



# TOWN OF WAYLAND

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December 21, 2022

Dear Select Board Members:

In our advisory capacity to the Select Board, we write today to endorse the following recommendations from the Wayland Policing Working Group in the wake of the recent former police chief investigation. May two members of the Human Rights, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee have 15 minutes on an upcoming Select Board meeting agenda to share these recommendations and address any questions you may have?

Respectfully,

The Wayland Human Rights, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee

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December 19, 2022

Dear HRDEIC members and Acting Town Manager John Bugbee,

We, the Wayland Policing Working Group, are sharing our initial suggestions following the Police Chief investigation. We note that many other towns are struggling with hidden sexual harassment and a hostile workplace for women in Police Departments. A quick survey shows that Acton, Brookline, Natick, Revere, and Stoughton Police Departments have experienced these issues within the past few years. Around the country, many female police officers have experienced sexual harassment from other officers and retaliation when they come forward, while the perpetrators often go unpunished. In a survey of 3,000 female police officers across the US, over 70% had experienced sexual harassment.<sup>1</sup> Zero tolerance sexual harassment policies are moot when the culture within many police departments tolerates officer misconduct against female officers. It becomes apparent that it is often not sexual harassment policy itself that is the problem, but implementation and the culture within police departments that overlooks gender bias, stereotyping of women, sexual harassment, and retaliation. There is ample evidence demonstrating

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<sup>1</sup> Siegel, Emily R. and Simone Weichselbaum, "Major U.S. police departments plagued by officer-on-officer sexual abuse and retaliation," NBC News. December 9, 2022. Accessed at: <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/major-us-police-departments-plagued-officer-officer-sexual-abuse-retal-rcna53020>

why female police officers do not feel safe, and are afraid to come forward if they are harassed or assaulted. Wayland is not immune to these same dynamics. The Town Manager and Select Board can help mitigate these issues by making changes that will make the Police Department a safer and more welcoming work environment for women.

We offer these suggestions for your consideration, and hope that they will contribute to the HRDEIC's discussion and recommendations for moving Wayland forward following this sobering investigation.

1. Recommend the Select Board ask the Acting Chief of Police to speak about how the Police Department will address these issues.
2. Hire a permanent Chief of Police who has demonstrated experience remedying these issues, and who can recommend ways to ensure gender discrimination or harassment will not be tolerated within the department.
3. Ask the new or Acting Chief how they will foster a culture of trust with the female police officers and other female staff. Ask for the Police Chief to have a way to 'check-in' with female staff about their experience in the department.
4. Significantly increase the percentage of women officers in the Police Department. Half the town is female.
5. Support termination policies to terminate officers or staff who do not adhere to Wayland Police Department's Code of Ethics and Sexual Harassment Policies.
6. Pursue a contract with Advocates of Framingham, which would provide a clinician to be embedded within the Police Department. This would provide a trained social worker to support the officers in their work, and an outsider perspective.
7. Pursue rebuilding the community's trust, particularly with survivors in the community who may question if they can trust the police to assist them without bias. Create a more visible focus on helping survivors of domestic abuse and sexual assault.
8. Consider creating a position in town administration for reporting violations, such as a DEI or civil rights officer.
9. Undertake trauma-informed trainings for the police on domestic violence and sexual assault taught by domestic violence service providers (and not police). The Cambridge Police Department has done something like this and in 2020 published a manual to help police departments create a similar training.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Cambridge Police Department, "Guide for a Trauma-Informed Law Enforcement Initiative." Accessed at: <https://www.cambridgema.gov/-/media/Files/policedepartment/SpecialReports/guidefortraumainformedlawenforcementinitiative.pdf>

10. Invite female survivors of domestic abuse/coercive control and sexual harassment/assault, including female police officers to speak to the Wayland Police Department.
11. Include an annual review of Wayland's Code of Ethics and the Sexual Harassment Policy in Wayland's Police Procedures and Policies Manual with discussion of how officers and staff will uphold policy and report violations.
12. Create a community group that works with the Police Department.
13. Consider a town-wide Equity Audit.
14. Finally, the graphic nature of the material in this Investigation of Complaint Finding of Fact and Conclusions can be triggering for victims of assault and abuse. As such, please consider adding a trigger warning and contact information for a support organization.

We believe that the recent police department investigation demonstrated that there were serious issues and long standing tolerance of gender discrimination and sexual harassment in our police department. We put forth these suggestions to support positive change and would support other ideas that would work towards creating a culture and work environment reflecting 21st Century Policing standards and mending trust between our police and victims of harassment and assault.

Best regards,

Mary Ann Borowski, Mei-Ling Ellerman, Jeff Kurtz