

Chair David Abramson
Statement – Select Board Meeting June 1, 2020

Tonight, before starting our meeting, I want to address the tragic death of George Floyd while in police custody. Usually, I would ask for a moment of silence, but I don't think that's enough here.

This is a time to speak out. I join those who are outraged by this horrific murder. George Floyd didn't have to die. It's time to join together to say enough is enough. Thank you to everyone who participated in last night's ***Black Lives Matter*** event. Your voices joined the voices of so many across the country who have had enough of police brutality.

Your outrage was also shared by many police officers across the country. The Minneapolis Police chief called Floyd's death "a violation of Humanity." Boston Police Commissioner William Gross called Floyd's death a "horrendous, cowardly act" and added "that is not the way we police. That is not the way we're going to police."

"I can't breathe." This was also what Eric Garner pleaded as he was placed in a choke hold by New York police in 2014. Since January 2015, 1,252 black people have been shot and killed by police, according the Washington Post and that number doesn't include people like George Floyd, who was killed using other methods. We need to keep talking about this, so we don't forget. George Floyd's life mattered.

I want to end by sharing what Barack Obama said in the aftermath Mr. Floyd's murder. President Obama said:

"It's natural to wish for life "to just get back to normal" as a pandemic and economic crisis upend everything around us. But we have to remember that for millions of Americans, being treated differently on account of race is tragically, painfully, maddeningly 'normal' — whether it's while dealing with the health care system, or interacting with the criminal justice system, or jogging down the street, or just watching birds in a park.

But it falls on all of us, regardless of our race or station — including the majority of men and women in law enforcement who take pride in doing their tough job the right way, every day — to work together to create a "new normal" in which the legacy of bigotry and unequal treatment no longer infects our institutions or our hearts."