

The Pelham Select Board and Police Chief are grateful and supportive of the thoughtful statement created by leaders in neighboring Amherst. We express our support by adopting points from their statement into ours.

We too are haunted by the searing vision of a Minneapolis police officer kneeling on a subdued man's neck, as other officers watched the man die. We too, are also haunted by the knowledge that this was not an isolated incident in our country. The number of names and similar experiences is unconscionably long, and an undeniable part of the history of this nation.

We extend our collective condolences to Mr. Floyd's family and friends and to all who grieve his death. We offer our thoughts to the countless members of our community who have been personally impacted as well.

We condemn the actions of the police officers involved and denounce in the strongest possible terms the actions and inactions by these police officers that resulted in Mr. Floyd's death. We feel compelled to say affirmatively and with real compassion that violence like this is yet another blow to black and brown people—particularly African-American men—who too often are told by our culture that they do not matter. This is a wrong that needs to be righted, and white Americans need to join those who have been carrying this burden and do the heaviest lifting to right it.

As public officials, this tragedy makes us reflect on our own practices, behavior, and attitudes. We strive to use our legal and moral authority to protect all members of our community no matter their race or color or where they fall on the power spectrum. It is our duty to foster a community free of fear, intimidation, and violence – a community in which people are not targeted or hurt unnecessarily by law enforcement – and provide equal protection under the law.

As a country we must do more to confront the systemic racism that has brought us to this place of fear and distrust. We can advocate for the criminal justice system to take a firm stand against officers who use excessive force. Those of us who are white can demonstrate that protecting and promoting the rights of black and brown people in our community is integral to securing the well-being of our entire community.

In the aftermath of this tragedy, we reaffirm our commitment to the larger goals of social justice and will focus on how we can deliver on the promise of good and fair public safety protection. We welcome your thoughts and suggestions. We will work with our community leaders to determine the best ways for us to engage in this important mission as we continue to move forward.

Pelham Select Board Members Karen Ribeiro and Bob Agoglia
Pelham Police Chief Gary Thomann