



**TOWN OF
NEEDHAM
MASSACHUSETTS**

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**LAWYERS FOR
CIVIL RIGHTS
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Forward-Looking Settlement Reached in Federal Civil Rights Lawsuit

Boston, MA (February 14, 2023)—The Town of Needham and lawyers for Mr. Marvin Henry announced today that they have reached a settlement agreement with Mr. Henry, an employee of a local Needham business who was detained by local police in January 2020.

The Needham Police Department (NPD) takes seriously its responsibility to perform its duties free of bias and discrimination. In light of the incident involving Mr. Henry and as part of the settlement, NPD will continue mandatory and ongoing training of all officers and leadership on implicit bias, de-escalation, and cultural competency. In addition, several key NPD policies, such as the Bias-Free Policing Policy, have also been reviewed and revised.

“The Town of Needham works very hard to be a welcoming and inclusive community for all residents and visitors,” said Select Board Chair Marianne Cooley. “As we always have, we will continue to examine the areas that challenge us and find opportunities to improve the way we do our work and to ensure we are acting in alignment with our values.”

The settlement does not include any admission of wrongdoing by the Needham Police Department. The Needham Select Board had issued a public statement on 3/15/2021 apologizing to Mr. Henry by acknowledging “Mr. Henry has expressed that this incident was a traumatic and painful one and for that, we are deeply sorry. Mr. Henry did nothing wrong.”

Mr. Henry is a Black father of four sons. In January 2020, Mr. Henry was detained and handcuffed on the same road as his workplace in response to a call to NPD about a shoplifting in progress which was later determined to have been attempted by a different Black man. No charges were ever brought against Mr. Henry.

“We are pleased that the Town of Needham has taken this incident as an opportunity to adopt reforms and training procedures that will help ensure that all police encounters are conducted with dignity and respect,” said Sophia Hall, Deputy Litigation Director at Lawyers for Civil Rights and one of Mr. Henry’s attorneys. “Meaningful police reform requires an internal culture shift that can only begin with the development and reinforcement of appropriate training and policies that place of disproportionately impacted communities first,” she added.

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As part of the settlement agreement, Mr. Henry received monetary compensation. The settlement is confidential and no further details are available.

In addition to Lawyers for Civil Rights, Mr. Henry was also represented by *pro bono* attorneys from WilmerHale LLP.