

## **Massachusetts Special Commission on Combatting Antisemitism**

### **Meeting Minutes 11.5.2025**

**Date:** November 5, 2025

**Time:** 11am-4pm

**Location:** Gardner Auditorium (Massachusetts State House, 24 Beacon Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02133) and Virtual via Microsoft Teams

#### **Attendees:**

- State Senator John Velis (Virtual)
- State Representative Simon Cataldo (In-person)
- Jody Kipnis, CEO of the Holocaust Legacy Foundation (In-person)
- Peggy Shukur, Vice President of the East Division of the Anti-Defamation League (In-person)
- Michael Memmolo, Executive Director at the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (In-person)
- State Representative Steven Howitt (In-person)
- David Friedman, Governor's Appointee (In-person)
- Jill Hai, Lexington Select Board (In-Person)
- Aaron Polansky, Superintendent of Old Colony Regional Vocational Technical High School (In-person)
- Rita Blanter, Board Member of Congregation Ahavat Olam in North Andover Jill Hai, Member of the Lexington Select Board (In-person)
- Constantia Papanikolaou, Chief Legal Counsel, Massachusetts Department of Higher Education (In-person)
- District Attorney Paul Tucker, Essex County District Attorney (Virtual)
- Mayor Ruthanne Fuller, Mayor of Newton (In-Person)
- Jamie Hoag, Senior Counselor to the Attorney General (In-Person)
- Chief Thomas Fowler, Salisbury Police Department (In-person)
- Dara Kaufman, Executive Director at the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires (Virtual)

## 1. Roll Call

- **Commission Co-Chair Cataldo** called the meeting to order and asked Anna O'Sullivan to conduct the roll call.
- **Roll Call:** Conducted by Anna O'Sullivan.

## 2. Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes

- **Commission Co-Chair Cataldo** requested a motion to approve the minutes from the October 16, 2025, meeting.
- **Commission Blanter** motioned to approve.
- **Commissioner Fuller** seconded.
- **Non-opposed:** The minutes were adopted by a voice vote.

## 3. Opening Statements and Announcements

- **Commission Co-Chair Cataldo** welcomed commission members and the public. He explained process of meeting and that majority of meeting would be for Commissioner discussion on the draft report and the DESE Rubric.

## 4. Discussion on Law Enforcement Training

**Speaker:** Chief James Hicks of the Natick Police Department; Chairman, Municipal Police Training Committee (MPTC); Chief Thomas Fowler of the Salisbury Police Department

### Discussion Highlights:

- Chief Fowler explained that Gov. Baker requested MPTC to establish specialized training curriculum to designated Civil Rights Officers (CRO's) to prevent hate crimes.
- Chief Fowler noted it can be difficult for officers to recognize antisemitism.
- Chief Fowler endorsed IHRA definition in use for training curriculum.
- Chief Hicks explained that MPTC can set and oversee training standards for police departments
- Chief Hicks explained that MPTC is responsible for developing and delivering training to municipal police, transit police, campus police and more.
- Chief Hicks explained that MPTC has broad authority to change training standards after Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission; MPTC has flexibility to adjust training as needed.

### Q&A Highlights:

- **Commissioner Friedman** asked about the 2022 Mapping project; Chief Fowler noted there are antisemitic incidents which do not rise to the level of a crime but it is still important that police are aware of incidents; Chief Hicks noted that MPTC has authority to change training standards to address arising issues.
- **Commissioner Friedman** asked about the use of masks by protestors and law enforcement; Chief Hicks noted there is a law which prohibits using a mask while committing a crime, stated that police should be identifiable; Chief Fowler noted that there are often legitimate reasons law enforcement wears masks, but noted that local law enforcement has been frustrated by masked federal agents who do not coordinate with local police.
- **Commissioner Papanikolaou** asked if campus police are covered by MPTC; Chief Hicks noted that all campus police fall under MPTC.
- **Commissioner Shukur** asked how efficacy of training is measured and if police have difficulty making time for training; Chief Hicks noted that delivery of training is a challenge for MPTC, trying to hold more virtual/hybrid trainings.
- **Commissioner Hai** asked about coordination with HART Unit; Chief Fowler stated that the infrastructure is there with CRO's; Chief Hicks noted that HART is consulted and assists when developing training and curriculum.

## **5. Discussion on the Massachusetts Special Commission on Combating Antisemitism's Draft Final Report**

### **Discussion Highlights:**

All Commissioners present shared feedback on the draft report, including:

- Changes to the prefatory language including
  - Use of definitions beyond IHRA
  - Making the report and recommendations more Massachusetts focused
  - Changing tone to make more inclusive and removing advocacy language
  - Language and grammar changes
- Edits and changes to findings and recommendations
  - Finding and recommendations on BDS
  - Finding and recommendations on partnering with museums
  - Finding on foreign funding
  - Proposed section on potential legislative actions Commission should support

## **6. Discussion on Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE) Antisemitism and Societal Bias Prevention Curriculum and Professional Development Draft Rubric**

### **Discussion Highlights:**

- Tying DESE Rubric to legal obligations of school committees
- Clarifying respective roles of school committees and superintendents
- Compare to Safe Schools Program for LGBTQ students
- Rollout of DESE Rubric
- More explanation as to what antisemitism actually is
- Rubric should fully capture DESE curriculum framework

## 7. Adjournment

- **Commission Co-Chair Cataldo** thanked commission members and the public for participation and asked for a motion to adjourn.
- **Commissioner Hai** motioned.
- **Commissioner Memmolo seconded the motion.**
- Meeting Adjourned.