



Town of Needham, Massachusetts Media Release

Office of the Town Manager
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Town Hires Natasha Tidwell to Investigate Claims in Henry Case

Attorney Tidwell is Experienced Investigator, Lead Monitor in Ferguson, MO

NEEDHAM – Monday, September 14, 2020 – Town Manager Kate Fitzpatrick announced today that the Town has hired Boston attorney Natasha Tidwell as the independent investigator tasked with examining the facts and circumstances of claims made against members of the Needham Police Department stemming from an incident at CVS on Highland Avenue in Needham in January of this year.

Tidwell is a partner in the Litigation Group with Saul Ewing Arnstein and Lehr where she helps lead the firm's Higher Education, K-12 Schools, White Collar and Government Litigation practices. Tidwell is a former federal prosecutor and a police officer whose background informs her work as a federal monitor. She is currently the lead monitor in Ferguson, Missouri, overseeing implementation of reforms to the city's police department and municipal court in the wake of a Justice Department civil rights investigation.

The Town sought an independent investigator after attorneys for Boston resident Marvin Henry sent a letter to the Town in July alleging that Mr. Henry had been the subject of inappropriate police behavior resulting from allegations by a CVS employee that he had been shoplifting in the store.

Tidwell's investigation will include examination of actions taken by the police officers involved including the initial response to the 911 call, the officers' activities on scene and closure of the scene and any actions taken by the Needham Police Department with respect to the subsequent investigation of complaints stemming from the January 25, 2020 call for service.

Tidwell will also review the Department's policies effective as of January 25, 2020 and determine if the actions taken by department personnel were consistent with those policies. The scope of the investigation also includes determining what role, if any, racial discrimination or implicit bias played in the officers' actions and response to the incident and its aftermath.

Additionally, Tidwell will review Needham Police Department policies that relate to the incident and provide recommendations, where needed, as to the appropriateness, effectiveness, and sufficiency of each policy. Tidwell may also provide recommendations as to additional training or other steps the Department should consider to improve its delivery of services, including to communities of color.

The investigation is expected to be complete this Fall. The results of Tidwell's investigation will be published on the Town's website.

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