

WHEREAS, racism is deeply embedded in America's history, culture, society, and legal and political systems; and

WHEREAS, racism acts on systemic, institutional, and interpersonal levels, all of which operate throughout time and across generations; and

WHEREAS, racism—not race—causes disproportionately high levels of homelessness, poverty, incarceration, and negative health outcomes; and

WHEREAS, data shows that people of color — particularly Black, Latino, and Native American people — have less access to educational attainment, healthy nutrition, gainful employment, a clean environment, and healthcare, all of which are social determinants of health; and

WHEREAS, negative social determinants of health cause people of color to suffer greater rates of diabetes, asthma, heart disease, high blood pressure, mental health afflictions, and other diseases which significantly reduce their life expectancy; and

WHEREAS, research shows that the killings of unarmed Black men create fear and distrust of police across the country that heighten levels of stress, anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder in Black communities, in turn worsening physical health; and

WHEREAS, in the aftermath of the killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, the Black Lives Matter movement fought to make the entire nation understand the need for sustainable policy and cultural changes to bring about racial justice; and

WHEREAS, the American Academy of Pediatrics has concluded that prolonged exposure to stress hormones, such as cortisol, resulting from racism predisposes individuals to chronic disease; and

WHEREAS, the American Medical Association has concluded that racism in its systemic, structural, institutional, and interpersonal forms is an urgent threat to public health, the advancement of health equity, and a barrier to excellence in the delivery of medical care; and

WHEREAS, the American Public Health Association recommends (1) eliminating policies and practices that facilitate disproportionate violence against specific populations, (2) instituting robust law enforcement accountability measures, (3) increasing investment in promoting racial and economic equity to address social determinants of health, (4) implementing community-based alternatives to addressing harms and preventing trauma, and (5) working with public health officials to comprehensively document law enforcement contact, violence, and injuries; and
WHEREAS, research concludes that people of color face worse public health outcomes than white Americans, including white Americans with the same income in the same community;

WHEREAS, the Longmeadow Select Board recognizes that racism is a public health crisis that affects all members of our society both on a local level and nationwide and deserves action from all levels of government and civil society; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Longmeadow Select Board does hereby declare racism a public health crisis; and

WHEREAS, the Longmeadow Select Board supports the establishment of a working group to address these issues and to: (1) reshape the discourse and actively engage all citizens in the dedicated work necessary to address the scourge of systematic racism; (2) continue to work to build alliances with organizations that are confronting racism and encourage partners to recognize racism as a public health crisis; (3) continue to promote racially equitable hiring and promotion of all employees, including Town employees; and (4) advocate and draft relevant policies that recognize and seek to mitigate the adverse impacts of racism.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Longmeadow Select Board recommits itself to serving residents by continuing to prioritize law enforcement reform, increasing access to opportunity, and listening to unheard voices in the community; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that through combating systemic racism, the Town of Longmeadow can be a place in which everyone can enjoy a more equitable share of dignity and prosperity.