



## **BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

Emergency Meeting

Meeting Minutes

Monday, January 11, 2021

5:00 PM

Virtual Meeting

**Present:** Jon Benson, Dean Charter, David Martin, Joan Gardner, Jim Snyder-Grant, Town Manager John S. Mangiaratti

**Absent:** None

Mr. Benson called the emergency meeting to order at 5:00 PM via a virtual meeting with no Board members in physical attendance and broadcasted via Zoom.us virtual meeting platform.

### **I. New/Special Business**

Board to Discuss Response to Hate Incident at the Acton-Boxborough School Committee Virtual Zoom Meeting on January 7, 2021, Including Updates of the Acton Police Investigations of the December 17, 2020 and January 7, 2021 Hate Incidents

Mr. Benson opened the meeting at 5:00 PM and declared that the emergency meeting was necessary to discuss the January 7<sup>th</sup> incident where two members of the Acton Boxborough School Committee were subjected to racist remarks during a virtual meeting on January 7, 2021 for the second time in three weeks. Mr. Benson invited Ms. Abayaah-Issah of the ABSC to speak first, followed by Ms. Wilson Cook of the ABSC. Additional statements were made from members of the School Committee and then Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, as well as members of the community. There was a brief update from Chief Rich Burrows on the status of the police investigations into these incidents.

Mr. Benson read aloud a draft statement that was published in advance in the meeting packet and is included as an attachment to these minutes.

**Ms. Gardner moved to adopt the statement of the Board of Selectmen, seconded by Mr. Martin. Mr. Martin called roll:**

**Mr. Snyder-Grant – aye**

**Ms. Gardner – aye**

**Mr. Charter – aye**

**Mr. Benson – aye**

**Mr. Martin – aye**

**The Board voted 5-0, the motion carried.**



Mr. Mangiaratti was directed to post the statement of the Board of Selectmen on the town website.

**Ms. Gardner moved to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Martin. Mr. Martin called roll:**

**Mr. Snyder-Grant – aye**

**Ms. Gardner – aye**

**Mr. Charter – aye**

**Mr. Benson – aye**

**Mr. Martin – aye**

**The Board voted 5-0, the motion carried.**

**Meeting adjourned at 6:02 PM.**

#### **Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting**

- Agenda, December 18, 2020
- Board of Selectmen Draft Statement on Hate Incident

**Statement by the Board of Selectmen—1/11/21—DRAFT**

Harassment and dehumanization of elected public officials is unacceptable in the Town of Acton and will not be tolerated. On behalf of the Town of Acton, the Board of Selectmen unanimously condemns the hateful, racist language that School Committee members Kyra Wilson Cook of Acton and Evelyn Abayaah-Issah of Boxborough, have been subjected to during a School Committee meeting for the second time in three weeks. The attack on Kyra and Evelyn is an attack against the community, including all elected members of the Board of Selectmen and the School Committee as well as the 250 community members who serve on Acton's nearly 50 boards, committees and commissions. Together with Town Meeting we are part of the oldest, continuous form of local government in the world. We stand together.

The Board of Selectmen pledges to make available the necessary financial resources to the Acton Police Department so that the police may pursue and complete their investigations of the December 17 and January 7 racist incidents.

It is sad and disappointing that despite our increasingly diverse society and very diverse town, racial and ethnic stereotyping persists. It is incumbent on all of us locally—the Board of Selectmen, Local Government, individuals, parents, our schools, our houses of worship and our

businesses to impress upon our children and adult neighbors and friends that racism and racist

acts have no place in Acton. It must stop.