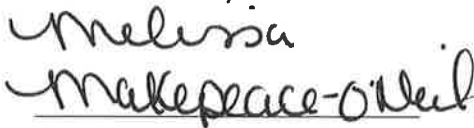
provide the ability to use the information as a monitor of police activity and as a teaching/training tool. We, on the Select Board, have full confidence that Chief Fernandes and his officers are equipped to help with the enormous challenges that we all face.

We fully recognize that with our best efforts, some may feel we could expand upon our efforts, or there may be issues that we are unaware of. We would like to encourage members of the community to come forward and share if you see something that needs attention. Likewise, we also want people to come to us to share your thoughts and ideas. Chief Fernandes welcomes anyone who would like to reach out via email or by phone, as does the Select Board.

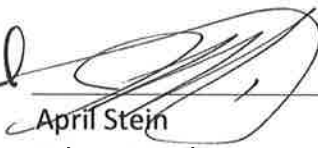
Collectively, our goal is for our community to be a safe, inclusive place for everyone, residents, and visitors alike. It is through open communication, education, and inclusion that we reach this goal. Families are families, people are people, and the world is made richer by the diversity and inclusion of us all.

Sincerely,

The Shutesbury Select Board and Shutesbury Chief of Police



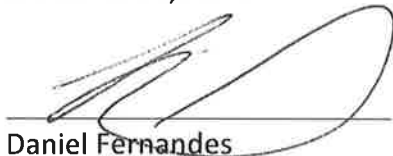
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Select Board, Chair



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Shutesbury Police Chief