

Statement from Mayor Mark Freda Regarding the Settlement of the 2021 Crash Litigation

Nearly five years ago, Jodi Marcou was lost in a sudden tragedy. No statement, no settlement, and no passage of time can undo that loss or ease what her family has carried every day since. To her loved ones: I am profoundly sorry for your loss. You have remained in my thoughts throughout this long process, and you remain there now. My deepest hope is that the conclusion of this litigation brings you some measure of peace. Likewise, the lives of teenagers, hired to steal cars, and their families were also drastically impacted that day.

I have not spoken publicly about this matter until now. While the litigation was ongoing, I was not free to do so. Now that the case has been resolved, I believe the people of Princeton deserve to hear from me directly.

I have given my entire adult life to this town — as a volunteer, as a first responder, and as your mayor — because I care deeply about the safety and well-being of the people who live here. That commitment is the reason I serve, and it has guided every decision I have made in public life. The events at the center of this case were a tragedy that will stay with me always, and I understand the responsibility that comes with the trust our residents place in their elected officials.

I also want to be transparent about how this matter was handled, because there has been understandable confusion in the public reporting:

The Municipality and I were each represented by separate and independent attorneys assigned by and provided through the town's Joint Insurance Fund (JIF). That cost was borne by the JIF, not by Princeton taxpayers.

I retained my own personal attorney, at my own expense, to represent my individual interests. And I cooperated fully with the investigation of this terrible accident.

The terms of the settlement were determined by the insurance carriers and a court-appointed mediator through an independent process. Neither the town nor I had input into those terms, and the settlement was funded through the JIF's pooled insurance program and my personal insurance policies.

I recognize that questions have been raised about my role on the day of the crash. What I can say is that I acted out of concern for the safety of my community, not out of any disregard for it. Throughout this case, I have consistently maintained that I did

not act with willful or wanton disregard for anyone's safety. The question of whether I acted properly was never decided by a court, because the insurance companies determined to settle the matter. I will simply say this: I have always tried to act in good faith and in the interest of protecting this community, and I accept the responsibility of learning from every difficult experience in public service.

Throughout this process the governing body has carried on the important work of the community and will continue to do so in the future.

Mark Freda Mayor, Municipality of Princeton

###