

**Statement by the Natick Select Board Regarding Matter(s) Involving James Quilty
Wednesday, November 2, 2022**

Yesterday, the Town of Natick released a Press Statement signed by the Select Board Chair, the Town Administrator, and the Police Chief. The statement reads as follows:

“The Town of Natick strives to be transparent and as timely as possible with all updates provided to the residents of Natick and the public at large. We're providing this timeline and accompanying documentation in an effort to summarize all shareable facts, as the law permits, given multiple, active legal proceedings pertaining to this incident. We fully appreciate the significance and sensitivity of this matter. We're confident that this timeline illustrates our earnest attempt to balance transparent communications and the realities of legal due process.”

The Natick Select Board, by its vote this evening, affirms and adopts this statement.

The Natick Select Board further offers the following statement regarding this matter:

1. The Town of Natick and its Select Board strongly and unequivocally condemn acts of sexual harassment and sexual assault.

The Board supports Natick’s employment policies designed to protect the privacy and interests of all parties and which foster a safe work environment where employees are trained to understand what behavior is deemed illegal and/or inappropriate, and where victims or those witnessing such behavior are able to report such incidents without fear of intimidation, retribution, or shame.

2. The Town of Natick seeks to promote transparency but must also adhere to strict rules and procedures to ensure that its actions do not violate any individual’s rights to privacy or legal due process and do not expose the Town to legal liability.

In that context, the Select Board continues to work diligently with Counsel, the Town Administrator, and the Natick Police Chief to review and release information to the public as we can. Recent press coverage about the Quilty matter lacked some details and context which, for legal reasons, cannot be shared and thus did not necessarily align with the reporting schedule or editorial choices of the press.

As evidenced by the timeline shared in the Press Statement of November 1st, the Select Board and/or its chair, working in collaboration with Counsel, the Administration, and the Police Chief, has been actively apprised of the Quilty matter and/or involved in both the investigations of this matter since June 2020 (the height of the pandemic) and the ongoing responses undertaken as additional facts have emerged. The Natick Select Board continues to reserve its rights to administer future disciplinary action(s) regarding this matter.

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3. The Town and the Select Board consider many factors before releasing certain types of documents and/or taking disciplinary action.

Regarding the release of information, such as Executive Session meeting minutes or investigation reports, whether they are public or not is governed by the General Laws, case law, and the Board's determinations concerning whether it is legally able to release this type of information. Some examples include: Will the release of information adversely affect criminal or civil litigation now or in the future? Will the release of information inadvertently harm the reputation of anyone not directly involved? Will the release of information expose the Town and/or its employees(s) to criminal or civil liability?

Regarding the discipline of police officers, the authority to discipline rests with the Chief and the Appointing Authority, in Natick's case, the Select Board. Each disciplinary matter is considered separately, and each is handled individually. When discipline is before the Select Board, it considers the advice of the Chief of Police and Counsel, and evaluates the facts and law which apply to each situation, including things such as the availability of witnesses, the evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of each case, and how such case may hold up when challenged in the Civil Service process or, more likely, through arbitration. The Select Board understands that if its disciplinary action is overturned in arbitration, the result is typically a return to duty of the alleged wrongdoer and restoration of their pay and status, even in cases where the allegations might have been true but the punishment was deemed too severe by the arbitrator.

4. The Select Board believes that every member of our community should feel safe and have 100% confidence in our public servants and their leadership, whether by title or example.

Earning the trust of our community members and fellow Natick employees relies on the Town's continuing commitment to training its employees, holding them accountable, and fostering a culture of transparency and continuous improvement so that such rare situations no longer taint anyone's trust in the Town, including its staff - especially those in departments of public safety, governance, and administration.

Given the ongoing nature of this matter, including current and potential future litigation, the Natick Select Board will continue to collaborate with the Administration and Police Department to determine the appropriate time(s) and manner in which it shall respond further.