**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Chief Szala’s July Update on Department Headquarters**

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**Dartmouth, MA**

**July 26, 2016**

After a failed vote in April to renovate the police station, Chief Robert Szala has been working with an established Advisory Board and Town Administrator, David Cressman. Originally, Chief Szala was tasked with recommending a ballot question for the general election in November 2016.  After several meetings with this Advisory Board consisting of Robert Michaud, Lorri-Ann Miller, John Quinn, Lara Stone, David Tatelbaum, Kenneth Vincent and Project Manager Richard Pomroy, it was decided that November was too ambitious and would result in a rushed decision. A consensus was reached to move this ballot question to the Annual Town election in April 2017 so a more comprehensive plan could be developed.

Advisory members are now discussing the need for a new location, how much it will cost and how willing Town residents are to invest in such a project. Chief Szala is committed to finding a safe, healthy and efficient work environment for the Police Department now and into the future. This mission guides the Advisory Board going forward. The Chief and Advisory Board are scheduled to go before the full Select Board on August 8 to discuss next steps.

Discussion will include merits of a new building study and possibility of sending an RFQ for an approved architect. This effort would allow for a parallel tract in supporting a next phase of the project in preparation for Town Meeting in October 2016. Locations discussed with the Advisory Board include town-owned land and privately owned land within the highest volume call for service zone within Town. This data is guiding decision-making.

Recently the Standard Times and Dartmouth Weekly have published articles and the Dartmouth Police Department Facebook Page and Website have listed information about the current status of the Department. Chief Szala is committed to educating Town residents about the needs of the Department on an on-going basis and will continue to update the Select Board in open, public meetings as Town Warrant Articles are prepared for the October Town Meeting.

The Dartmouth Police Department has a stake in and an impact on the quality of life in our community. The Advisory Board and the Chief are committed to developing a safe, healthy and efficient facility for the future. If residents have questions, they may visit <http://www.dartmouthpd.org/>

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