Re: URGENT: Formal Notice to Fairhaven Town Leadership | Immediate Attention and Action Required | On-going Civil Rights Violations

1 message

John Bennett <johnabennett66@gmail.com> Tue, Nov 3, 2026 at 10:24 AM
To: selectboard@fairhaven-ma.gov, aromano@fairhaven-ma.gov, namello@fairhaven-ma.gov, pkuechler@fairhaven-ma.gov, asaunders@fairhaven-ma.gov, rtrapilo@fairhaven-ma.gov
Cc: khickey@fairhaven-ma.gov, daniel.dorgan@fairhavenpolice.org, aco@fairhaven-ma.gov, svieira@fairhaven-ma.gov

Any and all who are new to this conversation…

I invite you to request from Mr. Hickey the volumes of communications between us. In them, I pleaded for his support, challenged him to come to his senses, and implored him to see through the games being played within Town Administration and the Police Department LONG before he arrived. I appealed to his humanity. I could not have been more explicit about the very real danger to my life created by his apparent disregard for his obligations under the law.

These communications began in early April of this year. The last I heard from our Town Manager, MONTHS ago, the best he could offer this severely epileptic, disabled resident, whose fully ADA-compliant Service Dogs are necessary to keep him alive, was essentially: "Keep the dogs in the yard."

That is a complete dismissal of my federally protected civil rights. His actions and inactions are, in a word, criminal.

And we ain't talking misdemeanor. **THIS SHIT IS SERIOUS.**

Civil rights. The kind of thing people march for when authorities trample them. Just wait and see what happens when the public sees what has been happening and how long it has been allowed to continue.

You might also ask your Town Manager whether he ever even CONSIDERED enlisting the support and guidance of the Commission on Disability. The very commission that DARED to glorify itself with an offensive banner above the Town Hall entrance, right in the MIDST of this situation.

It's the essence of performative art. And it's best left across the street at the Shepherd Center.

This reflects on ALL of YOU. And ALL of US.

Your fellow community members are soon going to SEE you.

I am telling MY story to the world. And it is now YOUR story, too.

How will the community see you? How will your loved ones, children, and friends see you?

What kind of community and world are you creating? One that is inclusive of ALL? Or one that simply protects its own little circle of "townies"?

Fair Haven. It's an ideal. And you are all falling FAR short.

Forget "fair" for a moment. The treatment I have experienced at the hands of my own Town government and associated authorities has been appalling. Shameful.

And this is only the beginning of what the public is going to see.

P.S. Is it only a coincidence that the offending Animal Control Officer, Kelsey, the town employee who knowingly impounded a disabled resident's Service Dog - appears to no longer be in her position of authority??? Hmmm...



The Town must be able to recognize a disabled person by more than just a wheel chair. The ADA requires you to go beyond wheelchair ramps and checklists. The federal law REQUIRES that an individual disabled person's SPECIFIC needs be effectively accommodated. The Town of Fairhaven has not so much as made a single attempt in this case. Instead, it coordinated a cover-up. And the consequences have been grave. Do not make it any worse for yourselves or the Town. It is time to FIX this.

> On Nov 3, 2026, at 06:15, John Bennett <johnabennett66@gmail.com> wrote:
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> **To all addressed:**
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> **Regardless of when you assumed your current position or what your specific responsibilities are within the Town of Fairhaven, this matter must now become your UTMOST PRIORITY.**
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> **Some of you were not yet serving in Town government when these events began, but this is an ongoing matter, and the responsibility for addressing it now rests with all of you entrusted with public responsibility.**
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> **The implications are serious, both for the Town and for every individual entrusted with its governance. Those who are now aware of what is happening and choose not to take it seriously will ultimately have to answer for that decision to their own community.**
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> **This matter concerns an egregious pattern of abuse of authority within the Town's governance structure, leveraged against one of its citizens who has clearly identified himself as disabled under the Americans with Disabilities Act. The result of this abuse includes multiple civil, constitutional, and HUMAN rights violations against me by my OWN town, endangering my life.**

What I describe below is both ongoing and being *intentionally intensified* by all involved.

I DEMAND that the Town of Fairhaven acknowledge that it has NOT recognized my federally protected rights and immediately begin taking substantive steps toward restoring those rights, providing meaningful financial restitution, and addressing the lawlessness of its Police Force under the leadership of homegrown Chief Daniel Dorgan.

Begin forwarded message:

From: John Bennett <johnabennett66@gmail.com>
Subject: Formal Notice: Fairhaven, My Civil Rights under the ADA, and Public Accountability
Date: November 2, 2026 at 18:02:18 EST
To: khickey@fairhaven-ma.gov, daniel.dorgan@fairhavenpolice.org, cmurphy@fairhaven-ma.gov
Cc: aco@fairhaven-ma.gov, svieira@fairhaven-ma.gov

I am writing to give each of you formal notice that this matter is about to become exceptionally public. Your community colleagues, coworkers, families, and the wider public will have an opportunity to see what has transpired, how this Town has handled its responsibilities, and what each of you has done, or failed to do, up to this point. From here forward, people will be watching very closely to see how you respond.

Let me be clear: I intend to make this matter public regardless of what happens next. The issues at hand are going to be addressed. That is not in question. What I am giving you is an opportunity to begin addressing them now, so that your community can also see that you recognize the seriousness of what has happened and are prepared to take meaningful responsibility for putting it right.

Nearly one year ago today, the Town's Animal Control Officer, Kelsey, impounded my ADA Service Animal – overnight - *on the eve of my father's funeral services*. She knew the dog was a Service Animal. She acknowledged that I had a disability and understood the implications, yet she still refused to return my dog to me solely because the vaccination and licensing deadlines had passed by a few weeks. My dog had been sick, and veterinary guidance was that she should not be vaccinated while ill. Nevertheless, I was forced to have her vaccinated as a condition of having my Service Dog returned to my lawful possession. Her actions represented an egregious abuse of authority and violated multiple federal laws. Further, they resulted in very real harm to both me and my Service Animal. That harm is on-going and accumulating. *This issue is on-going.*

Attached is a copy of the letter I have now been compelled to distribute to every household on Bayview Avenue. The Town's failure to understand and meet its obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, compounded by the absence of any meaningful response from its Disability Commission, has left me with no reasonable alternative.

I have been forced to disclose deeply personal medical information to forty families who are effectively strangers to me. I have done so because protecting my ability to remain in my own home, and quite literally preserving my life, has required it. The ADA exists to prevent precisely this kind of burden from being placed on a person with a disability.

Last evening, while in the midst of an epileptic seizure, my system was further agitated by a knock at my door. I managed to collect myself sufficiently to answer it, still streaked with sweat and rather disoriented, only to find a fully armed Officer Furtado standing on my porch with my lovely eighteen-month-old Service Dog, Nala. She had apparently gone over the fence, something I had not yet noticed.

Officer Furtado was perfectly polite, but the focus of our interaction was largely on preventing Nala from leaving the property again. That completely misses the point. Nala leaving the yard becomes a problem only because Town leadership does not understand its obligations under federal disability legislation. Per that federal disability legislation, my Service Dogs must be accommodated and handled differently so they can provide the life-serving and life-protective assistance I require as a disabled member of this community.

Why Town leadership and its police force cannot recognize that my Service Dogs occasionally being off-leash in a neighborhood is no different in principle from a Service Animal accompanying its handler on-leash in a restaurant is utterly beyond me. This is not complicated.

My Service Dogs cannot be so strictly confined, as the Town is requiring, and still provide the life-sustaining assistance I need. We require greater latitude in how they work and move so that I can live. Whatever the Town believes it has provided under the ADA, it remains insufficient. An accommodation must actually meet my needs, and the Town must do more until it does. This is not about convenience or access to a favorite restaurant. It is about whether I can continue living, whether I can take my next breath, and whether my Service Dogs can provide the assistance on which my life depends.

Bringing an *armed police officer* to my door was entirely unnecessary and over-reactive. It was a wholly disproportionate response given the situation at hand, the individual whose home was being approached, and the wealth of information already provided to the Town informing it of my needs so that I might live amongst you as a disabled resident.. The resulting intrusion further agitated my system during an epileptic seizure, endangering my life. I have explained the potentially life-threatening consequences of these interventions repeatedly over the past eighteen months. Sending an armed officer onto my private property under these circumstances represents an egregious violation of my civil rights and an affront to the constitutional protections that safeguard the privacy and security of my home.

Two words: unnecessary and dangerous. If Keith Hickey is prepared to assert that my Service Dogs create disturbances in the neighborhood, perhaps he should consider what introducing an armed police presence does to a peaceful neighborhood. All of this over a beautiful eighteen-month-old Golden Retriever peacefully sitting outside someone's home.

You have lost yourselves.

If the Police Department reviews its own call records, it will find that on a street with more than forty homes, repeated complaints originate from just two or three individuals, one of whom is a Town Board member, Mr. Rui DaSilva. This is hardly a neighborhood-wide concern. I am already receiving positive responses from many neighbors following the distribution of my letter, and the Town should expect to hear from others.

Keith Hickey has demonstrated an outrageous lack of understanding of the purpose and responsibilities of public service. Based on the pattern of behavior I have witnessed across the Fairhaven Police Department, I can reach no other conclusion than that unlawful police behavior is being covered up. In speaking with others in the area, I have repeatedly heard accounts of belligerent interactions with Fairhaven Police and a troubling attitude toward the very citizens they are sworn to serve. This points to a horrific failure in leadership.

These are not isolated incidents, and I am not a lone resident raising a solitary complaint. There is a broader community concern, and people are increasingly unwilling to accept this treatment as normal. I am formally charging that the department, under Chief Dorgan's leadership, has lost its way and represents a danger to the community it is meant to serve.

The Town government, in its existing structure, appears either unwilling or incapable of addressing it.

Please read the attached letter carefully. This is not a threat. It is notice that I am making these events and the Town's response public. The attention this matter receives will be substantial. The wider community will be watching, and the world will have an opportunity to see how each of you responds from this point forward. What happens next is in your hands.

Jake

<Letter to My Neighbors.pdf>