

Proclamation on systemic racism and establishment of Oversight Committee

Whereas, the Town of Great Barrington unequivocally opposes any manifestation of hatred and prejudice towards any group or individual and recognizes that systemic racism is a threat to public health and safety.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the Selectboard that the Town of Great Barrington will:

1. Advance the implementation of the 2017 Great Barrington Trust Policy and develop a formal process for addressing violations.
2. Initiate a self-study of the history of race and racism in Great Barrington resulting in a series of recommendations on how to illuminate the role of race and take steps to make amends for past injustices and highlight the positive.
3. Review and reform hiring practices and personnel policies for all town departments to develop a more diverse staff in a supportive and inclusive work environment.
4. Provide implicit bias, de-escalation, crisis intervention, and other similar training for town departments.

Whereas, the Great Barrington Police Department has a special role in our town which calls for additional oversight.

Therefore, the Selectboard resolves to:

1. Create a working group to reflect the needs of our community and to review current practices and policies, and, if necessary, to make recommendations with respect to:
 - a. Department transparency and accountability
 - b. Handling of allegations of misconduct
 - c. Directing resources to community-based services to support residents and divert them from the criminal justice system.
2. Support state and federal police reform efforts which include:
 - a. Creation of Peaceful Officer Support Training (MA H.2146)
 - b. The banning of the use of excessive force and the requirement of the intervention of officers in the event of excessive force is used (MA S.2800 and H.R.7120)
 - c. Creation of an independent special prosecutor at the state level to review and, where appropriate, to prosecute cases of potentially criminal police misconduct (H.R.7120)
 - d. The reform of civil service exams (MA H.2292)

- e. Creation of the Police Officer Standards and Accreditation Committee (POSAC) that certifies officers, maintains database on officer misconduct, and recertifies or decertifies an officer every three years based on actions (MA S.2800).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Town of Great Barrington supports the work of our Police Department, our Town government, and our schools to make them more diverse, equitable and inclusive and commits to seeking further policy and administrative measures in support of deepening our community's understanding of systemic racism and the deep harm it causes.