



TOWN OF STOUGHTON

SELECT BOARD

10 Pearl Street – Stoughton, MA 02072 (781) 341-1300 Fax (781) 297-2879

May 7, 2024

To: Town Meeting Members

Re: Police Contracts and Police and VNA Budgets

Good evening Town Meeting Members,

We are writing to you this evening to reaffirm the Select Board's support for the FY25 Police and Public Health/VNA budgets which were supported by a Select Board vote of 4 – 0 and by a Finance Committee a vote of 12 – 0.

As you know, the Police Department personnel are signatory to two labor unions. The command staff belongs to the Superiors Union and the Patrolmen belong to the Patrolmen Union. During the summer and fall of 2023, the Town's negotiating team consisting of Town Manager Calter, HR Director Chatsko, and Labor Counsel Feodoroff, engaged in good faith negotiations with representatives of the two Police unions. The Union and Town representatives worked collaboratively to reach agreement on new contracts. Let me remind you, the Manager made a commitment to deliver MOU's to the Finance Committee no later than December 31, 2023. The two sides in the negotiation process agreed to prioritize issues of employee attrition, employee recruitment, the barriers to safe staffing created by civil service, the command structure and the professional development of every Police Department member. Both sides carefully considered every proposal. Both sides agreed to meet weekly in an effort to reach agreement by December 31, 2023. Never once was there a breakdown in good faith negotiations. The Town negotiating team and the Union representatives agreed to execute MOU's by December 31, 2023. Those executed MOU's were immediately transmitted to the Select Board and the Finance Committee. The Select Board voted 4 – 1 in support of both Police MOU's. The Finance Committee voted 12 – 0 in favor of both Police MOU's on March 27, 2024. All of the priorities set forth by the parties were addressed and resolved by mutual agreement. The negotiations were long, difficult and complex. It was because of the fair dealings by both parties that agreements were reached. The Select Board stands behind its support for the Police Department and the contracts they have earned. To reduce the value of these contracts at this late stage may represent bad faith dealings in the collective bargaining process. The Police Department and its dedicated members are doing everything asked of them to build a professional brand that we will all be proud of. Those two Police contracts will provide the tools needed to rebuild safe staffing levels, recruit high quality candidates and to strengthen the command staff. **The Select Board strongly supports the Police Department members and the contracts they negotiated and encourages the Town Meeting Members to do so as well.**

The Stoughton Select Board further asks Town Meeting members to support the FY25 operating budget of the Stoughton Public Health/VNA. On January 16, 2024, the Select Board voted 5 – 0 in support of the Public Health/VNA FY25 operating budget. On March 27, 2024, the Finance Committee members voted 16 – 0 in support of the Public Health/VNA budget. Both Select Board members and Finance Committee recall the enthusiastic support of the VNA during the spring of 2023 Town Meeting. Recent suggestions that the Public Health/VNA Department be disbanded are based on misleading financial data. In short, it has been suggested that approximately \$400,000 could be saved and reinvested elsewhere if the VNA were to be disbanded. As Town Meeting members well know, the Public Health/VNA Department is structured as an Enterprise fund. Therefore, it is assigned approximately \$266,807 in indirect costs. If the VNA is eliminated, those indirect costs would not be eliminated. They would be reallocated to other Departments. The actual FY25 structural deficit is \$133,193 for both Public Health and VNA. Because the Town is mandated to provide public health services, that expense cannot be eliminated. We will still need to budget approximately \$150,000 for public health services. In summary, the indirect cost allocation of \$266,807 and the cost of mandated public health services of approximately \$150,000 exceed the structural deficit of \$400,000. Putting aside the valuable services provided by our VNA, those services are paid for in full through insurance reimbursements. The VNA is actually subsidizing the Public Health side of the Department. **Given those financial considerations and the Board's deep appreciation of the services provided by our VNA team, the Select Board strongly supports their FY25 budget and requests that Town Meeting enthusiastically demonstrates their support as well.**

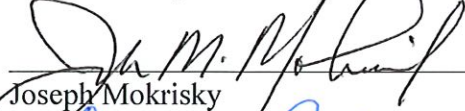
Respectfully,
Select Board Members



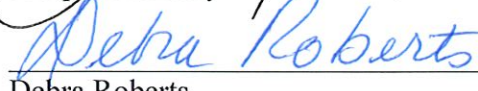
Stephen M. Cavey, Chair



Scott Carrara, Vice Chair



Joseph Mokrisky



Debra Roberts

Louis Gitto